

ETNOFOOR CALL FOR PAPERS: THE SEA

Anthropologists have a long-standing engagement with the sea. From classics such as Bronislaw Malinowski's "Argonauts of the Western Pacific" or Marshall Sahlins' "Islands of History" and the vast literature on "island anthropology" (Mead 1928, Rappaport 1968, Gladwin 1970) to more recent engagements with "sea change", including fisheries, conservation, tourism, health, oil production, or nuclear testing (Lazrus 2012: 286). This engagement is not surprising considering that the sea covers some 70 per cent of the earth's surface, and billions of people rely on the sea for economic, cultural and logistical purposes. In this light it is almost striking that, the rich anthropological work on it notwithstanding, the sea plays a comparatively modest role in the discipline as a whole. The next issue of *Etnofoor* is dedicated to The Sea because seas continue to be important sites of local and geopolitical connection and conflict.

The sea offers both opportunities and threats, and its representations are often ambiguous. Its mysterious depths and untameable currents have figured prominently in cultural narratives of danger. In historical crossings, such as the Middle Passage of transatlantic slavery and the Kali Pani (dark waters) traversed by South Asian indentured laborers, the sea has represented a site of rupture and trauma. Contemporary marine fears involve 'social' threats such as pirates, and 'natural' disasters from tsunamis, sea-level rise and pollution. However, the sea also speaks to cultural imaginations of freedom, adventure and rites of passage. It has long attracted seafaring opportunists and explorers, from the Maori and the Vikings to European colonizers and contemporary scientific expeditions to the Polar regions. Community identities, from the Trobrianders to the Dutch, are also constructed around the sea, and its threats and opportunities.

For many people, the sea is an important economic resource. In addition to fisheries, the sea also supports livelihoods in tourism, transport and extractive industries. Seafood and marine flora are the most important source of nutrition for many communities, and in territories with insufficient sweet water, desalinated sea water provides a crucial source of potable water. The sea is also central in spiritual matters, from Abrahamic religions to African and Afro-American as well as New Age religions. In many cultural contexts, the sea is imagined as a woman, most famously in the West African and Caribbean figure of Mami Wata/Yemayá. Sailors and landlubbers have long recounted sightings of mermaids, sirens and ghost ships, who might lead the way to lost underwater civilizations such as Atlantis. The sea and its mysteries have long featured prominently in artistic expression, from painted seascapes and underwater sculptures to sea shanties and poetry.

Etnofoor invites authors who wish to engage ethnographically with these and related issues to submit an abstract of no more than 200 words to editors@etnofoor.nl before **January 15, 2015**. The deadline for authors of accepted abstracts to submit their full paper for consideration is March 25, 2015.