WILHELM LONDOÑO DIAZ

THE ARGONAUTS OF WEST CARIBBEAN

TRADITION OF CANOES OF TAGANGA

Editorial UNIMAGDALENA

GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG

SANTA MARTA 500 AÑOS

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Wilhelm Londoño Díaz

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Hecho en Colombia - Made in Colombia

Santa Marta 500 Years Collection

> Just as the value and beauty of a pearl is not truly appreciated until the shell that concealed it is opened, revealing its undoubted splendor, the province of Santa Marta suffers the same fate. No matter how rich, fertile, and precious it may be, it remains hidden in our time and will forever be underappreciated if the veil of ignorance that obscures it is not lifted […].
>
> Antonio Julián: *The Pearl of America*,
> *Province of Santa Marta*

Through this collection, the Unimagdalena University Press commemorates the fifth centenary of the founding of Santa Marta, bearing witness to its lush natural beauty, rich history, and prolific cultural expressions. We wish to ensure that present and future generations have the opportunity to discover, admire, and preserve the Colombian Caribbean's most beautiful pearl.

Tabla de contenido

Foreword (Introduction)

When I began to study anthropology, I was told about Bronislaw Malinowski. I learned that he had been one of the first ethnographers and that somehow his legacy meant that, for better or worse, we had a discipline, a legitimate field of study: culture. My anthropology professor, Hernán Torres Valencia from Popayán, nephew of former president Guillermo León Valencia, explained to us how Malinowski had developed powerful tools of analysis, such as the distinction between magic, science, and religion, which had allowed the development of ethnography as the description of how culture functioned in different contexts. It was not a question of whether magic was effective or not; rather, the goal of anthropology was to understand the power of magic as a social institution that allows the ordering of human behavior. Magic makes it easier to control the world, science helps us respond to the technological needs imposed by the environment, and religion gives comfort in the face of uncertainty (Malinowski, 2014). After Torres' classes, I never again read of this ethnographer who was more or less vetoed in the classroom because of his pointed colonial origins and connivances. Then, I started working with Nasa communities and obtained my anthropology degree in 2000, doing fieldwork in Novirao. Somehow, anthropology was related to the description of Andean societies, how they had managed to overcome the conquest, and how they defied a state that had been configured to almost wipe them off the map. We knew little about the sea; even worse, the sea was not an anthropologically worthy object.

A decade after those events, I was a professor at the University of Magdalena and had begun to teach a course on Caribbean archaeology; this was in 2008. If I had to cover the basics, as the course demanded, I had to take as a point of reference Reichel-Dolmatoff's thesis on the historical development of the Colombian Caribbean. As we will see in the first chapter, Reichel had the thesis, the idea, the supposition, or better, the conviction that the early populations abandoned the coasts once someone told them about agriculture. At that time, I did not realize that Reichel was inviting us to generate a historical subordination in which the Colombian Caribbean coast should be considered an area of marginal development that shaped the complex developments of the Colombian

inter-Andean societies. For those readers who are not familiar with these concepts, in archaeology it is discussed whether the Spaniards, upon their arrival in the current Colombian territory, encountered societies with institutionalized social differences, called chiefdoms, or whether they were only tribal societies with episodic leaders. Reichel believed that they were chiefdoms as defined by archaeological theorists (Earle, 1987), that is, that they were social organizations with institutionalized political divisions. To understand how these social formations had developed throughout history, he considered that it had been maize that had allowed communities, at least in northern Colombia, to leave the coasts to go up to the sierras and found villages. As I show in the first chapter, we can call this the Andeanization of the Colombian Caribbean.

So, the first task of this approach, of this ride in a canoe, is to go against the established ideas of the history of the Colombian Caribbean. The coast was not and is not a passing place for the development of highland societies of chiefdom level, whose existence is an assumption that has guided the collection of data and not a given reality; on the contrary, the Colombian Caribbean is an area with its own complexity and historicity. Recently, D

avid Cantillo, anthropologist and Taganguero leader, pointed out the need to talk about the *maritorio* (the maritime territory) because coastal societies cannot be understood without their theorizations of what the sea is, of what they suppose to be the foundation of the world, and of the existence of things. Here, I find a similarity with Malinowski's approach. As his descriptions give us a glimpse into the exchanges of the canoe societies with which he worked, his theories are, in a way, a transmission of the knowledge of the insular societies of the South Pacific. So, in a way, Malinowski did trace the study of the sea as an understanding of local knowledge. However, he represented that knowledge without the backdrop of the conquest of these areas, which was not only by the British Empire but also by the American Empire. But that is a separate debate.

Another task of this approach is to understand the Colombian Caribbean as an area of connections. In fact, if I call the Caribbean Sea the Colombian Caribbean Sea, I am imposing my republican categories on an area that, since at least three millennia ago, was already interconnected by a tradition of knowledge of various kinds—linguistic, architectural, and goldsmith—which we are just trying to understand. As I show in Chapter 2, what we call the Colombian Caribbean is an area connected by cabotage: a navigation system of ships that skirt the coasts connecting various ports. A couple of millennia ago, there was an exchange of objects and knowledge in the western Caribbean that is attested in diverse archaeological evidence found in present-day Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela. In Chapter 2, I review this discussion on the intermediate area, as the western Caribbean is known from the archaeological point of view, and present the data that give us an overview of the role of navigation in this region.

If we compare the evidence of pre-Hispanic navigation in Colombia, especially for the Caribbean strip, we find an almost null record. However, the historical documentation, as I show in Chapter 2 based on previous studies, indicates that by the time of contact, the navigators coming from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean encountered important local maritime engineering that we are only now beginning to understand.

In summary, Chapter 1 is a critique of the Andeanization of the Colombian Caribbean and the subordination of the coast as a platform for the development of inter-Andean societies of cacical order, and Chapter 2 is a reflection on pre-Hispanic navigation that collates the main research on pre-contact connections in the Caribbean. Finally, Chapter 3 shows us the tradition of Taganguero monoxiles according to local practice. Regarding the last chapter, it is worth noting that a monoxile is a log dug out to make a canoe without the need to join planks. I use this concept because it is the technical term in the anthropology of navigation and even in maritime and fluvial archaeology and because, if there is something that distinguishes the Tagangueros, it is that they are navigators—the Phoenicians of the Caribbean, as the mayor of Taganga, Ariel Daniels, would say. Following this path, the role of these navigators in the generation of connections cannot be ignored, something that has been made invisible by Colombian anthropology written from a centralism that has condemned the coasts as peripheral and marginal.

If the coast is an area of connections, what allow those connections are the boats, in this case the monoxilous boats called cayucos. In 2022, I read Malinowski again, but his ethnographic articles rather than his classic texts. His famous article on the Kula (Malinowski, 1920) tells us about the circulation of bracelets and chokers, with some turning clockwise and others counterclockwise. This harmony in the circulation of non-human things, because they are not bracelets or chokers but something else, generates a network of alliances and commitments that can be achieved through the use of canoes. And there are the canoes in Malinowski's text. Actually, what I was not told in Popayán several decades ago was that the distinctions between magic, science, and religion were really the local theories of a canoe society that defines science as that where human intelligence cannot fail at the moment of preparing a vessel. No one is foolish enough to row an boat without a paddle; no one is careless enough to operate a boat that must be constantly bailed; no one sails without balancing loads. Yes, the Trobrianders are the fathers and mothers of anthropology; Malinowski only copied the idea, as he rightly says in his apocryphal diaries. However, sailing is uncertain, always uncertain, and there are entities like water and wind that must be taken into account when setting sail. Therein lies the magic in the gestures prior to the marine tasks, in the amulets that are placed around the necks, and in the handles that are taken care of at the moment of gripping the oars. All this material culture that prevents evil, the sailors with whom Malinowski spoke told him, was part of the magic. In the face of the uncertainty of the sea, there is

religion, faith, and belief in a world that is not this world but is connected to this plane. Magic, science, and religion are the epistemological bases of the canoe societies that allowed the development of classical anthropological theories.

Some time ago, an anthropology student said that we should stop reading Malinowski because he was a patriarchal exponent of 20th-century British imperialism. He was right. However, by reading Malinowski, we can distinguish the Trobrianders with their canoes; we can see the sea; we can understand his theories of magic, science and religion, which gives us an idea of what it means to be a sea being in another time, in another space, in another culture.

