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Diversity and analogies in the traditional ship construction in the gulf of Lion and the Ligurian sea : several cases studies

Hélène Botcazou (LA3M UMR 7298-AMU-CNRS - Ipsos Facto)

Research method

This poster is partly extracted from a research currently led within the frame of a PhD Thesis entitled "Sailing ships along Corsica's coast between the XVIIth and the XXth century", directed by Nicolas Faucherre (LA3M, AMU, CNRS) and Eric Rieth (LAMOP, CNRS), with Ipsos Facto.



Maritime Ex Voto, Rogliano Church, cpt Paoli 1866 (Detail)

sources and methodology

It is focused on the architecture of the sailing coasters in the North-occidental Mediterranean sea. The goal is to examine several types of regional vessels known from historical or archaeological sources in order to describe their characteristics and identify their adaptations to the environment and to the local societies that built them.

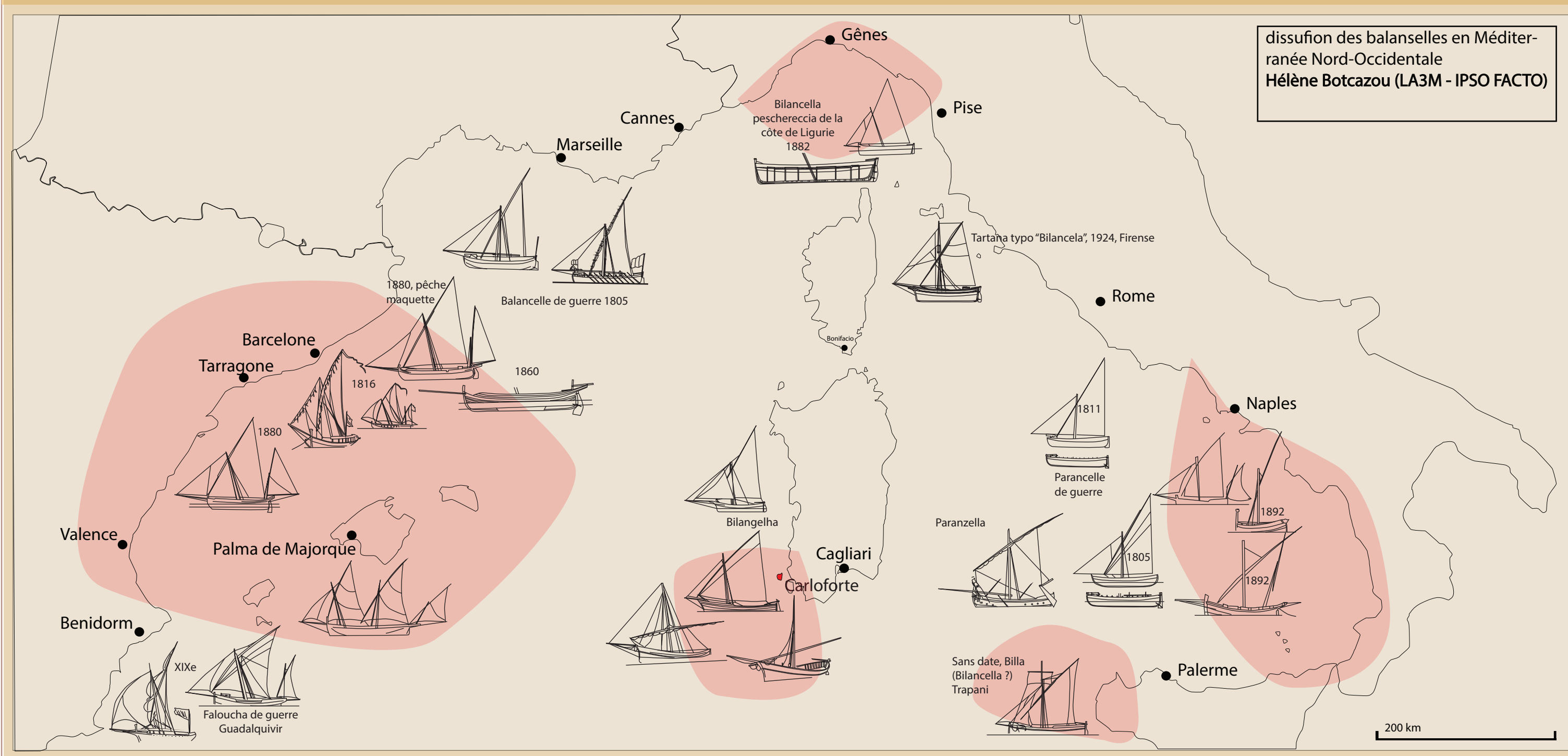
To lead this research, we proceeded to gather an important iconographic corpus as well as data coming from current archaeological excavations led on the coast of Corsica.



We aim to create a "catalogue" of the types of ships used in this area between the XVIIth c. and the beginning of the XXth c, that will show the nuances of construction in the different regions concerned (Northern Italy, South coast of France, Sardinia, Corsica, Catalunya...)

