

Sebbe i den amerikanske bog *Disasters at sea*

Ved en tilfældighed fandt jeg denne bog der havde et link til mit navn. Det var et værk på små 200 sider om katastrofer til havs gennem tiden udgivet i 2014. Bogen havde undertitlen "A visual history of infamous shipwrecks". Billedet var taget af undertegnede,

Steen Weile

LEGENDS OF THE DEEP

MASTER BUILDERS

Even as archaeologists worked under sprinklers to keep the wood wet, it was becoming clear what a spectacular and valuable find the Skuldelev ships represented. Each of the five ships hailed from a different boatyard, built to varied designs for entirely different uses. *Skuldelev 1* was a stout, oceangoing vessel of pine, meant for a crew of eight. The biggest wreck, *Skuldelev 2*, revealed a warship capable of carrying a crew of 60 or more, propelled by oar, sail, or both. *Skuldelev 3* was a smaller cargo ship, and *Skuldelev 5* was smaller warship, while *Skuldelev 6* completed the catalog of types as a fishing boat. These vessels revealed a treasure trove of information on ship construction, commerce, and politics of the time.

All of the ships showed evidence of multiple repairs, indicating that (quite sensibly) old, well-used ships were put to service for the barricade in their final mission. The widely varying woods and construction techniques displayed on the five ships presented historians with new data, enriching modern views of the lives of Scandinavians some thousand years ago. The Skuldelev ships serve as both grave marker and guidebook to the culture that created and sank them in those cold waters so long ago.



THEORY VS. PRACTICE

THE EXCAVATION OF THE SKULDELEV SHIPS piqued the interest of shipbuilders, who used the detailed plans of the wrecks to construct replicas. The *Sebbe Als*, one replica of *Skuldelev 5*, managed to make 5 knots under oar alone and reached up to 12 knots under sail, nearly twice what nautical theorists had predicted. Though it was still difficult to conceive of the bravery of those who would challenge the northern oceans in an open boat, actually building one left no doubt as to the possibilities these sturdy craft presented to their original owners.



▲ The *Sebbe Als*, launched in 1969, is a replica of *Skuldelev 5*. She was built with copies of the original Viking tools. She is still used for day trips, and every summer, she takes a one-to-three-week summer cruise. The *Sebbe Als* has traveled along most of the Danish and north German coasts.

◀ The *Skuldelev 5*