

# Maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki

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## Abstract

On the one hand, maritime archaeology in Finland has a long history that, depending on disciplinary definitions, extends back to the beginnings of the professionalisation of the field in the 1800s. On the other hand, the development that takes place in Finnish heritage management in the latter half of the 20th century gives birth to underwater archaeology and the study of sunken ships in particular. Building on and navigating these disciplinary boundaries, the article charts the history of higher education in maritime and underwater archaeology at the University of Helsinki. Maritime archaeological topics were introduced in the archaeology curriculum gradually and sporadically, with the first serious attempts to organise dedicated courses in the early 1970s and coming to full fruition in the early 1990s. Teaching of maritime archaeology in Helsinki has always been holistic and multidisciplinary, an approach that is also reflected in the thematic variation of maritime archaeological research projects carried out at the University of Helsinki. Recently, the thematic and methodological variation has also been complemented with a strong international focus.

**Keywords:** academic teaching, higher education, history of maritime archaeology, underwater archaeology, University of Helsinki

## Introduction

Albeit few, accounts of the development of Finnish maritime archaeology and heritage management exist (Immonen 2016; Marila & Ilves 2021; Ilves & Marila 2021), but what has received less attention in research is the development of academic training of maritime archaeologists (see, however, Marila & Ilves 2020; 2021; Ilves & Marila 2021). The purpose of the present article is to shed light on the evolution of teaching in maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki. We do so by contextualising the history of teaching in maritime archaeology against the general development of teaching and research in archaeology at the University of Helsinki, teaching and research in maritime archaeology in other Finnish universities, and the development of Finnish underwater and maritime heritage management. We conclude with an account of the present state of academic maritime archaeological research at the University of Helsinki and its relevance for

the academic training of maritime archaeologists in Finland.

## Early development

In researching the historical development of maritime archaeology, it is important to emphasise the difference between maritime archaeology and underwater archaeology. While the latter is a sub-discipline of archaeological research with specific methods and research questions dealing with sites and materials under water, the former denotes a wider set of research themes related to understanding humankind and its history with the help of material and non-material remains connected to water. In many ways, the discipline of maritime archaeology is as old as archaeology, while underwater archaeology as an academic endeavour came to fruition only in the 1950s and 1960s. This development, manifested in the emergence of underwater archaeology, led to a separation be-

tween archaeology and maritime archaeology in Finland and worldwide. Furthermore, in general terms, the process in which underwater archaeology came to stand for maritime archaeology must be considered as the main reason why maritime archaeology ended up in the well-known position of prolonged professional infancy (c.f. Gibbins & Adams 2001; Hocker 2004; Maarleveld 2007), and why in many regions maritime archaeology is still struggling with stereotypes and considered off the mainstream of archaeology (Bass 2011, 11; Gately & Benjamin 2018).

When looking at the development of maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki as more than underwater archaeology, it makes little sense to separate maritime archaeology from archaeology at large, mainly because early research and teaching by the archaeology staff at the University of Helsinki also included maritime archaeological topics. From this perspective, it is possible to extend the beginning of maritime archaeological teaching as far back as the 1870s.

Between 1878 and 1885, before becoming state archaeologist at the Finnish Heritage Agency (FHA), Johannes Reinhold Aspelin was extraordinary professor in Nordic archaeology (Salminen, this volume). During that time, there was not yet an established department of archaeology at the university. The University of Helsinki study guides from those years list no teaching in maritime archaeological topics specifically, and the names of taught courses reflect the chronologizing approach to archaeology characteristic of the time, rather than a phenomenon or theme-centred approach. Nevertheless, it is likely that, in his lectures, Aspelin brought up sites, materials, or aspects that bear relevance to maritime archaeology at large. For instance, Aspelin's 1877 article about stone labyrinths (Finn: *jatulintarha*) in the Finnish coastal areas is one of the first on that topic (Aspelin 1877; see, also, Freudenthal 1874; Figure 1). There are hundreds of stone labyrinths along the coasts of the Fennoscandian area, especially on islands, where these are often found immediately along the contemporary shorelines. Although it still remains speculative to interpret these monuments, universally understood as being connected to some sort of magic, there is a strong connection between labyrinths and fishing traditions and sites. Stone labyrinths belong to the

maritime cultural landscape and are one of the few ancient monuments available for the archaeological study of cognition in maritime life. Aspelin's preferred dating for the stone labyrinths was the late Bronze Age (see, again, Figure 1), but he also wondered whether the islands on which the labyrinths were located could have been exposed from the sea already two thousand years ago.

