Frank Heidemann, locally called Maliku, is the most southern island of the Lakshadweep, but culturally and historically linked to the Maldives. All are Muslims and follow matrilineal and matrilocal kinship rules. Most men work internationally as seamen, or - after an early retirement form commercial seafaring - locally as fishermen. They maintain a high reputation in their economic field and never complained about under-employment. As a decisive aspect of their economic success, I would suggest, is the seaman’s ethos. Sailing and fishing appears as the privileged (or even only) way for a young man to come up in life. In songs, proverbs and narratives the ocean appears as a male arena, a space of (or for) working, longing, competition, and (formerly) decapitation. Trade goods, fish and cash, come from the ocean. In the seamen’s perception, there is no dichotomy of land and sea, but rather a continuum of village, coconut-plantation, lagoon, atoll and open sea.

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