

Bologna, 10th October 2023

Dear Colleagues,

it was a pleasure to have met many of you during the Forum of AMMM in S. Benedetto del Tronto last week.

As told on that occasion, I would like to connect more widely with AMMM to complete a project, which I have been bringing forwards since the early 60s; I had opportunities to anticipate some of its aspects in selected notes and publications, also in cooperation with the Museo della Marineria in Cesenatico, within the activities of the Istituto Italiano per l'Archeologia e l'Etnografia Navale and, for inland waters, with the Atlante Linguistico dei Laghi Italiani of Perugia and now with the Museo della Navigazione nelle Acque Interne in Capodimonte (on Lake Bolsena).

It is an atlas of traditional crafts used in Italy during the last century of their survival; this survey includes recent and historical connections with the near Mediterranean areas and beyond the Alps.

After the years '60s and '70s of the past century the background of local nautical activities changed dramatically, sweeping away traditional economies, techniques and consequently types, usages of boats and the involved languages. This brought to the disappearance of most of them, which were the last issues of a history, which started from at least neolithic times and developed with waving outcomes through the centuries up to our recent times.

Maybe in the future the evolution of modern nautical handicraft will lead us to consider new techniques and new types of crafts as worth being considered as "traditional", but now it is too early to foresee how this can happen,

I could survey original crafts on the field in many areas, speak with their builders and, when possible, connect still living situations with our naval history, archaeology, philology and anthropology, taking profit from the available publications, documents in Museums and connections with our colleagues in Italy and abroad. Now times are ripe to collect the available information in an overall layout.

The atlas in project is aimed at giving an outline and description of the whole world of our traditional crafts, seen from the mentioned standpoints, describing the contributions of the different cultures to build what we call our nautical traditions, by following the milestones represented by the types of crafts as recognized locally according to their building techniques and designs, their handling and usages and their vocabulary. By taking these aspects into account it was possible to define distributions of such crafts within homogeneous cultural areas, which often involved not only boats. I call them typological regions and they could change their borders (often not coinciding with the present administrative organizations of our countries), distributions and features during their histories.

Dangerous approximations may hide under distribution charts, but these proved to be useful to describe relationships and differences among traditions, even though "fighting" to some extent between diffusion and evolution.

This risk emphasizes the need to avoid to stay on my standpoints only; now the atlas is almost complete: obviously there will be some uncovered areas, which I try to minimize, but this is the risk of such surveys. For covering still open matters and for setting up its final version I will come singularly to you according to the interested subjects.

Thank you in advance for your attention.

With my kindest regards

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P.S: I enclose a draft index of the atlas

Marco Bonino
AN ATLAS OF THE TRADITIONAL WATERCRAFTS IN ITALY
(DRAFT)

REGIONAL AREAS:

Within the general division of Mediterranean traditions between *Ponentine* and *Levantine* areas, Italy stands in the middle, as a sort of border between them and having been strongly influenced by both, without forgetting some Celto-German traditions which affected locally some areas of the Po valley near the foot of the Alps. On the other hand, also the influences exerted in external areas from types developed in Italian regions are worth being considered to complete the picture of such “movements” of experiences.

1 - AREA ALTO PADANA

It included Piedmont, part of Lombardy with the Lakes Maggiore, Como, Varese and Lugano, until the Adda draining area and the course of the Po until Piacenza.

2 - AREA MEDIOPADANA

It included Eastern Lombardy between Lake Iseo and the Eastern coast of Lake Garda and the Po until Ostiglia (occasionally Ferrara), including Mantua Lakes and the rivers and canals of Emilia (Parma, Reggio, Modena, Bologna) until Finale.

3 - AREA VENETA E BASSO PADANA

It included inland waters of the Eastern part of Emilia, Romagna, Veneto, Friuli until the Isonzo and Marano/Grado lagoon. It included also the maritime area of the Northern part of the Adriatic, roughly north of the line between Pesaro and Rovigno. Influence from Venice was very strong.