We acknowledge the anachronisms involved in interpreting early research of sites situated in maritime landscapes as maritime archaeology, but by doing so we hope to point out some historical reasons for the ultimate separation of maritime archaeology from the rest of archaeology. Incidental examples like Aspelin's labyrinth studies from the 19th century should

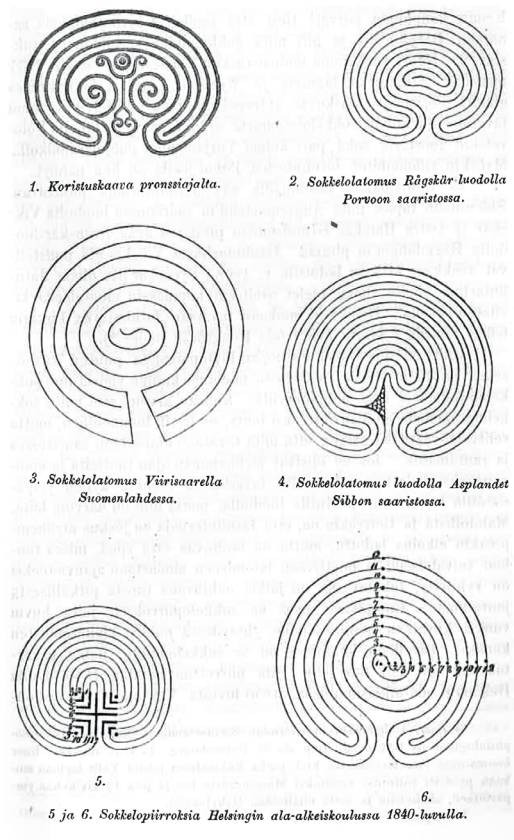


Figure 1. J.R. Aspelin drew analogies from Bronze Age decoration motifs in his attempts at dating the stone labyrinths located in the coastal areas of Finland. Figure from Aspelin (1877).

not be taken as evidence of the development of a subdiscipline, but rather as an indication of the nature of archaeology in the early phases of its professionalisation. In the 19th century, the task of archaeology in Finland was to decipher the origin of the Finnic peoples. As a basis for that research, the aim was simply to enumerate and periodise all known sites and finds in a totalistic fashion regardless of their character and compare them to those found in the neighbouring areas. Furthermore, the small number of people working in archaeology meant that most researchers were experts in a broad range of topics.

Nevertheless, and regardless of the totalistic character of 19th and early 20th century research, the coastal areas and the archipelago remained heavily underrepresented in research. The early 20th-century nationalistic construction of the Finnish Iron Age, for instance, relied heavily on the image of the ancestral Finns as forest-taming and hillfort-building rather than seafaring and shorebound (Fewster 1999, 14). As noted by Tuovinen (2002, 260), in the prehistoric imagery ‘the maritime archipelago seems to have been an alien region and therefore left outside of the mainstream of research.’

The available notes on study seminars in the collections of the archaeology department at the University of Helsinki provide a more detailed understanding of the presence of maritime archaeological topics in teaching since the early 20th century. In the course of the 1940s–1960s, for instance, mainly during Ella Kivikoski’s professorship (Silver & Uino, this volume), we see seminar presentations on topics such as prehistoric boat types, the Nydam ship, the Sutton Hoo ship, boat burials of Finland, the Tuorsniemi net find, and Stone Age fishing gear. The fascination with Late Iron Age boat burials in particular is also reflected in published literature from that era (e.g., Erä-Esko 1953; Anderson 1963); this is clearly connected to the general momentum that boat and ship burials enjoyed in the archaeological research following the discoveries of Late Iron Age boat burials at Vendel and Valsgärde in Sweden, the ship burials of Gokstad and Oseberg in Norway, as well as at the Sutton Hoo cemetery in England.

