

This is an interesting paper reporting on the oceanographic observations made in the gulf of Lion in the Mediterranean sea by Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, author of one of the first methodical books describing observations of sea properties, his celebrated “Histoire Physique de la Mer”, 1725.

The greatest value of this paper is not, in my judgement, the “reconstruction” in modern units of the measurements made by Marsili in the gulf and the description of its properties three centuries ago. The reliability of this “reconstruction” is not only doubtful considering the empiricism of the original measurements; but is also of very limited scientific interest. What is interesting is the figure and personality of Marsili himself and his “baconian” approach to science and investigation of sea properties. For me the major value of the paper is “historical” and the most interesting section is Marsili’s biography, Appendix B.

Looking also at the bibliography, one notices the numerous but “scattered” papers stemmed by examining different aspects and parts of the Histoire. Therefore I make a suggestion : to assemble all these different contributions into a unique, comprehensive article, maybe a special issue of Oceanography, fully dedicated to L.F. Marsili.

Exactly in the spirit of honoring “Marsili’s legacy” as stated in line 321 of the paper.

Paola Malanotte