

THE TRADITIONS OF SAILING TOURISM IN THE WORLD AND POLAND BEFORE 1918

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Abstract:

The aim of this article is to remind the historical events related to sailing evolution in the World and Poland. Therefore authors made a source query, especially through press and also from the memories of all participants of mentioned events.

During source query authors made an analysis based on descriptive narratives of researched problem.

The sail as means for moving boats and other swimming units was known from time immemorial. Such way was also familiar to ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Vikings as well as to other nations. Using wind power to propel boats was constantly being improved and the technique itself was familiar to more and more nations.

Between 16th and 17th century the leadership in sailing development domain could be attributed to the Netherlands¹. From Holland yachting came to England. It was due to English king Charles II who spending time in the Netherlands learned about recreational sailing and knowledge of sailing craft. In 1674 the first officer navy club 'Royal Navy Club' was established which united wealthy officer class of Royal Navy and in 1720 on Cork Harbor island sailors, owners and lovers of water units such as sailboats and canoes established world first yacht club named 'Water Club of Cork'.

Polish people in the Middle Ages up until the partitions in 1772 in spite of having the seas access did not manifest significant interest in sailing.

In 18th and 19th century the number of sailing Poles was still very small. In 1882 Warsaw Rowing Association was established which propagated sailing trips on the Vistula.

The sail as means for moving boats and other swimming units was known from time immemorial. Such way was also familiar to ancient Egyptians², Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Vikings³ as well as to other nations⁴. Ancient boats were not only used for transportation, they were also serving military purposes. The example would be a

¹ C.R. Boxer: *Morskie imperium Holandii 1600–1800*, Gdańsk 1980, s. 10–13; W. Głowacki: *Dzieje jachtu światowego*, Gdańsk 1983, s. 13.

² W. Lipoński: *Humanistyczna encyklopedia sportu*, Warszawa 1987, s. 132.

³ M. Mickiewicz: *Z dziejów żeglugi*, Warszawa 1971, s. 50-70.

⁴ W. Lipoński: *Humanistyczna...*, dz. cyt.

battleship of Ramses III exhibited in Medinet Habu temple as a draft depicting water battle (the oldest in history battle picture) of Egyptian ships against Vikings⁵.

Using wind power to propel boats was constantly being improved and the technique itself was familiar to more and more nations. In Ancient Times one of the most interesting journeys was executed by Pytheas in 330 BC who started in Massalia and finished in tin island (present-day Britain), visiting present-day Iceland, Jutland, Scania and Baltic. Pytheas made a makeshift map based on his journey which broadened geographical knowledge of that time. At this angle the knowledge was also increased by description of military expeditions of Alexander the Great which included eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and also waterside of Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, Indus basin. The territory knowledge was broadened alongside with Rome dominating the Adriatic Sea basin in the beginning of 2nd century BC, among others Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt and Rhodes and subsequently other conquered nations that became Roman provinces.

To equip Rome (city of one million inhabitants) in all kinds of goods, people built a huge port of Ostia. The great harbor in Ostia. Between Ostia and Alexandria there was the biggest ancient fleet of ships that were transporting cereal and other goods as well as slaves. Roman ships were equipped in other kinds of sails which stated that a mast had to be equipped in diagonal and Latin sails. The picture of such sails was preserved in reliefs on sarcophaguses from Ostia and Piraeus. Moreover in ancient times due to underwater archeology two wrecks of Roman 30 meter ships were excavated. The ships were designed for transporting olive oil and wine in amphora. Considering the striking resemblance it is believed that Romans copied their ships from Greeks. After years of Romans predominating over other nations starting from 2nd and 3rd century AD Roman Empire seemed to lose its power and finally in 5th century under the pretense of barbaric invasion, Rome lost its military and economic impetus⁶.

On the map of water areas of Northern Europe first and then of the world the Vikings appeared. They were described by British historian D. Wilson who writes that *Vikings were great travelers and accomplished many astonishing sailing achievements; their cities were big trade centers; their art was original, creative and left its imprint; they took pride in literature and culture. As a result of many rapacious invasions in 8th and 10th century Vikings gained the name of pirates and destroyers – their culture however, was as complex and sophisticated as that of the conquered nations...*⁷

It is Vikings who are said to be the cradle of trade which routes led through waters of Europe up to Ruthenia and further into the East. The Vikings introduced number of innovative improvements to boat construction e.g. the helm fixed on the back of the boat. They also modernized hull, elaborated navigation system based on astronomical knowledge, at their time the compass was invented which proved to be essential when sailing throughout the seas, lakes and rivers.

