

SUPPLEMENT No. 524

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Phenomenon.*

An historical overview made by *ADC Support AB.*

Stockholm 1995.

M/S Estonia

a ship emanating from The Baltic Phenomenon

**An historical overview
made by**



for

**The Joint Accident Investigation Commission
of Estonia, Finland and Sweden**

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INTRODUCTION - M/S ESTONIA

M/S Estonia belonged to the type of ships noted as *Passenger/RoRo Cargo/Ferry* in ship registers. The ship was delivered in June 1980 by the shipyard Jos L. Mayer for Rederi ab Sally in Mariehamn situated on the island of Åland (part of the archipelago of Finland). The ship was designed and built according to the rules of the classification society, Bureau Veritas. Bureau Veritas and the Finnish Board of Shipping and Navigation surveyed the design and the construction of the ship. Finally The Finnish Board of Shipping and Navigation issued a *Passenger Ship Safety Certificate*, certifying that the newbuilding fulfilled the international safety standard *Safety of Life at Sea*, SOLAS, for short international voyages

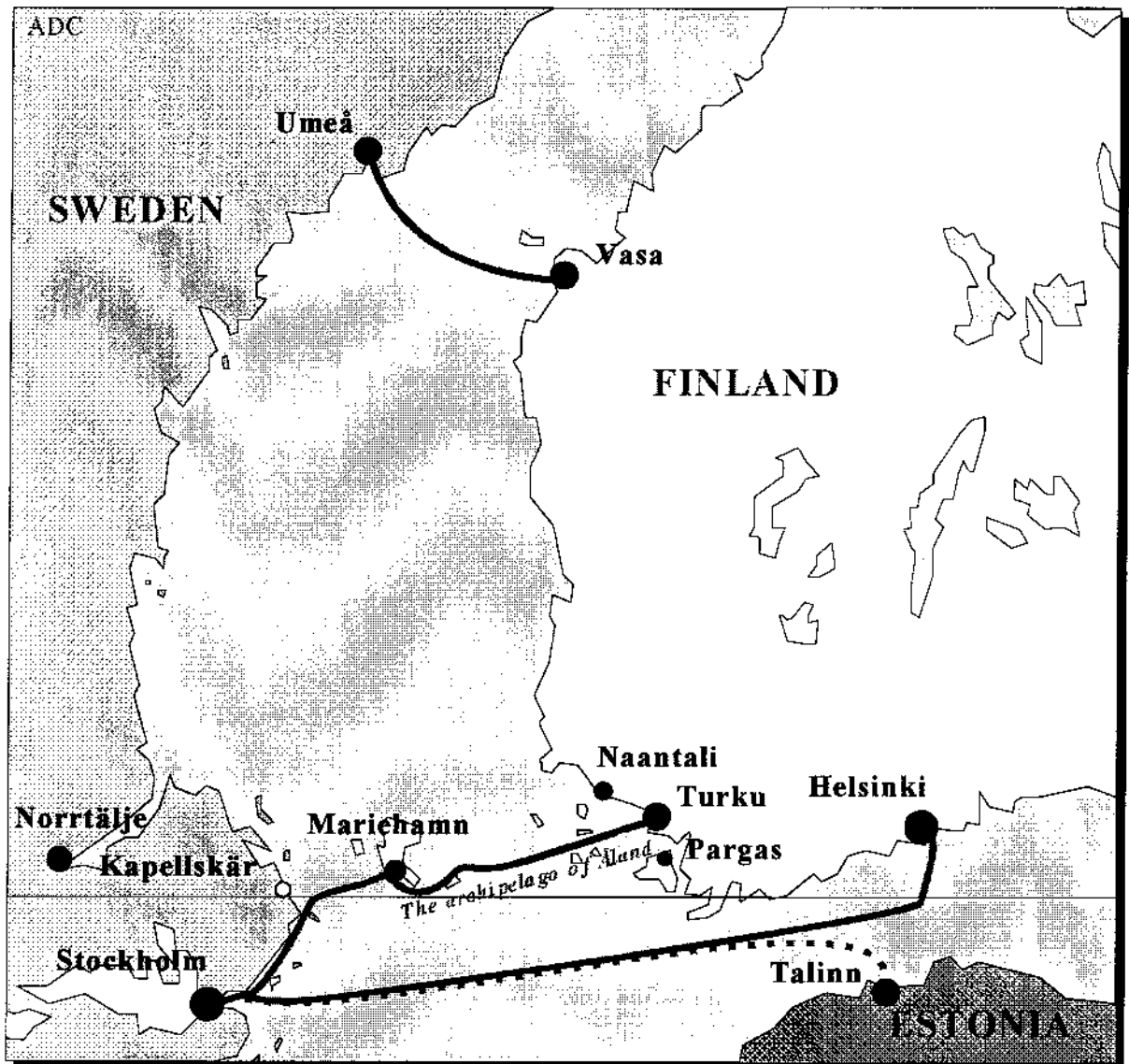
The ship was named *M/S Viking Sally* and commenced her service in Viking Line on July 5 1980 on the route Kapellskär (a small terminal Viking Line used about 90 km north of Stockholm) - Mariehamn - Naantali (about 20 km north of Turku, Finland). For eight months she belonged to the group of biggest ships ever seen in the ferry service between Finland and Sweden. In March 1981 Silja Line introduced the even bigger ship M/S Finlandia on the Stockholm - Helsinki route. M/S Viking Sally was after some time moved to the Stockholm - Mariehamn - Turku route.

The passenger- and general cargo trade between Sweden and Finland has since 1960 been dominated by two groups, the Silja Line and the Viking Line. The EffJohn group owned by the Swedish company Johnson Line and the Finnish company EFFOA, was the parent company of the Silja Line. In 1987 EffJohn acquired Rederi ab Sally with ships and interests in Viking Line included. The other owners of the marketing company Viking Line, Rederi AB Slite and SF Line then bought the shares of Rederi ab Sally in Viking Line from EffJohn. Rederi AB Slite chartered M/S Viking Sally back and the ship continued the service Stockholm - Mariehamn - Turku until March 1989. In February 1989 however, EFFOA bought the ship from EffJohn and chartered her to Rederi AB Slite. The ship continued the same service until April 1990. Then she operated under the name *M/S Silja Star* for Silja Line on the Stockholm - Turku route until she was transferred to the Vaasa-Umeå-traffic also belonging to the EffJohn group. The ship was renamed to *M/S Wasa King*. On 15 January 1993 the ship was sold to Estline Marine Co Ltd in Cyprus. The ship was renamed to *M/S Estonia* and bareboat chartered to E-Line Ltd and was put into the service of Estline on the route Stockholm - Tallinn. These companies were equally owned and controlled by the Swedish company Nordström & Thulin and Estonian Shipping Company in Estonia.

Although the history of M/S Estonia is more confusing than for most ships in the ferry service between Sweden and Finland it reflects the dynamic in this trade. This paper shall describe some of the circumstances behind the remarkable development of the ferry services between Sweden and Finland. In the worldwide shipping communities this is mentioned as *The Baltic Phenomenon*. Many questions have been raised; how can such an expansion of a ferry service occur so rapidly, how can the adoption and the development of new technique and concepts be so rapid, how can the high service level be maintained under the tough conditions in the Baltic Sea (confined waters, ice etc), how can the top class service concepts remain profitable.

The design of a ship is the final outcome of considerations and compromises in many different areas. Laws of nature, traditions/know-how, material & equipment, rules & regulations, ambient conditions etc. These are tools and/or limitations for the physical ship design. Software aspects i.e. atmosphere in the shipping industry when the ship is ordered is another important factor. The Owners purpose, vision, perspective etc. etc. are more dominating factors for the final result than the actual design and construction process. It should not be forgotten that the process is run by humans.

Hopefully it will be easier to understand the case of M/S Estonia when knowing the background to the Baltic Phenomenon from which M/S Estonia emanates.



THE PASSENGER/RORO CARGO/FERRY - M/S ESTONIA

M/S Estonia was built for satisfying the increasing demand for transportation capacity on the route Sweden through the Åland archipelago to the mainland of Finland. On this route the ships are making a round trip every 24 hours.

The ship was built to operate as a *day and night ferry* for *passengers and rolling cargo*. There were cabins of different categories. The Passenger Safety Certificate permitted the ship to carry 2 000 passengers. When the ship was introduced some passengers preferred to save money by just buying a "deck ticket" on the night trip, therefore the ship had just 1 223 beds arranged in 529 cabins and the deck passengers were offered to relax in comfortable chairs during the night hours.

The ship had dual purposes. Equally important with the transportation of the passengers was the transportation of cargo. To manage a round trip of about 250 nautical miles in 24 hours including port-calls, exchange of passengers and cargo, bunkering and handling of stores, only cargo rolling on wheels could be considered. On a *RoRo Cargo Ferry* the cargo is driven onboard and ashore either self-propelled or towed by so called tug-masters (a kind of tractor) e.g. trailers and containers on flat wagons (Mafis) are handled by tugmasters. Since on this route there was no time to turn or reverse the cargo flow, a drive-through concept with openings in both ends of the ship was the only solution.

Finally, with *ferry(service)* is meant a ship operating on a regular basis with fixed arrival- and departure times in defined ports. Normally this is associated to road-ferries. In this trade however, the ships are constructed for unrestricted service.

THE BALTIC PHENOMENON

The expression "The Baltic Phenomenon" alludes in shipping circles on the development of the ferry-services between Stockholm in Sweden and Turku and Helsinki in Finland. In the following explanations will be given to the amazing development of the ferry services in this region.

The tradition

To begin with, some characteristic factors of shipping will be discussed. The shipping industry is more complex than many other industrial activities. Experience and know-how are key factors tying progress of shipping to continuity. Shipping is a capital intensive industry, but also very flexible. There are many examples of steps in the development of shipping activities. In many such cases new technical solutions have been introduced enabling new superior commercial concepts. However, most new concepts in shipping fail due to underestimation of the complexity and/or lack of know-how.

Some aspects of shipping :

- Merchant ships should be regarded as individuals. In general just one or a few sister ships are built according to the same specification. Thus merchant ships are not standardised like cars, aircrafts or series of navy ships.
- The shipping industry can develop new technical concepts in shorter time than most other industries.
- Standard solutions in shipping are rare. Like all other transport services shipping has to adopt to varying conditions e.g. treatment of cargo, geography, infra-structures, customs of the trade etc.
- A ship is not just an autonomous movable production plant, but also a separated society.
- The production capacity of an established service (number-, performance- and size of ships in a fleet) can be changed in a short time through sale, purchase or various charter arrangements.
- In shipping rapid changes can be made; change of owners, flag, operator, crew, trade etc.
- The competition is normally unlimited, global.
- Supply of sea transport services adopt normally quickly to demand.
- Due to the complexity of shipping, tradition, experience, information and know-how takes more time to build up than in many other industries.

The story of the Baltic Phenomenon includes many of these factors. The introduction of the RoRo-technique was the initiation to the Baltic Phenomenon. Though the development was very fast it followed the traditions of the trade. The new technique just opened new business opportunities. There were several factors synchronously promoting the development of the traffic.

Influencing factors on traffic growth:

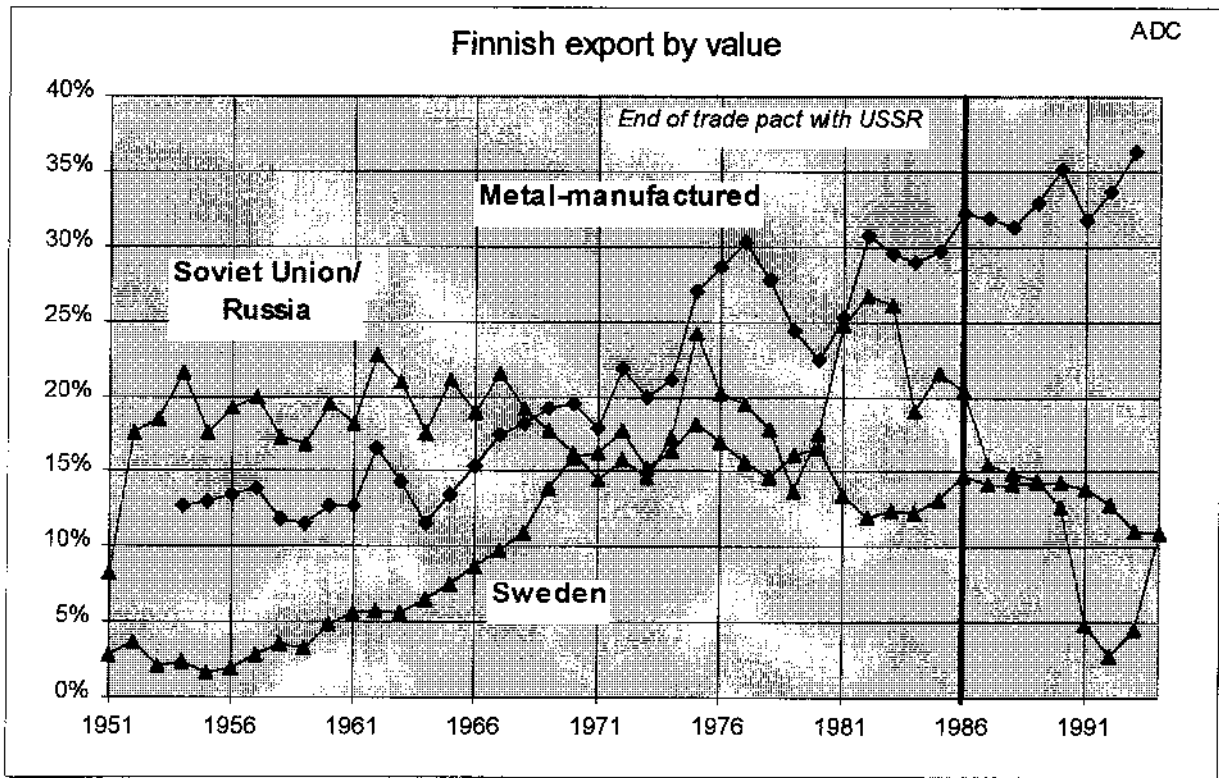
- Geographical conditions
- Cultural and historical background in Finland and Sweden
- Economical development in Finland and in Sweden
- Taxation in Finland and Sweden
- Ship-owners tradition in the region.
- The infrastructure of the shipping industry in the area, know-how, research, subcontractors, ship-yards etc.
- Etc. etc.

This traffic is entirely commercial. The competition and the profits have motivated the main operators Silja Line and Viking Line to develop new commercial concepts. Although the competition has always been intense it has been understood that safety- and environmental questions are of common interests for the traffic. Crew members from both lines has always maintained the good seaman tradition to exchange navigational experiences of the trade. The extensive newbuilding program kept the organisations updated with the development. The level of the discussions when ordering new ships was accordingly high. Thus the collected bank of technical navigational experiences from this trade is rich.

Before the Phenomenon

Some historical facts

In 1809 Sweden lost Finland and the archipelago of Åland to Russia. In Turku, which used to be the administrative centre, Swedish was the official language. The Finnish speaking Helsinki became capital in the Russian province. First in 1917, Finland became an independent country. In a cease-fire with Russia 1944 Finland was forced to pay war indemnity to the Soviet Union. Peace with the Soviet Union was settled three years later. Unlike most other countries in similar situations, Finland paid the indemnity in full. The last payment was done in 1986. Following that, trade pacts were signed between Finland and USSR which occupied large parts of the Finnish industrial capacity. The trade pact ended in 1986, initiating a need for expanding the Finnish trade with Western Countries. From 1960 the development of the ferry traffic to/from Sweden has been an important contributing factor for the development of the Finnish industry. Since then the Finnish trade has developed towards more refined industrial products to/from the western countries.



Sea traffic Finland - Sweden

The sea traffic can be separated into two main activities, full shiploads (e.g. forest-, oil products, etc.) and combined shiploads (e.g. general cargo, passengers & trucks, etc).