Felouque à la voile, J. Jouve, 1679

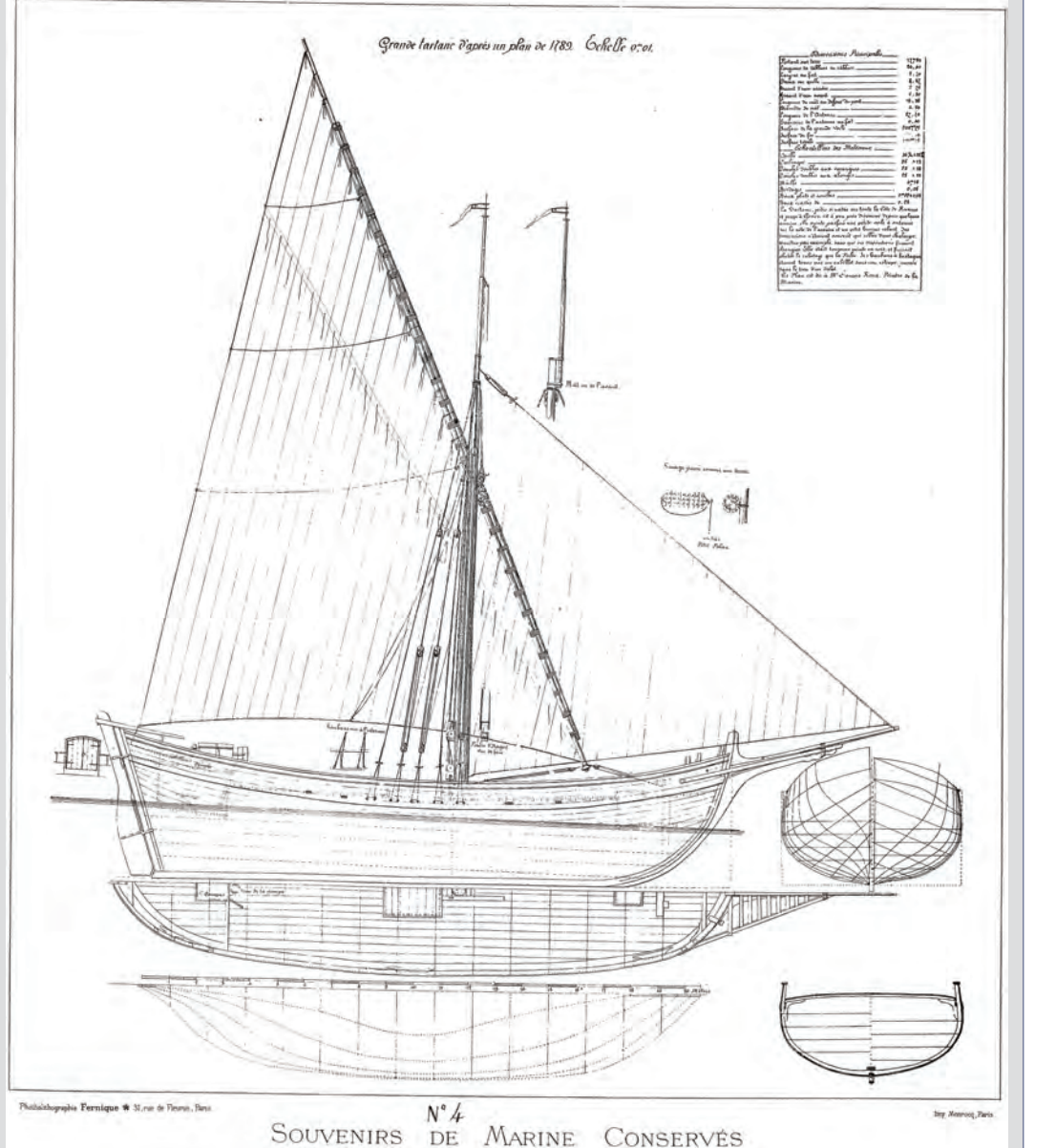
Spreading of the balancelle ship type across the North-western Mediterranean sea



From the widely spread tartane to its last uses : the "Bateau-Boeuf" of Sète.

Among the different types of cargo ship used in the modern era, one of the most emblematics is the widely spread tartane. It corresponds to a one or two masted ship that has an average tonnage around 70 tx. Its wide bottom and split bow are easily recognizable, as well as its latin-rig. As an example, the tartane drawn by Admiral Pâris, first french maritime ethnograph and curator of the National Maritime Museum, mesures 12,90 m long, 3.20 m large and 2.30 m draft.

It seems that the firsts of them appeared in the XVIIth c. (De Nicolo, 2012) in Provence (southern France). The lasts of them were used in the Estaque to transport tiles or between Marseille and Corsica, to ship coal.



Tartane de Provence, 1789, Souvenirs de Marine Amiral Pâris

Evolution of the latin rig of the tartane in the first decades of the XXth. c.



Tartane from Marseille (France), early XXe s., H. Poiroux

During the XVIIth c. and the XVIIIth. the tartanes used to cargo goods have a more important rigging, composed by a main mast ("mestre"), a little beyond the master frame, and a other one called "trinquet", at de bow of the ship, with a 25° inclination.

