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National and regional Perspectives of the Baltic in an Age of Change

David Kirby

Zusammenfassung

Der Aufsatz thematisiert einen Zeitraum (1780–1870), in dem sich im Ostseeraum politisch und wirtschaftlich viel verändert. Für alle, die an den Küsten der Ostsee lebten, war es das Meer, das Leben und Lebensunterhalt regelte, Bräuche und Anschauungen beeinflusste und Denken und Handeln bestimmte. In vielerlei Hinsicht bildeten die Küstenbewohner charakteristische Gemeinschaften, die nur geringen Bezug zu territorialen Grenzen und wenige Verbindungen zum Land hinter den Handelswegen hatten. Der immer schnellere Puls des Wirtschaftslebens, der Einfluss der technischen Errungenschaften und vor allem die Entstehung mächtiger zentralistisch agierender Staaten verursachten starke und langanhaltende Veränderungen. Der Aufsatz untersucht den Einfluss nationaler Normen und Werte auf die maritimen Gemeinschaften im Ostseeraum und richtet dabei besonderes Augenmerk darauf, inwiefern das Meer, die Küste und die Küstenbewohner neu definiert wurden, um in das nationale Selbstbild zu passen. Im Gegensatz zu anderen derartigen Gemeinschaften (wie beispielsweise Bergvölkern) lebten die die Küste bewohnenden in Gebieten, die in wirtschaftlicher, strategischer und militärischer Hinsicht immer wichtiger wurden. Diese mussten folglich in das nationale Ganze integriert werden. Weit in die Vergangenheit reichende internationale Verbindungen und stark ausgeprägte Traditionen in der Anpassung an veränderte Umstände sorgten dafür, dass die Küstengebiete selbst engagiert an diesem Veränderungsprozess teilnehmen konnten.

This article is based on a paper which formed part of a programme section at the 45. Deutscher Historikertag (September 14th – 17th 2004) in Kiel. The section dealt with different perspectives on writing Baltic Sea history and also served as a starting point to establish a Baltic Sea section within the International Committee of Historical Sciences. David Kirby (Ph.D.) is Professor of Modern History at the University College London and currently working on a history of Finland. Kontakt: dkirby@ssees.ac.uk

Die Ostsee ist ein wesentlich germanisches Mittelmeer, denn seit Jahrtausenden haben sich auf ihr vorzugsweise Völker germanischen Stammes getummelt. Sie haben dort, wie auf dem weiten Ozean, eine Hauptrolle gespielt und stets ihr Übergewicht geltend gemacht, weil ihnen Seebegabung in hohem Grade verliehen ist. Allerdings wohnen von frühester Zeit her an den östlichen Gestaden auch Völker von anderer Abkunft; aber die Menschen tschudischen Stammes sind immer nur passive gewesen und haben Denen gehorcht, welche zu ihnen kamen, um zu

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gebieten. Sie brachten es nie dahin, als eine seemächtige Nation aufzutreten und bildeten keine unabhängigen Staaten: Ihr geschichtliches Los bestand von jeher darin, von anderen überflügelt zu werden [...].¹

History and culture are not objective standards to which we are obliged to adjust. They constitute a reservoir to be drawn on by political projects [...]. In the last instance, identity is a question of who wants to see themselves as belonging. If Lithuanians suddenly want to be Nordic, and if we all want to be Baltic, then historical relationships and common culture will be discovered.²

It is unlikely, as well as being politically deeply incorrect, that the first-cited vision of the Baltic is advocated today. On the other hand, there will be many who would disagree with the postmodernist assumptions of the Danish political scientist Ole Wæver, who seems to regard region-building as a political project which uses the past to suit its own purposes and to “invent” traditions and identity.