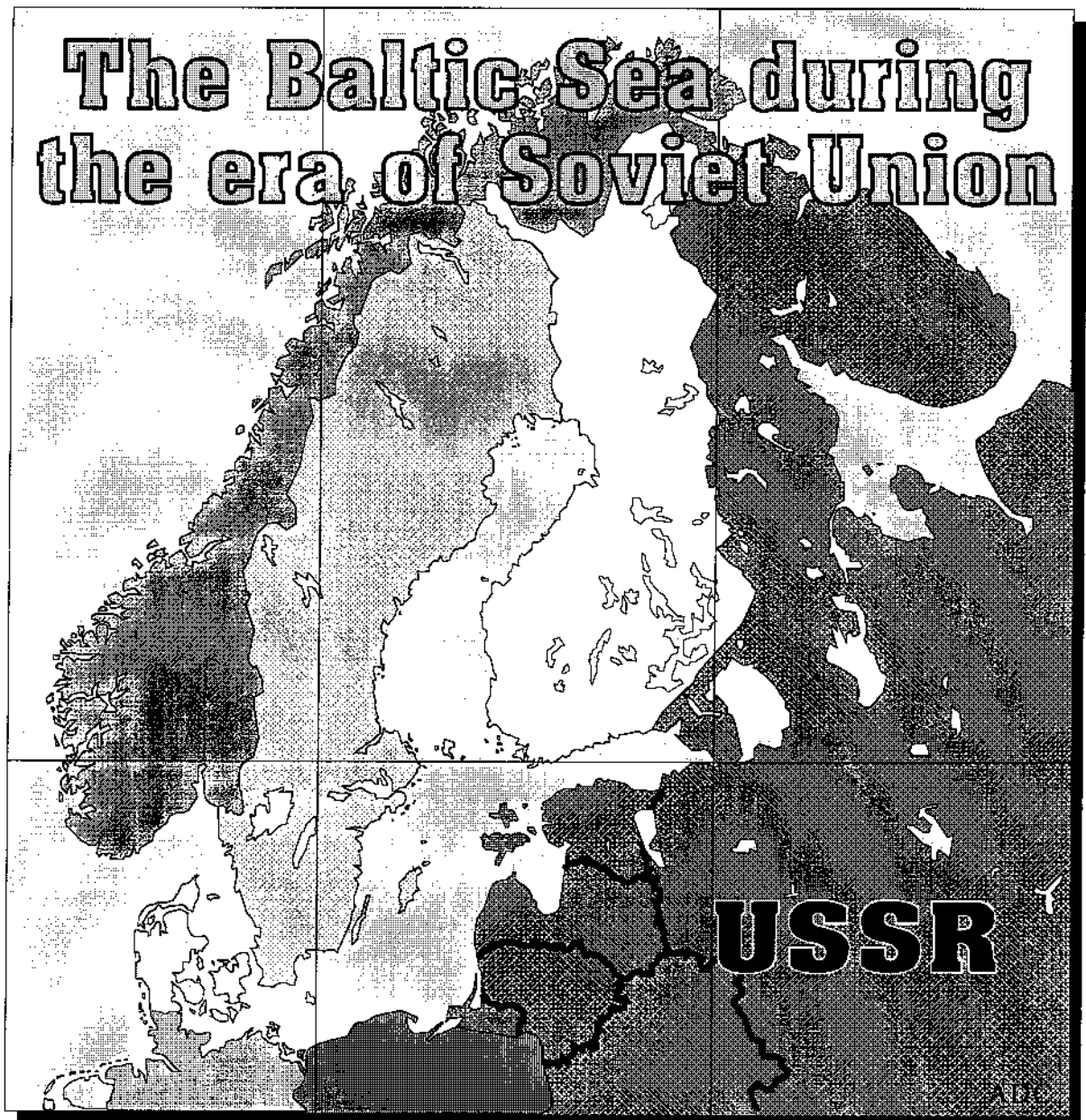
The ferry service handles mixed cargo and is performed on fixed published schedules. Except for dangerous cargo the service is offered on a general basis, a common transport service open to everyone.

The cargo is normally standing on its own wheels and represents in general a high value per ton. Ships carrying such cargo e.g. a truck-load of TV-sets, require a lot of space. This type of transport services have become increasingly time sensitive, until today's just-in-time (J-I-T) logistic systems. Today J-I-T services are important elements for the competitiveness of modern industry.

Late 1800 steamers were introduced on the trade to transport mail and passengers. The steamers were during the 60's replaced by diesel motor driven RoRo-ferries. In 1918 FÅA (the Finnish steamship company, later changed to the phonetic abbreviation EFFOA), the Finnish owner Bore and the Swedish owner Svea founded *De Samseglande Rederierna* (the jointly operating shipping companies). In the beginning they coordinated their services on the line Turku - Stockholm and in 1919 the line Helsinki - Stockholm was also included. These services were commonly called *The White Ships*. In 1957 the same owners founded Ab Siljarederiet. In 1970 the liner services were reorganised and the marketing company *Silja Line* was founded i.e. at that time Passenger/ RoRo Cargo/ Ferries had been used for about a decade in this trade.

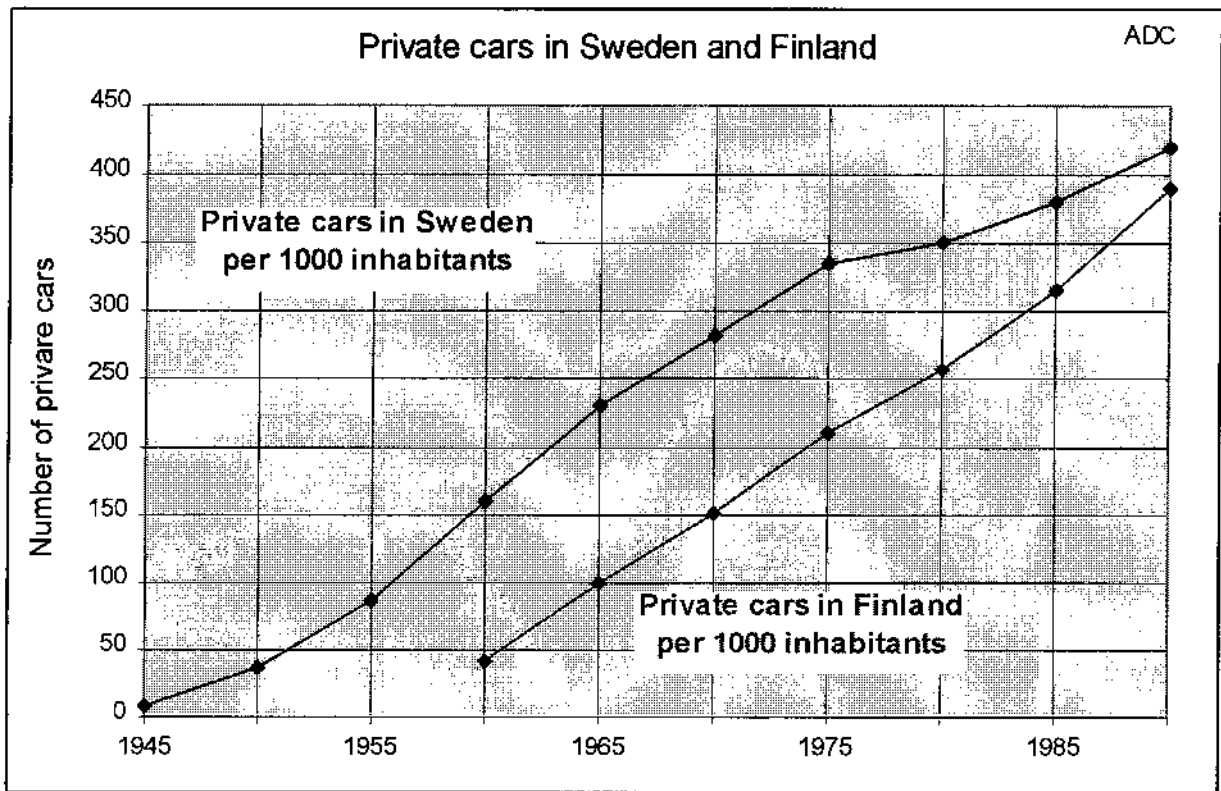
The initiation

In the autumn 1957 the sea captain Gunnar Eklund returned home to Åland from sea service for vacation. Mr. Eklund got however unhealthy and the verdict of the doctors involved was that he must not go back to sea again. On the Åland island there are few alternatives to earn living than from the sea. At the hospital there was plenty of time for Mr. Eklund to find solutions on how he should fulfill his economical obligations to his family. He realised that car traffic had increased a lot and the way around the Baltic Sea between population centres in Sweden and Finland was very long.



The concept of the liner services between Sweden and Finland remained at this time about the same as in the beginning of the century. The ships had got a few private car positions on deck and the cars were hoisted onboard.

Mr. Eklund told his friend sea captian Henning Rudberg that he had the idea to use a carferry between Åland and Sweden. Mr. Eklund had noticed the rapid increase of private cars in Sweden. As Mr. Rudberg had similar thoughts he supported the idea and wanted to join an potential investment. In February 1959 a British steam ferry laid up in Dover, England was found. It was the train- passenger ferry S/S Dinard, built 1924 in Dumbarton, England. The ship was bought with brokerage assistance from a good friend in England.



In April the ship was taken to Aalborg Værft, Denmark, for refurbishment and necessary rebuilding. The ship was renamed as *S/S Viking* and the line was inaugurated in *June 1 1959*. The route was Gräddö (Sweden), over the Åland Sea - Mariehamn (Åland), through the Åland and Turku archipelago - Korpo (an island close to Turku with road-connection to mainland Finland). About the time for the introduction Mr. Algot Johansson, managing director and founder of Rederi Ab Sally, Mariehamn also joined the project. He had a strong belief in the new connection over the Åland Sea.

The monopoly they had created lasted 5 days. The shipowner Carl Bertil Myrsten, Rederi AB Slite from the Swedish island Gotland then introduced M/S Slite on the route Simpnäs, Sweden - Mariehamn, Åland. Instead of using the ship on the intended line Klintehamn, Gotland - Grankullavik, mainland Sweden, M/S Slite started to compete with S/S Viking.

M/S Slite was originally a dry cargo coaster of 950 tdw, built 1955 at the Sölvesborg Yard in Sweden. The ship was converted to a Passenger/ RoRo Car/Ferry . The arrangement was simple, a side ramp for cars on deck, and reclining seats and a bar for the passengers in the cargo hold.

The above competitors formed later on the joint marketing company Viking Line, for the three shipowners, Rederi Ab Sally (Algot Johansson, Henning Rudberg), SF-Line (Gunnar Eklund) and Rederi AB Slite (Carl Bertil Myrsten). A duopoly situation developed soon between this formation and what later on should be The Silja Line. The competitor Silja Line was formed by Bore Line (Turku), EFOA (Helsinki), Rederi AB Svea (Stockholm) and the jointly owned Silja Rederiet (Turku) i.e. "The White Ships".

In this overview we will not go into the internal formations of the groups and to simplify, the groups will in the following just be called Silja and Viking Line.

In comparison with The White Ships, S/S Viking and M/S Slite were not impressing. Although the very introduction of the new service was a bit shaky the traffic very soon generated growing and stable profits. Already the second year in service (1960) the Viking Line transported 30% of the passengers, 60% of private cars and 100% of the trucks.

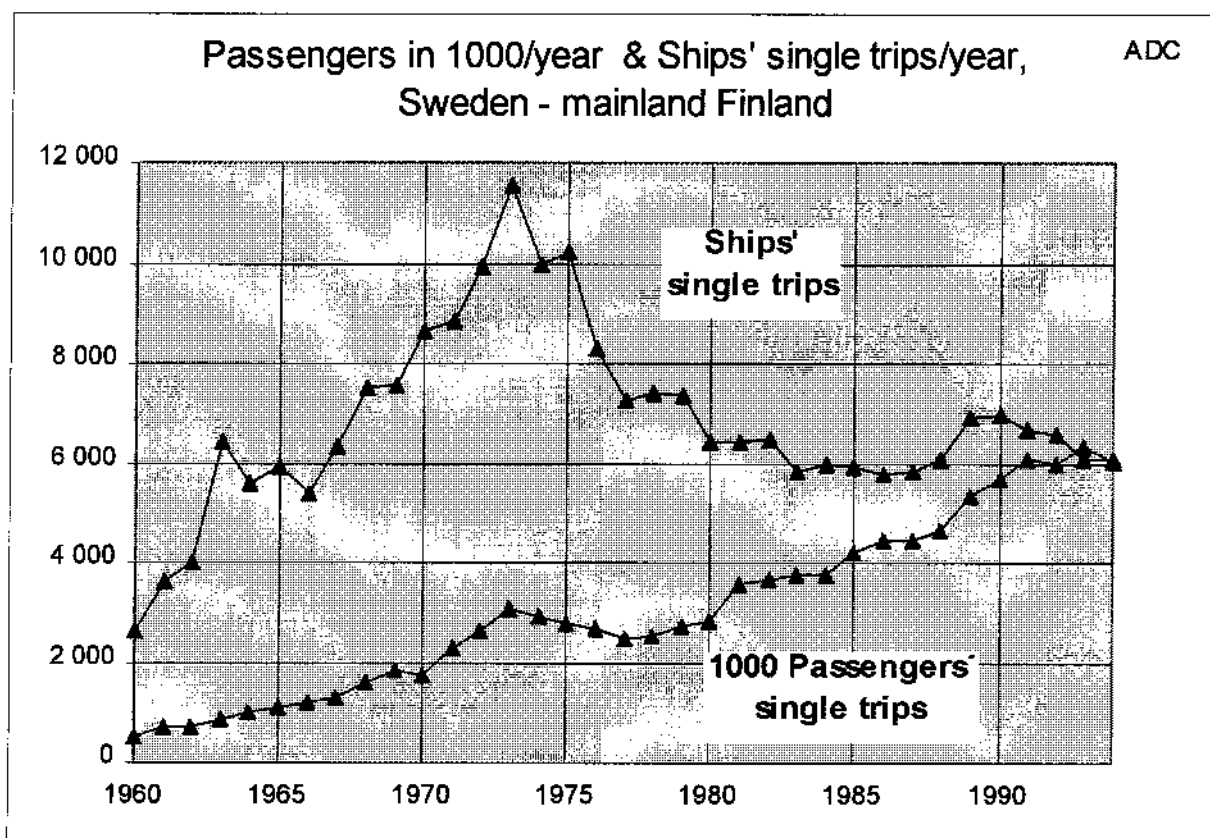
Silja Line couldn't deny that the new conceptual solution was a threat. Their philosophy that passenger and cargo traffic should be separated had to be revised. It wasn't a pleasant prospect that their passengers should be forced to go with "the newcomers" if they wanted to bring their car. It was however considered as a comfort that the loss of passengers market share was caused by a lot of new passengers that later on should hopefully realise that it would be worth while to spend some more money on the journey for the standard that Silja Line offered. The owners within Silja Line had previous long experience of project development. The technical departments had already for some time been studying RoRo-ferry concepts. Now they were assigned to develop a concept that should restore Silja Line's market position. In May 1961 M/S Skandia was delivered from Wärtsilä Ship-Yard and in May the following year the sister ship M/S Nordia was delivered to Silja Rederiet. These ships were the first purposely built Passenger/ RoRo Cargo/ Ferris for the trade between Sweden and Finland.

The development of the traffic

The diagrams below describes the development of the traffic between Sweden and the mainland of Finland from 1960 to 1994. During the following 30 years from 1960, the number of:

- passengers grew from about 500.000 per year to about 7.500.000 +1.400%
- number of private cars from about 30.000 to about 600.000 +1.900%
- trucks from about 900 to about 140.000 +15.500%

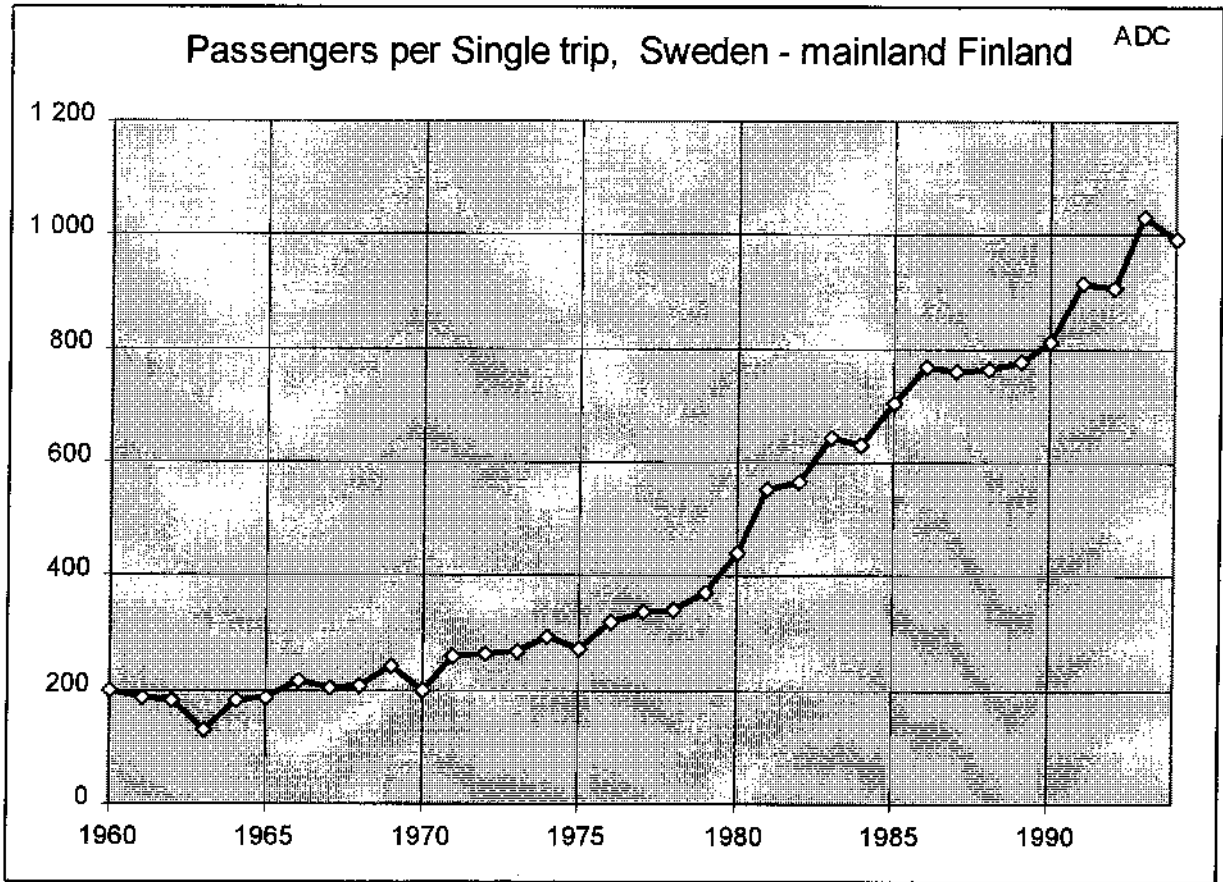
During the same period, in addition to above figures, passenger cruise traffic in the area and traffic to/from Åland has grown substantially.



