Which way to Kaer Morhen?

If you haven't noticed it yet, we are huge fans of charts. Some of us also fancy reading a gripping fantasy novel. And what has our journal to do with this lit genre? Maps, of course! Grab and open any fantasy book, and there is a good chance one will embellish the publication. You know, to get you even more immersed in the given universe. Most recently, the Department of Political and Historical Geography of the University of Warsaw has released **The world of the Witcher** map. However, it differs from the standard stylised fantasy charts. It is an actual map, with all the political and geographical details such as landforms (incl. height above sea level) or localities depicted according to population. Although there are many Witcher maps out there, among others from the CD Projekt Red video games, this one is the first of its kind. While Geralt's transportation means were more or less confined to Roach(es) – plus occasional, monster-hacking adventures under sail (oh, and that blasted teleportation, naturally) – the Department's work brings a wholly new level of nerdiness. Which we map and fantasy enthusiasts greatly appreciate!

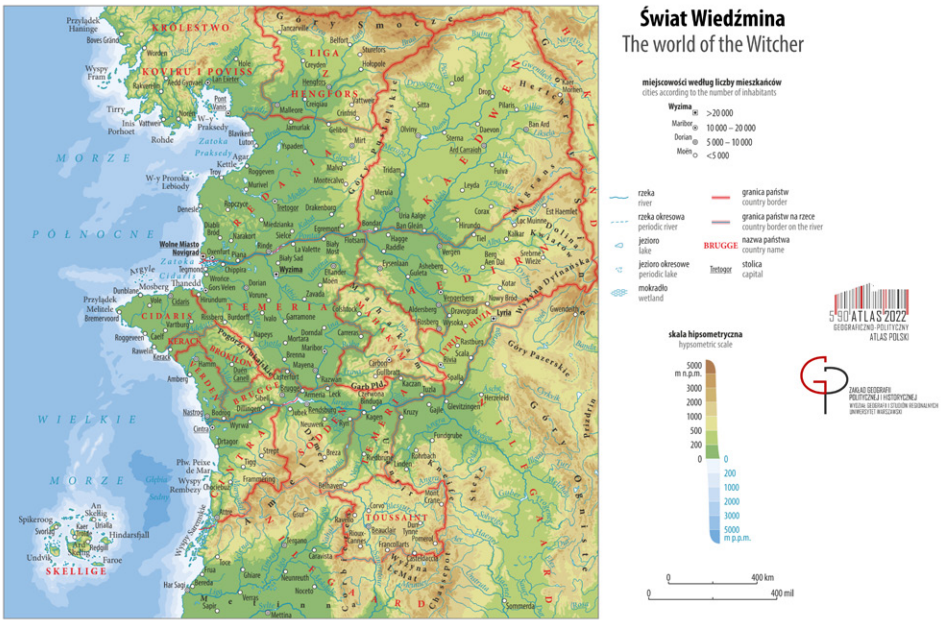


Photo: Department of Political and Historical Geography of the University of Warsaw

The Econtainer Bridge

Amidst all the container rumble in 2021, let us start this year by getting back to reporting on the various alternative uses of the shipping box. A 160 m long bridge made of reused containers will clip transportation and ecology together in Israel. The Econtainer Bridge – designed by Yoav Messer Architects – will be a gateway to the Ariel Sharon Park, a new green urban centre the size of three NYC Central Parks (a mountainous garbage dump in the past, 25mt of waste accumulated till shut down in mid-1998...). The passage will be suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, and special vehicles shuttling the public to and from the park. The bridge's pathway will also be made of reused timber. Photovoltaic panels will provide electricity for illuminating the bridge and its surroundings. We just hope that constructors will get their hands on a sufficient number of containers! As the transport industry's insurers from TT Club lately wrote in one of their insights, the market is in such dire straits that "any box will do." Yikes!







