

Ships And Maritime Landscapes

*Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Symposium
on Boat and Ship Archaeology, Amsterdam 2012*

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Edited by

Jerzy Gawronski
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& Joost Schokkenbroek

ISBSA 13

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Contributors and participants of the ISBSA 13 at the replica of the Batavia in Lelystad, October 10th 2012.

Preface

The Thirteenth International Symposium on Boat and Ship Archaeology (ISBSA 13) was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, from October 7th-12th 2012, at the Royal Navy Complex Amsterdam adjacent to the National Maritime Museum. The meeting was jointly organised by the Office for Monuments & Archaeology of the city of Amsterdam, Het Scheepvaartmuseum (The National Maritime Museum) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency and The University of Groningen. Over 200 scholars of archaeology, history, ethnography and anthropology gathered to discuss current global research issues related to the use and development of boats and ships.

The thirteenth edition of ISBSA had as general theme 'Ships and Maritime Landscapes' and focused on questions about the relationship between the physical landscape, the shipbuilding industry in a particular area and ship design. From their very start in 1976 the triennial ISBSA conferences had as their main purpose "to bring together all those involved in the study of the form, structure, function and operational performance of ancient boats." Although choosing a theme outside the direct scope of shipbuilding, the organisers of ISBSA 13 were well aware of the fact that ships and the technology of building ships are specialisms that deserve their own platform. Therefore, methodology of shipwreck research, experimental archaeology and ethnography of ships were kept as core elements of the conference programme. Simultaneously, current developments in maritime archaeology were integrated in the programme with the aim to discuss and understand ship technology and technological change in a wider context.

After three decades of methodological progression, maritime archaeology developed from the 1990s a broader perspective exploring the intricate information value of ships more fully. New approaches were formulated to understand and apply maritime data. Among other things the notion of the maritime cultural landscape was introduced, which was derived from landscape archaeology and allowed a more coherent and

integral approach, in which the boundaries between underwater and land-based sites were less distinct. Within this wider spatial context shipwrecks are not to be considered as isolated material entities but as exponents of complex patterns of production and communication within and between communities and societies, on a local, regional or global level simultaneously. The process of designing, building and using ships was a complex social activity and therefore ships are closely connected to the economic, social, political and cultural mechanisms of a given society. Ships exemplify in a concrete material way the spatial relations and interaction in trade, technology, power and culture. In discussing the current state of maritime archaeology, one of the focus points is the meaning of ships for our understanding of the functioning of societies. It is exactly this wider context which makes ships so relevant as new sources for the study of human behaviour and social changes.

In order to achieve a balance in the conference programming between these two diverse approaches – the technological and the social domains – and to facilitate as much as presentations as possible in the five-day programme it was decided to programme parallel sessions. Beside sessions on topics related to the maritime landscape, there was a simultaneous series of papers in which a broad array of other themes was addressed, like regional watercraft, ship construction and typology, material applications and design, outfitting and propulsion, reconstruction and quite a substantial section on current research.

The programme included next to 90 papers also 26 poster presentations on a variety of subjects and two venues outside the conference complex at the navy yard. On Tuesday evening October 9th the French Institute (Institut Français, Maison Descartes) organized for the ISBSA participants a showing of the film *Les voitures d'eau* on the building and navigation of wooden two-mast ships in Canada in collaboration with archaeologist and CNRS research coordinator Eric Rieth. On Wednesday afternoon October 10th a symposium

excursion was organised to Lelystad in the province of Flevoland. After a short session at the Province House the programme included a visit to the workshops and depot of the Department of Ship Archaeology of the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency, the replica of the *Batavia* and the exhibition *Schipbreuk* at New Land Heritage Centre.

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for welcome drinks and the city of Amsterdam for organising the welcome dinner. The excursion on Wednesday was hosted by the Province of Flevoland, the Batavia Shipyard and the New Land Heritage Centre in Lelystad. Representatives of these institutions warmly welcomed the participants of the symposium, among which we would like to mention Benno van Tilburg (Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency), Jaap Lodders (Provincial delegate of Flevoland), Willem de Jager (deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Lelystad) and Arjan Agema (director New Land Heritage Centre). On various matters, especially on the selection of papers, the organizing committee was advised by the Assisting Scientific Committee, consisting of organizers of previous ISBSA meetings (Ronald Bockius, Anton Englert, Nergis Günsenin, Fred Hocker and Ufuk Kocabaş). Special thanks also go out to Thijs Terhorst, who as assistant secretary, did a magnificent job managing the complicated program with parallel sessions. Also the day to day assistance by student volunteers from HSVL, the association of history students at the University of Leiden was much appreciated. Last but not least Joost Schokkenbroek and André van Holk would like to express their thanks to their co-editor Jerzy Gawronski. Without his effort and perseverance these proceedings would never have been published.

Organising Committee