Today, as the monoxile canoes rot on the coast, we should reflect on the role of these artifacts in shaping the identities of the Caribbean, especially the Colombian Caribbean. According to the information we have, shells and quartz were modified, polished, and used to make zoomorphic and anthropomorphic representations, which were then dispersed by various routes, maritime and fluvial, in a network of clan exchanges as described by Malinowski. What these objects were exchanged for is a question that, like the Fibonacci points, must be widened and that spirals like the shells of those snails that the Indians carried from the coasts to the inland valleys. To exchange is to know, is to move within the cartographies of the territories that are twinned by the alliances that help to build the canoes. Without these artifacts, it will be difficult for us to go back in time, which is our task as historians at the edge of Western civilization.

As a final comment, I will say that this book steals the title of a famous adventure (Malinowski had already stolen from other writers), immortalized in the ancient epic: the voyage of Jason in his ship Argos, which had 50 oars. The ship—we read in the texts of Aeschylus or Sophocles—could speak because it was made of sacred trees. So, to use a metaphor a little earlier than the Phoenician existence, I agree with Malinowski in using the name of the ancient seafarers to name societies, such as the Trobiandesas or the Tagangueras, who build boats with sacred trees to travel the borders of their maritory.

The Andeanization of the Caribbean

In the early 1960s, the German anthropologist Johannes Wilbert (1927–2022) published a book that attempted to understand, from a diachronic perspective, the evolution of the horticultural systems of the indigenous peoples of South America (Wilbert, 1961). The question of agriculture has always been a constant in archaeology that has not been able to separate itself from the 19th-century idea of evolution; in fact, as Geertz (1963) showed, there are processes of agricultural involution, so there is no positive correlation between agricultural developments and changes in social structures leading to chiefdom formations (Feinman & Neitzel, 1984; Gnecco, 1996). Wilbert's book was published in 1961, and as stated in the obituary of this renowned anthropologist (Throop, 2022), after holding various labor and academic positions, he was director of the Caribbean Institute of Anthropology and Sociology in Caracas, Venezuela, from 1956 to 1962. It was in this context that Wilbert imagined a book that would make South American sociocultural phenomena visible to the scientific community. In that book, which was put together in the light of the debates taking place in Caracas at that time, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1961) proposed an explanatory model of the cultural development of the Colombian Caribbean region, according to which the arrival of maize brought about a cultural change, of an evolutionary order, which led the pre-Hispanic tribal communities to become chiefdoms, which are understood as hierarchical social structures with specialists and surplus production systems (Earle, 1987). As the paper makes clear, behind the social complexity there was an agricultural base. He took this idea a bit further a couple of decades later when he coined the phrase "maize colonization" to account for the cultural developments that would have allowed the shift from coastal to highland adaptations (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1978). In this way, Reichel sowed disdain for the coastal occupations by labeling them as historical leftovers, previous cultural manifestations; the words he used were formative of what would actually be the disciplinary object of archaeology: the emergence of social complexity, that is, the appearance of chiefdoms.

In the archaeology manual popularized by the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, written by Reichel (2004), the sequence of cultural change implies a transition from

hunting and gathering. The correlates would be Paleolithic societies, through Formative societies, in which it is possible to perceive some features of civilization, such as sedentary patterns and pottery, until reaching regional developments that would be characterized by the existence of social leaders detached from the prosaic tasks of production, that is, caciques (chiefdoms). Although the data show a sequence that could work in this sense, it is clear that at the same time, there are various communities that do not have an agricultural base and that, in the light of Reichel's ideas, would be seen as archaisms, as oddities in the midst of civilization sustained by agriculture and life in cities. But this is not necessarily so. Moreover, today, it is clear that there is no marriage between agriculture and complexification, where complexification is understood as a concept composed of essential variables such as sedentarization, monumentality, centralization (architectural), and social hierarchization (Gnecco, 1996; Rojas-Mora, 2008). In fact, it has been suggested that some monumental components of architectural or funerary order could have been made in egalitarian structures (Gnecco, 1996). What does this mean? There are ethnographic and archaeological records of groups with chiefs or caciques that are not agriculturally based, such as the chiefs of the Kula exchange described by Malinowski. Likewise, there may be agricultural societies that did not build great civil works with monuments that were a reflection of their social hierarchy. There are too many types of political orders, and, to some extent, the notion of chiefdom tends to confuse rather than clarify history.

Karl Marx (2004) thought that precapitalist societies were based on social relations of production where land, as a resource, was an extension of human corporealities, so that there was no separation between economy, labor, and society. Although it was feasible to appreciate the existence of political centralization, this concentration could not be translated into social inequality because, in these economies, a sense of interest that could be materialized in wealth measured by a system of money/wealth was absent. If the social unit, which Marx thought could be a village, was subordinated to a larger entity, as was the case in Asia or India, internal relations were egalitarian, and the continuity between body, tools, and territory as a determinant of egalitarian formation was not broken. In this way, Marx suggested that the political ascriptions of villages in Asian modes of production allowed the construction of infrastructure that benefited these units so that subordination was not necessarily undesirable. This logic has been reported in anthropology. As Piddock (1965) showed with his research on the potlach of the Kwakiutl of present-day British Columbia, Canada, although there is a leader who centralizes the products to be redistributed in potlach, this subject functions more as an instrument that allows more peripheral subjects with little prestige to access goods that would otherwise be impossible for them to acquire. In this way, having a boss who can be supported by a redistribution party guarantees in a certain way an invitation to other redistribution parties, which makes the system work in favor of the community

rather than the bosses. As Marx (2004) masterfully put it, in precapitalist societies, the objective of production is society, and in capitalist societies, the objective of production is wealth. That is to say, in precapitalist economies, wealth is in the processes of distribution, not like capitalism, in which wealth is in accumulation.

The idea of maize colonization, which was the basis of a representation of pre-Hispanic history as a struggle of certain subjects to dominate others, was a model that was imposed as a cultural reality. According to this model, which followed the evolutionary tradition of American archaeology (Carneiro, 1970), the groups that inhabited the coast used the intertidal areas as a springboard to reach the sierras. In this way, habitability in the coastal strips was going to encounter a limit that sooner or later would have to be crossed, given the natural impulse of human societies to evolve. In the background, it was argued that life on the coast, without dependence on agriculture and without monumental complexes, was certainly undesirable. The sea was accused of being an obstacle to civilization, and civilization was seen as being based on agriculture. Some years ago, Alejandro Haber (2014) questioned this directionality, with data from sites in the Andean Punas showing that for centuries, agriculture was a possibility and not a determinant.

In any case, what was a model that should have generated hypotheses that needed testing ended up being the initial trigger for accepting Reichel's ideas without question. Upon Reichel's death in 1994, the beneficiaries of his ideas pointed out that "the father of Colombian archaeological anthropology" had died (Oyuela-Caycedo, 1996). Without going into psychoanalytical details, this declaration of paternity was, in the end, a paradigm that prevented, for more than half a century, the questioning of an image imposed on the cultural realities of the Colombian Caribbean. We could call this imposition of an agricultural model to explain the cultural change in the Colombian Caribbean the Andeanization of the Caribbean. In fact, C. Langebaek (2005a) hinted at this when, in pondering Reichel's legacy, he thought of the scholar's journey "from the Alps to the jungles and mountains of Colombia" without passing through the sea.

At the beginning of the 1980s, it was taken for granted, thanks to Reichel's work, that in the Colombian Andes and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (hereafter SNSM), there had been expressions of civilization similar to those of Mesoamerica and the Central Andes, based on maize agriculture. Thus, research on the coast was considered a necessary evil, a preliminary step to the final objective, which was the understanding of the complex manifestations that the conquistadors encountered. In fact, this obsession with finding features of civilization in Colombia came from the enlightenment dispute, according to which monumental manifestations were impossible in America (Langebaek, 2003). If one looks beyond these conventions, one can clearly see that the archaeological research agenda in Colombia had little to do with a fundamental understanding of the past and was more associated with disputes of academic associations that imposed their prejudices as given realities.