In general, teaching in archaeology in Helsinki followed the periodic approach until the early 1970s when questions of archaeological theory and methodology were introduced in the curriculum on the topical level, as evidenced by the faculty study guides. Similarly, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the department’s list of bought books mentions a lot of methodological literature, including subscriptions to methodology-centred journals such as *American Antiquity*. The increasing fascination with methodological questions was undoubtedly connected to the increasing specialisation that happened in archaeology in the course of the 20th century, but also a reaction to the assumed objectivism of post-war archaeology. Another reason was the introduction of the British and Anglo-American New Archaeology in Finland and Scandinavia, a topic that interested Carl Fredrik Meinander who was professor of archaeology at that time (Marila 2018; Silver, this volume). However, as pertains to maritime archaeology specifically, important may have been the general professionalisation of the subdiscipline in the course of the 1960s and 1970s: among the department’s acquired books were international publications on underwater archaeology (UNESCO 1972; Blackman 1973).

### **Establishment of underwater archaeology in Finnish heritage management**

In line with worldwide developments, where maritime research underwater was shaped by salvage, treasure hunting, and sports diving, Finnish maritime archaeology took a giant leap in the beginning of the 1960s with a clear focus on underwater and nautical research. Early research underwater – accelerated by the technological development of diving equipment in the course of the 1940s and 1950s – was mainly carried out by amateurs and sports divers. As diving got easier and equipment more available, the amount of archaeological sites and materials of maritime archaeological interest started to increase at a rapid pace. The popularity of sports diving, and the active involvement of hobby divers in the study of underwater cultural heritage, led to the establishment of formal collaboration between hobby di-

vers and the Finnish Heritage Agency in the early 1960s, most importantly in the form of research done on the wreck of the *St Nikolai* (Cleve 1961; Patoharju 1962; Peltonen 1964, 84). In 1963, the implementation of the Antiquities Act (295/1963) further advanced the development of underwater cultural heritage management as all shipwrecks assumed to be 100 years of age or older became automatically protected underwater cultural heritage. Both of these interconnected developments led to an increase in the number of management-driven research projects related to underwater material in the early 1960s, but also in the number of sites and materials in need of protection and management (Rosenius 1983).

Consequently, in 1968, the FHA founded the Bureau of Maritime Archaeology as a dedicated underwater archaeological task force. The establishment of the Bureau meant the beginning of systematic reporting of underwater archaeological research, mainly published in its early report series and later in the series *Nautica Fennica*, but underwater operations were still carried out by volunteer hobby divers rather than academically trained archaeologists. For instance, in 1975, maritime archaeological society *Teredo Navalis* was founded to aid the Bureau in the field. At the time no academic training in underwater or maritime archaeology existed in Finland, and the Bureau assumed responsibility in training hobby divers in the basics of archaeology.

### Formative years of academic teaching in maritime archaeology

Lectures on explicitly maritime archaeological topics were first introduced at the curricular level in teaching of archaeology at the University of Helsinki in the early 1970s, most likely as a response to the development that had happened in underwater heritage management at the FHA by the late 1960s. Another catalyst for the heightened academic interest in maritime archaeology was the raising of the *Vasa* in Stockholm in 1961. In fact, when the students of archaeology at the University of Helsinki went on an excursion to Sweden in early May 1971, they visited Wasavarvet where the ship was undergoing poly-

ethylene glycol (PEG) treatment at the time. According to the minutes of the archaeology department council, only days later, on May 14th, Christoffer H. Ericsson (Figure 2) gave a lecture about maritime archaeology as part of an intermediate level archaeology course on fieldwork methodology at the university. As the director of the Bureau of Maritime Archaeology at the FHA since 1968, Ericsson had already acquired a couple field seasons' worth of experience and was a natural choice to teach on the topic. It is therefore likely that the lecture dealt with the methodology of underwater archaeology and showcased sites that had been investigated by the Bureau so far.