The development of boat building industry contributed to increasing number of sailing boats and in consequence to the number of water travelers. Between 1450 and 1700 there was a shift in the direction of water units development into militarized boats which allow seaside nations to rule over trade and travel routes. Between 16th and 17th century the leadership in sailing development domain could be attributed to the Netherlands⁸. Sailing for recreation quickly gained its followers, especially within wealthy Dutchmen. The first and probably the

⁵ M. Mickiewicz: *Z dziejów...*, dz. cyt.

⁶ A. Mickiewicz: *Z dziejów...*, dz. cyt. s. 63–70.

⁷ D. Wilson: *The Vikings and Their Orgins*, London 1970, s. 35–36.

⁸ C.R. Boxer: *Morskie imperium Holandii 1600–1800*, Gdańsk 1980, s. 10–13; W. Głowacki: *Dzieje jachtu światowego*, Gdańsk 1983, s. 13.

only amateur patent for recreational sailing was sailor passport given to Henry de Voogt in April 19th, 1601⁹. The passport was given on the journey from Vlissingen to London. H. de Voogt writes about the journey *in a small, open boat, all alone, merely with the help of God...*¹⁰.

The example of sailing Dutchmen inspired other nations such as England, America, Australia, France, Spain. Among others in New Amsterdam (present-day New York) in 1614 the yacht *Onrust* was built. Soon enough the battle for leading position in Europe was joined by England, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal and other small countries. England proved to be the most sufficient for the leading part and started to rule over routes from Europe to both Americas, Far and Near East and also over smaller and less significant ones. From Holland yachting came to England. It was due to English king Charles II who spending time in the Netherlands learned about recreational sailing and knowledge of sailing craft, building ships and yachts as well as secrets of water battles, using ships in overseas trade and passenger transportation. Charles II introduced into England's development plan expansion of military and trade fleet as well as building yachts. In short time a large number of yachts was built and in 1661 the first described regatta took place with water unit *Catherina* owned by Charles II and yacht *Anna* that belonged to prince of York¹¹. In 1662, according to king Charles' plans the yacht *Jamie* was built. King Charles' personal pro-sailing activity, especially his participation in regatta, his fascination of yacht races, the speed of sailing and also the fact that king owned the fleet consisting of 18 yachts had an influence on English aristocracy's engagement into sailing. After the incidents with efficient usage of English yachts in war against Holland, the interest in yachting increased. The groups focused on water activity following other sports in England started organizing clubs. In 1674 on the initiative of prince Jacob of York the first officer navy club 'Royal Navy Club' was established. The organization united high-level officers of Royal Navy. Yet another ones were:

- in 1720 on Cork Harbor island sailors, owners and lovers of water units such as sailboats and canoes established world first yacht club named 'Water Club of Cork',

- 1775 'Cumberland Fleet' which in 1823 changed its name into 'Royal Thames Yacht Club'. It was another organization of amateur sailing which united followers of regatta and other forms of competition using sailboats,

- 1815 amateurs of yachts established the organization named 'Yacht Squadron'. One of the members since 1817 was king George IV. On his initiative in 1820 the name was altered into 'Royal Yacht Squadron'¹².

Polish people in the Middle Ages up until the partitions in 1772 in spite of having the seas access and many lakes and rivers situated throughout the country did not manifest significant interest in sailing. They used the basins merely for wood transportation to Gdansk. Such state is described by W. Liponski as *...in Poland before partitions the development of sailing based on wind power was rather weak and was the result of underestimation its part in general Polish politics. In contrast to other countries that had the leadership in overseas colonial expansion, Polish expansion was made through land towards eastern territories...*¹³.

Lots of Poles had their first encounter with sailing while emigrating during the partition period. One of them was Tadeusz Kosciuszko and many confederates who ,after Poland's decay, emigrated to America. In the second half of 18th century many outstanding Poles were

⁹ F. Bujak: *Kultury morskie i ladowe*, Toruń 1934, s. 11.

¹⁰ J. Merrien: *Samotni żeglarze*, Warszawa 1972, s. 37–38.

¹¹ J. Evelyn: *The diary of John Evelyn*, London 1945, s. 360; W. Głowacki: *Wspaniałe świat żeglarstwa*, Gdańsk 1972, s. 30–31.

¹² Z. Twardowski: *Zarys dziejów żeglarstwa w Polsce w latach 1922–1939*, maszynopis pracy doktorskiej zrealizowanej w AWF w Poznań w 1985 r. s. 22–23.

