

**ARHEOLOOGILISED
VÄLITÖÖD
EESTIS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELDWORK
IN ESTONIA**

2003

Koostanud ja toimetanud
Ülle Tamla

Muinsuskaitseamet
Tallinn 2004

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Esikaas: 13.–14. saj. Liivimaal löödud brakteaat.

Tagakaas: Tinaraamis klaas (fragment vitraažist?) Piritalt.

Cover: Bracteate of the 13th–14th century, minted in Livonia.

Back cover: Glass in lead frame (fragment of a stained glass window?) from Pirita.

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**TARTU ÜLIKOOI
RAAMATUKOBU**

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LOCATION OF THE 19TH CENTURY WARSHIP "RUSSALKA"

Vello MÄSS

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On the 22nd of July 2003 the research vessel "Mare" of the Estonian Maritime Museum was successful in locating the Russian ironclad "Russalka" which vanished on her way from Tallinn to Helsinki in September 1893. The wreck was found in the central part of the Gulf of Finland within the economic zone of the Republic of Finland at a depth of 74 metres by means of the "Interphase Echo 220" echo sounder, the "Garmin 120 LX" satellite navigator, the MX-500 proton magnetometer and the "EG&G LC-100" side scan sonar (Mäss 2003b).

Great efforts were made by the Russian Navy to find the sunken warship with the 177 crewmembers on board in 1893 and 1894 for a total of 5 months. A number of different navy ships ploughed the Gulf of Finland looking for the lost ironclad, but the "Russalka" was not located (Goldman1979).

In March 2003 the Estonian Maritime Museum marked the 25th anniversary of the beginning of its activities in the field of maritime archaeology. Much work has been done up to date: hundreds of hours spent under water, thousands of miles covered by the ship, a number of wrecks discovered, many of them investigated, two maritime history documentaries made *etc.* This has provided the researchers a good experience for this project. The ship's crew and the divers had ample skill and the searching and diving equipment was professional in all respects.

The museum had to start from the scratch. All previous attempts to find the wreck were unsuccessful (Mäss 2003a). Based on the navigator's experience, an area of 5 square miles between Tallinn and Helsinki was established, within which the Russalka was expected to rest. At 16.35 on the 22nd of July an image of a huge sunken ship appeared on the screen of the monitor of the side scan sonar at the position 59°51,922'N; 24°53,122'E. In order to verify that this wreck was the "Russalka", a very special diving operation needed to be carried out. Due to the great depth a traditional compressed air breathing apparatus was useless for diving. On the 24th of July an inspection of the wreck was made by the professional diver Kaido Peremees and his skillful companion Indrek Ostrat, using the "Buddy Inspiration" rebreathers with mixed gases. The wreck was identified conclusively as "Russalka" and recorded by a digital underwater videocamera. The 63 metre long warship was found on the bottom, standing almost upright, with her bow deep in the mud and her stern rising high up for a length of 33 metres (Fig. 1).