As shown by the revisions made to this historical perspective (Serje, 2008), Reichel's ideas were used to think about models of occupation of the SNSM from a sustainable development perspective. Based on this vision, research on the manifestations of social complexity in the area could allow the reproduction of sustainable agricultural systems, a sort of alternative to the peasant way of life that was accused of being a predator of ecosystems. This was the preponderant image of the use of archaeological and anthropological research in the area in the 1980s. As we can appreciate, the sea is absent; it is considered a mere backdrop, a necessary evil in the process of social complexity.

More than four decades after the founding of anthropology in Colombia (Echeverri, 1998), the Caribbean Sea, at least, had been disassociated from the understanding of the settlement processes in northern Colombia; likewise, it had been constructed as an object of environmental intervention that, to be effective, had to be managed without the articulation of the culture and society variables. Hence, the way was paved for an objectification of the sea as a tourist destination and not as an essential element of local cosmogonies. Actually, the fact that the sea had been a humanized landscape that had allowed the existence of interregional ties, at least among the communities settled in the Western Caribbean, from the coast of the SNSM through Panama to Costa Rica, was ignored (Hoopes, 2004).

As pointed out by the cabildo mayor of the Taganga indigenous community, Ariel Daniels (Daniels, 2011), by the early 1960s, the native fishing communities had been displaced when the Tayrona National Natural Park (hereafter PNNT) was built. Here, we see a clear process of uprooting that took place on two fronts. The first, as we have seen, consisted of generating a representation of the coast as a region where civilization was impossible; if there was complexity, it was in the SNSM, but not on its coasts. The second front consisted of the attempt to erase the coastal cultures, such as the Taganga fishing community, which, under the environmentalist discourse, began to be labeled as undesirable because they were predators. Anthropology in Colombia is indebted to the fishermen of the SNSM coast and the SNSM peasants, two actors made invisible by the pleasure associated with writing about the good Serrano natives (Ruibal, 2014). The first process, which consisted of creating a narrative of a coastline without people, was an uprooting of memory; the second, which was based on a criminalization of artisanal fishing and cattle ranching, was an uprooting of territory. Here, I must point out that I use the notion of "uprooting" under the definitions left to us by Bourdieu and Sayad (1964) as a consequence of a planned process of community destructuring to favor the interests of settlers. Unlike what happened in Algeria, as we must keep our distance from that, the SNSM coastline was not occupied by a foreign power that created ghettos and proletarianized the population to favor foreign settlers, but it was the Colombian State itself that defined a process of de-occupation of the areas that were now considered

protected. This process implied internal colonialism or endocolonialism (Accossatto, 2017) based on the destructuring of community life in favor of a dynamic of occupation of space under modern criteria.

In any case, the evolutionary vision of the Caribbean was not unanimous, and there were authors who were sensitive to the importance of amphibious life in understanding the history of the Colombian Caribbean. In the 1990s, Carlos Angulo Valdés (1914–2001) published a book that was little known in the Colombian archaeological community and which went against the paradigms imposed by Reichel. Unlike the processual evolutionary model that allowed Reichel to turn his speculations into archaeological truths, Angulo explored other visions based on a certain historical materialism. Although the document is not precisely an expression of a conceptual complexity derived from historical materialism, it does propose the notion of "ways of life" to understand the Caribbean occupations associated with coastal lagoon complexes such as the Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta (hereafter CGSM) (Angulo, 1995). As the book's prologue writer points out, lifeways do not necessarily follow an evolutionary model (although historical materialism contains an evolutionary teleology), so the approach attempts to go beyond the middle-range theories so popular in processual archaeology (Ruibal & Vila, 2018, p. 72). What it seeks is a characterization of past economies according to their modes of production without defining these modes of production in an evolutionary sense. Although Angulo Valdés did not take his thesis to its ultimate implications, it was clear that the modes of production based on the collection of coastal resources remained in force and were not necessarily an archaism. Angulo even suggested in his research the understanding of ethnographic pottery complexes associated with lacustrine occupations (Angulo, 1978). Unfortunately, this vein of research opportunities was not fully developed. This would have made it possible to question Reichel's evolutionary model, which was typological and not dialectical, as Marx required precapitalist economies to be read (Marx, 2004). This meant starting from the idea that social change was the result of a transformation in the social relations of production, and in an environment like that of the SNSM, with relative accessibility to diverse resources, it was very difficult for privileges to be institutionalized under the money–heritage model. Therefore, the precapitalist mode of production in the SNSM that fractured with the founding of Santa Marta in 1525 survived for centuries and was not characterized by large accumulations of land and institutionalized social classes but by the circulation of ritual objects that were exchanged in the middle of a network that has been detected, due to stylistic similarities in archaeological artifacts, as existing from Costa Rica to Colombia and Venezuela (Hoopes, 2004).

Over a decade ago, archaeologist Diana Carvajal (2013) published her research results on the area of the Canal del Dique (Dike Canal) on the coast adjacent to the city of Cartagena. As her data show, coastal lifestyles were maintained until very late periods,

and it is even possible to find ethnographic data on these economies. Therefore, it is somewhat erroneous to label coastal economies as stages prior to agricultural societies, as Reichel supposed. The typological image popularized by Austrian scholar Reichel has prevented us from understanding the complex relationships that were established between highland communities and coastal communities, which had a complex system of exchanges that we are just beginning to understand. Likewise, these exchanges were not internal but involved long-distance contacts reached by means of maritime technologies (Londoño, 2021; Callaghan & Bray, 2007). They were, in essence, canoe societies that wove interoceanic networks of much greater complexity than the current relations between nations in the area.

As we can see, the Andeanization of the coast implied several things. First, a temporal vision in which the sites of the coast or of the Caribbean savannas were considered a legitimate object of study if they helped in understanding how those historical moments laid the foundations, the formation—hence the name given to this supposed period, Formative—of the agricultural civilizations, which for Reichel were the Tairona and the Muisca. Second, it generated an allochronism (Fabian, 1983) that distanced the communities of the coast from their historical heritage by presenting them as upstarts when, in fact, they were the historical inhabitants of the territory (Londoño, 2020). Third, it generated a vision of the sea as an area lacking in patrimonial references, a sort of ungraspable area in which it was impossible to think of agricultural developments that, as we saw, were the objective of archaeological research.

Despite the fact that the conquest of the coast involved conflicts with fishing communities that had local vessels, Reichel's own ethnohistoric analyses (1951) completely ignored the role of the sea in the configuration of the cultural dynamics of the territory. The sea was removed from the historical understanding of the region in such a way that all historical dynamics that implied an understanding of local cosmologies and technologies were disregarded.

The process of Andeanization of the coast was no coincidence; it occurred parallel to another well-documented process in which the agency and self-management dynamics of Caribbean peasants were folklorized, showing the region's social movements as passive, lazy, and unwilling to engage in economic ventures (Figueroa, 2009). This process of converting the political struggle of social movements in the Colombian Caribbean into folklore concomitantly involved processes of land expropriation and violent displacement (Rappaport, 2020). It was a sort of emptying of local traditions that contributed to thinking of the coast as an empty area that was only relevant to the extent that it provided data for the understanding of maize colonization. However, the story is different. In the following paragraphs, I will try to offer the first steps to delving not only into local history but also into a kind of historical truth that needs to be vindicated.

The Survival of SNSM's Coastal Cosmovisions

The first time I heard about the PNNT was in 1994. I went on an excursion from the city of Cali as a high school prize, and I went with my classmates on a tour that included Medellín, Coveñas, Cartagena, and, finally, Santa Marta. The first place I saw in the PNNT was the so-called Playa del Muerto. At that time, the tourist name Playa Cristal had not yet become popular. The beauty of the blue sea contrasting with the white sands was a striking image, one which is promoted in tourist advertising. On that trip, I was introduced to the PNNT as it had been defined three decades earlier: a conservation area without native inhabitants offering tourist services.