¹³ W. Lipoński: *Encyklopedia sportów świata*, Poznań 2001, s. 587.

traveling throughout the whole world by sailing ships. In 1784 Jan Potocki, writer and scientist, went on a journey through Black Sea all alone in one-mast sailboat from Kherson to Ochakiv where he embarked other swimming unit in which he reached Istanbul. The journey influenced Potocki's development of passion for traveling and manifested it his creativity¹⁴.

Also the writer Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz traveled by sailing ships. He described his sea journeys. In historical meeting on Dnieper Polish king Stanislaw August Poniatowski and Russian tsarina Catherine II used big sailboats. Significant interest among magnate sphere was aroused by journey of Marianna Osolinska and Zofia Glavani who in 1787 in tourist purpose traveled through Black Sea from Kherson to Istanbul. Among Polish magnates, apart from Jan Potocki, his relative Seweryn Bukar as well as prince Aleksander Lubomirski showed the passion for sailing. In his diaries Jan Potocki recalls positive experience of sailors, describes their knowledge concerning building sailboats and maneuver technique while sailing. In spite of these examples in 18th and 19th century the number of sailing Poles, including those who were performing captain and officer functions in war and trade navy, was still very small¹⁵.

Among Polish rare cases of sailing the one that is worth mentioning is Jozef Conrad Korzeniowski. He started learning about sailing from the journey on Antalya. After he joined British *sailing*, he gained all sailor ranks, from deck hand to captain of British navigation. Already as a captain, Korzeniowski took part in many long voyages on frigates and barges¹⁶. His passion for sailing was presented in *...notes of experiences he gained, usually not prominent or striking, rather accidental, experiences that for no reason drill into mind and emerge from memory after very long time in form of irrational ritual that takes place behind the curtain...*¹⁷. Moreover Adam Mickiewicz's voyage from Odessa to Crimea in 1825 was reflected in his poetry collection 'Sonety Krymskie'. Many cases of Polish sailors serving under banners of other countries are known to history, among others between 1874-1876 admiral G. Borowski took part in voyage around the world on Russian sailing ship. Between 1872-1912 the sailing association owned by captain T. Bochenski was functioning on water routes. The history of sailing knows a case where Polish officer S. Szolc-Rogozinski organized the voyage to Cameroon. S. Szolc-Rogozinski swam around the world on sailing ship¹⁸.

During the Partitions of Poland people made endeavor to sail on rivers and formed first organizational structures, among others in 1872 in Warsaw 'Rzeczny Jacht Klub' was established. River voyages were popular among the student youth, among others members of student water association in 1873 in oar-sail boat 'Wanda' which they bought, under the command of K. Pruszyński made a voyage up and down through the Vistula¹⁹.

Scattered around the world Poles made voyages by sailboats and united, among others in Riga high school students due to the lack of Polish sport associations joined German gymnastic association 'Turnverein' and supported the activity of fire brigade. After gaining sport experience in 1880 they tried to established Polish organization. J. Tuliszkowski describes this situation *...an idea to regain independence and preparatory activity were born. 'Kolko przyszlych powstancow' was established. However, few reckless trips, especially shooting and fights with Moskals aroused the suspicion among the authorities. Searches and spying started that lasted over two years and paralyzed the life. Being concerned that only*

¹⁴ . Potocki: *Podróże*, w opracowaniu L. Kukulski, Warszawa 1959, s. 23–24.

¹⁵ W. Głowacki: *Dawne i nowe tradycje polskiego żeglowania*, Gdańsk 1979, s. 5.

¹⁶ A. Braun: *Conrad-żeglarz*, „Świat żagli”, Gdańsk 1975, s. 7–9.

¹⁷ J. C. Korzeniowski: *Zwierciadło morza*, Warszawa 1969, s. 8.

¹⁸ W. Lipoński: *Encyklopedia sportów...*, dz. cyt., s. 587.

¹⁹ Tamże.

free terrain could suffice when it comes to preparation an idea was born – to build fleet and prepare sailors, to harden body and soul...²⁰.

The considerable contribution to the development of sailing voyages through the Vistula is ascribed to Warsaw Rowing Association (WRA)²¹. After being established in 1882 WRA very quickly gained popularity among residents of Warsaw. After a year, its members counted 900. The members of WRA who were associated from the very beginning were: Bolesław Prus, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Stefan Zeromski and others²². Thanks to its members and followers in 1890 WRA with raised funds bought eight-person sailing boat 'Boruta' in Gdansk. The boat was made use of in Vistula voyages and from 1906 also sea escapades. In Warsaw in 1900, second in history water unit, namely yacht 'Mewa' was built. It was equipped in sail that measured 8m². The 'Mewa' yacht is recognized as the first Polish sailing unit²³.