This essay seeks to steer a course between these two extremes and will try to offer a circumlittoral perspective of the Baltic as a contribution to the discussion on the identity of a Baltic region. A few general observations may, however, be useful. In the first instance, the current concern with “identity” is to a large degree a consequence of the shifting of the great power blocs that dominated Europe from the end of the Second World War until the last decade of the 20th century, and although there has been a number of innovative studies looking at the spatial and chronological dimensions of territory, much of the debate has been conducted with an eye to present political concerns such as European integration or minority rights issues. The discussion has also been almost exclusively about land and territory; the role or impact of the sea has hardly featured at all.³

Secondly, it is important to draw attention to the fact that multi-ethnic dominions, or “empires” have historically prevailed in the Baltic region. With due acknowledgement to the existence of a strong sense of national identity in medieval Denmark and Sweden at least, the nation-state as such is a latecomer.⁴ One can speak of at least three distinctive and essentially maritime conglomerations, by which I mean that the Baltic sea helped to provide the means of expansion and bound the disparate elements together: the early medieval Danish kingdom, and its two later rivals, the Hanseatic League and the kingdom of Sweden.⁵ Insofar as one is justified in speaking of a political “Baltic world”, then the period from the end of the Viking era until the end of the 17th century is probably the most appropriate for such a term. Post Ice-Age settlement of northern Europe, the establishment of trading links with the rest of the world, even primitive state formation was quintessentially maritime in nature.⁶ Sea routes were vital arteries of trade and communication for large, sparsely populated land masses, covered in thick, impenetrable forests, littered with bogs and stony moraine. The open channel of water between the Stockholm skerries, the Åland Islands and the Finnish archipelago was at the heart of the medieval Swedish kingdom, linking together the central regions within the royal

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perambulation (*eriksgata*) and Finland Proper.⁷ Control of the sea was an essential element in the power struggle between Denmark and Sweden after the final break-up of the Kalmar Union in the early 16th century, something that was frequently recognised by Sweden's great statesman, Axel Oxenstierna.⁸

This began to change with the demise of Sweden as a great power. Although there remained a dense network of maritime interregional connections that paid little heed of formal national boundaries, the new "empires" that began to play a commanding role in the Baltic – the Russian from the early 18th century, the German in the 19th – depended far less upon control of the sea to maintain their dominance. Both were essentially continental land powers, and although access to the sea was an important component in the creation of an image of statehood and power (especially at the turn of the 19th century, the golden age of geopolitics), the extension and assertion of territorial control was seen largely in terms of armies, not navies. Furthermore, the Baltic was no longer the mother of all trades to anyone. Although peasants and small merchants dealing in fish, firewood, wooden artefacts, skins and furs kept alive a kind of cultural "Baltic world", it had become a backwater in terms of global trade and it no longer brought the great European powers to the negotiating table as it had done in the mid-17th century.

Out of the ruins of empire in 1918 emerged a number of small states around the eastern rim of the Baltic. For these newly independent states, the establishment of a *national* identity was of paramount importance; any "Baltic" dimension was invariably seen from that perspective, and tended moreover to be adapted to other concerns – most notably the delineation of physical and mental boundaries against the east, the "other" of Bolshevik Russia⁹. The division of Europe after 1945 split the Baltic; furthermore, the southern shores were subjected to huge demographic changes, which removed entire historic communities and brought in large numbers of newcomers with no knowledge of the history or traditions of the war-torn areas they moved to. The sudden ending of the division of Europe in 1991 has added yet another twist to the search for identity, with the re-emergence of states sustained by a high level of nationalism, and yet having to accommodate to a Europe in which supranational cooperation and integration are the passwords for admission.

In our study of the Baltic and North seas, in which we cast a broad view from the earliest settlements on the shores of the seas emerging from the last Ice Age up to the present time, my co-author Merja-Liisa Hinkkanen and I sought to trace the intertwined history of human culture in all its aspects with that of the maritime environment. We tried to show how the sea determined the lives and livelihoods of coastal dwellers, affected their customs and beliefs and defined their mental as well as commercial maps.¹⁰ Until the ending of the age of sail, coastal dwellers formed their own distinctive communities, often with little regard to territorial boundaries and few ties to the hinterland beyond the trade routes. The coastal communities of northern Jutland had far more communication, and culturally far more in common, for example, with southern Norway than with the hinterland, with which communication overland was often virtually