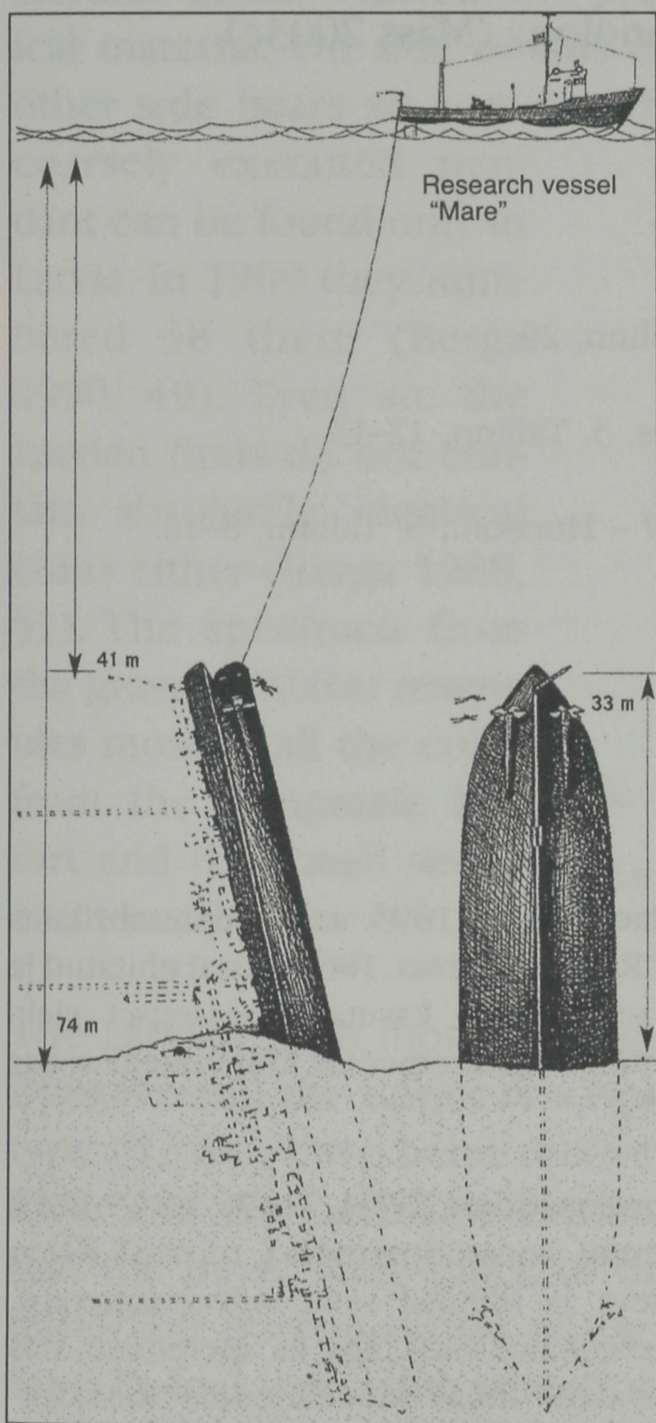


Fig. 1. The research vessel "Mare" on the surface and sunken "Russalka" in right scale.

Joon. 1. Uurimislaev "Mare" mere pinnal ja uppunud "Russalka" õiges mastaabis.