The number of passenger single trips exceeds today the entire population of Finland. The population in Finland is about 5,0 million people. The portion of passengers from Sweden, Finland and other countries varies with time and route. Today however the Finnish passengers are in majority.

The diagram also shows that the number of ships' voyages culminates in 1973. Although the number of passengers grew, from that year the number of ships voyages have decreased and is now stabilising.

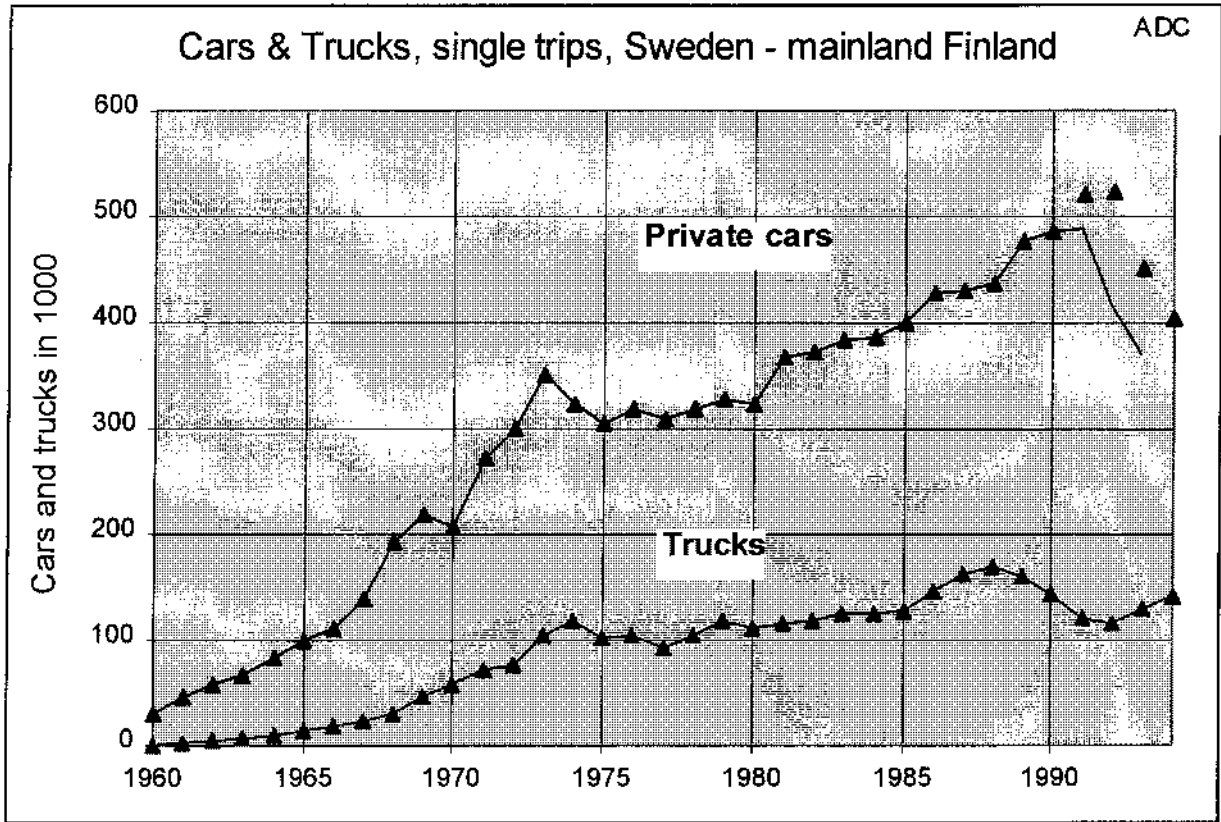
The reason is, competition has forced the traffic to be rationalised. Fewer and bigger ships made more transport work. This is not just an effect of economy of scale. The operators have also expanded their market by introducing new commercial concepts.



When this traffic began in about 1960 nobody could foresee the development. Required transport capacity had until about 1970 been covered by employing more ships in the trade. The ferry service began to play an increasingly important role for transportation of industrial goods and merchandises to/from Finland. The exp./imp. between Finland and Sweden (+transit W.Europe) was increasing. On the same time the way of transporting changed. Trucktransportation became increasingly frequent also for long distance transportation, railroads had difficulties to offer the required service quality. The different track width in Finland and Sweden discriminated also, at that time, the development of rail-road transportation. (Today there are two lines with rail-road services in the trade.)

The demand for improved service quality of the ferry transports also constantly increased. In the winter 1965/66 M/S Apollo maintained winter traffic on Kapellskär - Pargas. Earlier the traffic had been interrupted when the ice had been too difficult. In 1971/72 Silja Line continued the traffic during the winter on the Stockholm- Helsinki route. This was a test made with S/S Svea Jarl. The following winter 1973/74 Silja Line could offer the market a substantially improved service on the Stockholm- Helsinki Line by introducing the newbuildings M/S Aallotar and M/S Svea Regina. These ships, as well as M/S Apollo, were ice-strengthened to Swedish/Finnish ice class 1A. The ships had for that time, the impressive engine power of almost 12.000 kW (Maximum Continuous Rating) for forcing the ice. M/S Apollo had 5.880 kW. The ships were Passenger/RoRo Cargo/Ferries. The logistic transport infrastructure between Finland - Sweden (W.Europe) had improved a lot also on the Helsinki Line. The trucker could now offer door-to-door transports around the year.

It was important that the trucker could control the whole transport chain by having the same truck and the same driver all the way. When the ship carried the truck over the Baltic the driver got a proper rest.

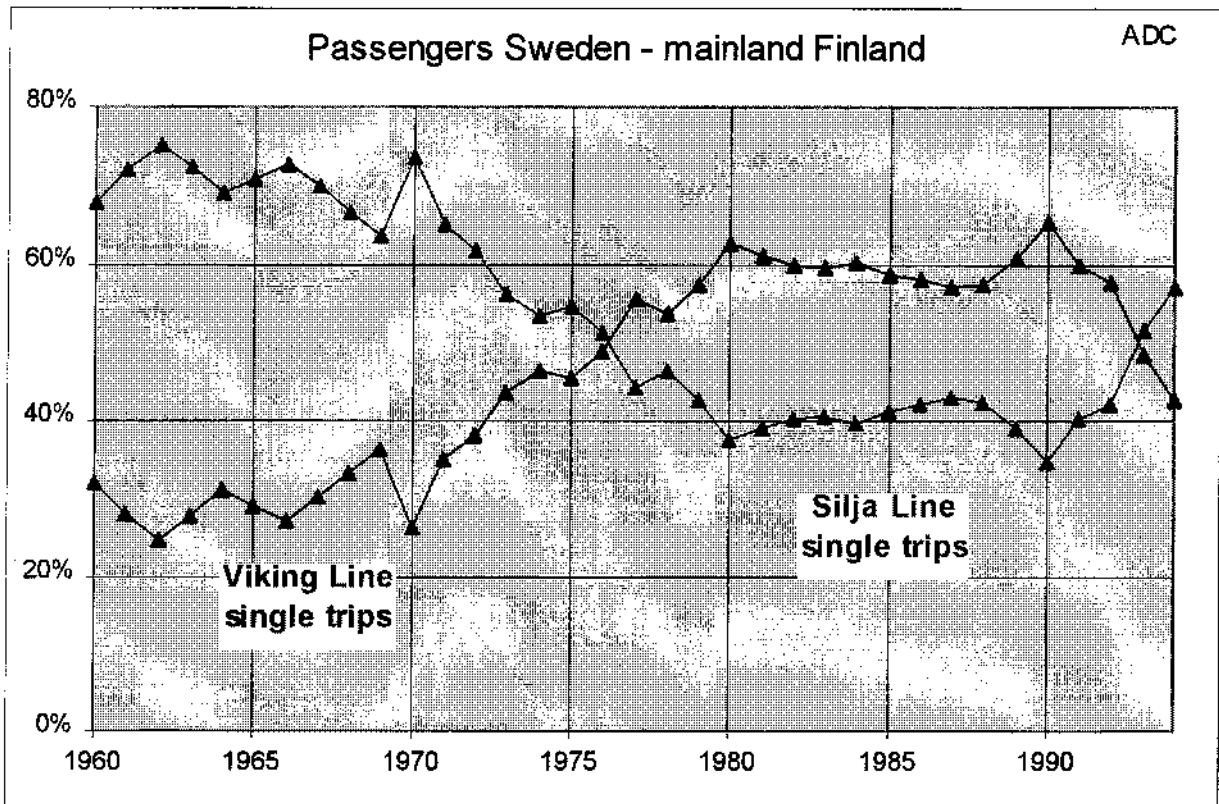


The diagram also shows a substantial increase of private cars. The combination of private cars and rolling cargo showed to work. In vacation periods when the trucking activities were low, space was available on RoRo-deck for private cars.

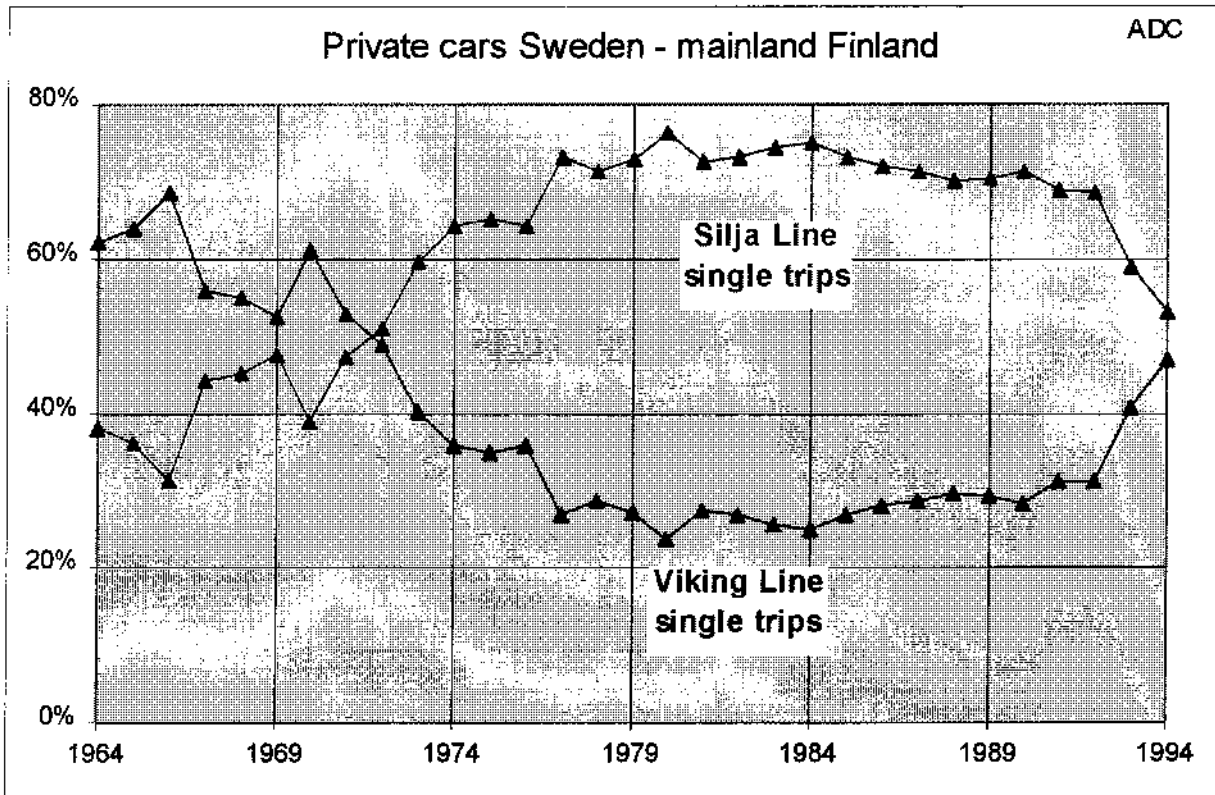
The increased number of ships in the trade was also the result of an escalating competition. In June 20 1973 Viking Line started a service Stockholm - Mariehamn - Turku i.e. in direct competition with Silja Line. In 1974 Viking Line also started to compete on the Stockholm - Helsinki route.

The fight for market shares

The two competitors approached the market in different ways. Silja Line followed their tradition to develop quality concepts. More and more specially designed newbuildings were delivered. Encouraged by what seemed to be the never ending success, Viking Line ran for capacity. Regarding the cargo Viking Line also aimed for quality. The different approaches reflected the dissimilar structures of the competitors. Viking Line was built on equal effort from the participating owners. This encouraged capacity grow, if one owner introduced a ship the others should also respond with the corresponding capacity. Silja Line on the other hand had a pool arrangement with economic compensation for efforts and profit charing.

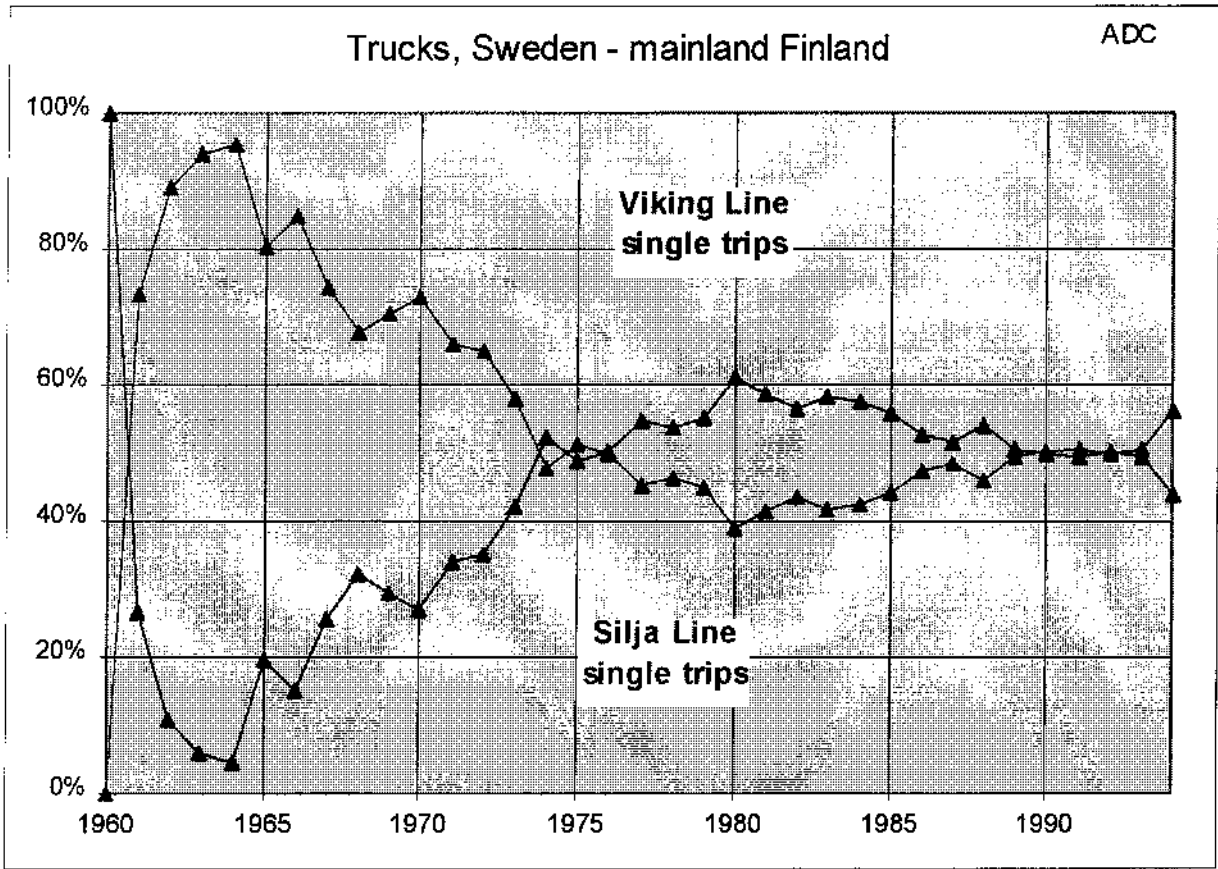


Although Viking Line almost immediately succeeded in gaining 30% of the passengers, Silja Line could defend their majority position until 1975. By chartering ships and an extensive new building-program Viking Line then took a bigger share than Silja Line. On the other hand it was some comfort to Silja Line that they could maintain somewhat higher prices for their services.