Another indication of increasing interest in maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki in the early 1970s were plans to offer a complete course in maritime archaeology, likewise to be taught by Ericsson. The minutes of the archaeology department council from 28 October 1971 included a teaching plan for the spring term 1972, and among the planned teaching were 14 hours' worth of lectures by Ericsson at the Bureau offices located in the Finnish House of Nobility, starting 27 January 1972. It is, however, uncertain whether this course was actually taught, because there is no mention of it in the Faculty of Philosophy study guide for that period, and Ericsson is not among the listed teachers either. Furthermore, there are no mentions of this course in the archaeology department council minutes from subsequent years. Likewise, the planned contents for subsequent iterations of the fieldwork methodology course make no mention of a lecture planned for Ericsson. However, Ora Patoharju (1981, 18) recounts having given a lecture as part of introductory courses (sic) in maritime archaeology organised jointly by the university and the Bureau in spring 1971. There is no reason to doubt the veracity of Patoharju's testimony, but the role of the university in the organisation of those courses is uncertain at best. In any case, again there is no mention of such courses in the study guides.

Regardless of the establishment of underwater and maritime archaeological research at the FHA by the late 1960s, lectures on maritime archaeological topics in academia were sporadic. According to the department council minutes,



Figure 2. Director of The Bureau of Maritime Archaeology Christoffer H. Ericsson (third from left) onboard the *Räpylä 4* during investigations of the wreck of the *St Nikolai* in summer 1972. Photo: Kalervo Karalahti, Finnish Heritage Agency.

Ericsson gave another lecture about the Bureau and underwater archaeology on 22 March 1973 as part of a museum course organised collaboratively by the departments of archaeology and ethnology. Just like his fieldwork methodology course lecture, this lecture seems to have been given only once. It is possible that the sporadic nature and lack of proper documentation of lectures in maritime archaeology was due to lack of interest at the university. Importantly, Ericsson was involved in the teaching given at the department, but instead of maritime archaeology, his academic efforts were directed elsewhere. During the first half of the 1970s, Ericsson taught courses on classical archaeology at the University of Helsinki, and later went on to write his doctoral thesis on Roman architecture (Ericsson 1980).

### Teaching maritime archaeology becomes established

It is evident that the interest in teaching maritime archaeology at the department in the early 1970s was very short-lived. It is therefore likely – and obvious from the faculty study guides – that no dedicated courses on maritime archaeology were taught at the University of Helsinki until the

1990s. In the course of the 1980s, the pressure to train diving archaeologists capable of carrying out the underwater surveys and excavations conducted by the FHA became more pronounced than it perhaps had been in the 1970s. The need for academically trained archaeologists capable of carrying out underwater operations posed an increasing concern for Finnish maritime archaeology, organised almost single-handedly by the FHA since the early 1960s (Figure 3). The small number of professionals capable of handling the increasing number of underwater tasks gradually led to the beginning of higher education in maritime archaeology at Finnish universities.

Part of the motivation for setting up maritime archaeological teaching at the University of Helsinki came from then director of the Maritime Museum of Finland Leena Sammallahti who in the late 1980s called a meeting with four University of Helsinki professors: Juhani U.E. Lehtonen (ethnology), Yrjö Kaukiainen (economic history and maritime history), Matti Klinge (history), and Ari Siiriäinen (archaeology). The meeting led to each of the participating fields of study planning courses with a maritime focus as part of their curriculums with the intent that later those courses would be combined into a standalone module. Thus, from the very



Figure 3. Hobby divers examining finds from the Jussarö I wreck in summer 1973. Christoffer H. Ericsson was excavation leader. Photo: Klas Lindqvist, Maritime Museum of Finland, Finnish Heritage Agency.

beginning of formalised university teaching in maritime archaeology, the field was planned as a wide and integrated field of maritime studies: a seamless approach within a common intellectual framework was a clear aim for maritime archaeology as an academic discipline at the University of Helsinki (c.f. Ala-Pöllänen 2023).

The resulting module in maritime history first appears in the Faculty of Art study guide for the academic year 1993–1994. The module, listed under multidisciplinary studies, aimed to provide students with a broad historical understanding of humans' relationship with the sea, and topics included maritime subsistence, maritime communities, and transportation, to name some. The module consisted of teaching provided by the disciplines of history, history of economics, ethnology, and archaeology. As pertains to maritime archaeological topics, teachers and lecturers in the module included, for example, Mika Lavento, Juhani Grönhagen, Anne Vikkula, Sallamaria Tikkanen, Maija Matikka, Tapio Bergholm, Hannu Matikka, Riikka Alvik, Minna Koivikko, Kalle Virtanen, Matias Laitinen, Christian Carpelan, Henrik Jansson, Stefan Wessman, and Tapani Tuovinen. In addition to Finnish teachers, leading maritime archaeology experts from Scan-

dinavia were brought in on a regular basis. These included, for instance, Carl-Olof Cederlund and Christer Westerdahl.