Almost a couple of decades later, in 2011, a native inhabitant of Taganga, Ariel Daniels de Andreis, a member of the Comité Prodefensa de Taganga at that time, published a book chapter where he pointed out that the native inhabitants of Taganga were descendants of the pre-Columbian inhabitants; moreover, as an indigenous people, they were associated with the mountain communities by kinship ties (Daniels, 2011, p. 116). Daniels said this in relation to the conflict between official representations that emptied the coast of a certain cultural history and local identity processes that appealed to the past to support demands. To demonstrate that the Tagangas were a people with deep historical roots, Daniels researched and cited colonial documents indicating that the Tagangas and Gaira were communities with which the Spanish had established commercial ties (p. 116). But this assertion was not made in a historical vacuum; rather, Daniels went to the trouble of tracing genealogies. He also reviewed documents from 1625 that spoke of 48 indigenous contributors associated with the Taganga encomienda (p. 117), from which surnames could be distinguished, not only in the historical record but contemporaneously. Likewise, he cited a document from 1719 that proved that the governor of that time, Juan Beltrán, ordered the construction of a fort to defend the oyster beds that were being exploited by the Taganga Indians (p. 118). In that documentation and unlike what was expressed in 1625, the useful Indians, that is, taxpayers, numbered only five (p. 118). Forty-two years after the construction of the fort at the hands of the Tagangueros, in 1761, a document is recorded in which the Taganga Indians denounce the mistreatment they received from the encomenderos (p. 118). It is in this way that Ariel Daniels makes

visible a temporal chain associated with the struggles of the Taganga Indians for the defense of their marine, terrestrial, and coastal territory. Although it could be thought that the current Tagangueros are not connected with these historical actors, Daniels' research shows that they are related by kinship, so there are elements of judgment that allow the establishment of these genealogies. Likewise, the people who question these affiliations usually have real estate interests, so the dispute over history is not minor.

In addition to this information, Daniels mentioned some local practices, such as the drawing of lots for fishing, which undoubtedly constituted a distinctive marker of the use of community practices typical of ethnic communities. Perhaps the most important piece of information presented by Daniels was the recognition given by the Colombian state to the Junta de Padres de Familia, whose roots go back to 1873 (Daniels, 2011, p. 116); said Junta would become the Cabildo Abierto by 2011, the year Daniels published his research, and then in 2018 it would be transformed into the Cabildo Indígena de Taganga, legally recognized by the Colombian state. As I write these lines, Ariel is the cabildo mayor.

However, within the historical documentation, there are some republican documents that represent a set of important materials that tell us about the agency of this indigenous partiality in the defense of the coast. In 1837, Taganga was a parish whose indigenous mayor was named Santiago Manigua, a lineage that continues to this day; according to the information reported by the person in charge of the parish, Andrés González, by that year, the town had "198 souls," which must be the people baptized (Daniels, 2011, p. 120). A couple of decades after this census, the Tagangueros were involved in a lawsuit over coastal lands when General José María Vieco asked to be awarded land in the current PNNT; in particular, Vieco asked for the areas of Arrecifes and Cañaveral as compensation for military services in the 19th-century civil wars. At that time, the Taganguero indigenous leader Juan Francisco Perdomo took the lead in the legal defense of the territory, taking as a starting point the fact that these areas were ejidos in charge of the Tagangueros, and therefore, it was inappropriate to award them to a private individual like Vieco. Thus, the subsequent President Rafael Núñez responded as representative of the Executive by annulling the adjudication made to Vieco and restituting the indigenous communal territory of the Tagangueros (pp. 121–122). As Daniels points out, the creation of the Junta de Padres de Familia was a necessary act to propose a legal representative who would be in charge of the title clearance of the territory that practically corresponds to the entire coastal strip of the PNNT (p. 122). If we look in detail at the documentation presented by Daniels, it becomes evident that the existence of areas with optimal conservation conditions, which would later be called PNNT, was the result of a practice of care for the territory that goes back even further than the defense made by Perdomo in the 1850s. Yes, it is possible to affirm that we owe the existence of the PNNT to the Tagangueros because if they had not fought for the areas from Vieco in the

20th century, these strips of coastline would be private properties, probably with resorts of international chains. Pure plunder.

Obviously, these genealogies are political, but it is clear that the documented supports are not fiction but evidence of a historical dispute over the SNSM coastline.

From the point of view of the oral memory and written documentation presented by Daniels, the sea is not the backdrop against which it is possible to appreciate the evolution of the mountain communities. On the contrary, it is a constitutive agent of the community dynamics that identify the cultural unity of the Tagangueros. In this sense, the sea should be understood in its intermediation in local cultural dynamics, in its role in the processes of local cultural reproduction that do not necessarily imply processes of cultural loss but of appropriation and denial of external elements, which guarantees the unity of culture and territory (Daniels, 2011).

As Daniels shows with a diversity of cases, the Taganga have fought since the 16th century against attempts to dissolve them; first, in the Colony, under the yoke of the encomenderos; later, in the Republic, at the hands of the military, and, at the end of the 20th century, in the processes carried out by the administration of the Tourist District and Historic Center of Santa Marta, which on occasion pointed out that Taganga was just another neighborhood. This led to a mobilization that took de facto routes, such as the seizure of the road leading from Santa Marta to Taganga on October 29, 1995 (Daniels, 2011, p. 126). This picket was intended to signal to the district authorities that they could not treat what should have been a recognized Indigenous community as a neighborhood or commune. By 1998, Jaime Solano Jimeno, mayor of the district, asked the district council to revoke the political division that proposed Taganga as a commune to grant it the character of a *corregimiento*, where Tagangueros could continue to recreate their local indigenous practices (p. 127). Although the council rejected Mayor Solano's vision, which was based on ceding territorial autonomy to the Taganga, that same year, the Tagangueros were given back their *corregimiento* denomination, noting that it includes the Bonito Gordo inlet (p. 128).

The great outcome of this process, in addition to the state's recognition of the Tagangueros as an ethnic community in 2018, was the declaration of Murundúa de Taganga, which indicated that Taganga was an indigenous area that was articulated to the network of sacred sites that make up the sacred landscape of the peoples of the SNSM. This occurred in 2006, and it took until 2018 for Decree 1500 of 2018 to emerge, recognizing the existence of this network of sites, called the Black Line.

From the point of view of the Black Line, the sea and the SNSM configure an undivided space that cannot be fragmented and that, as corresponds to local cosmogonies, implies an interaction between the coast and the sierras. The Black Line points are spaces where the indigenous people must make payments that serve to maintain the balance of the world. In this way, they make journeys according to the needs of balance that are

required. If there is an omen of a bad harvest, the point where the Fathers and Mothers of creation left the beings that take care of the crops should be sought. If this point is in a different basin from that of the contributor, as often happens, this demands a journey that involves usually endogamous exchanges (Londoño, 2020). Thus, keeping the world in equilibrium supposes a journey in the territory that, in turn, allows the reproduction of society with its forms of subsistence. If Marx had visited the SNSM, he would have seen the Asian modes of production without their despotism, where the land and the sea are an extension of the hand of the human being that intervenes and is intervened by the world. Regardless of the particularities of the Serrano myths, these cosmologies reflect that generality that Marx noted in the precapitalist formations, especially what is grouped in the Asian mode of production, which is the small property and collective property. Marx (2004) says that when these two assumptions are broken, the worker appears to behave with the objective conditions of his work as his property (p. 67).

If we review the central argument of this chapter, we can appreciate that the process of Andeanization of the Caribbean, in Colombian anthropology, has implied a disdain for the sea to the extent that it was considered an improbable place for the manifestations of monumentality, centralization, and hierarchization that occurred in the inter-Andean valleys. However, the sea, as Ariel Daniels shows, is not an entity where coastal life develops but rather an actor with whom existence must be negotiated on a daily basis.

In assuming a vision of the sea as an actor in the history of the Colombian Caribbean, we must transcend the evolutionary typological logics based on agriculture as an engine of change and understand the local logic of living with the sea and not by the sea. It is necessary to desensitize culture as an expression of the agricultural world in order to reorient sensitivity to an understanding of coastal cultures. To achieve this reorientation, it is necessary to take a route to enter the sinuosity of the sea. This route, this entry point, is, for the purposes of this research, the monoxile canoes of Taganga. In a way, understanding the logic of the Taganguera monoxile canoe, locally called cayuco, is an act of subversion for an anthropology dominated by a vision of cultural change as agriculturally motivated. In this sense, the process of unlearning Andeanization implies turning the gaze on central objects in the understanding of coastal cultures.