4 – AREA MEDIO ADRIATICA

It included the Western sea coasts of the Adriatic between Pesaro and Molfetta/Bari and the facing Eastern Croatian coast, where we notice a wider presence of the lateen sail and some occasional presence from the inner Balkanic peninsula.

5 – AREA BASSO ADRIATICA E IONICA

It included the coasts from Bari approximately to the Gulf of Squillace.

6 – AREA CENTRALE INTERNA

It included inland waters from the Serchio to the Sarno rivers and the interested volcanic and tectonic lakes and coastal lagoons.

7 – AREA LIGURE PROVENZALE CATALANA

Without any actual border, it includes the whole Ligurian Sea, extending until Catalonia, and including Corsica and the Western coasts of Sardinia (Alghero and Carloforte).

8, 9 – AREE TIRRENICHE

They included the Tyrrhenian Sea from Viareggio to Gaeta and the Eastern coasts of Sardinia. Strong influence from the Gulf of Naples affected, directly Sardinia and somewhat indirectly Corsica (with types developed in Provence under Neapolitan influence, like the *barque marseillaise*), in what can be defined as a Northern Tyrrhenian area. Direct presence of Neapolitan types, or common to them, extended also until mid Calabria.

10 – AREA SICULA OCCIDENTALE CON MALTA

It includes Western Sicily, Pantelleria, Lampedusa and Malta, Westward of an approximate line from Cefalù to Gela. It may be questionable if including the Eolian Islands. Tunisia can be included, but types came there also from Provence and Liguria,

11 – AREA CALABRO-SICULA ORIENTALE

It includes Calabria approximately South of Palmi and Squillace and the Eastern coasts of Sicily. The position of the Eolian Islands may be questionable.

This framework is completed by the consideration of bordering traditions, which are important for this research in terms of differences or of connections to ours. Some significant examples are mentioned.

I - RHÔNE

From Lake Léman to Annecy and Bourget including the course of the Rhône river and a small extension on Neuchâtel Lake. Ligurian builders were active in Genève; the *nau de pêche* of the Léman was comparable to the *triass* of Ascona/Locarno on the Northern part of Lake Maggiore.

II – RHINE

It extended from Bodensee to almost all Swiss lakes (excluding Lugano and Maggiore) until Basel, it can be extended up to Colmar/Strasbourg. No connections are with recent traditions in Italy, however the wreck of Precenico (UD, 11th–13th Cent.) suggests similarities with structures used in the Rhine and Danube areas. Similarly do some Tyrolian paintings of the 15th Century. Confirmations may come from the distribution of words like *nave*, *nau*, *naue*, *nacelle*.

III – IV - INN, HIGH AND MIDDLE DANUBE AREAS.

Traditions settled on the Inn and on the Danube appear as rather uniform, based upon a background which we can call generically Celtic. High Danube types (like the *Zille* family) are specific of such Celto-Germanic traditions with crafts sometimes dismounted after the trip to supply timber. The case of the *pletni* brought on the Lake Bled in Slovenia from Salzburg is another example of the extension of such traditions. Large barges from Linz to Budapest (*Schachteln*, *Sieberinne*, *Prügler*) were much similar, dimensions of crafts became smaller on tributary rivers, such as Drau, Sava and Tisza, and approaching the Iron Gate.

V – BALCANIC AREA

Dinaric Alps made a real barrier with regards to the Adriatic, however some types could reach our sea, like the family of Croatian *ladjas* and the Albanian *fercheti* and *lundre*. Our *sannaro* of the lakes Lesina and Varano belongs to the same family, although the strictest comparison is with Macedonian lakes.

VI – GREEK AREA

It faces directly our Regions N. 5 and 11. Strict contacts among the Adriatic, Southern Italy and the *Levante* occurred since long and were the backgrounds for reciprocal influences between the two shores of the Ionian Sea, even with remembrances of Classical and Byzantine shipping. Sprit sail and a still living Greek vocabulary, e.g. in Calabria, are among the most evident traces of this exchange of cultures.

VII – PONENTINE AREAS.

The fairly uniform traditions developed in Catalonia, Provence and Liguria interacted mainly with our Regions 7 and 10.

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