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impossible. There are numerous signs of Norwegian influence in the villages of Vendsyssel and Thy, from the grain barns in Norwegian style to Norwegian gravestones and ovens. There was also considerable emigration from the coastal settlements to the towns of southern Norway.¹¹ Even in the remotest places, such as northern Sweden, a port could have significant impact on the hinterland. Pastor Per Læstadius noted in the early 19th century how the coastal town of Skellefteå influenced the upland parish of Arvidsjaur, which “could be regarded as a colony of the former”. The dialect, habits and dress of Skellefteå were all to be found in Arvidsjaur, and the peasants who engaged in sea trade were looked up to as role models to be imitated.¹²

The great trading cities were for centuries powerful enough to defy attempts to subordinate them to the direction of a central princely authority; indeed, the Hanseatic League in its prime was able to force princes to accept its terms. But even modest coastal communities were able to evade many of the irksome burdens and controls imposed by centralising state authorities on those who lived in the more fertile and densely populated plains of the hinterland. Isolated on the margins of the kingdom or duchy, the seafaring peoples of these communities ate different food, wore different clothes, and spoke a very different dialect or even language to that of their landlubber neighbours. Unlike other distinctive and separate communities, such as marsh-dwellers or mountain folk, however, maritime communities were more likely to live in areas which in the 19th century acquired increasing commercial and political importance, as a “paradoxical result of the fact that the emergence of a world market went hand in hand with the formation of national states”, in the words of the Danish historian Poul Holm¹³. The quickening pace of economic activity and the impact of technological change compelled coastal dwellers to adapt, but it were above all the policies of powerful centralising states that wrought the most lasting changes. It is the impact of new and different norms and values upon maritime communities around the Baltic which will form the main element of this paper, and particular attention will be paid to the ways in which the sea, coast and coastal communities were redefined to fit in with a national self-image.

As already indicated, coastal communities from the earliest times had been open to external influences, and this gave them a distinctive character.¹⁴ From the end of the 18th century, however, these communities were increasingly exposed to a new influence that did not flow through them, as did the commodities, customs and fashions of the wider world, but which sought to capture or reshape their very essence. This “discovery” of the seaside, which within a short space of time created a new industry, actually predated the formation of the modern national state, yet in many ways anticipated it.¹⁵ It relied on much of the social and economic infrastructure that was necessary in the building of the modern state: a prosperous urban middle class, good communications, modern comforts. The early venturers to the coast may have been looking for the exotic and untouched, as they claimed; but nature in all its rawness was not something favoured by those who followed in their footsteps. Having described in detail the rugged, rocky coastline of Bohuslän on Sweden’s west coast, a Swedish tourist guide of the 1850s found Marstrand a pleasant surprise, for here “one could easily

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be convinced that nature itself intended it to be what it has only just become after many centuries – a bathing station”¹⁶. Visiting the remote northern tip of the Jutland peninsula in 1859, Hans Christian Andersen, one of the most powerful image-makers of his age, urged painters to hasten there to find “an aspect of nature which will give you a picture of Africa’s desert, of the ash heaps of Pompeii and of sandbanks in the great ocean above which birds soar”. Here we have an image of wild, unspoilt nature, so dear to the Romantic heart. But Andersen was also very enamoured of progress, and he visualised a time in the not too distant future when

the houses of the town will stand in rows, each with its own small front garden, there will be streets and roads out to the open highway which leads to Fredrikshavn, the terminal for the Jutland railway down to the Continent, and a port with steamships which in a few hours link Norway, Sweden and Denmark¹⁷.

Andersen was not the only visitor to the seashore who sent back conflicting messages. One is almost tempted to say that the encounter between the outside visitor and the dwellers by the shore has much in common with that between the European and the “primitive peoples” of Africa and Asia. The many travel books, poems and novels of the first half of the 19th century in which the shoreline and the sea are the main feature often convey a strong sense of ambivalence about the people of the shore, as shown in the juxtaposition of opposites, such as the wrecker and the rescuer. Much of this reflects the uncertainties of the writers themselves, men and women from the cultured classes on a mission to discover the “true people”, but not always quite sure what to make of their findings. Even those such as the Danish pastor Steen Steensen Blicher who were determined to dispose of fearful myths of bloodthirsty, half-human wreckers drew attention to the distinctive “otherness” of the coastal inhabitants. They were different not only in their dress, physique, customs and language, but also in their very character.¹⁸