According to the available archaeology department documents, the first university course in maritime archaeology within the maritime history module was organised on 8–12 November 1993. Basics of maritime archaeology (2 study weeks, or c. 3 ECTS credits) was taught by C.-O. Cederlund and included 20 hours of lectures on prehistoric and historical vessel types, harbours, and sailing routes as seen in the underwater and maritime archaeological record from Finland and Scandinavia. Over the years, the maritime archaeology part of the module also included courses on the theory, methodology, and research materials and sites of maritime archaeology, a maritime archaeology seminar, a course on the maritime cultural landscape, a practicum, and a course on Nordic shipbuilding, to name some.

In 1997, a complete 10 study week (c. 15 ECTS credits) module in underwater archaeology was introduced as being under development. In the study guides the module appears under its own name, but it was intended to complement, and required previous studies in, archaeology and maritime history. The underwater archaeol-

ogy module consisted of a course in the analysis of artefacts from the historical period, a course on mediaeval constructions (on land and underwater), a course on water vessels, a course on the theory and methodology of underwater archaeology, and a field course that required the student to have completed diving training. The popularity of the underwater archaeology module remains unknown, and by 2003, the module was listed in the study guide under the maritime history module with courses offered as book exams.

Although initially recognised as a key part of the module, the underwater archaeology field course was most likely never taught at the university. Instead, interested students were instructed to contact the Maritime Museum of Finland for participation in their underwater fieldwork. By the late 1990s, the practice of training students on the underwater excavations organised by the FHA was already well established. For instance, the excavations of the so-called *Mulan* wreck in Hanko, during 1988–1995, under the leadership of L. Sammallahhti, witnessed the formation of the first group of university educated diving researchers. In fact, some students who completed the maritime history module also taught in it, and later went on to assume key roles in Finnish underwater heritage management due to their experience from fieldwork organised at the FHA. A number of research projects carried out at the FHA in the 2000s were led by module alumni.

Over the years the maritime history module attracted a fair number of students, but contact teaching was dramatically reduced in 2012 after funding cuts created by departmental restructuring within the Faculty of Arts in 2009. More significant for the termination of the maritime history module, however, was the founding of a tenure-track professorship in maritime archaeology in 2012. As a result, teaching responsibilities related to maritime topics were gradually transferred from the module to the newly appointed tenure-track professor. Furthermore, after another organisational restructuring at the Faculty of Arts, the module was finally dropped from the teaching plan of the new Department of Cultures.

After the termination of the maritime history module, starting from 2014, three mari-

time archaeology courses, 3 ECTS credits each, focussing on theories, research methods, and research subjects respectively were part of the archaeology curriculum during a short period of time. Although these courses were intended as contact teaching by Marcus Hjulhammar, the newly appointed tenure-track professor, these were mostly organised as book exams, and laid down shortly after the initiation. In 2018, Kristin Ilves took over the position as a tenure-track professor in maritime archaeology leading to a new beginning of teaching in maritime topics. Since 2019, all archaeology students at the University of Helsinki have started to receive single lectures on maritime archaeological topics as part of their other courses, most importantly within the Introduction to archaeology course. Since 2020, as part of an optional module in maritime archaeology, there have been specialised graduate level courses in maritime archaeology on offer.

In its current form the module in maritime archaeology is 15 ECTS credits in total, targeting MA level students, and is taught mainly in English. While two of the courses in the module draw on a range of thematic case studies, and provide students with a detailed understanding of the varied nature of maritime archaeology as an academic discipline within the sphere of human history and prehistory studies, the third course, specifically focussing on the examples related to human-environment interactions in maritime spaces, is designed to offer students an insight into different theoretical frameworks that can be applied in any field seeking to incorporate data from archaeology.