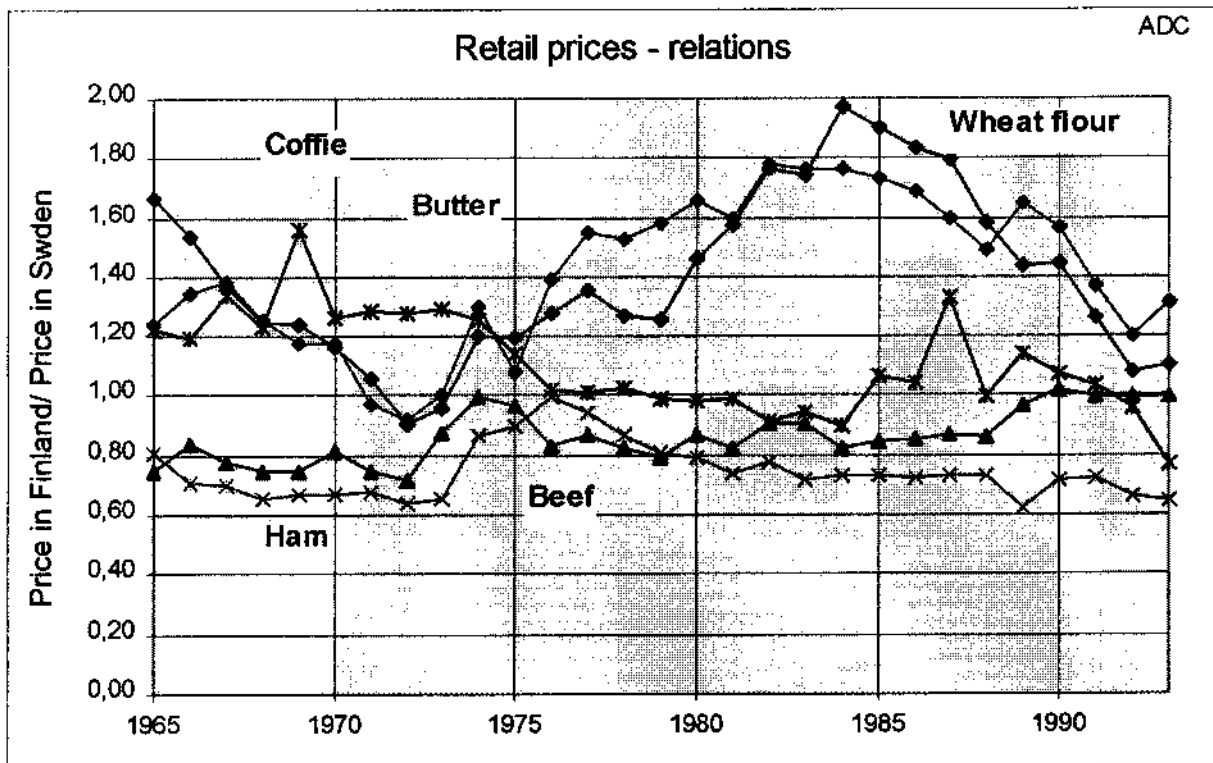
Viking Line got the initiative in the market of private cars. As seen in the diagram it took some time until the Silja Line passengers brought their cars over the Baltic. An explanation is that in the beginning the passenger with car selected the most affordable alternative for the transport. Later on the price for the car became less important for the customers choice of transport alternative. If the car was needed it was neither complicated nor expensive to bring it with on the ships.

When Viking Line started their traffic they surprised Silja Line with their cargo carrying capacity. The statistics in the enclosed figure doesn't reflect the substantial cargo carrying activity going on by pure cargo ships managed within the sphere of Silja Line. Silja Line however, regained soon a leading role as carrier of cargo also in the passenger ferry service. This was accomplished by introducing the purposely built Passenger/ RoRo Cargo/ Ferry M/S Skandia in 1961. Thus taking back the initiative for some years. The owners of Silja Line were in the beginning running RoRo cargo ferry services in parallel with the passenger service, since they considered that they complied better with the requirements of the market in that way. A reason was the difficulties to arrange a time table that was attractable for both passengers and cargo. It was also an inertia built in as the transport systems for cargo was there and had so far worked satisfactory. From mid 70's until late 80's Viking Line was however a bigger cargo carrier than Silja Line. A reason to that was their higher cargo carrying capacity over the Åland Sea.

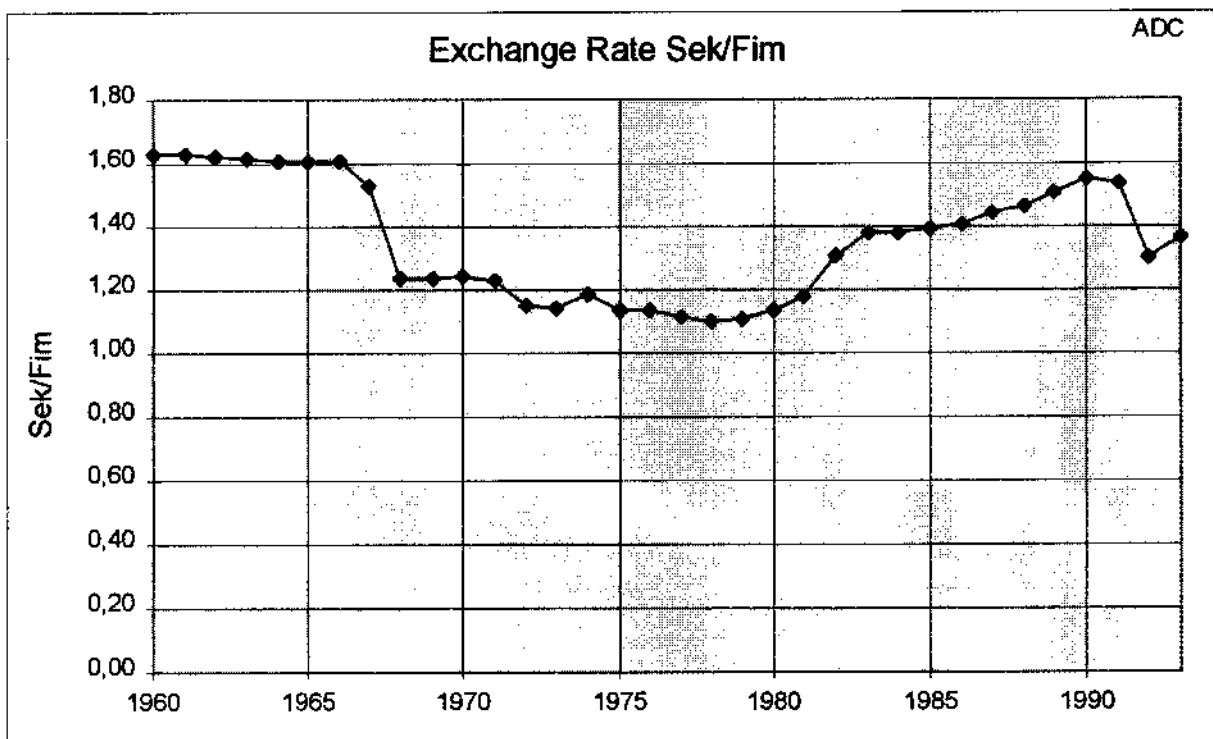


Today all the diagrams of market shares converge momentarily to a 50/50 relation. The differences in capacity and product have diminished by the introduction of the so called Super Ferries. In 1992 the trend of growing passenger market was broken by the recession in Sweden and Finland. In addition to that the Estonia catastrophe suddenly changed the passengers attitude to the traffic. The instant loss of passengers caused by those two factors acting simultaneously, had never been experienced before in this traffic. By reducing ticket fares the number of passengers has been restored, but still the economic result is not what it used to be.

Economic factors



Explanations to the development are primary found in Finland and not so much in Sweden. Although this RoRo/Passenger traffic was started in the Åland Sea, the driving force in the traffic has been the development of the Finnish economy.



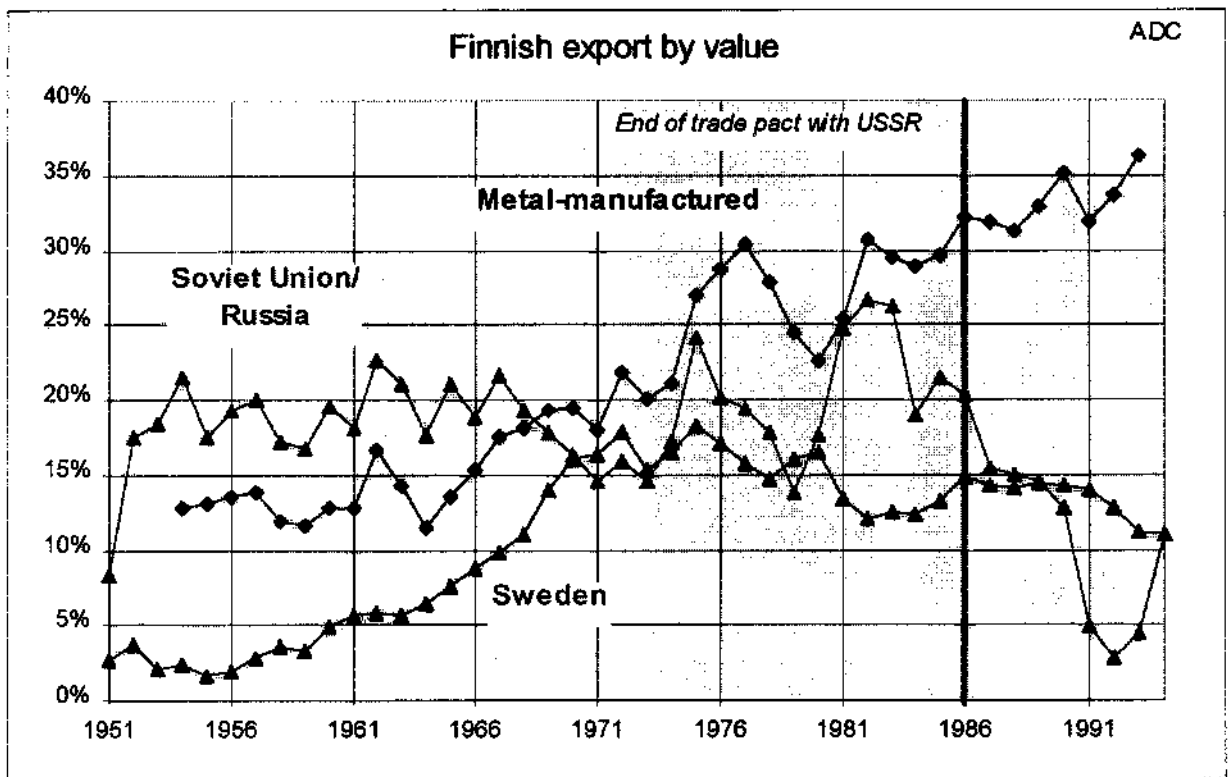
The traffic over Åland Sea between Sweden and Åland was elementary. The business idea was to make it easier to bring private cars between Sweden and Finland and to explore border trade. Border trade, meat and tax-free, soon made the traffic popular in Sweden. The Finnish people on the other hand were attracted by the low price of coffee and fruit-syrup in Sweden.

Fluctuations in currency exchange rates stimulates travelling in one or the other direction all the time.

When the traffic grew other economic factors got increasingly important. One was the "the big neighbour in East", Russia, that always had influenced the conditions in Finland.

When this traffic started, Finland was from transport point of view blocked Eastward by the Soviet union. Conventional ships' services connected Finland with the rest of the world, including Sweden. The constantly increased integration of Western industry and trade made rational transports an important factor in the competition. Rail-roads and conventional shipping services had difficulties in offering the quality standard required by high valued cargo (merchandises, semi-manufactured products etc.). On short and medium distances door-to-door truck transportation in combination with the RoRo ferries could offer the required service quality. In this case quality was expressed in terms of reliability, flexibility and short transit times.

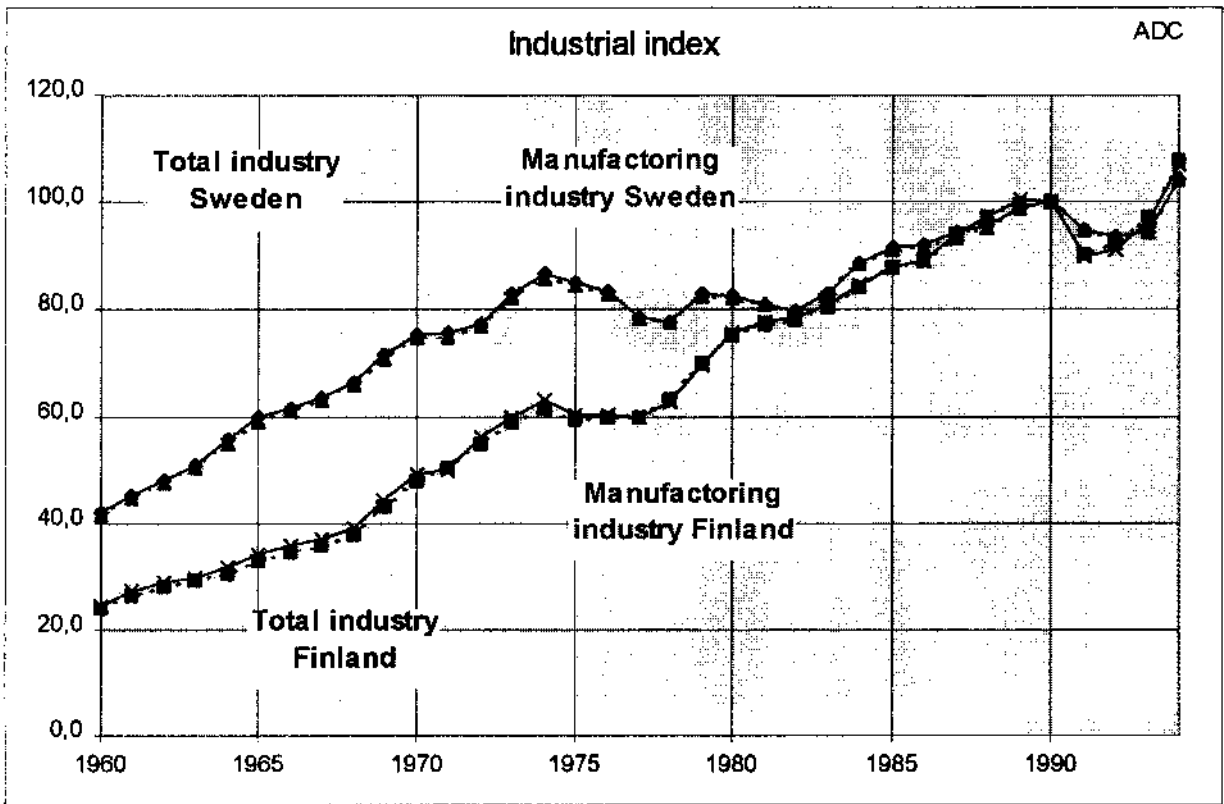
Thus a major infrastructural obstacle for the development of the Finnish trade and industry was solved by the frequent RoRo services over the Baltic Sea. Finland got by time a very reliable connection with Sweden and N.Europe.



The diagram "Finnish export", shows how the trade grew with Sweden during the 60's. Then the industrial activity of Finland continued to increase. The Swedish share in % of the total volume declined however somewhat when other markets grew faster.