The values and habits of the wealthier and more powerful intruders into the lives of coastal folk affected the local culture. The demands of prosperous middle-class visitors ensured that pleasant promenades, assembly rooms and parks replaced the clutter and smell of fishermen’s huts; their money also reshaped the local economy, as sailors and fishermen found it more profitable to hire themselves and their boats out for pleasure trips, or to rent rooms.¹⁹ There was, however, little social intermixing between visitors and residents. The light holiday clothes of the visitors contrasted sharply with the drab, heavy working garb of the locals, and there were frequent tensions between the world of hard, unremitting work and the determination of the visitors to indulge themselves in pleasure. It may well be, as some have argued, that the encounter served to sharpen rather than to blur differences, and there is evidence, from southern Sweden for instance, of a reaction by locals against the tourist trade. But given the regularity and growing importance of the tourist trade, few coastal communities would have been immune to the influences of visitors who carried with them the manifold signs and symbols of the burgeoning national state – newspapers, a “standard” vocabulary as opposed to a dialect, a liking for popular music

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that could be played from scores by bands with mass-produced instruments, a preference for hygienically produced foodstuffs, and a familiarity with the sinews that bind a nation together, from railway timetables to the school system.²⁰

The visitors were themselves part of this new infrastructure of standardisation and regulation. The railway was probably less important in creating a seaside industry in northern Europe than it was in Britain – and there is an interesting contrast to be made here between the essentially middle-class, spa-type holiday-making that took place in Doberan or Marstrand, for example, with the kind of lower middle-class and working-class daytripping that became popular in Britain even before Thomas Cook organised his cut-price railway excursions to the seaside in the 1840s – but it may nonetheless be seen as the first serious challenge since Roman times to the waterways as a means of communication.²¹ A railway network bound the hinterland to the coast, allowing the cheap and speedy transit of goods, bringing newspapers, mail-order catalogues, letters and above all visitors to the coast. It also allowed people to leave to find better opportunities elsewhere, and it caused opinions to circulate. One need only consider the part played by the steamship, railway and telegraph in the Schleswig-Holstein conflict to appreciate this. They also permitted the formation of new types of association – commercial, religious, social and political – which often cut across and weakened older communal ties. Of course, coastal communities were not the only ones affected; but they differed from inland regions in the weakening of their trans-maritime connections by the growing centripetal pressures of national state-formation.

This occurred in several ways. The advent of the steamship and the concentration of tonnage in the bigger ports, together with changes in patterns of ownership, gradually brought about a shift towards a new intermediary class of seafarers. Those who had once skippered vessels in which they had a part-share now sought work in the large ports as pilots, customs officials, fishery inspectors, harbourmasters and as captains employed by the big shipping companies. Those who had crewed these vessels now signed on as deckhands, stokers or mechanics – or found work in the docks, factories and shipyards. The seasonal and local rhythm of small-scale coastal trade survived, but in much reduced circumstances. The same is true of fishing and boat-building; they survived and their practitioners were often able to adapt to new technologies, but they were no longer at the heart of the local economy.²²

These practitioners also had to be fitted into a national self-image. Fishermen were frequently held up as good examples. A reading-book widely used in Swedish elementary schools, for example, portrayed the fisherman as devout and content with his lot. Carl Koch's 1874 novel *Strand und See* painted a highly romantic picture of hardy, brave, Germanic fisher folk, excellent sailors, who were the core of the new German navy.²³ And the sea had not only to be claimed for the middle classes as a source of health, pleasure and relaxation; it had also to be claimed for the nation. This is a fairly powerful refrain of German nationalism from the early 19th century onwards. In the foreword to this three-volume account of the marshlands