Thus, within the university teaching, maritime archaeology at Helsinki remains fully integrated with archaeology in general, and the field continues to expand academically. However, as in any teaching, the inseparability of theory and practice is paramount, but in the current setting where teaching of maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki is not yet fully realised, the students of the maritime archaeology module lack practical fieldwork-based training. In order to provide students also with the opportunities to develop work and field skills in maritime archaeology, including work under water, a collaborative model which involves practising maritime

archaeologists and underwater cultural heritage managers is increasingly developed and seen as a sustainable way forward. In the future vision of higher education in maritime archaeology, university students are all anchored in a comprehensive understanding of the field as contributing to the study of the human past, while having a possibility to develop their methodological skills in accessing source material also under water.

### Teaching in other Finnish universities

Compared to other Finnish universities, teaching in maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki has been relatively long-standing. Complete archaeology degree programmes are available at the University of Turku and at the University of Oulu. While maritime archaeology has never been part of teaching in archaeology or as a standalone course at the University of Oulu, the University of Turku offered basic and intermediate-level modules in maritime archaeology as part of a BA or MA degree in archaeology between 2011 and 2013. The introduction of maritime archaeology in teaching supported the long-standing concentration at the University of Turku in historical archaeology, but in practice, more important was an underwater archaeological field course that had been organised in collaboration with the Hanko Summer University at the 17th-century Jorskär I wreck since 1998 (c.f. Wessman 2023).

Teaching within the University of Turku maritime archaeology modules, organised by Stefan Wessman, followed the underwater orientation of the field course in Hanko. Despite the strong focus on underwater archaeology, students were not required to have diving training in order to complete their studies. In practice, however, only the basic level studies were ever organised before the module was shut down, mainly due to the announcement of the tenure-track professorship at the University of Helsinki. The collaboration with the Hanko Summer University continues.

There are currently no plans to re-establish teaching in maritime archaeology at the University of Turku, but an introductory course has been on offer at the Degree Programme in Digital Culture, Landscape and Cultural Heritage since

fall 2021. This course, titled *Perspectives in maritime archaeology*, running parallel in both Turku and Helsinki, emanates directly from the tenure-track professorship at the University of Helsinki as it was developed within a postdoctoral project connected to that position (Marila & Ilves 2023). *Perspectives in maritime archaeology* is a large collection of lectures by dozens of national and international experts, and the course aims to portray a picture of maritime archaeology as a field beyond the study of shipwrecks underwater.

### Academic expansion of maritime archaeology in Finland

Whereas the FHA has focussed on underwater archaeological research, mainly for reasons related to responsibilities in heritage management, academic maritime archaeological research has been relatively scarce in Finland, only emerging in the past decades, as in other countries, too (Duncan & Gibbs 2015). As pertains to the academic research of underwater archaeological material in Finland, the doctoral research in archaeology by Christian Ahlström (1995), conducted at the University of Stockholm in Sweden, is paramount. In the thesis, alongside Swedish shipwrecks, Finnish material was for the first time put into a greater narrative. However, Tapani Tuovinen's (2002) doctoral thesis from the University of Oulu is the first Finnish maritime archaeological dissertation, and studies the expressions of Bronze Age and Iron Age mortuary rituals in the archipelagic maritime landscape of south-western Finland.

The maritime archaeological research done at the University of Helsinki has generally also had a landscape orientation, which is in line with the multidisciplinary approach introduced with the maritime history module (Figure 4). Large-scale underwater archaeological research projects have not been undertaken at the university, save for the work facilitated by the collaboration with the FHA and connected to doctoral theses (Koivikko 2017). Instead, research projects carried out in Helsinki have adopted a holistic approach to the maritime cultural landscape. Examples of such research include the *Our maritime heritage*, but also *Settlements and economies*





Figure 4. Students of the maritime history module's 2006 practicum course survey the remains of boat houses in Kapelshamn, Hanko. The practicum concentrated on archaeological and ethnological methods, and included, among other things, field excursions and exercises in documentation and archival work. Photo: Anna-Maria Villa.

around the sea: Maritime settlement, subsistence and economic histories around the Baltic Sea 500–1700 AD projects. These interconnected projects, both of which ran during the 2000s, resulted in hundreds of new sites from the Late Iron Age and Early Middle Ages being found and documented in the coastal areas of southern Finland (Jansson 2005; Haggren 2008; Haggren & Lavento 2011; Alenius *et al.* 2014). Furthermore, the projects were connected to University of Helsinki field school teaching (Ilves & Heinonen, this volume), thereby (consciously or not) integrating the maritime perspective to teaching and learning archaeology at the university.