A great significance had the sailing experience gained by Mariusz Zaruski. It was due to the fact that he had been punished for public activity against czarism. His punishment was a service on Russian fleet. With the permission of the authorities he graduated the captain school. With the diploma, Zaruski swam on 'Nadzieja' ship to the end of his punishment in 1899. After returning to Poland, he passed his experience onto younger generation of sailors²⁴.

On basin of Gulf of Finland, Czesław Czarnowski sailed with the group of young sailors. He gained the experience at the age of 15 through being a member of *river yacht club* in Saint Petersburg. Czarnowski built a yacht called 'Unda'. He writes about his voyages, sailing adventures and 'Unda' yacht *...her members were consisted mostly of Polish sailors, my school friends. In our later voyages we raised Polish banner. We dreamt that someday, after bringing the czarism down we could swim under Polish flag on Polish sea...*²⁵.

In 'Jachtklub', after passing the examination in 1899 C. Czarnowski became the youngest captain and took part in numerous voyages and regatta. Ludwik Szewczykowski had his contribution as well. During his trading studies in Antwerp as well as practice in England, Szewczykowski participated in training and sailing voyages, owned a boat called *Gay Parisienne* which he sailed on and took part in regatta in England, Belgium and France. After returning to Saint Petersburg he sailed through Baltic Sea (most frequently at Gulf of Finland basin). He resigned from representing Russia on Olympic Games in 1912 in Sztokholm. In Warsaw, he belonged to people who developed sailing on the Vistula²⁶.

Many Poles who were living under the Prussian Partition did sailing. They gained the skills through service in the navy, they swam in German trading fleet and also worked in German harbor cities; Bremen and Hamburg. They had a chance to learn sea yachting. In Chojnice in 1912, sailor used handmade boats. The example of precursory sailing activity was Otto Welland, who in his own sailboat visited many overseas sailing centers. In 1912, after

²⁰ J. Tuliszkowski: *Yacht „Trio”*, Warszawa 1935, s. 5–6.

²¹ Tamże.

²² W. Głowacki: *Dzieje żeglarstwa...*, dz. cyt. s. 101–103.

²³ Tamże.

²⁴ M. Zaruski: *Wśród wichrów i fal*, Warszawa 1958, s. 9–10.

²⁵ C. Czarnowski: *Wśród wichrów i fal*, Warszawa 1958, s. 9–10.

²⁶ W. Głowacki: *Dzieje żeglarstwa polskiego*, Gdańsk 1989, s. 125–126; podając za stronami internetowymi Muzeum Żeglarstwa Pomorskiego (http://muzeum.pozz.org.pl/?page_id=609), pierwszym Polakiem na igrzyskach olimpijskich w konkurencjach żeglarskich był Ludwik Szewczykowski, który pojawił się na nich na 6 lat przed odzyskaniem przez Polskę niepodległości. Jego udział w igrzyskach był jednak szczególny, startował w towarzyskim wyścigu na jachcie „Gay Parisienne”, którego był współwłaścicielem. Regat nie ukończył z powodu złamania bukszprytu.

adjusting a fishing boat to meet sailing requirements, he sailed at Charzykowskie lake and endeavored to establish sailing centre. Until the outbreak of World War I, three boats were sailing at the lake. Despite the war, Jan Gierszowski, inspired by Welland's activity came to Chojnice. Thanks to his activity, a jetty and boat hangar were built in Lukom around Charzykowo. These activities allowed to open the first Polish sailing harbor at the end of 1918. The first ice sail-runs were performed by O. Welland at the turn of 1918²⁷.

Yet another person connected to sailing and voyages was Tadeusz Bramański who starting from being a signaler on *Hohenzollern* yacht gained all the naval ranks. After regaining the Polish Independence in 1918, he was one of the first organizers of yacht regatta on Polish coasts.

Based on source analysis we can conclude that before 1918 year nautical tourism was at an early stage of development. Completed trip had an individual character, but with a constant tendency to grow.

When it comes to the length of trips, expeditions were initially very short, not more than one day, with time people began to organize longer trips. On Polish lands tourist participants of sailing trips were using equipment from other countries, however national boatyard was created later. Scattered throughout the world people from Poland sailing experience were gaining during military service in various countries or in commercial fleets, as well as they worked in various port cities, gained experience they have moved later to Polish area.

Certainly we can conclude without any doubt that this modest result gave the beginnings of nautical tourism in Poland.

²⁷ M. Halter: *Zaczęło się w Chojnicach*, „Żagle”, 2004 nr 11, s. 12–15.