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ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD EESTIS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD
WORKS IN ESTONIA IN
1996

Koostanud ja toimetanud Ülle Tamla

EESTI ARHEOLOOGIASELTS

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Tartu Ülikooli Raamatukogu

INVENTORY OF UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ESTONIA

Vello MÄSS

Eesti Meremuuseum (Estonian Maritime Museum), Pikk 70,
EE-0001 Tallinn, Eesti (Estonia)

There are many types of antiquities in the territory of Estonia. A number of these have been located and are included in the list of historical monuments. Many archaeologists work year after year, but there are still a lot of objects still to be discovered and investigated, especially underwater.

Thousands of sunken ships, including remains of Viking ships, Hanseatic cogs and Estonian local water craft, are resting on the sea bottom and other water-bodies.

Searches for sunken ships, in Estonia, began in 1978 when the Estonian Maritime Museum began marine archaeological research (Mäss, 1984, 46).

The main task was to study the possibilities of finding the remains of sunken ships and investigating them. This has been successful and serious branch of scientific research has been established. In 1988, the Department of Underwater Archaeology was established in the Museum, and every year sunken ships are found.

In 1995, modern technology for locating wrecks was mounted on the research vessel of the Maritime museum (Mäss, 1996) and more systematic inventory of Estonian territorial sea started.

As a result of active research, during the previous 17th years, much information concerning wrecks has been collected. The main sources of information have been:

- local fishermen
- war history memories
- old sea charts
- archives
- folklore
- reports of sport divers

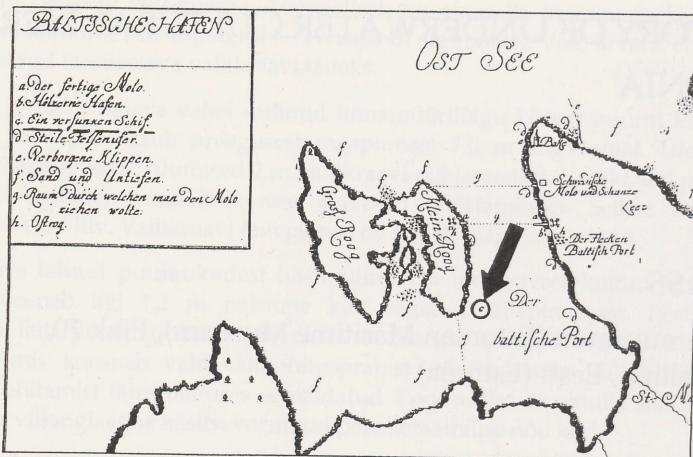


Fig. 1. The Gulf of Paldiski and the Pakri islands in the 19th c. The sunken ship (c) has not been found yet.

Contacts with the local fishermen is undoubtedly the most valuable source of information because of the long traditions of bottom trawling in Estonian waters.

War history memories contain much information about losses at sea during the last two wars, but very often there is quite a lot of fantasy.

Old sea charts can provide researchers with exciting information, but usually they are not precise enough.

Much more information could be obtained from the archives, but there are a lack of researchers in the Maritime Museum, who can systematically work and continuously be engaged in this field of research.

Quite a lot of folklore concerning shipwrecks has also been collected, however, most people who lived on the coast in the past do not remember today the wrecks in the surrounding sea.

Some information could be obtained from sport divers. However, because of economic reasons and the heavy diving conditions, in the cold sea water, this kind of sports is not yet popular in Estonia.

Currently, the Museum has information about 250 wrecks in Estonian waters, and they are waiting to be investigated using modern underwater technology. The positions of the wrecks must be specified by navigation satellites according to the global positioning system (GPS), and the types of sunken ships must be determined and their remains preliminarily dated by divers.

A few of the wrecks have been thoroughly investigated already. Two of them — the Maasilinn ship and the Pärnu cog — have been excavated, lifted up and conserved. Most of the deep-water wrecks are still waiting to be located by side scan sonar and investigated by divers. The collected data has to be systematized and computerized.

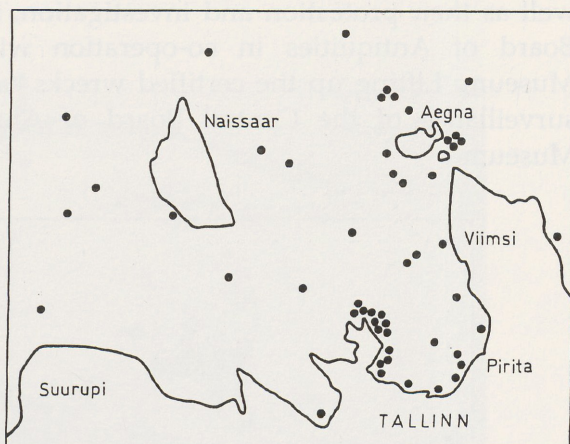


Fig. 2. Wrecked ships mapped near Tallinn (February, 1997).