Before entering into an understanding of coastal canoes, we must situate the problem of navigation in the Colombian Caribbean. To do so, we will review the research that has been done using a combination of ethnographic, historical, and archaeological data. We must warn that, in this research, we have found a tendency toward an understanding of these phenomena in terms of pre-Hispanic indigenous mobility, especially for the Antillean areas. Likewise, we have some information for the western Caribbean side; however, we lack a research tradition on indigenous nautical technologies for the case of the Colombian Caribbean.

Indigenous Navigation in the Colombian Caribbean

In the previous chapter, we saw how Colombian anthropology relegated the sea to being a mere transit site between the early formations, intentionally called formative, and the mountain colonizations that would be the manifestations of social complexity. In short, what was proposed was that once the coastal populations discovered agriculture, they went to the sierras because the mountains were preferable to the coast. It is a rather simple argument and unacceptable in the light of current evidence. In spite of this, there is abundant literature that has as its object of analysis the maritime circulation in the Caribbean. A surprising element of this literature is the lack of archaeological evidence on these technologies, but this has not been a limitation in the generation of a holistic understanding of this phenomenon. It is true that most of the information on Indigenous navigation in the Caribbean comes from historical sources (Londoño, 2021), ethnographic sources (Sheran, 2020), and computer simulations (Callaghan & Bray, 2007). Thus, we face a field of work that demands an important part of classical archaeology itself and its material evidence, trapped in cultural strata that, in turn, are trapped in geological strata.

When reviewing the most representative works on navigation in the Caribbean, we find that there is a tendency toward studies on the Greater and Lesser Antilles, relegating the discussion on the navigation of the western Caribbean to merely incidental. In this sense, we can detect a bias that should be corrected in order to have a non-fragmented understanding of the region. As will be shown throughout the chapter, there are some research exceptions that have addressed the problem of navigation in the western Caribbean, especially the connection that linked Costa Rican societies with northern Colombia (Callaghan & Bray, 2007).

Several researchers have addressed the problem of navigation in the Caribbean. McKusick (1960) raised the issue of navigation in the area several decades ago, generating some questions that were intended to be answered with historical information. His speculations are oriented to answering the problems related to the ethnohistoric evidence of navigation in the Antillean Caribbean. As he points out, it would be necessary to distinguish

navigation between the Lesser Antilles, apparently dominated by the Caribs, and the arts of Arawak navigation, associated with the Greater Antilles (p. 3). For McKusick, a couple of important questions have to do with the question of whether, in the Antillean Caribbean, there existed a tradition of boats made with planks in addition to the traditions of monoxiles. Here, we must stop and insist that the term monoxile refers to a canoe of a single trunk, and its construction consists of reducing and excavating the trunk until it has the concavity that gives rise to this navigation technology. For some authors, monoxile in Spanish is synonymous with the English term dugout boats (Ayuso, 2010), which, as their name indicates, are boats made from the excavation of a single trunk.

According to McKusick (1960), on islands such as Dominica, it was possible to witness the manufacture and use of monoxiles with freeboards enlarged with planks that allowed for better maritime maneuverability (p. 5). This ethnoarchaeological exercise that he reports allows us to infer that the boats with slats did not represent a regional tradition. These boats are those reported on the Brazilian coasts that are characterized by the use of slats arranged on a frame (Castro and Gomes-Dias, 2015). Undoubtedly, this technique is an influence of the colonization of America that should be studied in depth for the case of the Colombian Caribbean, where there is evidence of the technique being used in indigenous communities (Londoño, 2020; Sarmiento, 2021; Sanz, 2023).

McKusick, being a pioneer in the investigation of Indigenous Caribbean navigation, applied another layer of complexity by questioning some of the assessments of late 17th-century travelers who claimed that sails were an Indigenous technology. As McKusick writes in a review of the work of a 17th-century traveler, Henry Challons, as this English traveler passed through on his way to Virginia, he observed a white flag off the coast of Dominica. As they approached, the sailors were able to appreciate that there was a person who, with thunderous gestures, was asking for contact with them. After approaching and interviewing him, the castaway said that he was a friar who had been in the custody of the Indians for a long time, and that they had spared his life in exchange for his teaching them the art of sailing. According to the story, on that coast, there was a shipwreck that contained, among other things, a load of linen cloth that enabled the friar to introduce this technology to the Indians (McKusick, 1960, p. 5). Several authors have used this account to discuss the use of sails in indigenous Caribbean navigation (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 112), but it seems exaggerated to stick to a single narrative to evaluate a problem whose scope is the Antillean Caribbean.

One element that is interesting to discuss in McKusick's work is his criticism of Loven (1935), who argued at the beginning of the 20th century that there were two traditions of maritime technologies in the Caribbean: one of the monoxiles, which would be Taino, and the other of piraguas, which would be Carib (McKusick 1960, pp. 6–7). In the case of the Carib piraguas, these would be made from a hull of a single trunk, to which

planks were added by means of perforations and fiber ties. This methodology allowed for an increase in the number of freeboards, which marked a difference in relation to the monoxiles, which are almost nonexistent in this part of the boat. McKusick, along with another colleague, presents a translation of the accounts of Dominican Jean-Batiste Du Tertre, who visited the West Indies in the 17th century. Du Tertre recounts the various types of boats he saw on his West Indian voyage. According to this Dominican, the Carib boats are not like the skiffs or the European sloops but are made of a single trunk that is dug out with axes and retouched with adzes that were traded with the Europeans. The boats, which were extended with planks, were able to have a width of seven feet. The freeboard, according to the story, was achieved with a plank of up to 15 inches wide that was attached to the structure by means of perforations and fibers made from vegetables. The structure was caulked with vegetable gum to waterproof the vessel. The canoe could be up to 40 feet long, and every two feet, there could be a sort of bench that served for paddling. Although there are sails, according to Du Tertre, the paddle usually has a 60-cm-wide blade with a paddle-shaped handle; the anchor could be a stone between four tied poles, and with this technology, it was possible to travel between 200 and 300 leagues (McKusick, 1960, p. 6).

McKusick also takes data from the famous transcriptions of Christopher Columbus' diary (Chaverri, 1992). He shows how this sailor and his crew recorded huge pirogues in Jamaica, up to 90 feet long, on the second voyage (McKusick, 1960, p. 8); Columbus is also said to have seen single-trunk canoes that were very fast, some with as many as 80 men paddling (p. 9). McKusick makes it clear that, for these early navigators who entered the eastern Caribbean, these canoes were artifacts that allowed smooth and versatile communication between the islands.

McKusick's pioneering work has inspired other research that has even generated computer models to measure navigability in the Caribbean (Callaghan, 2001; Callaghan & Bray, 2007). Within this range of options, we have the work of Fitzpatrick (2013), who, like McKusick, explores several variables that allow us to understand indigenous navigation in the region. On the environment, Fitzpatrick points out that the system of currents and winds allows some mobility among the islands of the Antilles, making them interconnected areas (pp. 104–107). Specifically, the bathymetry of the islands indicates that these islands are steep, and between them, a bottleneck is generated that allows a displacement through the interstice; this was proven by archaeologist B. Benoit, who made simulations of navigating in traditional canoes in the area (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 107). In addition to the environment, Fitzpatrick briefly mentions the discussion related to the settlement of the area. It is clear that the earliest dates are for northern Cuba, up to almost 6000 BP, which raises some questions, such as the origin of the occupations and the technologies used for them. In any case, Fitzpatrick makes

it clear that the Greater Antilles could easily have been colonized from the present Venezuelan coast (p. 108). From the data presented by him, it is clear that the discussion that concerns him has to do with the chronology of the Antillean occupations, which leaves us without data to understand the dynamics of Indigenous navigation in the western Caribbean. In addition to the meteomarine conditions and archaeological antecedents, Fitzpatrick takes the canoes themselves as a reference point for the capabilities of navigation in the Caribbean. Like McKusick, Fitzpatrick recognizes that one way to approach an understanding of these arts involves ethnohistorical data in view of the almost nonexistent archaeological data (p. 109). He mentions Cooper's (2004) findings in Cuba of what appear to be monoxiles associated with late-period ceramics. This limitation also occurs with technologies concomitant to canoes, such as paddles, of which there are few archaeological specimens (Fitzpatrick, 2013, pp. 109–111); in the case of the Antilles, some paddles have decorations that could be interpreted as social status (Ostapkowicz, 1998). If we recall McKusick's (1960) ideas about Columbus' diary (p. 7), it is clear that, from these sources, it could be asserted that certain decorations on the boats would reflect some social ascription with status dimensions. However, the ethnohistoric evidence should only lead us to generate hypotheses and not to take as given that Indigenous navigation systems in the Caribbean were mediated by social inequalities. To say that a paddle is associated with a status pattern would have the same truth value as stating that every canoe is made for navigation. In any case, as we will see below, the construction of canoes and nets, before the introduction of synthetic fibers, involved a coordination that implied the use of a certain authority that directed the phases of construction and use of canoes.

