

Boye Meyer-Friese and Albrecht Sauer. *Johan Månssons Seebuch der Ostsee von 1644*. Bremerhaven, Germany: Deutsche Schiffahrts Museum and Oceanum Verlag, www.dsm.museum, 2020. 350 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. Euro 49,90€, cloth; ISBN 978-386927-073-9.

Knowledge of their surroundings has always been important for seafarers, be it the weather, the state of the sea, sailing tracks or destinations. In fact, even without help, most sailors are able to predict the weather for the next twenty-four hours. Information on sea lanes, ports, depths and prevailing winds, for example, are less variable and more valuable to compile for future voyages. Once Sweden had taken control of the Baltic in 1658, it was considered an inner sea, from Atlantic Norway to Finland's Bothnian Bay. Sweden decided that the existing knowledge of the coast, rivers, and ports, till then only known by pilots and fishermen, was to be gathered and made available for the Admiralty and its officers. Naval officer Johan Månsson had been working for the Swedish Admiralty in Stockholm, rising through the lower ranks from 1632 until in 1643, he was ordered to collect information on the shipping routes and coasts of the Balticum, and to share his information on ports, landmarks, river mouths, water depths, etc. He was given command of the pinnace *Phoenix* and in August 1643, he set sail for present-day Germany and the south coast of Sweden. In 1644, in Stockholm, Månsson published his *Seebuch*, with all the hallmarks of a nautical almanac. The collected information was not only for merchant shipping purposes, but the Swedish Navy also greatly benefitted from Månsson's work. Between 1664 and 1786, the *Ostsee Seebuch* was published in 23 issues in four languages; Swedish, German, Russian and Danish. The foreign-language books and charts of the Baltic at that time were not flawless, however, since the use of different languages could easily lead to errors in the nautical publications. The necessity for clear guidance and direction was obvious. The 121-page book is a facsimile reprint in German of the 1759 *Seebuchs der ganzen Ostsee* by Johan Månsson, including texts on religion and their rituals at sea. The authors, Boye Meyer-Friese and Albrecht Sauer, show the interconnection between the natural circumstances of the Baltic and the mariners that contributed to maritime culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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