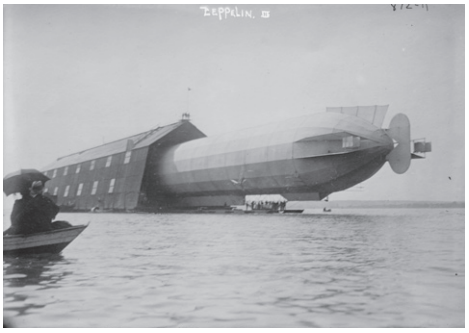
Photos: Yoav Messer Architects

Nested


Photo: Wikimedia Commons



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The four first rigid airships made by Ferdinand von Zeppelin (LZ-1-to-LZ-4) were assembled on the water – in floating hangars anchored on Lake Constance, near Friedrichshafen. The hangars' structure resembled a catamaran – a grating of a shed supported on two-side pontoons between which a third movable one was located. Inside the hangar, there was a resting platform while outside – one for starting and landing. Zeppelin chose the lake as the safest place for experimental flights as it was the only spot where the hangar could rotate to be always in line with the wind. The second condition was crucially important because the airship's large side airflow area precluded all manoeuvres with the wind coming from a different side than its nose. Although this issue was solved later, in 1900, when LZ-1 made its first flight - the 'airship carrier' nested into a floating, covered harbour was the only viable solution. The first hangar and its flying 'stuffing' (on the left) were dismantled after three flights as the wallet of Zeppelin's first company hollowed out. The second business attempt was more successful, even though the new floating hangar's first child, LZ-2, was lost during the second flight. The follower, the 1906-built LZ-3 (the middle and right photos), made a living for the inventor and his invention. After a series of safe flights, it was bought by the German Army, serving until its disposal in 1913.

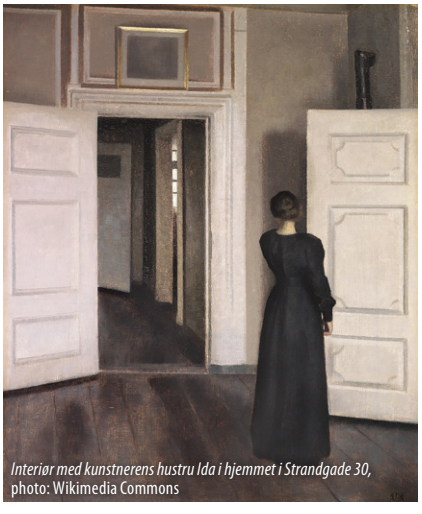
The (light and) silence of the harbour

Polish lovers of Nordic art can make merry! All thanks to the first-ever exhibition, titled *Light and Silence*, of the famous Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi, presented in the National Museum in Poznań (**shortly to be repeated in Cracow**). Hammershøi is known chiefly for the 73-big collection of paintings of his home's interiors (located under Strandgade no. 30, literally the "Beach Street" in Danish, in Copenhagen). White doors, windows, mahogany furniture, and, of course, his wife Ida, wearing a long, black dress, were his everyday models. Though Hammershøi's wife is present, the paintings befit the still life genre, as Ida is usually turned back to the spectator, resembling more a mannequin than a living human being. That is probably why Hammershøi is called the "most still and silent (. . .) painter of pauses, silences and in-between spaces." We seascape lovers can also admire Hammershøi's works, though only four capture what was happening outside the painter's window, a stone's throw from the quays. But he didn't immortalise the usual harbour bustling. Oh, no, the landscapes show ships laid up for the winter! *From Christianshavn's Canal* depicts three wintering brigs with lower yards cockbilled to protect them from rot by arrested rainwater. The unusual geometry of the resting rigging probably prompted the painter to take up the exceptional topic. Interviewed, he said, "[. . .] first and foremost it's the lines I look at." Indeed! No life, no motion, only lines, stillness and silence, all frame-frozen between navigation seasons.


Interior with Ida in a White Chair, photo: Wikimedia Commons


From Christianshavn's Canal, photo: Artvee


Interior in Strandgade Sunlight on the Floor, photo: Artvee


Interiør med kunstnerens hustru Ida i hjemmet i Strandgade 30, photo: Wikimedia Commons