Underwater survey of sunken ships is usually quite complicated in Estonian waters. As a result of active bottom trawling, during many decades, most of the deep-water wrecks are completely covered with nets.

In addition to the ships lying underwater, all kinds of wrecks will be registered including those which have been destroyed by running ashore, embedded in swamps or buried under the soil in sandy beaches.

Computerizing of information started in 1997. The results of this very exciting work, which will probably last for decades, will be the complete register of sunken ships and a wide-range graphic wreck-chart covering the whole territorial sea and all inland water-bodies of Estonia. The question is should the register of wrecks be opened for public use or not?

Information in any of the democratic countries must usually be available to the public, but, the situation in Estonia is a little different these days. Some serious problems are appearing in countries where diving has always been free. Illegal wreck diving, plundering sunken ships, collecting souvenirs and selling objects to foreign countries is becoming a reality also in Estonia. It must be prevented, and some efforts have been made to keep this danger under control.

In addition to the Merchant Shipping Code of 1991 and the Cultural Heritage Act of 1994, a special decree of the Government of the Republic of Estonia, about the organization of investigations, lifting up and protection of sunken ships and their remains, was issued in 1994. It states that certification of the wrecked ships as cultural monuments, as

well as their protection and investigation, is organized by the Central Board of Antiquities in co-operation with the Estonian Maritime Museum. Lifting up the certified wrecks can be undertaken under the surveillance of the Central Board of Antiquities and the Maritime Museum.

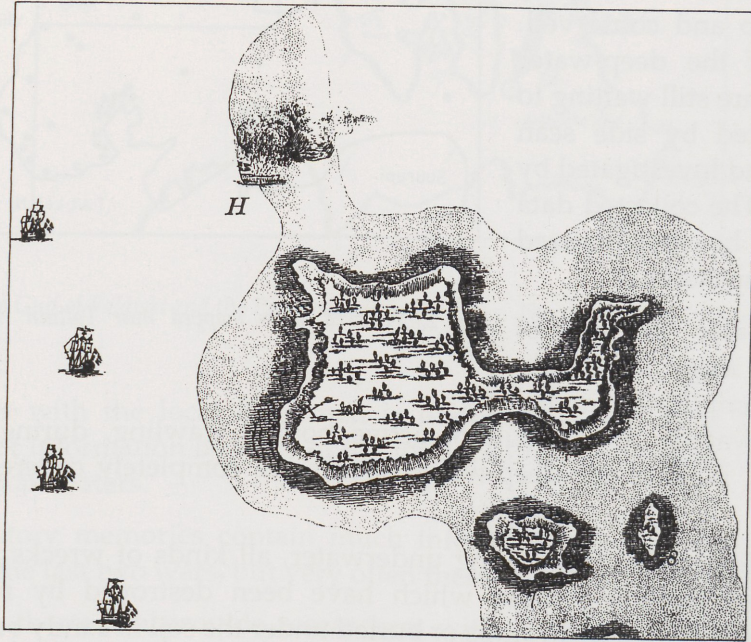


Fig. 3. Shipwreck near the island of Aegna in a map from the 18th c.

It is forbidden for Estonians and foreign institutions, enterprises, organizations and individuals, not possessing a respective permission, to search for, investigate or lift up wrecked ships in Estonian territorial waters and interior seas and inland water-bodies.

Permission to exercise the above mentioned activities must be acquired from the Central Board of Antiquities with the knowledge of the National Maritime Board.

Accidental finds, of cultural value, are regarded as being under temporary protection from the moment of their discovery, and must immediately be reported to the Central Board of Antiquities or the Estonian Maritime Museum.

Foreigners are only allowed to take part in underwater archaeological expeditions, organized by Estonian scientific institutions and museums, with the permission of the Central Board of Antiquities. Foreigners involved in underwater works must be under the surveillance of the National Maritime Board.



Fig. 4. An unidentified wreck of a ship ashore of the Kunda Bay.

Implementation of this decree is supervised by the Central Board of Antiquities, National Maritime Board, National Police Board, National Customs Board, State Sea Inspection Office and the National Board of Frontier Guard, involving for this purpose members of the Defense League on a voluntary bases. To completely take care of our underwater cultural heritage at least one or two more laws are needed as follows:

— Protection of Wrecks Act — to protect an area within which certain activities (diving, bottom trawling, dredging etc.) are prohibited. The designed area is often a circle with a radius of between 50 and 300 meters. This law can only apply to shipwrecks within a known position because it relies on the definition of an area.

— Protection of Military Remains Act — applying beyond the territorial sea in international waters. According to international practice, this law can be used to protect remains without their position being known. Such a wreck is the submarine "Kalev", which perished at sea in 1941 and supposedly lies on the bottom of the central part of the Gulf of Finland. One day her remains will probably be located and Estonia has to be prepared for that time.