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and geest of Schleswig-Holstein, published in the 1840s, Johann Georg Kohl for example made considerable play of the “Germanness” of the coast, and of Prussia as the successor of the Hanse, “der unser Interesse vertritt [an der Ostsee, DK]”. The development of the Zollverein, the building of a canal linking North and Baltic seas, and the creation of a German merchant fleet all underlined the need for national unity.²⁴ In common with other states around the Baltic, the new German empire also actively supported marine exploration. The Ministerial Commission for Studying the German Seas, set up in 1869, sent out expeditions in 1871 and 1873 and the German research steamer *Poseidon* conducted regular expeditions from 1903 onwards. The close involvement of the new German state in marine exploration was highlighted in the first number of an annual series on *Meereskunde*, issued by the *Institut für Meereskunde* in Berlin. In addition to the didactic and instructive, the new museum was to serve another purpose: as its chief founder and tireless propagandist Freiherr Ferdinand von Richthofen remarked in a speech of 1900, it served to make the “Binnenbewohner” (“inlander”) aware of the harbours of his country as the points of exit to the world ocean, and aware as well of the value of the protection afforded by the new German fleet against foreign attack.²⁵

The coastline could also become part of the front line in national conflict, in more senses than the building of naval harbours and coastal batteries. After the loss of Sylt and Föhr to Germany in 1864, Fanø was developed and promoted as a “Danish” resort, and patriotic Danes demonstrated their loyalty on the beaches of Denmark by ostentatiously flying the Dannebrog in order to discomfit German visitors.²⁶ The placing of the Finnish pilot service under the control of the Imperial Russian ministry of the marine in 1912 prompted mass resignations and the replacement of some of these men by Russians with an inadequate knowledge of Finnish coastal waters. Within Finland itself, those who spoke on behalf of the Swedish-speaking minority, which lived largely in coastal areas, claimed the sea and its shores as their natural homeland, open and free, in contrast to the silent and gloomy forests of the (Finnish-speaking) hinterland.²⁷ The mutterings of Russian geo-politicians about their country’s need for access to the sea, and the betrothal to the sea staged by a detachment of Polish soldiers in January 1920 may also be cited to highlight the perceived importance of the sea for the national self-image.

The regional gave way before the national in other ways: in the gradual demise of local dialects and languages, in the decay of ports and harbours no longer able to keep up with changes in trade and shipping, or unable to modernise, in the surrender or loss of local autonomy and self-government. Many of the things that had sustained a maritime inter-regionalism were now curtailed or faded away, “nationalised” by regulation or prohibition.

Maritime communities showed themselves capable of adaptation to changed circumstances, as they had done in the past, and played an active part in the process of transformation from the age of sail to the age of steam. But they were undeniably a good deal less “maritime” at the end of the 19th century than they had been at the beginning, and were to lose far more of that distinctive seafaring character as the 20th century progressed.

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I would like to conclude by returning to the question of identity and ask why the many attempts at defining a Baltic identity have paid so little attention to the sea itself. To a large extent, of course, this reflects the obvious fact that we live on the land, not on the sea, but, besides, the waters do not easily lend themselves to easy definition.²⁸ It is also significant that the principal name by which the sea is known is the *Ostsee*, the *mare quod vocant orientale*, for this is surely a characterisation of the sea and the region by *western* outsiders, or those coming from the west, who penetrated the area for purposes of trade. This has been reinforced in much of the literature concerning the Baltic – it is seen as the outlet to the wider (western) world of commerce and culture, the conduit for the reception of ideas, goods, institutions, etc. Although studies of trans-Baltic trade have shown how important this has been in the exchange of ideas and techniques, from ship-building to traditions of popular culture, the Baltic is seen primarily as a receptor and channel of transmission, not as a generator or inspirer of ideas or visions.²⁹ In other words, it lacks the historical and cultural resonance of the Mediterranean, and, in comparison with the countries on the north-western seaboard of Europe, there seems to have been little in the way of absorption of a strong maritime (and specifically Baltic) identity into the national self-image. A four-volume study of the history of Danish identity, for example, says hardly anything about the part played by the sea in helping to define the only European country whose capital is on an island which in a bad winter could be cut off from the rest of the country for days, even weeks.³⁰ The ever-observant Kohl may have stumbled upon one explanation for this when he recorded a conversation with a Danish naval officer, who was of the opinion that the peasants on the islands earned their bread too easily on land, and thus turned their backs on fishing and seafaring. There is much evidence to suggest a firm belief that only poverty and the lack of opportunity in the locality would force people to earn their livelihood from the sea. Such marginality was hardly the stuff upon which to build a national image.³¹

