



## Preserving the maritime heritage in different cultural surroundings

### Scientific exchange between Japan and the EMH

by Dr. Ingo Heidbrink, Deutsches Schiffahrtsmuseum  
Fotos: Dörte Münstermann

Japan - a country most people will relate to high-tech industry, traditional shrines and temples, sushi, geishas, tea ceremonies, and many other aspects related to economy, society and culture of this major country in the Far East, but not to maritime heritage or special problems concerning the restoration of ships. So it was really astonishing to get an invitation to give a paper about conservation of steel ships during a symposium organized by the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in Tokyo. Even more astonishing was the question to propose some other European colleagues to give papers on similar topics during this symposium.

What may be the problems concerning ship-conservation in Japan? What ships are kept in Japan as cultural heritage? What is the special European approach to traditional ships and will this be interesting for Japanese colleagues? These



*The Maritime Science Museum in Tokyo.*

were some of the questions to think about during the preparation of the proposal of speakers and the paper for the symposium. At least the questions on the European approach to traditional ships were easy to answer. Traditional ships are preserved in maritime museums all over the world, but a traditional

fleet in operation with the size of that in European waters can be hardly found in any other place of the world. Therefore the proposal of speakers was closely related to active historic ships and in consequence to the EMH. Gratefully the organizer of the symposium, Dr. Wataru

Kawanobe, accepted my proposals without any changes.

Anders Berg, Hendrik Boland, Dörte Münstermann, Tom Rasmussen and myself got the chance to tell a little bit of our European experiences to Japanese colleagues and to learn a lot

*(continued...)*

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on maritime heritage in Japan. Thanks to the very well done organization by the staff of the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties - especially Wataru Kawanobe and Chie Takahashi - the symposium was a success. A high ranked and qualified audience joined the sessions on the scientific background of keeping ships in operation, the Scandinavian experiences with ship restoration, the Dutch way of commercial use of traditional sailing vessels, methods of documentation, and the political work of the EMH. As well as the sessions by Japanese colleagues on general problems concerning ships as cultural properties in Japan, and on the special problems concerning the preservation of the ships in the collection of the Maritime Science Museum in Tokyo. Every part of the discussions after the papers clearly showed the interest of the Japanese audience on these topics. Especially the idea of keeping ships not only as dead monuments but also as living temporary witnesses, that means as sailing (operating) monuments, was of great importance during the discussions and the side-talks around

the symposium itself.

After the symposium Wataru Kawanobe and his colleagues Chie Takahashi and Masayuki Morii organized a round trip visiting some major museum ships in Japan. Already while visiting the first ships in Tokyo (the former ferry *Yotei-Maru* and the polar research vessel *Soya*) all of us European visitors realized that Japan contains a rich maritime heritage, and that it in many cases is different from our European heritage afloat. After visiting these first two ships it became clear that the information given before the symposium - that Japan is just now starting to take care of its maritime heritage - was definitely more a kind of Far East politeness than a fact. While visiting those ships it was possible to get a first idea of what is the main difference between ship preservation in Japan and Europe. Both ships were as much symbols for the pride of the nation as they were technical monuments. For example the *Soya*: While discussing the history of the ship and looking at the exhibition about the ship in the nearby main building of the museum, it became clear that the main reason for

preserving the ship was its participation in the Antarctic research activities. In fact it was a symbol of Japan's ability to join the international exploration of Antarctica. Nearly the same with *Yotei-Maru*, a former railway ferryboat that used to operate between the main islands of Hokkaido and Honshu: Because this ship was a part as a floating pavillion in a world exhibition nearly nothing from the original interior was left. Despite of this the ship is a well known part of the Japanese maritime heritage and a symbol for linking the islands with ferryboats, and thereby participating in creating one nation out of all the Japanese islands.

The same impression occurred while visiting the next ship in Nagasaki. The railway ferry *Taisethu-Maru*, today a hotel-ship named *Victoria*, seems to be much more than just a hotel ship. It is a place where people go to enjoy the maritime atmosphere of a real ship together with marvellous Japanese food and drinks. And although it is a commercial enterprise the owner of the ship really takes care of the history ship's history. He even organizes - together with a former master of the ship - special programmes for school children, where they can get a first idea of the maritime traditions from a temporary witness onboard another one. Culture and commerce ... maybe it is not a contradiction in all parts of the world.

The next place to visit was the Osaka Maritime Museum. In our western eyes it was a little bit similar to the Maritime Science Museum in Tokyo. A marvellous architecture - in Tokyo a per-



The Hikawa-Maru



*From the Osaka Maritime Museum*



*The Nippon Maru*

fect copy of a ship in concrete, in Osaka a gigantic glass-sphere in the harbour - and exhibitions inside that are very traditional.

