

**Lisa HELLMAN, Hanna HODACS, Aryo MAKKO,  
Steve MURDOCH (eds.)**  
*Connected Oceans: A Festschrift to Leos Müller*

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**344 pages**

The book *Connected oceans* is a year-book published on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Leoš Müller, a Swedish professor of History of Czech origin who works at Stockholm University. It represents an appreciation of his long and fruitful scientific career, contribution and inspiration to several scientific fields. It is no coincidence that it contains a total of 19 studies by leading world experts, not only historians, but also ethnologists and archaeologists, so it offers a stimulating interdisciplinary perspective. The common theme of the studies is European maritime activities in the period from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the book, European maritime history is understood as part of the *world history*, which is gaining relevance in the current globalized world and is experiencing an unprecedented growth. This approach generally describes mutual relations between chronologically defined periods of individual cultures and compares them. The basic principle of the book is therefore a global approach. The authors do not focus only on the fate of one country or on one aspect of historical development. On the contrary,

they artfully and easily connect maritime trade with the political, diplomatic, military and social level.

In addition to the *world history*, the book emphasizes the interconnectedness of the world through the oceans, as its title suggests. Thus, it refers to the also extremely popular approach of the *connected history*, which points to mutual connections between individual areas, to the interconnectedness of regional and global history, and to contacts between individual cultures. Its aim is to expand the historical perspective both chronologically and geographically. Therefore, the authors of the book discuss European maritime activities not only in Europe, but also in Asia, Africa and America, and in the long term.

Given that the book is a tribute to Leoš Müller, it is not surprising that most of the contributions refer to Scandinavia, especially Sweden. Nevertheless, Scandinavian themes are usually placed in a wider global context. Space is also devoted to issues of British, French and Dutch naval engagement. From the Czech point of view, the two studies are undoubtedly the most interesting. The first study

*Bohemian exiles in the transoceanic world: An unexpected consequence of the Thirty Years' War* is written by Steve Murdoch and discusses Bohemian emigrants in the service of the Dutch trading companies, the VOC and the WIC, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The author of the second study, *Dum spiro spero: The Ostend Company in the vortex of the European great powers' policy*, is the Czech historian Michal Wanner, who wrote a study about the Ostend Company's international struggle for survival in the years 1722–1727.

Steve Murdoch focuses on the relatively little-known presence of Bohemian emigrants overseas, especially in Asia, Africa, Brazil and North America, and their involvement in various maritime activities within the VOC and the WIC. Bohemian emigrants appear in sources as settlers, merchants, soldiers, sailors or corsairs. They were even engaged in the slave trade. Murdoch concludes by outlining the possibilities for further research using the VOC archive. At the same time, he reminds us that not everyone who bore the nickname “Bohemian” necessarily had to come from Bohemia but could only be of Bohemian origin. We can add to that that not every Bohemian native had to necessarily be an ethnic Bohemian.

Michal Wanner has been researching the Ostend Society for a long time, which is somewhat distant from the Czech scholarly environment, but unjustly. After all, it was created on the territory of the Southern Netherlands, now Belgium, which at that time formed part of the Habsburg Monarchy. According to Wanner, the fate of the Ostend Company was very specific compared to other European trading companies overseas. No other trading company has provoked such a strong hostile reaction from other trading companies and countries and has not influenced European diplomacy in such a way. Therefore, its fate was sealed primarily for political reasons, not for economic reasons.

The book is definitely a valuable contribution to an interdisciplinary and global understanding of European maritime history. It keeps up with modern trends in historical science. It also helps uncover the roots of globalization in today's sense of the word. Although it is a yearbook, it would still be useful if it offered a slightly more comprehensive view of the issue and did not gravitate so much towards Scandinavia. After all, its all-embracing name encourages it.

*Karel Staněk*