The diagram "Finnish export Soviet Union and Sweden excluded" on page 20 shows that Finland has an extensive trade with other countries than their close neighbours (60- 80%), still though most high valued cargo pass to/from N.Europe via the ferry services between Finland and Sweden. In the last decades export from the Finnish forest industry represents increasing values.

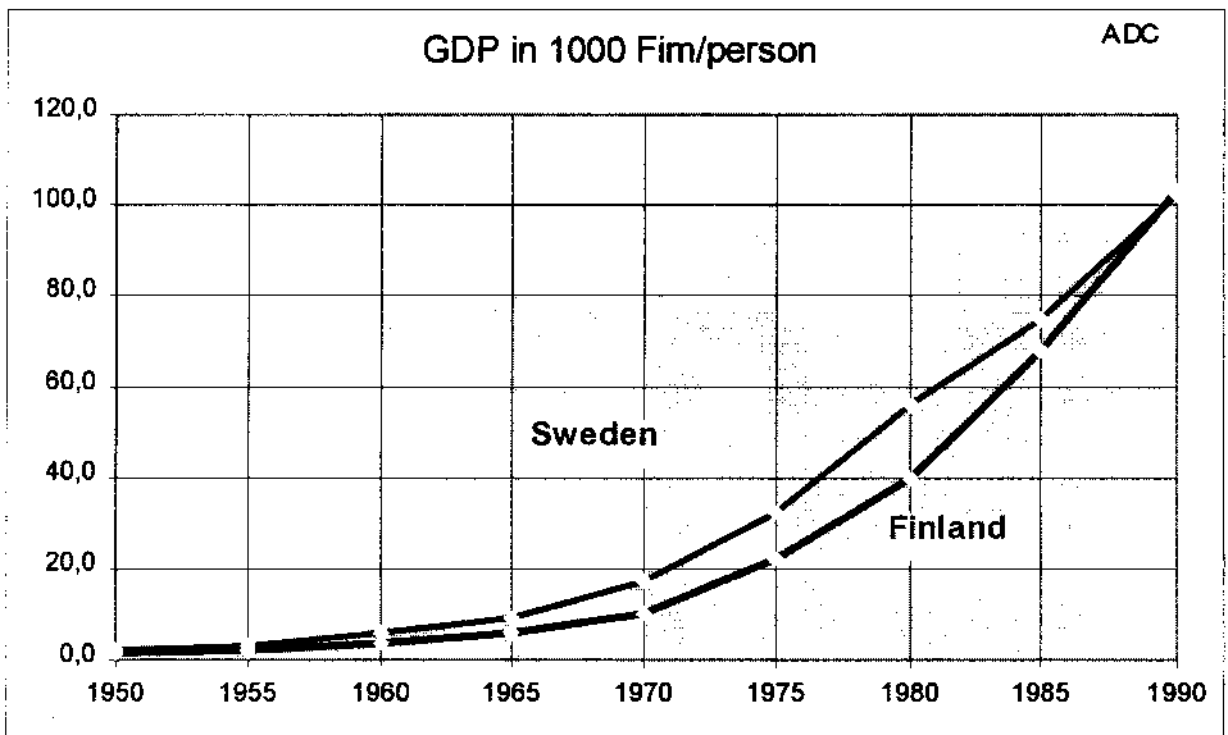
The increase of the truck fleet reflects to some extent the increased demand for flexible transports, but also the increased transport work that the highly specialised industries required.



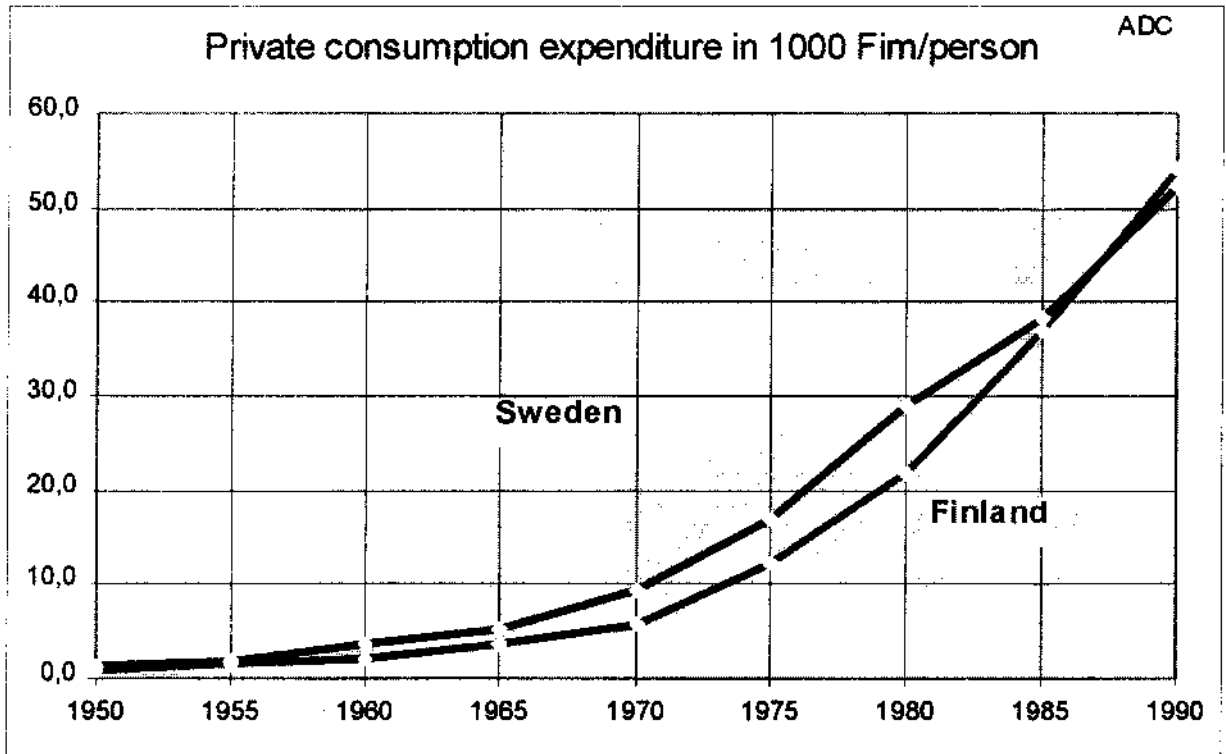
Industrial index (100% 1990) shows that industry in Finland had a faster expansion of the industrial sector than Sweden during the period 1978 to -82. During this time the quality of the transport service also improved a lot. In 1981 the reliability was close to what it is today.



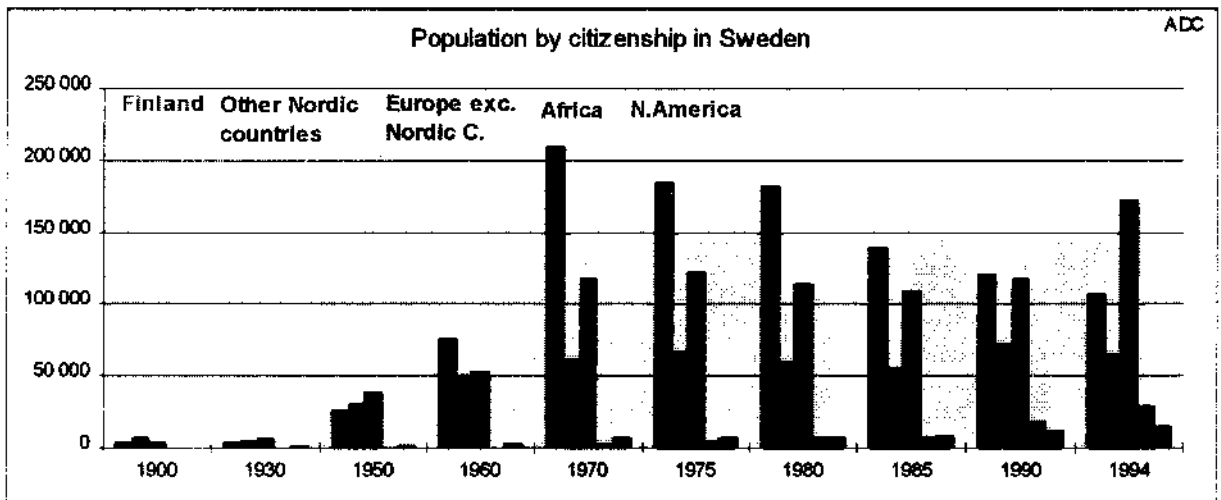
With the expansion of industry followed increased GDP. Sweden used to be ahead of Finland until today when GDP/person is practically the same for the two countries.



Private consumption expenditure /person shows a synchronised development curve.



Improved standard of living in Sweden and Finland in combination with prices within reach encouraged travelling. The lower price offered by Viking Line was a good supplement to the more expensive Silja Line standard. Though competition was hard there was a market for both lines.

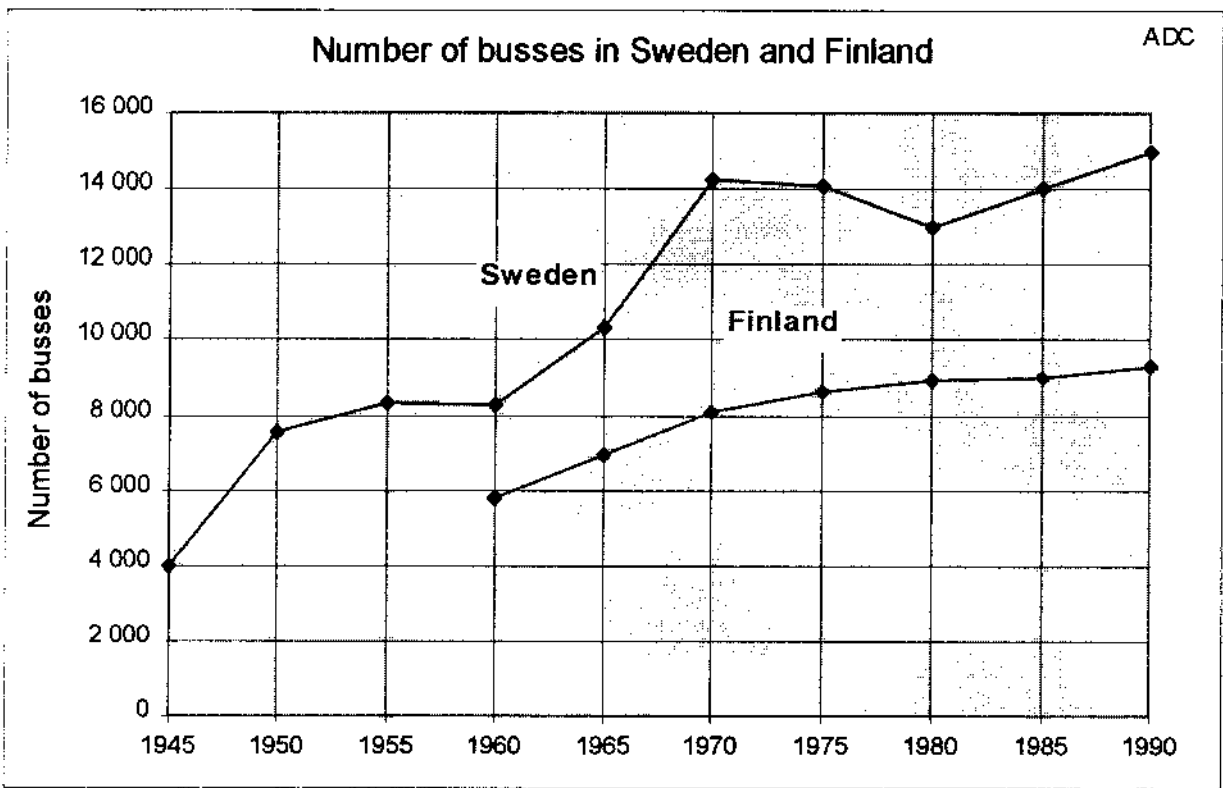


The Finnish colony in Sweden has always been big. Today the first and second generation of people originating from Finland living in Sweden is 443.000 persons. The improved ferry services made it much easier to see relatives and friends in the other country. Despite the big capacity the journeys before and after big holidays have to be booked long time in advance. Travelling to see relatives is however going on all the days of the whole year.

With the increased living standard, leisure trips for one or a couple of days to the other country became more frequent. The scheduling made it also possible to arrange attractive programs for tourist trips.

Taxation of tobacco- and alcoholic products in the Nordic Countries is high. To attract passengers by the low onboard tax-free prices was a part of the original business idea of Viking Line. Though tax-free still is important for the traffic, this argument has weakened by time and due to both countries membership in EU. Tax-free may be enjoyed in the future by including calls in Åland or Estonia. In Finland Estonia appears to be the new destination for tax-free travelling. Thus the Lines have for some time tried to focus on other attractions in order to maintain passenger volumes in the future.

Since 1960, almost every family has access to a private car, diagram page 9. When visiting the other country it was very convenient to bring the car onboard the ships. If the start and/or the end of the trip was not close to the ferry terminals this was a competitive alternative.



To travel by car became thus a common alternative. To bring the car on a ferry to Sweden and go further south in Europe became also an attractive alternative for the people living in Finland.

For those who didn't use a car various bus-trips were arranged in the neighbouring country.

Conceptual development

Almost all curves in the above diagrams show an upward trend from 1960 until today. The introduction of further developed passenger/ RoRo-cargo concepts has had good timing. Keeping in mind the difficulties to foresee the future, many great initiatives have been taken by the ship owners when building up this traffic.

An important factor for reducing the economical risks have been the circumstance that these ships have been attractive on the second hand market. The average life time of a ship in this trade used to be about seven years. After service in this trade the ships could in general be sold for the purchase price. Thus the costs for the huge investment finally were relatively small. For many years the ships worked like gigantic saving boxes. Today many claim, that this rule is no longer valid with the huge capacity of a Super Ferry. This has been said before and it remains to be seen if the second hand market, once again, has grown to also receive the Super Ferries.

The competition between the two lines made it important to react quickly on market signals. The owners were also motivated and able to adopt new conceptual ideas. Thus the tonnage was replaced frequently, ships were often rebuilt even when still in service. By that more or less constant modernisation took place. New functions and conceptual ideas were tried out and refined in a high tempo.

The owners tradition and competence and the advantage of easy access to a supporting infrastructure of marine expertise in the region were important key elements for the development. The Lines developed the concepts they believed attracted their targeted market. Silja Line defended by tradition the upper segment of the market and had the initiative in conceptual development in that sector, while Viking Line concentrated on concept that could attract ordinary people.

Silja Line aspired to a quality profile and Viking Line focused on ordinary people's value for money. This was also reflected in the organisations of the lines. Silja Line made more internal development work than Viking Line. Although Viking Line introduced new concepts for the trade they could in general enjoy a more relaxed position by monitoring the outcome of Silja Line's novelties before they made up their mind.

The shipping industry, shipyards and subcontractors, realised soon that this traffic represented a big and quality conscious market. Thus the lines were offered developing resources, in general free of charge. Even if several first class shipyards in the region closed down in the early 80's, the network of first class makers still remained in the area and N.Europe still is the centre in the world for building high class cruise ships and passenger ferries.

In the beginning of the competition the activities of Silja and Viking Line were quite different. Silja Line was the traditional carrier in the trade. Viking Line focused on developing an economical and uncomplicated transport alternative by rolling cars on and off the ships and transport deck-passengers. It wasn't considered necessary to offer the passengers cabins during the trip. Soon however, due to competition it became necessary to arrange cabins for truck drivers.

Silja Line's idea was that the RoRo concept had to be combined with cabins of high standard and first class service for the passengers. By time the differences in prices and concepts of the two lines have diminished and today many have difficulties to see the differences.

Commercial concepts

The requirements have changed over the years and so also the response from the Lines market's. From the beginning the new-buildings have been purposely built in order to fit the particular market profiles of the Lines. Even though the ships accommodated several different commercial functions simultaneously, this shall not be associated with the *multi purpose philosophy* sometimes practised by ship owners who want to have the option to use a ship in alternative trades.

Passenger transport over The Åland Sea and the possibility to facilitate the transport of a car between Sweden and Åland/Finland were the primary objectives when Viking Line started. In the beginning border trade was important and e.g. the low coffee price in Sweden (see diagram page 17) generated numerous Finnish passengers for Viking Line. The main purpose was however to offer an uncomplicated transport alternative between the countries which could also be used by ordinary people for leisure travelling. Consequently the commercial concept was simplified.

In about 1970 Viking Line offered the same bed capacity as Silja Line, "calendar" page 27. To improve the passengers appreciation of the trip high quality a superior alternative compared with the li

market response on the new transport alternative introduced by Viking Line showed clearly that the market was elastic i.e. the right transport product generated more traffic. With more traffic the lines could use bigger ships and get benefits from economy of scale and then offer more competitive products to the market, and so on in a happy spiral.