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VEEALUSE KULTUURIPÄRANDI INVENTEERIMINE EESTIS

Vello MÄSS

Aastakümneid on Eesti arheoloogid muististe otsimisel, uurimisel ning nende kultuuri- ja ajaloomälestistena registreerimisel teinud tänuväärset tööd. Sellele vaatamata ootab suur hulk objekte — potentsiaalseid muistiseid — avastamist seni väheuuritud Eesti territoriaalmere põhjas.

Esimesed katsed uppunud laevade leidmiseks tegi Eesti Meremuuseum 1978. aastal. 1996. aastal varustati muuseumi spetsiaalne uurimislaev kaasaegse otsimisaparatuuriga. Algas süstemaatiline töö uppunud laevade — veealuse kultuuripärandi — otsimise, uurimise ja registreerimise eesmärgil. 17 aasta pikkuse eeltööga on kogutud hulk informatsiooni, mille peamiseks allikateks on olnud:

- kohalikud rannakalurid
- sõjaajaloomälestised
- vanad merekaardid
- arhiivid
- folkloor
- teated harrastussukeldujatelt

Kõige väärtuslikumaks on osutunud kaluritelt saadud info, seda eelkõige tänu pikaajalisele traalipüügi-traditsioonile Eesti rannikumeres.

Suhteliselt informatiivsetes sõjaajaloomälestistes esineb siiski küllalt sageli fantaasiat ja liialdusi.

Vanade merekaartide puuduseks on nende ebatäpsus. Arhiivides leiduva info kättesaamine on praegu raske, sest Meremuuseumil puuduvad inimesed, kes võiksid selles vallas pikaajaliselt ja süstemaatiliselt töötada.

Kogutud folkloor on suurelt osalt teoreetiline, sest randlaste 1940. aastal katkestatud merelise elulaadi tõttu ei teata tänapäeval enam, mis peitub oma kodumere põhjas.

Vähene on harrastussukeldujatelt saadav info, sest allveesport ei ole Eestis veel populaarne.

Tänapäevaks on Meremuuseumil informatsiooni ligikaudu 250 laevavraki kohta. Seda kõike tuleb kontrollida, leitud vrakke uurida, informatsioon süstematiseerida ning saadud teave arvutisse salvestada.

Registreeritakse kõik teadaolevad laevahukud, lisaks sellele ka kinnikasvanud merelahtedesse ja järvedesse, kruusastesse rannavallidesse, soodesse ja rabadesse maetud laevajäänused.

Olemasoleva info arvutisse salvestamisega tehti Meremuuseumis algust käesoleval aastal. Selle, ilmselt aastakümnete pikkuse töö resultaatiks peab saama täiuslik vrakiregister ning ülevaatlik, kogu Eesti territoriaalmerd ja siseveekogusid kattev vrakikaart.

Küsimus on, kas peab see olema avalik, s.t. kättesaadav kõigile huvilistele, nii nagu on see näiteks demokraatlikus Rootsis?

Tänapäeva Eestis on situatsioon siiski mõnevõrra erinev. Illegaalne vrakisukeldumine, suveniirikogumine, metallivargus ja varandusejaht on saamas reaalsuseks ning selle vastu tuleb võidelda. Lisaks olemasolevale Kaubandusliku meresõidu koodeksile (1991) ja Muinsuskaitseadusele (1994) andis vabariigi valitsus 1994. aastal välja ka määruse uppunud laevade otsimise, uurimise, ülestõstmise ja kaitse korraldamise kohta.

Nimetatud määrus reglementeerib täpselt, kelle loal ja kellega kooskõlastatult võib Eesti vetes tegeleda vrakisukeldumise, uppunud laevade otsimise, uurimise ja vrakkidega seotud majandustegevusega.

Veealuse kultuuripärandi täielikuks kaitseks oleks meil arenenud seadusandlusega mereriikide eeskujul vaja veel kahte täiendavat seadust:

— Vrakikaitseadust (Protection of Wrecks Act), mis keelab teatud alal (raadiusega 50–300 m) peale sukeldumiste veel kalapüügi põhjatraalidega, süvendustööd jm. tegevuse, mis võib vrakke kahjustada.

— Sõjaajaloomälestiste seadust (Protection of Military Remains Act), mis laieneb väljapoole Eesti Vabariigi piire. Vastavalt rahvusvahelisele praktikale lubab see seadus võtta kaitse alla uppunud sõjalaevu ka nende praegust asukohta teadmata. Eesti oludes saaks selle seaduse olemasolu korral võtta kaitse alla allveelaeva "Kalev", mis 1941. aastal hukkus kusagil Soome lahe keskosas. Kunagi avastatakse selle kaitset vääriva laeva jäänused kindlasti. Peaksime olema selleks õigeaegselt valmis.