Regarding sails, Fitzpatrick (2013) recalls the anecdote of the friar who saved his own life by teaching these technologies (pp. 112–113) and suggests, as was done decades ago, that this evidence contradicts the idea of the use of sail as a pre-Hispanic art. To this assertion he adds the idea that the use of sail was not a necessary element for navigation in the area (p. 113), given the use of oars and the system of currents between islands. Regarding the sources on the construction of canoes, Fitzpatrick uses the same ones as McKusick (1960) but adds data on Indigenous navigation in Oceania, where monoxiles using sails with outriggers have been reported, something that was not reported in the early Caribbean documentation. This allows the inference that sails were not used in the Antillean Caribbean, as this would have required the development of other systems to condition the boats to wind propulsion, especially the use of daggerboards (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 117) that served to balance the boat at the time of deploying the sails. Undoubtedly, the subject of sails in the pre-Hispanic Caribbean is an issue that has been addressed not without some resentment since the assertion of the nonexistence of sails in pre-Hispanic periods could be read as nautical underdevelopment. In any case,

it is quite probable that the technological designs, as suggested, made the use of sails unnecessary, or that they were circumscribed to coastal or lake navigation maneuvers. This could be particularly true in the case of the Colombian and Venezuelan Caribbean, which is full of lake systems bordering the coastline. Let us not forget that the sister republic of Venezuela derives its name from the diminutive of Venezia, "Venezziola" (Gómez, 2011). Currently, as we will see below, in the Colombian Caribbean, it is possible to appreciate the use of sails in the lagoon systems, and in the case of the CGSM, the sail is associated with the current palafitic occupations, which are similar to the Venezuelan ones that gave the name to the country.

Regarding resources, Fitzpatrick (2013) notes that mahogany (Meliaceae), kapok (Malvaceae), and cedar (Cedrela odorata) were used. Mahogany can reach heights of up to 30 meters and kapok of up to 70 meters (p. 118). Fitzpatrick summarizes a discussion that has been held regarding the shape of the canoes in the eastern Caribbean and concludes that they were U-shaped but that some were observed with what appear to be fins that allowed for better maneuverability (p. 118). Something very important that the author points out is that, given the evidence for the eastern Caribbean, it was not necessary to build boats of the great draft that implied solving problems such as ballasting. This would mark the difference with the traditions of the South Pacific, where the problems of sail and cargo use required the use of stabilizers, something absent in the Caribbean (p. 119).

In addition to the variables described, Fitzpatrick (2013) evaluates the connection between the Antillean island system and the continental areas of Central and South America. In this regard, he states that certain domesticated plants reached the Antilles from some part of Central or South America, although it is not very clear when and by what means (p. 119). In any case, Fitzpatrick points out important variables in the determination of navigation technologies, such as intersocietal exchanges, which were surely responsible for the distribution of some plants in the insular area (Newsom & Wing, 2004). These exchanges, as have been documented for Indigenous communities in northern Colombia, are associated with ritual mobilities that occur at pilgrimage points of sacred cartography (Londoño, 2020). For Fitzpatrick (2013), maize could be an element of chronological value that determines when the plant was introduced to the West Indies and thus infers navigation patterns between islands and between islands and various continental areas (p. 121). Based on the studies of Mickleburgh and Pagán-Jiménez (2012), Fitzpatrick (2013) considers that a reasonable date for these interactions would be 3800 BP, although certain data from the area could sink their temporal roots to almost 6000 BP (Newsom, 2006). As shown by ethnographic data (Londoño, 2020), the system of exchanges between highland and coastal communities involves the exchange of seeds of various kinds, which is an element to take into

account when analyzing pre-Hispanic plant distributions, something that, in reality, we do not know very much about.

In addition to maize, certain jade objects have allowed us to think of exchange routes between the continent and the islands. Mineralogical studies have shown some affiliations between areas of Guatemala and Antigua (Harlow et al., 2006), but West Indian jade deposits have also been discovered (Knippenberg, 2007). It cannot be ruled out that the archaeological record has representations of local lithic productions as well as evidence of exchanges between continental and insular areas. Fitzpatrick (2013) rightly suggests that in addition to spatial markers such as jadeite elements, certain metallurgical elements could be evidence of relations between the Greater Antilles and northern Colombia, especially those related to the famous Tairona iconography (Bray, 1997). We will return to this subject later.

The recent studies of Shearn (2020) detail a little better the insular interactions that were based on the circulation of quartz beads between the islands, which clearly implies a practice of exchanges based on maritime technologies. Shearn contributes an interesting element to the discussion by pointing out that the canoes generated a determination of the social practices of the Caribbean communities, which led to the production, use, and maintenance of maritime technologies that allowed exogamous exchanges (p. 4). It is inferred from Shearn's reasoning that canoes are not only means of transportation but technologies that allow the construction of social ties. Canoes are part of social structures. Shearn draws attention, moreover, to the fact that canoes involve social agreements, either to allow the felling of trees to make the monoxiles or to set afloat and use the canoe (p. 8). Thus, it is clear that indigenous navigation assumes the existence of an underlying social structure that determines navigation technologies. It is evident that indigenous navigation necessarily presupposes ideological motivations that are unknown in several cases; however, if we appeal to the reflections of C. Marx (2004) on precapitalist societies, it is unquestionable that the underlying ideologies of these economies were based on extended family systems with a communal basis of land and sea, which made them egalitarian societies. It was these tribal structures that were responsible for the construction of the first boats that allowed the reproduction of the social structures that produced them. These societies were even responsible for the gold and silver work classified as Tairona, which is considered an expression of societies of chiefdom order, i.e., unequal.

Something very interesting about Shearn (2020) is his ethnoarchaeological observations of the Kalinago of Dominica. As his work shows, the Kalinago build monoxiles from the *Dacryodes excelsa* tree, which implies several operative chains related to the participation of the people who help to cut the tree, those who help to dig the tree, those who help to move the canoe to the coast, and those who help to decorate it. Something

important that Shearn mentions is that all these elements are related to variables such as the distribution of *Dacryodes excelsa*, to which must be added the will of the humans involved in the task.

As taught by Shearn (2020), studies by Bérard et al. (2016) give an account of the operative chains for the production of monoxiles in Dominica and the relationship of each phase to the social structure. For example, the phases of tree choice involve contact with nonhuman entities or spiritual beings that allow the tree to be cut. These tasks require authorized subjects to handle esoteric knowledge. After the cutting of the tree, where various actors intervene, the excavation of the tree involves the intervention of specialists; then, the vessel is allowed to be decorated by certain individuals, which involves the crystallization of rites of passage. Shearn (2020) hits the nail on the head when he assumes that progress must be made in a theorization of Caribbean canoe societies, for canoes are not incidental but structural (p. 13). As we saw in the first chapter, in the Colombian Caribbean, we are far from an anthropology of canoes since the emphasis, or the sensibility, has been placed on agriculture. This is simply a mistake that does not allow us to appreciate the complexity of the coastal riverine carpentry of the SNSM. As can be inferred from Shearn's research (2020), although the canoe may be owned by the person who decides to have it made, its production is collective and, in many cases, relies more on kinship relationships than on monetary remuneration.