Another explanation of the relatively low profile of maritime identity around the Baltic can be discerned in the observation of Theodor Fontane's Baron von Innstetten about the lack of contact between the inhabitants of the coastal towns and their Cashubian neighbours in the novel *Effi Briest*, and in the ethnographer Wolfgang Rudolph's description of the role of harbours as

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Binnenlandbewohnern und dem Seevolk der eigenen
Nation, ebenso aber Plätze permanenter wirksamer Kontakte
zwischen Angehörigen oft sehr verschiedener Nationen,
zwischen Vertretern unterschiedlicher
Glaubensgemeinschaften und gegensätzlicher politischer
Weltanschauungen.³²

Ports and maritime regions are essentially zones of transmission between the hinterland and the outer world; their function and even existence are determined by their role as intermediaries. The rhythm of their life is usually quite different from that of the hinterland; they are more susceptible to influences from outside than from inside the country to which they are

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attached, often rather uneasily. This created and sustained an inter-regionalism which was in the end incompatible with the ambitious objectives of the strong, highly centralised states of the 19th century, whose maritime policies saw the coast as a frontier to be defended or from which the drive for global dominance could be launched. In truth, many of the vital elements of that Baltic maritime community were also weakened by commercial and technological developments, and by the opening up of the coast to tourism; but the modern state alone had the power to force conformity to standards, to impose tariffs, to build navies and set national norms.

It remains to be seen whether a new maritime regionalism can flourish in the Baltic in an age of European integration. There is plentiful evidence of efforts to revive or create regional identities, but what at the present moment may be a political and economic necessity is not necessarily the same as the historical experience of regional identity. At any given time or locality, there will probably be several layers operating simultaneously, creating a multiplicity of contacts, exchanges, influences and fusions that constitute the archaeology of identities within a broad territory on the northern periphery of Europe.³³ And, because the sea is in the end a common resource linking the littoral states, a rich repository of identities, of which many are fragile or have been lost altogether, there is perhaps a case to be made for greater consideration of this maritime heritage in the ongoing search for a "Baltic identity".

1 von Etzel, Anton: *Die Ostsee und ihre Küstenländer*. Leipzig 1859, Einleitung v.

2 Wæver, Ole: "Culture and Identity in the Baltic Region." In: Pertti Joenniemi (ed.): *Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region*. Washington D.C. 1993, 23–24.

3 Mollat du Jourdain, Michel: *Europe and the Sea*. Oxford 1993 is one recent exception.

4 In the Danish case, the notion of the *helstat*, a conglomeration of states and enclaves held together by dynastic absolutism, hung on until the middle of the 19th century. Sweden effectively lost its empire in 1721, but it can be argued that it only began to define itself as a nation state in the 19th century (and some would claim that the image of the nation state was completely reinvented in the 20th).

5 One might also add the Dutch republic to this list; on the importance of the Baltic grain trade for the population of the northern Netherlands, see van Tielhof, Milja: *'The Mother of all Trades'. The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the late 16th to the early 19th Century*. Leiden 2002, 1–8 (= The Northern World, Volume 3).

6 The degree of organisation (and willing cooperation) needed to build, crew and maintain ships is a crucial element in the creation of petty chiefdoms and in the establishment of larger states. On this, see Crumlin-Pedersen, Ole (ed.): *Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia, AD 200–1200*. Roskilde 1991; Kirby, David and Hinkkanen, Merja-Liisa: *The*

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Baltic and the North seas. London 2000, 103–110.

7 This is admittedly an argument advanced rather more by Finnish than by Swedish historians. Confer Klinge, Matti: *The Finnish Tradition. Essays on Structures and Identities in the North of Europe*. Helsinki 1993, 69–72 and 104, and the introduction to Engman, Max and Kirby, David (eds.): *Finland. People – Nation – State*. London 1989, ix–xvii.