The development in the countries created new demands on transports and the supply of transport services in the trade grew synchronously with the demand.

Silja Line was traditionally the main provider of sea transports between the countries. The option to bring a car on the passenger ship was for them in the beginning more a service than a sales point. Their passenger concept had then similarities with what was offered to travellers on the Atlantic Liners between Europe and USA; good cabin standard, excellent food- and service concepts and sometimes passengers were even divided into different classes.

Silja Line responded rapidly to Viking Line's introduction of the RoRo concept. In May 1961 Silja line introduced the first purposely built Passenger/ RoRo cargo/ Ferry in this trade, M/S Skandia. The next year the sister ship M/S Nordia came. Silja Line had noted the "newcomers" almost immediate success during the summer. On December 23 the same year (1959) the order of M/S Skandia was signed with Wärtsilä shipyard in Helsinki. The entire freeboard deck was reserved for truck- and car transportation. With hoistable car decks the cargo deck got two functions, increased deck area for private cars in high season and enough height for trucks in low season. In summertime the ships made so called double trips, a round trip in 24 hours, calling the ports of Norrtälje - Mariehamn - Turku. The service speed 18 knots made the time in port short. Consequently a drive trough solution with stern- and bow ramps was arranged for the cargo handling. This was also a convenient solution for the drivers, the frequency of damages to vehicles also showed to be low.

The number of passengers, 1000 persons, was impressing and still is when comparing with todays some 2500 passengers of a Super Ferry. There is however a big difference in standard. The reclinable seats for resting was at that time an appreciated standard for passengers travelling with M/S Skandia. Today most passengers have a private cabin on night trips. In the mid 80's Silja Line took the decision to not accept deck passengers any longer on night trips.

"Silja- and Viking Line" Calendar

Birger Jarl	1959	(Viking (0), Silje (0))	
SS Bore	1960	(Bore (0))	
Skandia (106)	1961	(Alandsfärjan (0))	Kapellkärr
Nordia (209), Svea Jarl (250)	1962	Apollo (0) (Drotten (72))	Winter traffic Kapellsk., Pargas
Ilmarinen, Floria (cargo only)	1963	(Visby)	
(Holmia)	1964	Kapella (120), (Visby (245), Stena Baltica)	
Fennia (296)	1965	(Viking 2 (0))	
Botnia (162)	1966	Apollo (222), Viking 1 (206), Marella (172)	
Floria (186)	1967	Viking 3 (226), Diana (240)	
	1968	Viking 4 (198), Aurella (328)	New route for Viking Line -73 Stockholm - Mariehamn - Turku
Floria (186)	1969		New route for Viking Line Stockholm - Helsinki -74
Aallotar (412), Svea Regina (412)	1970	Viking 5 (410), (Viking 6 (432))	
Bore I (377)	1971	(Apollo III (500))	
	1972	(Alandsfärjan)	
Svea Corona, Wellamo, Bore Star	1973	Diana II (328), Aurella (750)	
(810)	1974	Rosella, Viking Song, Viking Sally, Viking Saga	
	1975	(740) (1223)	
	1976	(Aurella (328), Alandsfärjan (0))	
	1977	(Alandsfärjan(0))	
	1978	(Alandsfärjan(0))	
	1979	Mariella (2447), (Alandsfärjan (0))	New name: Viking Line
	1980	Olympia (2333)	
Finlandia (1544), Silvia Regina (1544)	1981	(Alandsfärjan (0))	
	1982	Aurella (328), Alandsfärjan (0)	
Svea (1625)	1983	Alandsfärjan(0))	
Wellamo (1937)	1984	(Alandsfärjan(0))	
	1985	Mariella (2447), (Alandsfärjan (0))	
Silja Serenade (2626) (Silja Star)	1986	Olympia (2333)	
Silja Symphony (2626)	1987	(Alandsfärjan (0))	
(3700)	1988	Aurella (2112)	
(Silja Europa, Silja Scandinavia)	1989	Athens (1712), Cinderella (2766), Isabella (2004)	
	1990	Kalypso (2165)	
ADC Support AB	1991		
Stockholm 1998	1992		
	1993		

Notes: Ships within brackets are not purpose built for the trade.
Figures in brackets are passenger bed capacity.

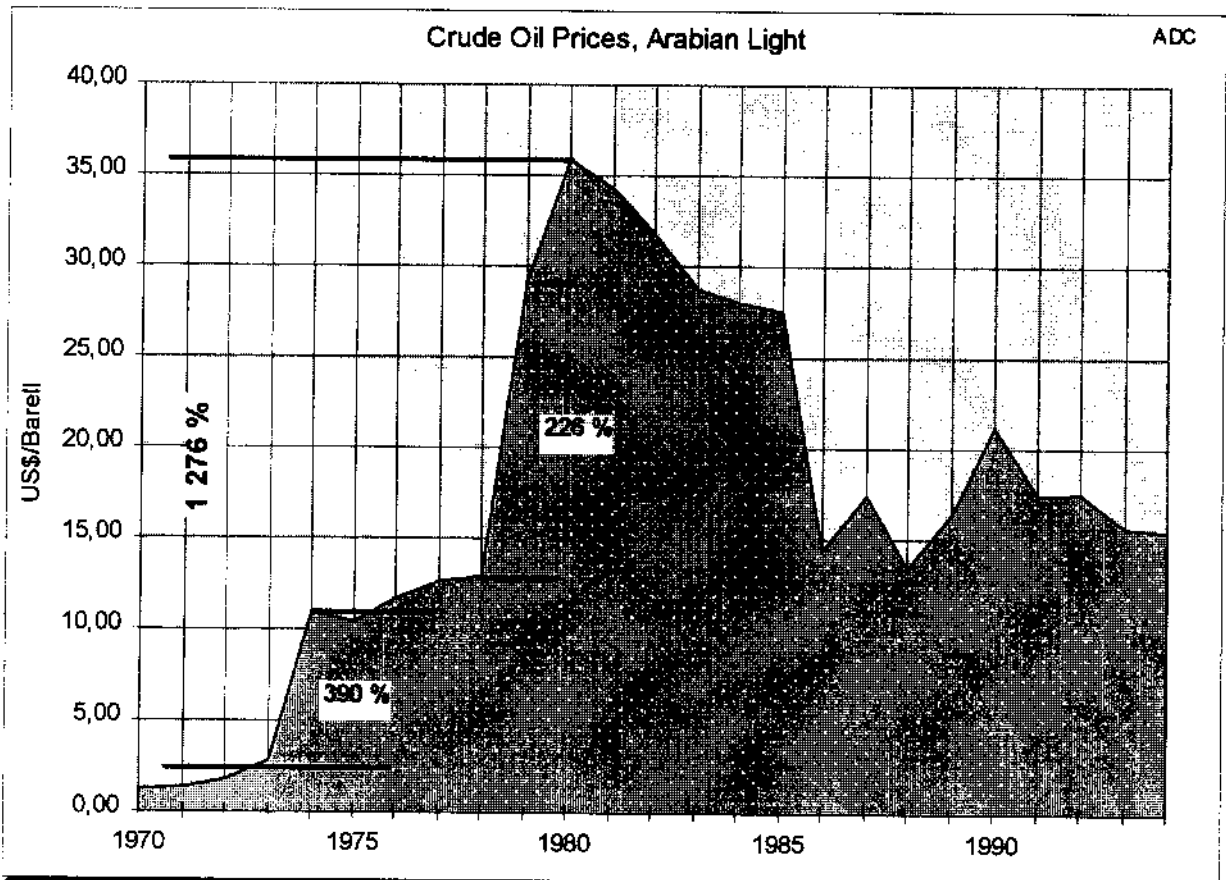
The easiest way to travel by sea between the region of Stockholm in Sweden, and Southern Finland has always been via the region of Turku in Finland. On the alternative route Helsinki - Stockholm, due to the distance, the ships can make just one single trip in 24 hours. The Turku route therefore has a character of transportation, whereas the Stockholm - Helsinki route has more of the glamour of connecting the two capitals.

The ships following after Skandia and Nordia had in principal the same basic arrangement. The difference was the increased space requirement, improved comfort, more service and entertainment i.e. cabins, more private cars, more restaurants, shops and bars etc.

The key to the development of the traffic has been ability to offer attractive services in low-season. In high season for passenger traffic, about three months a year, the market is less sensitive to commercial concepts. In the beginning and the end of vacation periods some trips are peaking then the matter is concentrated to transport capacity. Due to this unbalance in demand during the year it has been economically necessary to make the ships more attractive in low season. The option to charter ships in high season has always been there but then supply of suitable ships to acceptable prices is very restricted.

In 1964 Viking Line got the first purpose built ship M/S Apollo. That was the first ship with ice breaking capacity in the fleet of Viking Line. Thus in the winter 1965 -66 Viking Line also opened winter traffic, Kapellskär (Sw) - Pargas (Fi). At that time the traffic had pure transport character, as late as in the early 70's both Silja- and Viking Line gave discount on weekend trips.

During the 70's serious competition between Silja- and Viking Line started. Then both lines received a lot of new-buildings and Viking Line opened new services on Stockholm - Turku, Stockholm - Helsinki in direct competition with Silja Line. In order to feed the growing fleets, both lines also started to build up relatively extensive marketing organisations. At that time weekend trips became attractive, consequently the prices on weekend trips increased and discount was instead given on weekday trips.



During the 70's oil crises choked the shipping world, so also the ferry traffic. The first chock came in 1973 and the second in 1978. Cost for bunker was suddenly a strategic important factor in shipping. From 1973 to 1974 price of bunker increased with almost 400% and from 1978 to -79 with about 200%. All together bunker prices increased from 1973 to 1980 with about 1.300%.

Late in the 70's, discussions in Sweden started about "the right of participation in decision-making". Employees should be informed and give their views on important decisions for the company/ organisation. That created a lot of meetings. The discussion had roots in the unique Swedish tradition of educating adults. Federal support for adult education had existed for decades. A similar system was now built up to finance employees education in joint decision making.

These ideas were after some time combined with similar ideas from management schools, learning that management and employees should come closer and develop coordinated and motivated acting. The human resources should be developed. To implement such philosophies it was no longer sufficient with meetings in the offices, conferences had to be held. Such conferences required thorough preparations and in many cases the social off duty, get-to-gather, was the most important object of the conference.

Conference trips shall not be mixed up with group travelling. Such travelling has been going on all the time and there is no significant traditional difference between the countries with regard to group travellers.

Although occupancy rates of the ships were stable and high, the drastic increase of the oil price eroded the profits of the lines. There was however no serious sign of weakening markets for the traffic. The possibilities to increase prices were limited. In this situation there were two options, one was to go for economy of scale and the other was to improve occupancy rates in low seasons by making the ships more attractive.

Silja Line tried to combine that with the ships they received in 1975, two years after the first oil crisis, "The French Sisters". The three newbuildings were considerably bigger and such a high standard had never been seen before in this RoRo trade. With these ships conference centre was for the first time in the trade arranged onboard, 143 seats distributed on 4 conference rooms. Certainly meeting rooms had been arranged onboard before but then it had just been a service item. Now conferences with hostess service and conference facilities were tested as a business concept. Two years later in 1977, the second oil crisis came. This time Viking Line was active, six new ships were ordered. In the design, economy of scale were applied. Two ships were delivered in 1979 and four in 1980. Among these were **M/S Diana II**, delivered 1979 nowadays **M/S Mare Balticum** in the Tallinn - Stockholm trade, and **M/S Viking Sally**, delivered 1980, she should later on become **M/S Estonia**. Both ships had extremely short delivery time, less than one year. This can be compared with the two years that is normal. **M/S Viking Sally** was an enlarged version of **M/S Diana II**. **M/S Viking Sally** was about 15 meter longer and had a different superstructure that gave the ship a gross tonnage of 15.566 m³, to be compared with **M/S Diana II**'s 11.537 m³. The engine installation and the hull form except for the bulbous bow was the same.

This massive introduction of new buildings aimed also to strengthen the market position of Viking Line against the competitor Silja Line.

Viking Line introduced conference facilities with the ships M/S Viking Song, -Sally and - Saga. This time however, the conference centre was a multipurpose area, in the evenings it was transformed to a night club.

Silja Line had three still relatively modern ships delivered in 1975. They took a cautious position and spent more time on developing their concept for the future. Two new ships for the Helsinki Line was ordered, M/S Finlandia and M/S Silvia Regina. With these ships the conference concept has further developed. The ships had a big "dining & dancing" saloon that should show to be a very good compliment to the conference centre.

The positive response from the Swedish conference market surprised most people in the trade. As a spill over effect conference groups also begun to fill up the meeting rooms that had always existed on the ships in the trade. The key to the Super Ferries was found.

Then the conference capacity was increased by retrofits on existing ships. In 1985 both lines received their first "conference" ships. Silja Line got M/S Svea for the Turku line and Viking Line got M/S Mariella for the Helsinki line.

The conference concept offered to the Swedish market was very competitive. Thus conference groups evened out fluctuations in occupancy rates over the year. The conference concepts was further developed to include exhibitions and even sometimes advancing to close to congress dimensions. At the same time cruise ferry concepts were developed. Some shares from the leisure market should also even out occupancy rates. This time also the market in Finland was addressed. This development resulted in the Super Ferries of today. Still though the ships provide a basic transport service between the countries. The various passenger concepts for low seasons made cost effective just-in-time transports possible. Thus this traffic has got the record of being the most reliable transport system in the region.

The Estonia catastrophe resulted in an immense loss of passengers on these routes. Conference groups disappeared almost instantly and still one year after, the big conference groups have not returned. Until recently conferences have been a typical Swedish activity but now the Finnish conference market is picking up and starts to use the ships.

Finally some about the cargo transport concept. Conventional RoRo ferries have served this trade all the time, thus balancing the flow of cargo. The economy of the RoRo Cargo/ Passenger Ferries is a symbiotic combination of three components 1/3 passenger tickets, 1/3 tax free and 1/3 cargo. The transportation of cargo has been "subsidised" by the two other activities. The concept for cargo once introduced by M/S Skandia is principally unchanged. The lines have found a compromise in the scheduling that truckers adopt to. Today the traffic is a high quality link in the industrial network of just-in-time door-to-door transports.

This transport service for high valued products is an important factor for the effectiveness of the economy in the region. The drivers also appreciate their own specially designed spaces onboard.

The cargo carrying capacity of the ships have not increased as much as the passenger capacity. Supplementary RoRo services offers good transport alternatives, and so the requirements from the market are balanced.

The stagnation of cargo carrying capacity has to do with the planning of such ships and the requirements of efficient cargo handling. As passenger service always has had a high priority in this trade, a second deck for cargo above or below the freeboard deck have not been motivated. Sometimes such space has been arranged for private cars. A private car deck is however, much easier to arrange as the strength requirements of decks and ramps as well as the requirements of turning radius for cars are much less than for trucks. Compromises between different commercial functions and technical solutions have up to today resulted in the freeboard deck still being the cargo deck. For the latest generation of ships, the freeboard deck is not even fully utilised for cargo. Cabins are arranged along the outside on both sides. When these ships were designed the experiences from the catastrophe of The Herald of The Free Enterprise was discussed. The motive for such an arrangement to reduce the ships sensitivity for water on RoRo deck was important for the decision to reduce the width of cargo deck. This is an example of how a safety aspect has influenced the design.

Technical concepts

Design philosophies

The two lines had different backgrounds for their technical development. Within the Silja sphere there was a long tradition in the trade. They had accepted and aspired to fulfill the responsibility of being the main provider of sea transports between the two countries.

Behind Viking Line there were also experienced ship owners. But their experiences mainly came from other trades. Even though Viking Line started as a entrepreneurship over the Åland Sea they soon learned the trade by exchanging professional experiences with colleagues from the competitor. From a technical point of view, the design philosophy of Viking Line has been to apply good ship building standard. There were some reluctance to apply solutions exceeding existing rules and regulations. But if there were good reasons such solutions were adopted. Thus both Lines contributed to the technical development.

Silja Line's design philosophy was to focus on functions more than rules and regulations. They concentrated on what they believed was required in their traffic in order to maintain their own unwritten quality standard. It happened that such solutions didn't cope with the existing rules and regulations. This was in general solved when reasons and solutions had been presented to the Administration and approval within the scope of IMO was given as "equivalent or better solution". Silja Line has in this way had impact on e.g. the Finnish/Swedish Ice Class, IMO's rules for fire protection, structural strength of fore ships with bow opening etc.

Viking Line however, was more receptive for new technical solutions developed in the shipping industry e.g. in spite of the ice conditions in this traffic they took the initiative to use barge typed aft body lines, high lift rudders, resiliently mounted main engines etc.