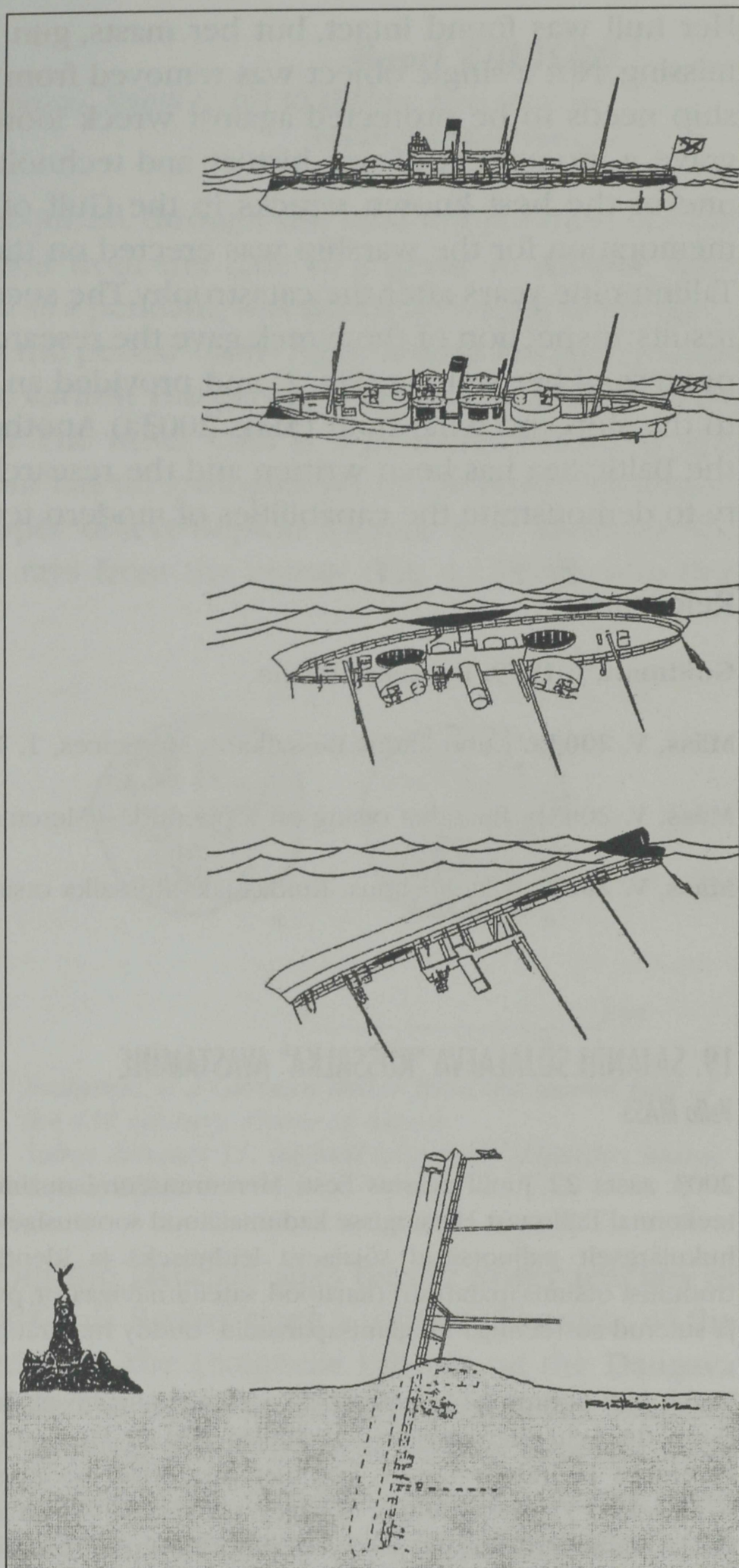


Fig. 2. The process of sinking of the "Russalka". The monument at the left side of the drawing as scale.

Joon. 2. "Russalka" hukkumise kulg. Monument joonise vasakul serval on mastaabiks.

Her hull was found intact, but her masts, gun turrets and superstructures were missing. Not a single object was removed from the wreck. The 137 year old warship needs to be protected against wreck looters and souvenir hunters as a sea grave, a monument of war history and technology. The "Russalka" is undoubtedly one of the best known wrecks in the Gulf of Finland. The monument of commemoration for the warship was erected on the shore of the park of Kadriorg in Tallinn nine years after the catastrophe. The success of the project has had several results: inspection of the wreck gave the researchers an opportunity to model the process of her sinking (Fig. 2) and provided an understanding of what happened to the ship and what hour (Mäss 2003a). Another page in the maritime history of the Baltic Sea has been written and the researchers and divers had an opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of modern technology (Mäss 2003c).

References

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Mäss, V. 2003a. Kuhu kadus Russalka? – Meremees, 1. Tallinn, 29.

Mäss, V. 2003b. Russalka otsing on lõppenud. – Meremees, 3. Tallinn, 12–13.

Mäss, V. 2003c. Üks küsimus. Kuidas läks Russalka otsing? – Horisont, 5. Tallinn, 8–10.

19. SAJANDI SÕJALAEVA "RUSSALKA" AVASTAMINE

Vello MÄSS

2003. aasta 22. juulil avastas Eesti Meremuuseumi uurimislaev "Mare" 1893. aasta septembrikuus teekonnal Tallinnast Helsingisse kadumaläinud soomuslaeva "Russalka" vraki. 1867. aastal ehitatud ja hukujärgselt paljuotsitud sõjalaeva leidmiseks ja identifitseerimiseks kasutati kaasaegset elektroonilist otsimisaparatuuri (kajalood, satelliitnavigaator, prooton-magnetomeeter, külgvaatega sonar ja suletud süsteemiga hingamisaparaadid "Buddy Inspiration").

Vrakk leiti Soome lahe keskosast 74 meetri sügavuselt koordinaatidest 59°51,922'N; 24°53,122'E (joon. 1). Leiu ülevaatuses sukeldusid vrakile Meremuuseumi koostööpartnerid, tuukrid Kaido Peremees ja Indrek Ostrat, kes identifitseerisid soomuslaeva ja filmisid seda videokaameraga. Nüüdseks 137 aasta vanune sõjalaev on sõjaajaloo- ning tehnikamälestis, aga ka merehaud, mis vajaks kaitset rüüstajate ja suveniiriküttide eest. Tuukriülevaatus lubas modelleerida "Russalka" hukkumise käigu ja mõista selle asjaolusid (joon. 2). Edukalt realiseeritud projekt annab hea ettekujutuse nüüdseks juba 25 aastat tegutsenud Eesti Meremuuseumi uurijate ja sukeldujate nüüdisaegsetest võimalustest merearheoloogias.