8 It was, for example, the defence of the shores of the Baltic against Habsburg aggression that kept Sweden in the war in Germany, argued the Rikskansler in July 1640: *Sveriges riksrådets protokoll: viii, 1640–1641*. Stockholm 1898, 170. The importance of the sea in the Danish-Swedish conflict has been well illustrated by Glete, Jan: *Navies and Nations. Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1500–1860*. Stockholm 1993, Volume One.

9 Hovi, Kalervo: *Interessensphären im Baltikum. Finnland im Rahmen der Ostpolitik Polens 1919–1922*. Helsinki 1984 (= *Studia Historica*, 13), and Lehti, Marko: *A Baltic League as a Construct of the New Europe. Envisioning a Baltic Region and Small State Sovereignty in the Aftermath of the First World War*. Frankfurt am Main 1999, offer two contrasting interpretations that also reflect the times in which they were written.

10 Kirby and Hinkkanen 2000, like in footnote 6: In the final chapter, “The Seas Threatened” (254–276), we concluded that the seas are no longer the major channels of communication they once were, and have become in many ways “invisible”.

11 Holm, Poul: *Kystfolk. Kontakter og sammenhænge over Kattegat og Skagerrak ca. 1550–1914*. Esbjerg 1991. See also idem: “Coastal Life’, ‘Nordic Culture’ and ‘Nation State’.” In: Lewis R. Fischer and Walter Minchinton (eds.): *People of the Northern Seas*. St John’s Newfoundland 1992, (= *Research in Maritime History*, 3) 194–200.

12 Læstadius, Per: *Journal af P. Læstadius för första året af hans tjenstgöring såsom Missionaire i Lappmarken*. Stockholm 1831, reprint edition Umeå 1977, 101.

13 Holm 1991, like in footnote 11, 148.

14 On this, see the work of Rudolph, Wolfgang: *Die Hafenstadt. Eine maritime Kulturgeschichte*. Oldenburg 1980; idem: *Maritime Kultur der südlichen Ostseeküste. Schiffsbilder und Prestigekeramik der Fahrensleute*. Rostock 1983; Peesch, Reinhard: *Die Fischerkommünen auf Rügen und Hiddensee*. Berlin 1961; Wossidlo, Richard: *Reise, Quartier, in Gottesnaam’. Das Seemannsleben auf den alten Segelschiffen im Munde alter Fahrensleute*. Rostock 1959; Kirby and Hinkkanen 2000, like in footnote 6, 148–153, 160–163, 177–188, 232–242.

15 On the “discovery” of the seaside, see Corbin, Alain: *Le territoire du vide*. Paris 1988. A chain of coastal resorts was developed on the

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southern shores of the Baltic during the first half of the 19th century; further north, it was the summer cottage by the shore that became the dominant mode during the later half of the 19th century.

16 Wallin, Johan: *Beskrifning öfver badorterna å Sverges vestra kust*. Göteborg 1858, reproduction edition Bielefeld 1970, 75.

17 Cited in Holm 1991, like in footnote 11, 282.

18 Steensen Blicher, Steen: "Vestlig Profil af den cimbriske Halvøe." In Jeppe Aakjær and Helge Topsøe-Jensen (eds.): *Steen Steensen Blichers Samlede Skrifter*. Vol.23. Copenhagen 1929, 115. On this, confer also Tilitzki, Christian: "Ostdeutsche Küstenfischer im Spiegel der Reise- und Bäderliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts." In: *Jahrbuch für Ostdeutsche Volkskunde*. 25 (1982), 203ff.

19 Selmer, Jørgen: "Landliggere og lokalbefolkning." and Hvidbjerg, Ena and Toft Jensen, Hannelene: "Køgebugt." In: *Sommerglæder. Arv og eje. Årbog for Dansk Kulturhistorisk Forening* (1985). 199–266, 267–276.

20 See especially Gustavsson, Anders: *Sommargäster och bofasta. Kulturmöte och motsättningar vid bohuskusten*. Uppsala 1981; Löfgren, Orvar: *Fångstmän i industrisamhället. En halländsk kustbygds omvändning*. Lund 1977.

21 On the development of seaside tourism in Britain, confer Walton, John: *The English Seaside Resort. A Social History 1750–1914*. Leicester 1983; Stackell, Lars: "Marstrand – en västkustbadort." In: *Bohuskust. Svenska Turistföreningsårsbok* (1992). 50–54 draws some interesting comparisons in the development of sea-bathing and the seaside resort in northern Europe.