As the works cited above show, a significant number of the reflections and data on navigation in the Caribbean have been more focused on understanding interactions in the eastern Caribbean. They do not take into account what has been happening in the western Caribbean, especially in what concerns us, which is the Colombian Caribbean coast.

A notable difference in this regard is the work of Callaghan and Bray (2007). These authors combine previous knowledge about possible contacts between what is now Costa Rica and northern Colombia with computer simulations that recreate navigation variables in canoes. According to specialized literature (Bray, 1984), these contacts could go back as far as 2000 BP and would be related to the flow of ideas, technologies, and material culture between the two areas, expressed in what is known as the iconography of the spread-winged bird motif (Cooke, 1986).

For Callaghan and Bray (2007), the technological and stylistic similarities are not anomalous if one takes into account that the area is composed of societies with related languages; however, the similarities tend to be very noticeable between 2000 BP and 1200 BP. As Bray points out, in addition to the existence of circular ring villages and stone roads, in both parts, there are more specific features, such as "spoon" objects that can be lithic or ceramic, in addition to jade carvings (Bray, 2003; Callaghan & Bray, 2007, pp. 5–6).

Picture 1. Lithic Spoon

As Callaghan and Bray (2007) point out, the directionality of these exchanges has been discussed in the specialized literature, and arguments have been found that give weight to one source or another (p. 7). The work of Reichel-Dolmatoff (1965), which assumes that the flow was north–south, is mentioned, but the work of Snarskis (1998), which suggests the opposite, is also described. In any case, the investigations of Cooke (1986) seem to distort the north–south circulation of these objects and consider that it was south–north, given the early dates of Colombian goldsmiths whose styles seem to have spread along the southern coasts of Central America, including Panama and Costa Rica.

The project carried out by Callaghan and Bray (2007) used a database with information on currents and winds in the area that were recorded from the beginning of the 19th century. This information was cross-referenced with the model of a Central American canoe, specifically one from Belize (p. 9). It is of particular note that the authors of the simulation did not use a Colombian or Costa Rican monoxile. Here, it is time to digress and point out the complexities of pre-Hispanic research in Central America because, although it is possible to speculate the existence of routes between present-day Colombia and Costa Rica through the Caribbean, the truth of the matter is that for Costa Rica, the reports of monoxile traditions are found for the Pacific side (Romo et al., 2017). In any case, in addition to this information, the model used what appears to be a rowing propulsion system, so sailing was ruled out. The model, likewise, took into account the freshwater supply from precipitation, which led to some interesting results. For example, it was calculated that, in the wet season that occupies the entire second half of the year, with the exception of November, the success of drifting trips between Colombia and Costa Rica would be a maximum of 35%, with up to 57 days of sailing. In contrast

to drifting, intentional trips at a speed of two knots represent a success rate of up to 84% (Callaghan & Bray, 2007, p. 17). The simulations made by these authors show some ease in south–north mobility without ruling out reverse mobility. It is also suggested in the conclusions that there may have been many intermediate ports along the route that served various purposes, such as trading or obtaining food supplies (p. 20). Specifically, mention is made of the famous "trading ports" of the ancient world where sumptuary goods were exchanged without there necessarily being direct contact. This brings us a little closer to the precapitalist motivations of trade, a topic that should undoubtedly guide research on trade in the western Caribbean and the Caribbean in general. These pre-Hispanic mobilities were based on a series of offerings that were deployed throughout the territory and involved the exchange of spoons, beads, and pectorals made of gold and tumbaga, which represented certain types of birds. Since these pectorals were used to adorn the body, it is very likely that the motivations for their circulation were oriented by logic, like those of the Kula that were described by Malinowski (1920) at the beginning of the 20th century. According to him, although we cannot understand the logic of these exchanges, we can understand their function, which aims to maintain the current kinship relations and make the roles of the social structure visible. In addition, these exchanges allow dietary complementarity and facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge. As he points out, these exchanges do not have economic functions, as he was also able to detect specific barter systems to complement the food supply of the islands. It was a system that functioned with a certain reciprocity. This case confirms the fact that precapitalist exchanges allow, in addition to the circulation of objects, plants and food to be exchanged. In fact, Malinowski refers to the fact that the bracelets and chokers that make up the Kula exchange have proper names since they are subjects. These are, in any case, animistic ontologies, which adds another level of complexity to the understanding of these phenomena. The same happens with some Kogi masks, which are indigenous of the SNSM, who in the past made these deities circulate (Londoño, 2020). Consequently, when the deity circulates, plants also circulate, and this allows the social structure to reproduce and diversify its access to resources.

As we saw above, Bray (2003) emphasized the connections between Central America and northern Colombia in terms of what could be the exchange of ritual objects. There are also other features, such as cobblestone roads and circular villages, but I consider them not to be as convincing as the design and iconography of the famous spoons. It could not be a coincidence that these appear in Colombia and Costa Rica. Now, some questions arise, such as the chronology of these relationships and their meaning. I must say that, with the available information, there are no certainties; we have some indications, but we must better refine our chronological understanding of the circulation of objects and their motivations and logics. On this, several decades ago, Langebaek (1987)

proposed two moments of connection. A first moment would be associated with what has traditionally been considered the Neguanje period, which could be placed at about 2000 BP (p. 32). In this historical moment, there is evidence of the circulation of winged jade earrings found in both poles, and that allows us to understand an iconographic communality (p. 37). According to Langebaek, the circulation of Tairona objects became more complex, perhaps a millennium before the conquest, and at that time, the SNSM societies were able to provide necklace beads to societies located in diverse areas, such as the Lower and Middle Magdalena, the Sabana de Bogotá, La Guajira, and Costa Rica (p. 37). From this perspective, it seems to be accepted in the archaeology of Colombia that before the social and demographic emergence of the SNSM around 1000 BP (Hoopes, 2005), there were exchanges of goldsmith objects between Colombia and Costa Rica, and these objects were designed to represent the motif of the bird with spread wings, which would be the identity mark of the Intermediate Area (Cooke, 1986).

As we can infer from the above, in pre-Hispanic times, there was a regional connection that linked diverse areas such as Costa Rica with Colombia and Colombia with Venezuela. A fact that is not without particularity is that this layer of stylistic communality fits perfectly with what would be the layer of Chibcha linguistic communality (Constenla, 1995). Thus, it is very clear that this cultural continuity in the Caribbean must have been fed by mobility technologies such as navigation and ritual artifacts made of gold, stones, and ceramics. Although we do not have such direct archaeological evidence on Indigenous navigation in the Colombian Caribbean, since we only have two anchors found in archaeological contexts in Taganga (Londoño, 2021), the linguistic and stylistic commonality allows us to deduce the mobility technologies that made it possible.

According to Constenla (1995), it is possible to make diachronic studies of languages through the comparison of phonemes; in this way, we seek to recognize the phonemes of the proto-languages in their different variations, which implies using a comparative method that allows us to locate these similarities. In this way, by locating the base phonemes, it is possible to detect the variations that have to do with temporal or spatial changes. These studies allowed Constenla to infer a series of four linguistic areas. The first would be the Paya territory of Honduras; the second would be the southern Caribbean coast of Nicaragua to western Panama; the third would be from the Darien, with related areas along the western bank of the Cauca River; finally, the fourth would be the eastern bank of the Magdalena to the SNSM and the Sierra de Perijá (p. 43). For Constenla, the linguistic fragmentation began at about 4000 BP, which adds another layer of complexity because it would make us think of probable maritime technologies that helped the Central American dispersions. Logically, the dispersion of this proto-language later allowed the regional variations to occur along both oceans; we find, on the one hand, all these linguistic families associated with the cradle languages that link the

Cauca River with the Pacific and, on the other hand, the dispersion along the Caribbean that links all the languages of the Magdalena River with the Colombian Caribbean (p. 45). Thus, the Greater Caribbean should be understood in its isthmic interactions that facilitated interoceanic communication in pre-Hispanic times.

Pre-Hispanic material evidence of indigenous navigation in Colombia is practically nonexistent. The most concrete are two anchors that appeared in archaeological contexts in Taganga, which appear in Picture 2. As we can see, these are two lithic artifacts that are known in the maritime literature as *potalas* (Domínguez, 2000; Cayuela et al., 2007), which are nothing more than stone anchors (Evrin et al., 2002).