The turn around of ships (see the above "Calendar") indicates the two Lines different philosophy. Viking Line had a quicker turn around and got more opportunities for testing whereas Silja Line relied more on their development inhouse.

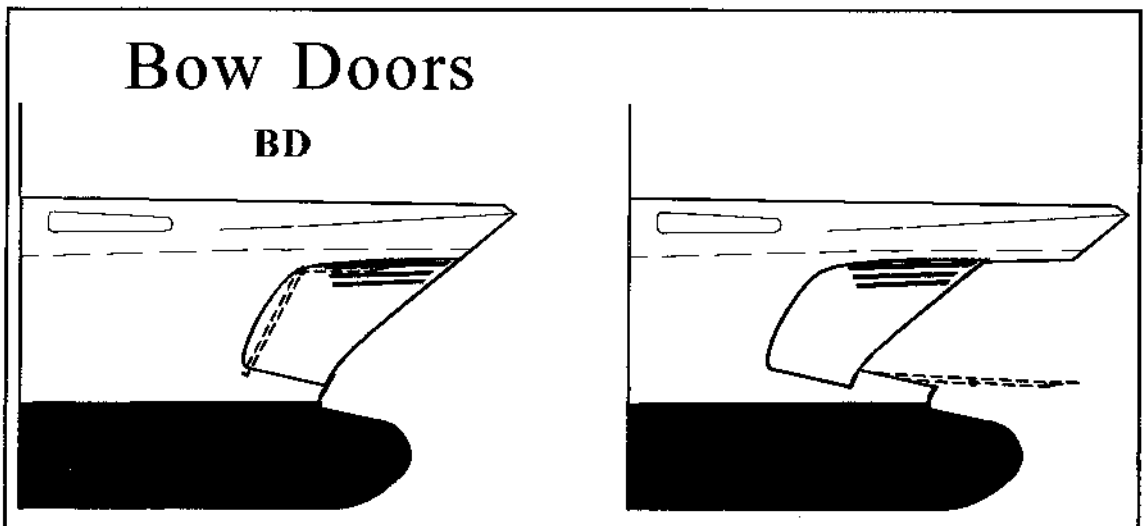
The cargo deck and -accesses

Ever since M/S Skandia the design of cargo decks is generally the same only detail design has developed, thus improving cargo handling and safety and environmental conditions on cargo deck.

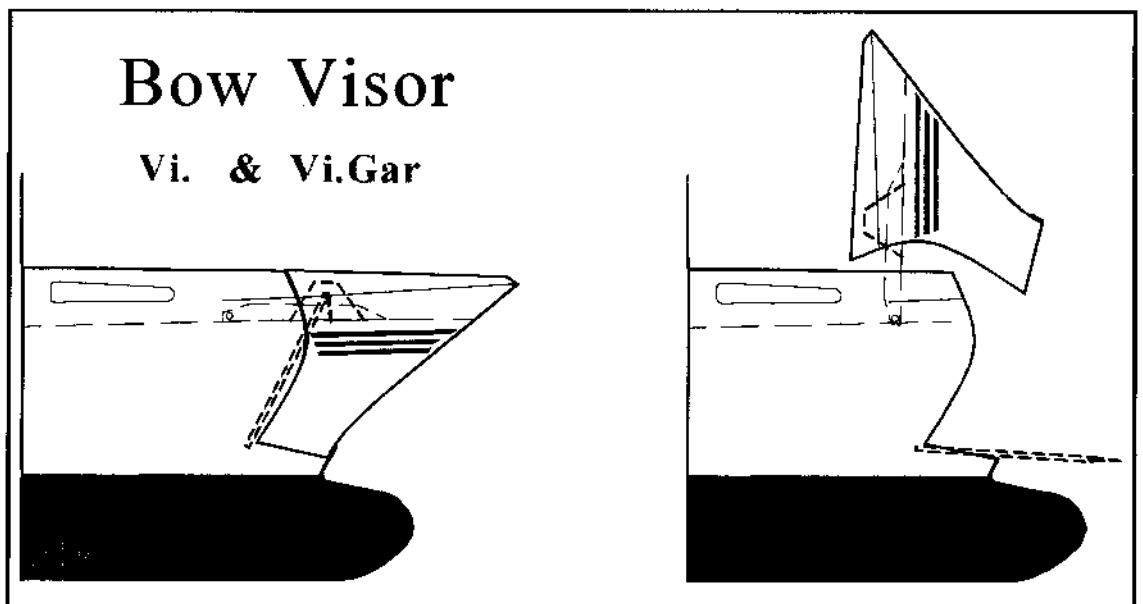
Stern ramps and stern openings have been improved but the design principal remain the same, i.e. in lowered position the ramp is a driving way and in the upper position the ramp seals the stern opening to cargo deck. This ramp is located in the aft most position of the ship with the aft collision bulkhead located forward of the stern ramp. The Joint Accident Commission will report about position of the forward collision bulkhead and the arrangement in the bow area of M/S Estonia. This overview will be limited to cargo deck accesses in fore ships.

On page 34 there is a scheme of the ships in the trade. There is indicated type of opening in the forward part of cargo deck. Bow openings can either be arranged by using a pair of doors or a so called visor.

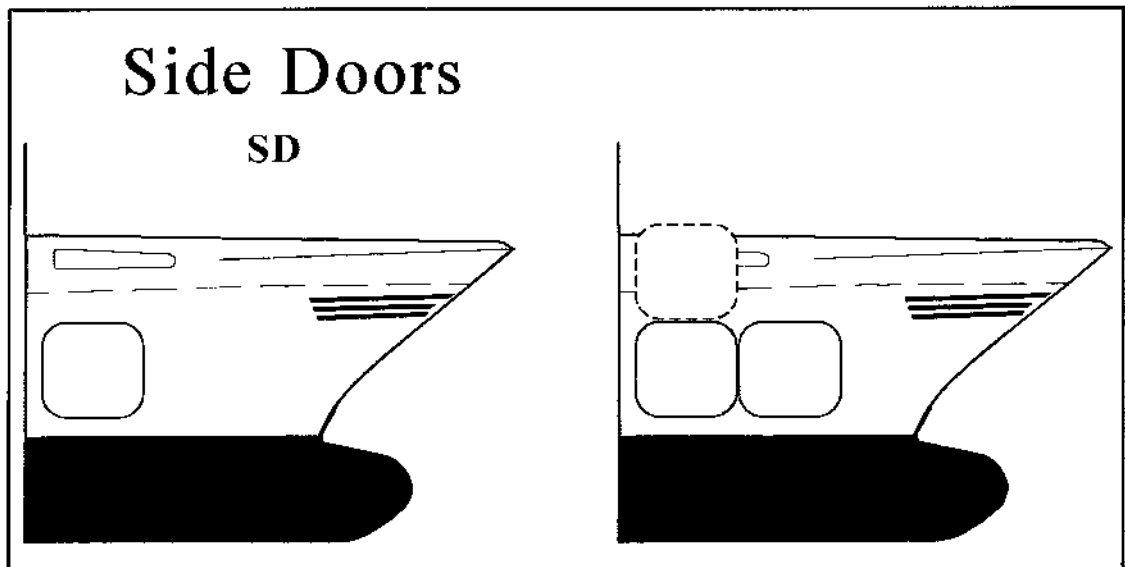
- **Bow doors** are normally hinged on heavy arms. The doors are opened by hydraulic cylinders moving the doors outside along the ship's sides. There are also some old designs where the doors are swinging. In closed position, pressure forces acting on the doors are transferred to the ship's hull via reinforced supports. Though the framework along the contours of the doors absorb some forces, the primary function is to keep the sea away from the space between the ramp and the doors. The primary function of locking devices is to prevent the doors from falling out from the ship.



- A **bow visor** forms the bow on a ship. The visor is normally hinged on the forecastle deck and is opened upwards by hydraulic cylinders. The visor's supporting structures in the hull doesn't prevent the visor from opening. Only the locking devices have that function. The space between the visor and the ramp is sealed to the sea along the visors contouring frame. Depending on the geometry of that frame and the elasticity of the visor the frame may absorb some of the forces acting on the visor.



- **Side door(-s)** are used for many purposes on ships. Side doors in closed position rest on a supporting and sealing framework in the hull. The doors are opened by hydraulic cylinders moving the doors horizontally or sometimes vertically to the outside of the ship.



In the scheme below Vi marked ships have a bow visor that from safety point of view is independent of the ramp. To get access to cargo deck, two barriers has to be passed.

Vi.Gar marked ships have a bow visor design including a garage for stowing the ramp. From safety point of view the visor and the ramp can be regarded as a single barrier, the design is integrated.

BD indicates bow doors, two independent barriers has to be passed to open the ship, the doors and the ramp.

SD indicates side door, one barrier has to be passed to open the ship. The strength of the side door arrangement should be equal with the ship's side.

"Silja- and Viking Line" Bow Arrangements	
Birger Jarl, Lo/Lo	1959 (Viking, Slitte)
SS Bore SD	1960 (Boge SD)
Skandia Vi.	1961 (Alandsfärjan)
Nordia Vi., Svea Jarl SD	1962 Apollo Vi. (Drottin)
Floria Lo/Lo	1963 (Visby Vi)
Ilmatar SD	1964 Kapella Vi., (Visby Vi., Stena Baltica Vi.)
(Holmia Vi.)	1965 (Viking, 2 Vi.)
Fennia Vi.	1966 Apollo Vi. Gar, Viking I Vi. Gar, Marella Vi.
Botnia Vi.	1967 Viking 3 Vi. Gar, Diana Vi. Gar
Floria Vi. Gar	1970 Viking 4 Vi. Gar, Aurella Vi. Gar
Aallotar BD, Svea Regina BD	1971 Viking 5 Vi. Gar, (Viking 6 Vi.)
Bore I Vi. Gar	1972 (Apollo III SD)
Svea Corona, Wellamo, Bore Star	1973 (Alandsfärjan Vi.)
Vi.	1974 Diana II Vi. Gar, Turella Vi. Gar
Wellamo BD	1975 Rosella, Viking Song, Viking Salt, Viking Saga
Silja Serenade BD, (Silja Star)	1976 Vi. Gar Vi.
Silja Symphony BD	1977 (Alandsfärjan Vi.)
BD	1978 The 2nd Oil Crisis
(Silja Europa, Silja Scandinavia)	1979
	1980
	1981
	1982
	1983
	1984
	1985
	1986
	1987
	1988
	1989
	1990
	1991
	1992
	1993

Notes: SD = Side Doors, BD = Bow Doors
 Vi. Gar = Visir & Ramp-garage Vi = Independent Visir
 Vi. Gar = Visir & Ramp-garage and barrier

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 Stockholm 1995

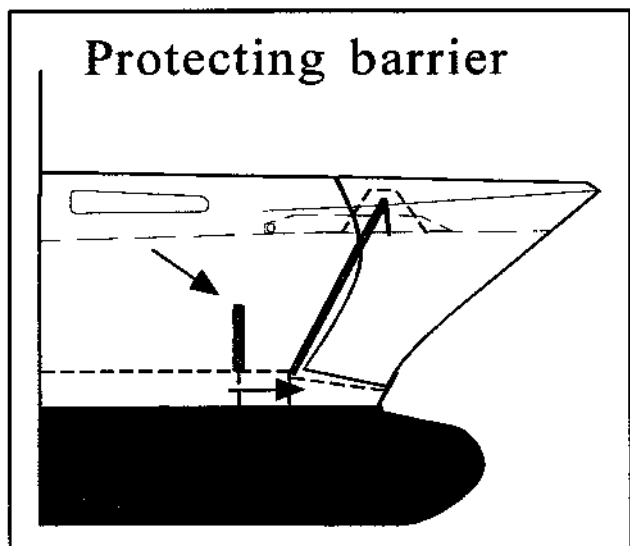
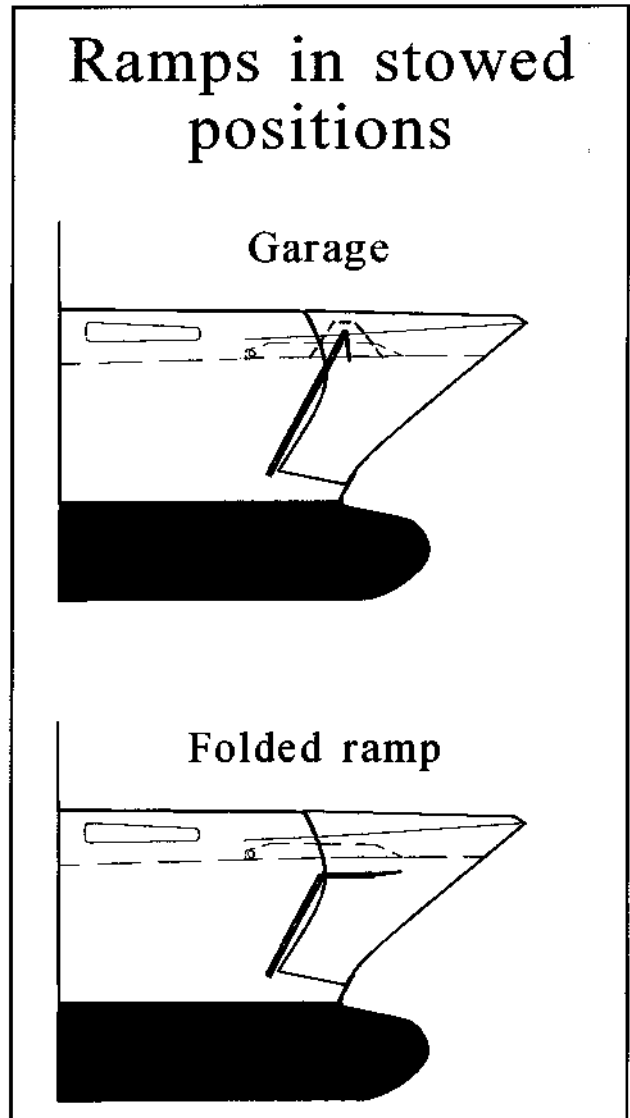
On the sketches of the openings the ship is shown with a bulbous bow. In the trade Apollo from 1970 was the first ship with a bulb. Without having specially designed landing ramps it was, for the ships with bulb necessary to arrange a longer bow ramp. Generally the height in the fore-ship was not sufficient to accommodate the full length of the ramp when raised.

There were two possibilities to accommodate a long ramp, either to make the forward part of the ramp foldable or simply to increase the height by arranging a garage on the above deck in which the ramp could be stowed.

In order to make the design simple and the operation uncomplicated the solution with the garage used to be more frequent. Then the garage was built on the deck of the visor. Consequently the two construction elements were integrated. Accordingly the ship had then in practice just one protecting barrier against the sea.

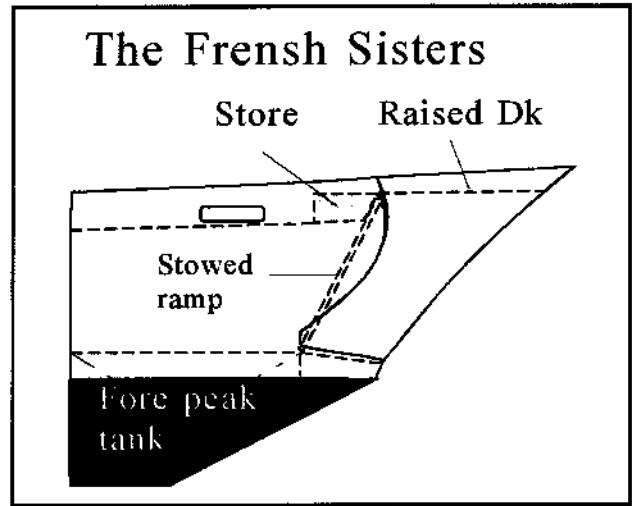
The other solution was to make the uppermost part of the ramp foldable forward under the mooring deck. The shaping of the bow limited the length of the folded part. This was also in practice an "integration" of the visor and the ramp. Thus if the visor for some reason was moved outside its normal track it could affect the folded part of the ramp.

There was also a solution aiming to reduce the required length of the ramp. The pivoting point of the ramp was simply forward and thus could the ramp be made shorter. Often this was not sufficient so this was often combined with the above described arrangements. When the ramp was moved forward the ramp couldn't in general fulfill the requirements as an extension of the forward collision bulkhead as specified in SOLAS. That had to be compensated. To arrange a 2,3 m high extra barrier behind the ramp was then considered as an equivalent solution to the rules in SOLAS.



M/S Estonia had a garage built on the visor to accommodate the upper part of the ramp. The ramp was moved forward and therefore did not fulfill the rules as an extension of the collision bulkhead. The arrangement could have complied with the rules of SOLAS if an additional barrier had been arranged.