22 See for example Brockstedt, Jürgen (ed.): *Seefahrt an deutschen Küsten im Wandel 1815–1914*. Neumünster 1993 (= Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Schleswig-Holsteins, 22); Kaukiainen, Yrjö: *Sailing into Twilight. Finnish Shipping in an Age of Transport Revolution*. Helsinki 1991; Kirby and Hinkkanen 2000, like in footnote 6, 204ff.

23 Tilitzki 1982, like in footnote 18, 214.

24 Kohl, Johann Georg: *Die Marschen und Inseln der Herzogthümer Schleswig und Holstein*. Dresden and Leipzig 1846, Einleitung; Höfken, Gustaf von: *Der deutsche Zollverein in seiner Fortbildung*. Stuttgart 1842; Klefeker, Franz: *Der Zollverein und die Küstenstaaten Norddeutschlands*. Hamburg 1844.

25 *Meereskunde. Sammlung volkstümlicher Vorträge zum Verständnis der naturalen Bedeutung von Meer und Seewesen*. 1 (1907), 11.

26 Slettebo, Jørgen: "Vesterhavsoernes badesteder." In: *Sommerglæder. Arv og eje. Årbog for Dansk Kulturhistorisk Forening* (1985). 15–36.

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27 Högnäs, Sten: *Kustens och skogarnas folk. Om synen på svenskt och finskt folklyne*. Stockholm 1995, 31–50.

28 I have developed this point in “Seas as Thresholds and Boundaries.”

In: Michael Barnes (ed.): *Borders and Communities*. London 2001, 71–84.

29 Confer for example Hasslöf, Olof; Hennigsen, Henning and Christensen, Arne Emil (eds.): *Ships and Shipyards, Sailors and Fishermen. Introduction to Marine Ethnology*. Copenhagen 1972; Reinhard Peesch: “Kulturströmungen in den Küstenzonen der südlichen Ostsee.” In: *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*. 8 (1962), 3–29; Rudolph, Wolfgang: “Seefahrerdörfer der südlichen Ostseeküste. Tendenzen und Perioden der Entwicklung einer regionalen Sonderkultur (16. bis 19. Jahrhundert).” In: *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte*. 10 (1977), 105–130; Mortensøn, Ole: *Renæssancens fartøjer. Sejlads og søfart i Danmark 1560–1650*. Rudkøbing 1987; Holm 1991, like in footnote 11.

30 Feldbæk, Ole: *Dansk identitetshistorie*. (four volumes)

Copenhagen 1991–93. Contemporaries who visited Denmark, such as Samuel Laing and Johann Georg Kohl, were quick to notice how steamships had contributed greatly to consolidating the kingdom, and how important the sea was in shaping Denmark. Laing, Samuel: *Observations on the Social and Political State of Denmark and the Duchies of Slesvick and Holstein in 1851*. London 1852, 291; Kohl, Johann Georg: *Resor i Danmarck jemte en utflygt till Södra Sverige*. Stockholm 1847, 165–166.

31 Kohl 1847, like in footnote 30, 169–170. Confer also Kirby and Hinkkanen 2000, like in footnote 6, 177–182.

32 Theodor Fontane’s novel *Effi Briest* was first published in 1896; the extract quoted is from chapter six. Rudolph, Wolfgang:

“Kulturkontaktbereiche in den Hafenstädten der südlichen Ostseeküste (1600 bis 1900).” In Hans Jürgen Rach (ed.): *Bauen und Wohnen*. Berlin 1982, 261.

33 Insofar as identities are constantly in flux, I would agree with Wæver’s assertion that “to survey the history, culture, and identity of the Baltic area is doomed to be, in the last instance, a (more or less hidden) political effort to establish certain patterns as normal”. Wæver 1993, like in footnote 2, 24. A good overview of the recent literature on the politics of identity in northern Europe can be found in Lehti, Marko and Smith, David (eds.): *Post-Cold War Identity Politics. Northern and Baltic Experiences*. London 2003.