

## THE VALORISATION AND THE PRESENTATION OF UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE: THE VASA MUSEUM

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This paper aims to present the Vasa shipwreck and the Vasa museum in Stockholm. The Vasa museum is one of the most visited maritime museums in the world. How can we understand the success of the museum and the fascination of its content? And how does this fascination relate to all other well-preserved Baltic Sea shipwrecks still in situ?

The success story of the Vasa museum gives us inspiration, but also challenges us. Since the salvage of the Vasa in the late 1950s, many shipwrecks have been salvaged around the world. Very few grew to become world famous tourist attractions. Despite high scientific values and strong narratives, most salvaged shipwrecks end up in museums collections, inaccessible to the public.

In an ordinary well preserved Baltic Sea shipwreck the structure of the ship is more or less undamaged and the objects are still in place as they were when the ship was foundered. In a comparison between a well-preserved Baltic Sea shipwreck and the Vasa, the Vasa actually almost seem arranged and reconstructed. This paper will argue that we need to take on the challenge of using the same fascination that attracts million of peoples to the Vasa museum, to create a public understanding for the ambition to preserve shipwrecks in situ.