

## Revisiting European Maritime Exploration in the Pacific Ocean (c. 1750–1850)

In 2025, the Estonian Maritime Museum celebrates its 90th anniversary. Opened in 1935, it is among the oldest maritime museums in Europe. With its two buildings – the medieval Fat Margaret tower in Tallinn Old Town and the Seaplane Harbour hangar on Tallinn's seashore – the museum covers Estonian maritime and naval history from the Middle Ages up until the present day. Featuring several ships, such as the flagship Suur Tõll, an icebreaker built in 1914, and two medieval shipwrecks, the Museum presents maritime themes relevant to the larger Baltic Sea Region.

We are pleased to invite presentation proposals for the upcoming conference on maritime exploration organised and hosted by the Estonian Maritime Museum in Tallinn, Estonia on **November 5–7, 2025**. The conference, together with the exhibition “Famous Sea Voyages. The broadening Horizons of Europeans” opened at the Seaplane Harbour in October 2024, is part of the anniversary program of the Estonian Maritime Museum.

### Theme

The conference sets out to revisit the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, when great European maritime powers sent out regular scientific expeditions to the Pacific Ocean. The theme is largely inspired by the vast legacy left by Adam Johann von Krusenstern, an Estonian-born Baltic German hydrographer in the Russian service, whose *magnum opus* - the Atlas of the Pacific Ocean - was published between 1824 and 1827. This work is considered to be one of the pioneering hydrographic works of its time, extensively used by explorers, cartographers and geographers all over Europe.

2025 roughly marks the bicentenary of the golden age of Baltic German maritime exploration. Several individuals serving in the Russian Imperial Navy contributed greatly to the maritime exploration and geographical sciences of the Pacific Ocean. In addition to Adam Johann von Krusenstern who commanded the First Russian Circumnavigation between 1803 and 1806, Otto von Kotzebue, Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, Ferdinand von Wrangell and Friedrich Benjamin von Lütke participated in the history of Pacific exploration. At the same time, the British and the French continued their advances in Pacific exploration, following the legacy of James Cook and Jean-François de La Pérouse from half a century earlier.

When Adam Johann von Krusenstern passed away in 1846, many of the pressing geographical questions of his era had been resolved. During his career, he witnessed the mapping of Australia, the discovery of Antarctica, and the appearance of seemingly countless small islands on the maps of the Pacific Ocean. The exploration of the Northwest Passage was nearing completion. Throughout his life, Krusenstern experienced it all through his extensive network of international contacts.

The conference aims to connect researchers, discuss the current state of scholarship, and share new perspectives on European exploration in the Pacific Ocean from the Arctic to the Antarctic and from America to Asia in c. 1750–1850. We particularly invite discussion of the following topics:

- Shifts and turning points in the Pacific exploration since the 18th century
- Development of navigational sciences
- Development of geographical sciences and cartography
- Commercial and political considerations of maritime exploration
- European networks of explorers and geographers
- Science at sea and dissemination of results
- Practicalities of maritime exploration: ships, crew, equipment, supplies
- Maps, atlases and globes
- Decolonisation and museums today – knowledge transfer between museums and academia
- Objects of maritime exploration in museum collections (instruments, ethnographic objects, scientific samples)

We welcome different kinds of proposals, including individual papers, panels, roundtables and workshops. Individual papers should be limited to 20 minutes, a panel session should include three speakers in a 90-minute time slot. Please submit a title, an abstract of up to 250 words, and a short CV. We encourage proposals by early career researchers and papers introducing early-stage research and exhibition projects. Select papers will be published in a special issue. Please express your interest in the abstract.

The deadline for submissions is **June 6, 2025**. All proposals should be sent to [conference@meremuuseum.ee](mailto:conference@meremuuseum.ee). Notifications of acceptance will be sent in late June.

Accommodation is provided to presenters.

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