Before exploring the next ships we had a chance to get a little impression of the traditional Japan while visiting Kyoto, Japan's old capital. Here we had to learn that there is so much cultural heritage in Japan that preserving ships at any time will only be a side aspect of the whole heritage. But it was interesting to hear that our colleagues from the National Institute for Cultural Properties are really willing to do this job.

Finally the sail training ship *Nippon-Maru*, the pacific

liner *Hikawa-Maru* and the pre-dreadnaught-battleship *Mikasa* were on the schedule. Although the *Mikasa* and the *Nippon-Maru* may be the best known Japanese historic ships in foreign countries, the most impressive one was clearly the *Hikawa-Maru*. Again the ship was not operated by a cultural institution or a museum but by a commercial enterprise, but make no mistakes about it. Large parts of the interior of the ship has survived without any changes, and where else in the world can you find first- or second-class cabins in original conditions from the 1930s? But while visiting the boiler-room, the freezer-stores, or some

places near the keel, it could be clearly seen that there is great lack of preservation work due to lack of money. Although the ship is very popular to the public, the money that can be raised by entrance fees and room rentals is not enough to take care of the ship in the long run. The *Hikawa-Maru* is not only a part of the Japanese - but of the world's - maritime heritage and just pushing the "restoring-button" that can be found in every first-class passenger cabin will not solve the problem.

To sum it up, there is a rich maritime heritage in Japan, and especially a lot of very large ships are preserved. Most of them are not strictly museums ships but engaged

in a multipurpose use as hotel-ships, restaurants, cultural centres etc. None of the big ships is in active historic service, and it seems to be a dream to think about such, because those ships are too large. Our Japanese colleagues, scientists and curators, are very openminded to new approaches, and all discussion with them was a real pleasure, because they have a very different approach to the ship as a monument or a symbol for a wider context.

To finish this article I will quote one of the last sentences of my paper given in Tokyo: "*The maritime industry itself is one of the most global communities today and the first of this kind in history. We should take the chance to continue this tradition also in the field of keeping the maritime heritage. In fact it is a global heritage.*" Therefore I want to say thanks to Wataru Kawanobe and the whole staff of the National Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, for giving us the opportunity to being able to connect the experiences of keeping ships alive in Europe and in Japan.



*Cabin on board the Hikawa Maru*



*The "Restoring Button"*



# The Difficult European Approach to Culture and Heritage

by Mr. Michael vom Baur, EMH Vice President

## Impressions of a participant in the Forum 2001 "Cultural Cooperation in Europe" 21-22 November 2001 in Brussels

More than 100 representatives from national ministries, the European Parliament, the EU bureaucracy and region's permanent representations as well as nearly the same number of representatives of cultural NGOs, networks and umbrella organisations had been invited to a cold and rainy Brussels in November 2001 in order to summarize the yield of the past ten years cultural programmes of the EU, and to re-think the future of cultural cooperation in Europe on the background of the planned expansion of the union. Among nearly 30 European umbrellas, such as forinstens the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), the European League of Institutes of the Arts, the European Concert Halls Organisation, the Union of European Historic Houses Association, and the European Network of Art Organisations for Children & Young People (EUNET-ART), just to name a few, EMH was one of the many different NGOs participating in this 2 day forum held in the Centre de Conference Borschette, with all the circumstances of the "EU world" like simultaneous translation in 11 languages, cubic metres of brochures, EU civil servants lobbying with insiders in front of the conference rooms and fingerfood lunches.

The reason for me to follow the invitation of the General

Directorate XXIII and show the EMH flag at this Forum 2001 was twofold: First of all the Forum's intention was described as to collect the opinion of the main European cultural umbrellas and networks about the past programmes and the future possibilities and priorities, with many more (and poor!) candidates waiting for EU membership and access to funding programmes (and we have our opinion); secondly it was a good opportunity to meet a lot of the major players on the European "cultural scene". EMH participants were myself and Lluisa Prieto from our Mediterranean focal point, Museu Maritim de Drassanes de Barcelona, who delivered a keynote speech in workshop 1. The Forum was opened by the EU-Commissioner responsible for Education and Culture, Mrs. Viviane Reding (LUX), and continued in 3 workshops, No.1 "European Cooperation and Cultural Creativity", No.2 "Cooperation Networks in the European Cultural Field" and No.3 "Industries and Cultural Actions in Europe", and a closing plenary session chaired by the Director General Mr. Nikolaus van der Pas (NL). I participated in the second workshop, which was in fact the largest (and obviously the most interesting) one. Maybe it was not planned like this by the organizers, but the

workshop No. 2 turned into a very open and critical review of the past ten years of funding policy by the EU cultural programmes. It was announced that all contributions shall be recorded and be part of the Forum's report.