Little by little, during the XIXth century, the yard of the lateen sail ("antenne") is slowly rigidized and topped so the triangle of sail situated in front of the mast is minimized. This front part of the yard will slowly disappear to look like a fore and aft rigging (also see R. Buret, 1988 and L. Damonte, 1990).

This system demands less effort and people to be used. It also allows the division of the sails, which are, by consequence, lighter to use.

From the tartane to the bateau boeuf

The tartanes were also used as fishing boats since at least the XVIIth century. Indeed, the term "tartane" is also the name of a specific net. Those boats were doing the "pêche aux boeufs" or paired-trawling. The lasts avatars of these were still in use in the first half of the XXth century, in the harbor of Sète, on the Langedocian coast.

The local traditional boat builders like A. Aversa, who saw the transformation of technics at the scale of his life, testified that he adapted the original shape of the bateaux boeufs, to the engine and new nets that are now took in from the back of the boat. Little by little the sail disappeared and, with the engine, a transom appeared. Nowadays very few ships are constructed in wood.



Bateaux boeufs from Sète

architectural types definition : the "Balancelle" case



spanish Balancelle, Frédéric Roux

Our research on the different types of ship and boat sailing across north-western Mediterranean, led us to interrogate ourselves on the spreading of a boat along the coast of Italy, France and Spain, keeping the same name despite its local adaptations. It is the case of "Balancelle", "bilancella", "baransella", "baranzella", "baransa", "Paranza", "paranzella", "parancèle", paranzello", that have been used for fishing, trade and even war, transformed from a language to another, and from bay to bay through time.

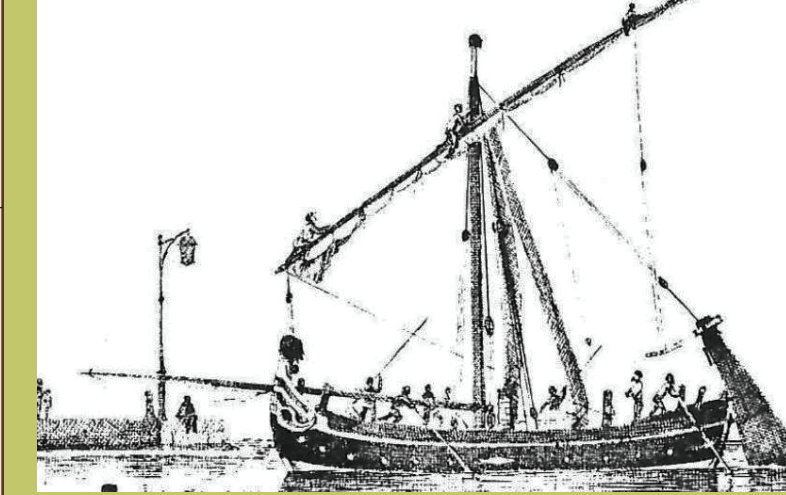
Typology of the Balancelle ship across North-western Mediterranean sea

	Péninsule Italique			France	
	Gênes	Golfo de Naples	Sicile	Autre	Provence
XVIIe siècle					
XVIIIe siècle					
XIXe siècle	Bilancella peschereccia de la cote de Ligurie 1802	Tartane type "Bilancella" 1924 Fiesse	Paranzella de guerre 1805	Paranzella	Bilancelle de guerre 1805
XXe siècle			Sans date, Billa (Bilancella?) Tapané		
	Péninsule ibérique		Corse	Sardaigne	Méditerranée
XVIIe siècle	Catalogne	Autre			
XVIIIe siècle					
XIXe siècle	1816, 1880, pèche maquette	1880, pèche maquette	Balancelle devant Cala Bello	Sans dates	1831
XXe siècle	1899, 1880, Faloucha de guerre Guadalupe				
			Bilanghella		

the architectural genealogy

Iconographic research shows a certain disparity between the boat called "balancelle" or "falucho" in Spain, and the one called "paranzella" in Italy. The first one has two or three masts that are characteristic because of their inclination, and the presence of a little mast at the stern. In Genova, the "baransella" is smaller and has only one mast but with a big inclination toward the bow. In Napoli and Sicilia, the "paranzella" was used as a fishing boat on the coast of Tunisia. It's a single perpendicular masted boat, with a round bow. In the Napoli kingdom, the balancelle has been also armed for war. In all cases, this coaster has been used essentially in the XIXth century.

Italian Paranzella, Pâris, XIXth c.



Balancelle, Napoli, Bayard, C. 1892



Bilanghella, Sardinia, Cherini, XXth c.



related bibliography

- Maria Lucia De Nicolo, « Recherches sur l'histoire de la pêche en Méditerranée : Tartanes de Provence, tartanes de Vénétie, trabacs, modèles adriatiques pour la pêche à la traîne et le petit cabotage (XVIIe au XVIIIe siècles) », in Cahiers de la Méditerranée, vol. 84 (2012).
- Laurent Damonte, « Les derniers voiliers ayant fréquenté la rade de Marseille », Neptunia, no 179 (1990)
- René Buret, « La voile latine », Neptunia, no 171 (1988)