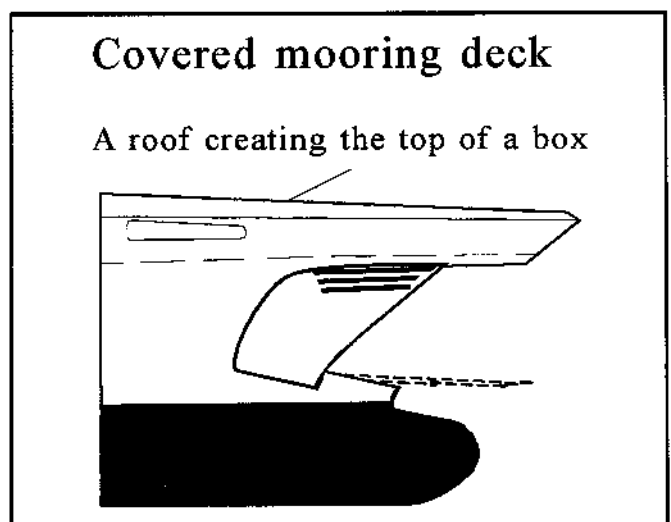
The "French Sisters" Svea Corona, Wellamo and Bore Star had an interesting solution. Instead of the garage a store was arranged on the fore castle deck. The ramp was stowed towards the forward bulkhead of that store. The foremost part of the forecastle deck belonging to the visor was then raised to the same level as the roof of that store. Thus the ramp and the visor was no longer an integrated design.



From design point of view, visors and bow doors is shaping the bow of the ship. Properly designed the bow shape would contribute to good sea keeping performance. Although it is the ambition, it is practically impossible, to keep the space forward of the ramp completely dry, but the construction shall prevent rough sea from penetrating the space between the bow and the ramp. The ramp on the contrary, has to tighten against the frame. When under way it is normal that some water in certain sailing conditions is sloshing on the fore peak tank top in front of the ramp. If the sealing of the ramp does not work properly, an early warning will be given by a wet cargo deck. Then this is normally corrected by operational reasons as soon as possible, far before that water will be a safety issue.

From a safety point of view bow doors are a better design than a bow visor. The external forces on a visor are acting in an opening direction. That means that a failure can result in an unsafe situation. On a bow door design the heavy forces from the sea on the contrary are closing the doors. Thus a failure doesn't result in an unsafe situation.

Most bigger relatively new Passenger/ RoRo cargo/ Ferries have bow doors. In some cases the impact forces from sea have been underestimated and the supporting structures have not been strong enough. Consequently when such doors have been overloaded the construction has jammed making the doors difficult to open. This is an example of how a failure didn't result in an unsafe situation.



The consequence of a properly designed supporting structure for a bow door arrangement is often that the forward mooring deck is covered. Thus a stiff box construction provides the foundation of the supports absorbing vertical forces. It has not been difficult to get acceptance for such arrangements in this traffic as this reduce the problem with ice and snow on mooring deck wintertime. An other advantage is that the risk to ship "green water" on fore castle deck is avoided. The forces acting on the bow door's locking devices are not just the mass forces of the doors. Under some circumstances the water flow in the bow region can cause suction forces on the surface of the door. These forces, are however much less than the pressure caused by sea impacts on the bow.

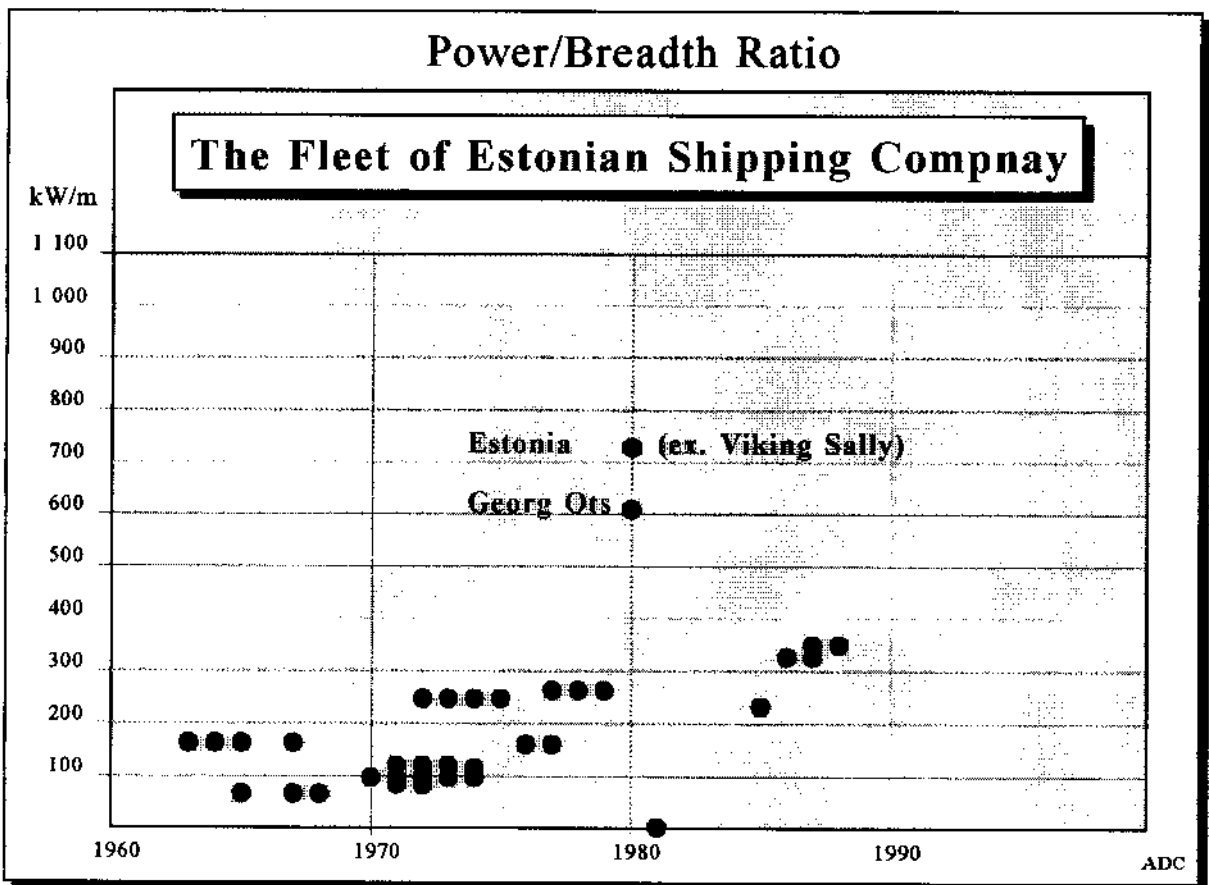
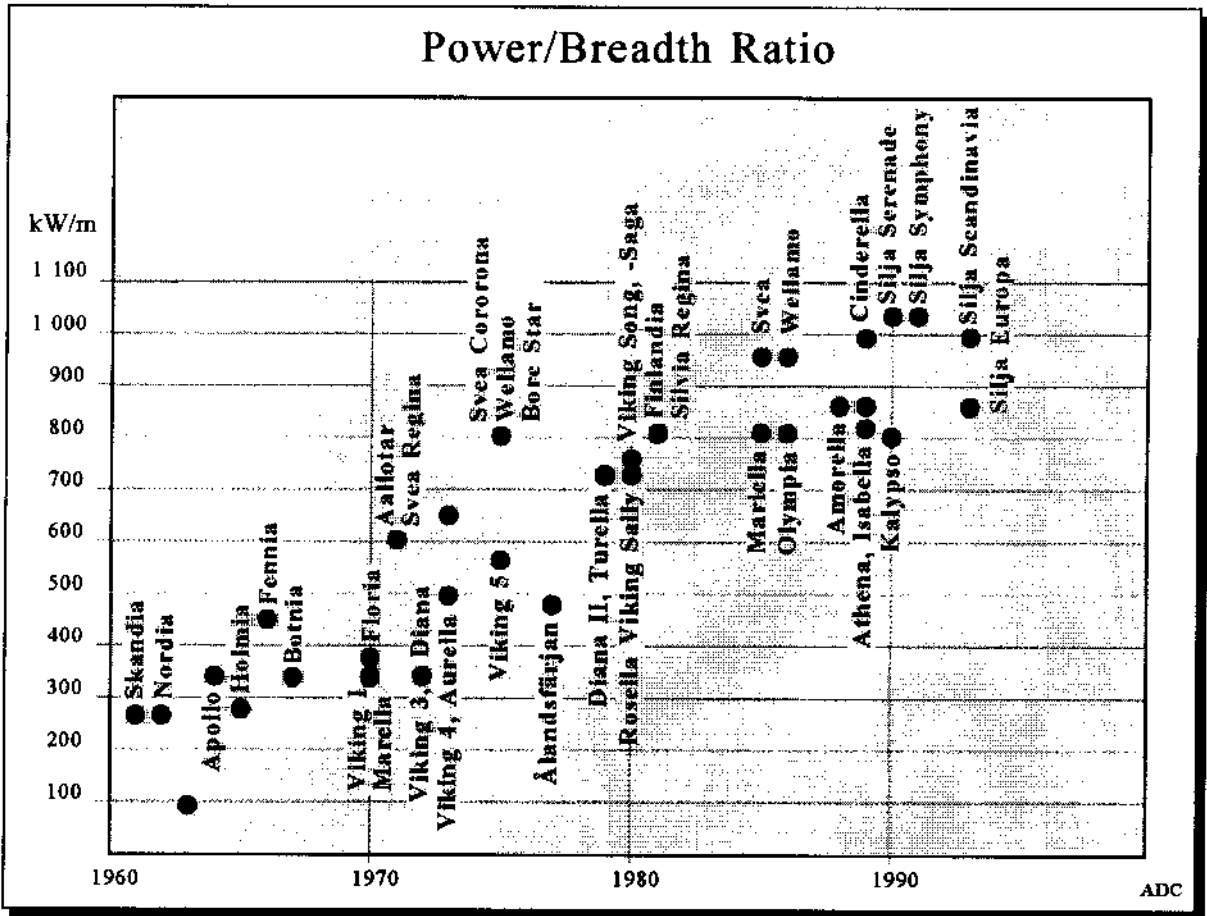
Safety and redundancy

After the second oil crisis the size of ships in the trade grew considerably . Also some of the tradition regarding suitable bow shapes for the Baltic Sea was lost. The challenging bow flare of M/S Estonia is an example of that. Another example is a small local knuckled flare some meter above the water line that M/S Finlandia/ Silvia Regina had when delivered. This was a cavity that captured waves. Very high pressure was built up in the cavity and when the energy was released water was shot far away from the ship. Even during normal sea conditions passenger experienced that as explosions and many had difficulties to sleep. This was quickly redesigned by Silja Line. That incident showed the importance passenger comfort. Ever since passenger comfort is a very important aspect when the route is planned. Silja Line also made efforts to soften bow shapes on the following ships.

During the 60's and 70's the conceptual development of deep sea shipping was very fast. In ship design the laws of nature was often violated when struggling for maximising transport productivity. Also the ship yards wanted to offer high productive ships in terms of cargo carrying capacity and high trial speeds. Cost for bunker had at that time low priority an the marine engines available could deliver the required power. Ship engines were turbo charged already in the 50's, the car industry begun with that in the 80's. The design philosophy many times was to build a ship like a wrapping around the cargo with easy accesses for cargo handling. Thereafter the necessary power was installed. To improve productivity on the ship yards flat panels were used as much as possible. The result of all this was boxed shaped ships with low hydrodynamic efficiency and bad sea keeping performance.

Consequently most Owners in the West also learnt that the engine power of "modern" ships could endanger the ship if the power resource was not handled gently. The diagram below shows the ratio of ship power to breadth over the years, in this traffic.

The ratio just mirrors the potential a ship has to maintain speed through rough sea. Since also other factors are influencing on the ships performance in rough sea the plotting in the diagrams shall just be regarded as indications.



The crew of M/S Estonia (M/S Viking Sally) was recruited from Estonian Shipping Company (ESCO). The diagram shows the corresponding power/breadth ratio of the ESCO fleet in early 1993.

Ships navigation and operation at sea was before The Estonia catastrophe not considered as a main risk factor. The routines were well proven and it was no doubt the ships should be seaworthy. Safety was focused on all the time. Checking lists for operation of the ships were made and followed as far as practical. The two competitors agreed on how the ships should cooperate in confined waters. A near accident report system was introduced but at the time it was no success due to that the integrity of individual persons could not be safely guaranteed. The seagoing personnel exchanged however a lot of vital information of how to handle the ships safely.

Until the mid 80's the technical development dominated the owners' efforts to make the ships safer. Redundancy and single point failure i.e. multi engine arrangements and back up solutions had been applied from the beginning. Techniques and routines to minimise risks for black out (powerless ship) were developed. In case of a black out there was a lot of technical systems available and prepared routines to assure safe handling of the ship. For the first time in commercial shipping computer aided navigation systems were introduced etc. etc.

Although safety against fire was improved for shipping in general, these operators took fire risks even more serious. The local fire brigade onboard the ships solved many fire incidences on the ships with minimal consequences. Serious fires occurred but in these cases the ships were out of traffic, docking etc. Thus the Lines had a leading position in preventing and fighting fires, both from hardware (structural and equipment) and software (routines and handling) point of view. To ensure safe handling of the ship in a damage condition extensive training programs were run onboard.

Cooperating accident training with land forces was routine both on the Swedish and the Finnish side. Some exercises were made in full scale e.g. including Swedish and Finnish helicopters, fire brigades from shore on road ferries etc. For example, the experiences from an exercise at Korpo in the Åland Archipelago contributed to the decision in Finland to renew the helicopter fleet.

In fact some of these exercises emanated from discussions from mid 80's about how the impossible accident should be handled. "The accident that couldn't happen", that happened M/S Estonia. This was concluded by stating; if it is hard weather it doesn't matter how many the ships are in the area. The only assistance they can give is to serve as On Scene Commander, and to receive and treat distressed people from helicopters. The ships had already at that time developed routines for sending sick passengers from the ships with helicopter to hospitals. A result of that discussion was however that it was decided to make the electrical motors for hoisting lifeboats stronger. Before, these motors were just able to lift the lifeboats onboard when exercising, now the motors should be able to lift a lifeboat filled with rescued people.

The list of safety measures can be made longer. In the end of the 80's both lines formalised the safety work by establishing permanent functions in the organisations.

Some major accidents as e.g. M/S Herald of the Free Enterprise, M/S Scandinavian Star put passenger safety into focus and the public pressure on authorities to do something increased. Thus a lot of the rules and regulations for ships were revised and for the first time requirements on ship owners organisation were formulated in the so called ISM-Code, the International Ship Management Code for safe ship operation.

The collective record of Silja- and Viking Line from 1960 to 1995 is five killed passengers on 107 million passenger single trips i.e. one casualty per almost 18 million single trips. This can be compared with the risk to be struck by the lightning when living in UK, that has been calculated to be 1 in 10 million. These five casualties was caused in one accident, it was one ship running into a cabin of another ship. The reason was that the captains had misunderstood how the ships should pass each other in a narrow section of a fairway.

EPILOGUE

The purpose with the description of The Baltic Phenomenon, from which M/S Estonia emanates, has been to mirror the atmosphere in which the ship were designed and operated. It is also an history of how competition force the two rivals to adopt to the market situation in the trade and thereby discovering new market segments.

The economical situation and the extensive know-how of the trade, formal and informal network of contacts between specialists in the region have contributed to give this ferry services a leading position in the world. This is not just concerning the commercial concept development but also from a safety and ship design point of view. The traffic has been pioneer in many safety areas e.g. navigation systems, fire systems, redundancy of vital technical systems, ships construction, onboard safety routines and training etc. Many of these ideas have later on been adopted by authorities as rules and regulations.

This overview with the explanations of the work with safety is contrasting to the Estonia catastrophe. The reason is that until this happened the design philosophy was that big volumes of water should not enter into cargo deck when the ship was properly closed at sea. When the catastrophe showed this was a false philosophy an intensive work started to make these ships safe regardless of water on cargo deck. In fact this work was already started after the catastrophe with the Herald of The Free Enterprise. Thus the latest purposely built ships in the trade manage to carry a lot of water on the cargo deck: M/S Silja Symphony and M/S Silja Serenade manage one meter and M/S Silja Europa has to sink before she capsizes.

Sea transportation is almost as important for the development of Estonia as it has been and still is for Finland. The Baltic Phenomenon is however not expected to be repeated in the Estonian trade. The different geographical situation of Estonia, is reason to expect a different development. The commercial development irrespectively, such traffic will be included in the discussions and the development of safety- and environmental standards for the region.

Stockholm in December 1995

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