According to the intention of the founders of the European Community, culture was to remain under national responsibility in line with the principle of subsidiarity. But with the Maastricht treaty the legal foundations for actions of the EU Commission in the field of culture had been laid. The so called "Ruffolo-Report", a brochure edited by the Parliamentary Group of the PSE (Socialist Parties in the European Parliament) under the title "The Unity of Diversities - Cultural Co-Operation in the European Union" (ISBN 88-85207-94-4) provides a good overview over the development and the approaches to a European cultural policy.

From 1990-2000 the number of cultural projects supported by the Union in the framework of programmes like KALEIDOSCOPE, RAPHAEL, ARIANE and, finally, CULTURE 2000 amounted to some 2.500, worth over 130m EUR, with 12.000 operators involved. EMH took benefit two times: the first CEMHC

1992 in Amsterdam and the ICOMOS survey of the traditional fleet in Europe have been co-financed by KALEIDOSCOPE, Museu Maritim Barcelona could include the fourth CEMHC 2001 partly in their Mediterranean programme granted by CULTURE 2000. The selected projects refer to a wide range of themes, e.g. music, dance, opera, theatre/circus, visual arts, books, archeology, architecture/urban development, multidisciplinary projects and cultural heritage. On the other hand a large number of applications, i.e. 8.000 with 40.000 operators over the period 1996-2000 alone, had to be rejected due to the limited budgetary resources (so was our RAPHAEL-application including the third CEMHC in Elsinore 1998). From outside viewpoints it often appeared, that regional interests (and lobby) dominated the decisions to some extent ( the remarkable career of the olive as cultural subject of a lot of EU funded projects is a clear hint to this).

But back to the discussions in workshop No.2: The formulated questions to the participants of workshop No.2 had been: 1.What do networks represent (what is the added value)? 2. What can networks return to the funding community?, and 3. What are the objectives for

the next ten years?

The most prominent complaint of most speakers was (surprise!) the relatively small available budget for the programmes, at least compared to other actions of the EU but also the policy of project selection. Representatives of accepted or "would be" EU candidates like e.g. Slovenia, Hungaria, Bulgaria or the Baltic States formulated their expectations to participation in EU funded cultural programmes, which was well understood by the present EU memberstates' delegates, but which also sketched the future problem of sharing limited funds with much more players. EU-officials outlined basics of the necessary future policy to focus on the new EU states' applications in order to advertise EUs benefits to the local population. Surprisingly it was also announced in Mrs. Reding's speech, that sports should play a larger role in the future cultural programmes of the EU, a fact which irritated many delegates since this would mean to invite another "hungry eater" (presently financed by totally different sources) to the much to small cake. Should we really spend European cultural funds to co-finance activities at (commercialized) sports events like the Olympic games in Athens?

Concerning the role of the

networks and umbrella organisations it turned out during the discussions, that the view on these questions was extremely different among the speakers. While some of them favoured "ad-hoc"-networks for a specific project application which vanish shortly after the funding has expired, and described this phenomenon as an "element of creative flexibility" (cynics could also name it "creative fundraising only"), there were others (including me) pleading for more stable and representative networks and umbrella organizations. In the EMH-statement which I delivered, the emphasis was laid on the fact that networks (and umbrellas) should accept the responsibility to include and link with all (or at least with as many as possible) of the relevant players in the respective cultural sector on a representative democratic base. Such representative networks could become real acting and responsible partners of the European Authorities. They could provide consulting for the sector ("scouting function") and could participate in project management; they could take responsibility for the (vertical) transfer of information and opinions, up and down; they can develop codes of best prac-

tice, which can be used as a platform for European policy and legislation (e.g. as for the safe operation of traditional ships) and they could help to integrate the players coming from new EU entrants and thus enhance cohesion. This - in our opinion - could be a significant return for received grants from the European taxpayer and a successful application of public-private-partnership. In many cases such representative networks and umbrellas could help to avoid expensive flops, because these networks and umbrellas are much closer to the "real world" of the topic than even a well informed civil servant from the EU-bureaucracy can be.

What could the EU do to support representative and responsible umbrella-organisations and networks:

EU could help to cover the costs which are purely induced by the European dimension of voluntary association work, i.e. travel and translation costs. This would be the logical complement to the many speeches which are encouraging citizens of the EU to take responsibility in their field of interest and to engage themselves in NGOs.

However, since the funds of

the EU are very limited for cultural programmes, and as there is no improvement visible in the next years due to poor budgets in many member states, and also high expectations can be felt from the new member candidates, we have to face a sharply declining probability to apply successfully for grants in the coming years. All other assessments of the situation would be an illusion! It could be helpful in this situation for the EU-officials to rely on the real representative players instead of on changing pressure groups and pure fundraisers.