The *Lost inland landscapes* (2015–2018) project on the other hand concentrated on the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic dwelling sites in central Finland. While drawing from an earlier project and doctoral research at the University of Helsinki (Koivisto 2017), *Lost inland landscapes* was the first to draw attention to the huge research potential of wetland archaeology in Finland (e.g., Koivisto & Lahelma 2021), a direction furthered within the project *Perish and fade away: Sedimen-*

*tation and preservation of organic archaeological remains in wetland landscapes* (2019–2022), hosted by the University of Turku (Figure 5).

Also, maritime archaeological research concentrating on the archipelagic maritime landscape in Finland continues in the framework of the University of Helsinki driven investigations. *The survivors of Ragnarök: Tracing Late Iron Age and early medieval maritime migrations in the Baltic Sea region* (2020–2025) project focuses on the biocultural heritage and investigates cultural and landscape development of the Åland Islands while emphasising the interplay between a changing environment, fluctuations in networks for people and material goods, endogenous cultural development versus adaptation of external cultural traits, and changes in economy and ideology (e.g., Alenius *et al.* 2022; Holmqvist & Ilves 2022; Ilves 2022; Larsson *et al.* 2023). The fieldwork within this project is also connected to field school excavations at the University of Helsinki, thereby promoting a dual land-sea perspective (c.f. Ilves 2004) in both teaching and research in academic maritime archaeology.



Figure 5. Excavations at the Neolithic site of Järvensuo 1 in Humpila. Wetland archaeology holds a lot of research potential for the maritime archaeological understanding of past lifeways. Photo: Satu Koivisto (2021).

In addition to research and related teaching focusing on maritime archaeological topics in Finland, increasingly, the University of Helsinki is also hosting maritime archaeological projects that concentrate on regions outside the country, thereby acknowledging the benefits of ever wider perspectives to the development of the discipline. For example, *The ports and harbours of Southeast Asia* (2020–2022) project examined the complex phenomena behind the establishment of maritime networks and their relational ontologies using Southeast Asia as a case study (e.g., Walker Vadillo 2021). Applying an interdisciplinary approach using data from environmental sciences, history, archaeology, and ethnography, the project aimed to better understand the interrelationship between the environment, the ports, and nautical technology (e.g., Perttola 2021). The research project *Re-imagining the use of traditional watercraft in the Aegean Sea for a sustainable environment and economy* (2021–2024) is equally interdisciplinary in presenting a case of modern adoption of past lifestyles in the pursuit of sustain-

able environment and economies in the face of the current climate emergency (e.g., Velentza 2022).

Staying on the topic of maritime archaeology's connection to contemporary society, research projects at the University of Helsinki have also addressed the pedagogical aspects of the discipline. *Long-term degree program success in maritime archaeology*, as well as its follow-up *Bridging worlds of water*, carried out in 2019–2021, investigated the factors contributing to the successes and failures of maritime archaeology degree programs in higher education internationally. The key findings of the research indicated that, due to the commonly small size of maritime archaeology programs and departments in terms of staff, they are easy targets for budget cuts and lay-offs, especially during organisational restructuring. In order to safeguard the long-term continuation of teaching in maritime archaeology, it should be intimately integrated into existing teaching in other disciplines, most importantly archaeology (Marila & Ilves 2020).

It is no exaggeration to say that the long tradition of integrated teaching in maritime archaeology at the University of Helsinki has created a unique opportunity for students both with and without diving skills to develop their understanding and practice of maritime archaeology with thought and meaning. Thanks to the collaboration with the practitioners outside universities, underwater archaeology and maritime archaeology enjoy healthy relations in the Finnish academic sphere. A number of academic dissertations dealing with underwater sites located in the coastal regions of Finland are being prepared at the University of Helsinki, while the aforementioned recent and ongoing research projects have introduced a heightened sense of internationality and thematic diversity.

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