Each region has its own shipbuilding traditions that reflect the particularities of its nautical area, mainly its geographic and economic specificities but also on its political, social and cultural characteristics. The more pronounced these particularities, the stronger and more persistent the traditions. Beyond the local level, strongly marked by specific activities on a limited scale, these same phenomena can also be found at a regional level and, more broadly, within the well-defined spaces of inland water navigation, and within enclosed sea areas. However, when the maritime space widens across the open sea, specificities fade to make room for more common traditions that tend to a certain universality as maritime spaces are increasingly global. It is in this context that changes in shipbuilding traditions occur, with the contradictory interplay of local or regional resistance and interregional reciprocal influences, which may lead to transfer of technology.

Depending on the scale and nature of maritime exchange, and depending on the extent of maritime areas being studied, these developments will be more or less rapid and more or less complex. It is these interactions between local and interregional traditions, open seas and enclosed seas that we seek to demonstrate through examples from nautical areas as varied and representative as possible.