Our proposal to do so was tabled and noted during the session of the second workshop. We are looking forward with great interest, whether this position, which was shared in principal by several other speakers, will be reflected in the summary booklet of the Forum 2001. This booklet will finally prove whether the Forum 2001 was an "alibi"-type of conference for the EU-DG 23 Culture and Education or - as we all hope - that the EU-bureaucracy is willing to listen and to modify their policy and processes according to the feedback gained from a majority of cultural operators in Europe.

## EMH Newsletter On-Line

As mentioned in Newsletter No. 10 our intention is to offer our readers the possibility of receiving the EMH-newsletter on-line. This issue is the first to be offered by online download from the internet.

But with modern technology everything that can go wrong, will probably go wrong, and although around 30 people by now have signed up for the electronical version of the newsletter, they will receive this issue in the paper version also ... just in case.

The online version can be down-loaded from the internet: [www.sejlskib.dk/emh/emh-news.htm](http://www.sejlskib.dk/emh/emh-news.htm)

From this address you can also sign up for receiving the electronic newsletter in the future and thereby help the EMH save mailing costs (around EUR 1,- per newsletter).

In case something goes wrong please inform us on [newsletterproblems@sejlskib.dk](mailto:newsletterproblems@sejlskib.dk)



# Sails and Cotton

by Mr. Thedo Fruithof, Federatie Oud Nederlandse Vaartuigen (FONV)

Our goal is to sail the traditional boats. Thousands of enthusiasts, communities and associations take care of our past. The historical and technical knowledge is increasing in many countries and thanks to all this efforts many boats and vessels are still sailing. Discussions about original wood constructions, use of original wood, iron or steel, welded or riveted are very common in our field. But what are we doing with the sails? Is it still possible to sail with original materials?

Many a restorer is proud of his original hull, the colours, the interior, or an overhauled engine. But how many say: "look to the top of my mast". Most people chose for synthetic fibres because of practical reasons.

Also in the Netherlands most of the traditional sailing vessels are fitted with synthetic materials. Some of these clothes have brown or beige finish, others are rare white. Of course this material is very practical, and most sailmakers will advise you to use traditional look-a-like sails. Problems of rot, the good cut and faster sailing are the reasons for this. But the situation now in Holland is that together with the disappearing of the use of natural materials the skills for the old craftsmanship is dis-



*On the former island Wieringen a group people are using the evening hours for making cotton sails for their traditional fishing vessels - the so called Wieringer Aak*

appearing too. Sailmakers have gotten out of the habit of using natural cloth. The demand for natural fibres have decreased, and we reached the point where we cannot find a factory anymore who makes cotton cloth.

Until some years ago the famous racing "skûttjes" in Friesland did not accept modern materials, but now they have decided that it is free to use it, because it is impossible to find cotton with the same stretch and strength as before.

Most of the fifteen organisations for the preservation of traditional vessels have accepted this situation; only one organisation of (wooden) fishing vessels of the former Zuiderzee (botters, aken, etc.) has in their regulations that the sails

most be made of natural fibre. A very interesting rule. Since ten years people can follow courses to sew cotton sails ... not on a sewing machine but by hand. The technique is learned from old sailmakers and now in several places you can find groups of enthusiasts sewing, sitting on a bench as before. They learn how to make a good shape, take into account the quality of the cloth and how to complete an original sail. Also the ropes are hemp or manila. And since courses were started also owners of small freshwater fishing boats from the rivers (Rhine and Maas) have been learning how to make spritsails again. Since this year a financial grant will be given to people who use cotton again, in order to stimulate the old knowledge of craftsmanship.

In Lelystad the reconstruction of a East Indiaman *Batavia* is equipped with flax cloths, all made by hand. In the seventeenth century it was almost cer-

tain hemp, but this was impossible to find again. Flax had other qualities but it looks like hemp, and it was used before cotton sails became common in the nineteenth century.

Five years ago cotton cloth nr 1 (1040 gram, 60 cm wide) and nr 4 ( 740 gram/m<sup>2</sup>, 61 cm wide) was especially made for the FONV, the Dutch umbrella organisation, in order to keep a collection of special materials in stock. Now the five kilometres of cloth is nearly used already, and we are looking for a factory who can deliver it.

## 7<sup>th</sup> North Sea History Conference

The Museum (Musée Portuaire) in Dunkirk reports the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference about the North Sea History on 21-23 June 2002. The theme is Bridging the North Sea: Conflict and Cooperation. Sessions as Fighting over the North Sea, 1568-1702 as well as a Session about Adapting to the North Sea, 1814-1914, what factors made the sea a safer highway between the North Sea communities before 1914?

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We are looking for where cotton sails are used in Europe and if there are some factories left in the world who can make cotton sail cloth, but also hemp or flax is interesting. Please send information to Thedo Fruithof, Dijkweg 222, 1619 JC ANDIJK, The Netherlands. Tel/Fax:: + 31 228 59 31 36 or thedo@wxs.nl.