

## THE 13<sup>th</sup> CENTURY GENOESE *PAMPHILUS*: SIMILAR TO YASSIADA VESSEL?

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### ABSTRACT

From some 13<sup>th</sup> century Genoese vessel construction contracts, we know a type of “ship” called *pamphilus*. We think that the origin of this word is Byzantine and at the beginning of Genoese sea power of the Middle Ages, probably, there was the heritage of Byzantine fleet and navy.

The first quotation of *pamphilus* in Genoa was in 1259 and the last in 1441. It was a medium-size two-masted trade vessel but we know oared *pamphili* too; it was a lateen-sail two-rudder vessel.

In Portovenere, a small town about 100 kilometres east of Genoa, were located the best known shipyards for building *pamphili*. In Portovenere lived some notaries: from two of them notarial records we know many things about the 13<sup>th</sup> century shipyards. For example: what kind of vessel they built, where the wood was from, who their customers were, and the price. But they built *pamphili* in Genoese shipyards too.

For example, we have a precise description of the dimensions of a *pamphilus* in this notarial record (Genoa, September the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1267):

*“corpus pamphili de mensuris infrascriptis, videlicet per carenam cubitos XXX et plus, per rotam cubitos LII ... altum per rectam lineam in medio palmos VIII ... et altum de popa palmos XVI et similiter in prora ...”*

“(shipbuilders will build) the hull of a *pamphilus* with a keel over m 22.5 long; m 39 maximum long deck; m 2.25 high (in medium hull) and m 4 high (in stern and the same in prow)”.

As we can see, the dimensions of the hull are similar to Yassiada vessel. But also we have a small Genoese drawing (13<sup>th</sup> century ?) that we can compare with the written sources for the *pamphilus*. Thus several questions arise. Was the Yassiada ship a *pamphilus*? Was the Genoese 13<sup>th</sup> century *pamphilus* of Byzantine origin vessel? In my opinion, we can say “yes, maybe” to all of these questions.