Picture 2. Lithic Anchor (Potala) From Taganga

Picture 2 shows two *potalas* resting on the seafloor simulation. The lower *potala* is very similar to those that have been found in the Mediterranean with chronologies of 2000 BP (Evrin et al., 2002, p. 254); this does not mean that there was cultural continuity; rather, it points to simultaneous invention processes that are the result of combining practical needs with the availability of local resources. On the other hand, the anchor above is not common since its turrets make it unusual. For Taganga, we do not have C-14 dates that would allow us to associate these findings; for the coastal strip, we have C-14 dates that would cover a temporality of up to 1300 BP (Londoño, 2011). In the case of Chengue Bay, in the PNNT, Alejandro Dever (2010) reported three dates ranging from 2200 BP to 640 BP. This site report presents a sequence of a salt production specialization process, which is evidence of coastal management that involved navigation technologies.

At this site, the negative evidence, for example the absence of monoxile remains and fishing nets, is an indicator that is consistent with the expectation of not finding plant materials, given the high rate of wood decomposition in submerged contexts in the Caribbean. Likewise, in the Gold Museum, it is possible to find gold hooks, and the lack of archaeological evidence of these fishing technologies could be due to the intense *guaquería* that has occurred in the SNSM since the mid-20th century (Londoño, 2020). In addition, for decades, the infamous shipworms (Grave, 1928) have been the main enemies of the timber not only of active boats but also of shipwrecks (Eriksen et al., 2015). Likewise, the fact that Dever (2010) did not report anchors or weights is probably due to the fact that these materials were highly recycled, to the extent that they did not generate deposits as pottery did. The pottery deposits that allowed Dever (p. 11) to make chronological inferences are almost two meters deep, so the intention of not leaving evidence of nautical technologies is noticeable.

Archaeological research on the SNSM coastline has involved the study of coastal and highland sites. Some decades ago, it was believed that the coastal temporalities were earlier than the mountain ones, which was a consequence of Reichel's imposition of maize evolution. This was probably due to the fact that since the beginning of the 20th century, the only existing coastal date was 1,700 years ago (Hoopes, 2004, p. 149), while in the 1980s, mountain dates ranged 1,000 years ago (Ardila, 1986). In the 1980s, it was common to accept these temporal gaps as evidence of occupation phases that took cultures from their precarious coastal manifestations to the pinnacles of highland civilization. However, this imbalance was due to the intensity of highland dates combined with few coastal dates or investigations (Langebaek, 2005b). This has been balanced out in recent years in such a way that we can affirm that there was not necessarily a maize colonization but rather a complementarity.

If we cross-check the available archaeological information, we clearly notice that there is no disparity between the coastal occupations and the highland occupations. The dates provided to us by Dever (2010) for the coastal context and by Giraldo (2018) for

the Alto Buritaca region prove this. This chronological similarity allows us to infer the existence of coast–hill dynamics that are easily perceptible in the colonial documentation that tells us about exchanges between the sea and the mountains. As reported by Reichel when reviewing historical documents (1951), blankets and gold from the highlands were exchanged for coastal fish and salt. This probably involved the interregional use of some types of ceramics made for practices that were shared by people who spoke different languages.

As archaeologist Hoopes (2004) has shown, the Neguanje site excavated by J. Mason in the present-day cove of the same name was composed of grave goods with V-shaped gold pectorals, which contain anthropomorphic figures with their necks adorned with what appear to be pendants of the famous motif of the bird with spread wings; this figure is formed of a base that is an equilateral triangle and an upper body that is a V shape. As Hoopes points out, this iconography is repeated in Panama and Costa Rica, and one such headdress was seen on a Bribri Indigenous leader in Costa Rica at the end of the 19th century. Hoopes suggests that this iconography is clearly associated with Kogi deities that are related to the sun and creation deities (pp. 148–149). Without discussing the details of these representations, it is clear that gold in the Amerindian imagery of the SNSM coast is associated with the offerings or *pagamentos* that constitute the regional exchange system. This system of exchanges could be described as an activity that implies walking the territory to find points called *ezuamas*, which are spaces where offerings must be made according to the function corresponding to the place. There are places for wisdom, for healing, for protecting crops, and for pottery and goldsmithing. Thus, it is necessary to understand the location of the gold excavated at the beginning of the 20th century and the function it was fulfilling there (Londoño, 2020). In any case, it is important to highlight that it is possible to register a linguistic, stylistic, and technological communality that unites diverse peoples from Costa Rica through Panama to the Colombian Caribbean. This communality must undoubtedly have occurred by means of navigation systems in monoxiles, which were the basis for the reproduction of these social structures that we can infer from these shared iconographies. The monoxile tradition is still present throughout the western Caribbean; think of the monoxile tradition of the Naso of Panama, who are related to several Central American communities (Burgos et al., 2014). Monoxile traditions have also been reported in the Colombian Pacific (Fuquen, 2014), and I was able to learn, while living in Cartagena de Indias in 2019, of a trade between Afro-descendants from Tierrabomba, across from Cartagena, and Afro-descendants from the Colombian Pacific, who supply the Tierrabomba islanders with monoxiles. This exchange is interoceanic, and we do not have clarity on its temporality. These navigation technologies are hardly understandable in a country that, like Colombia, is almost half land and half water.

The available information allows us to infer that the ethnographic tradition of monoxiles and the stylistic communality of the western Caribbean, which has a temporality of almost two millennia, are evidence that the regional monoxile tradition is vernacular and was (is) the basis of a system of ritual exchanges between related communities. Here, I must pause and point out that these relationships were just that, relationships, dispersion rhizomes that connected separate interoceanic basins. This synthesis does not seek a genealogy, which is already written in the Andeanization of the Caribbean; on the contrary, it seeks to dilute these historical sedimentations in the ever-changing waters of the sea.

Having made this tour through the regional antecedents, and having situated the problem of indigenous navigation in the Colombian Caribbean, it only remains to move on to the description of the results of a research that aimed at understanding the monoxile tradition of the SNSM coastline.

The Taganga Monoxiles

In 2021, the German foundation Gerda Henkel, the University of Magdalena, and the Indigenous Cabildo of Taganga funded a project called "Towards the understanding and conservation of the Indigenous canoes of the coast of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta." The objective of the project was placed within the framework of Gerda Henkel's "Patrimonies" call for proposals, which seeks to draw attention to traditional technologies that have disappeared or are in danger of disappearing. We could almost say that the history of anthropology has oscillated in this function of recording the last minutes of a non-Western culture or technologies. In any case, this was the opportunity to access some funds and to be able to do research on the monoxile canoes of the SNSM coastline.

Needless to say, interest in monoxiles has existed in society for a long time. Along the SNSM coastline, it is usual to find monoxiles that have been used for various ornamental purposes. Perhaps the one that has caught my attention the most is the conversion of monoxiles into pots (see Picture 3). The result of taking an excavated trunk, filling it with soil, and putting flowering plants on top of it is certainly pleasant, even beautiful; however, this recycling, which has been carried out by resort landscapers—it seems to me—hides in its background a historical violence by ignoring the importance of the monoxiles in the construction of the Indigenous societies of the coast.

Along the coast of Santa Marta, it is common to find several resorts or hostels that have appropriated the remains of the monoxiles for various uses, mainly related to decorative contexts. According to conversations I was able to have with some fishermen from what would be the old beach of Gaira, the people in charge of decorating hotel enclosures can pay up to two million pesos, about 400 US dollars, per canoe. The price will depend on the condition of the canoe; obviously, what these decorators are looking for are relatively complete canoes.

Another use that has been made of monoxile remains is converting their edges into boards to make advertisements (see Picture 4); even in a hostel in Dibulla, a monoxile was innovatively conditioned as a table (see Picture 5). These processes of appropriation of these objects have been concomitant with a dynamic of appropriation of the coastline

at the hands of real estate companies (Burgos, 2011). This has meant that large and small businesses have appropriated the coastlines, displacing the fishermen of Rodadero Sur, Bello Horizonte, Pozos Colorados, Don Jaca, and the entire strip of coastline that goes to Ciénaga. In fact, more than a decade ago, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting at the Sociedad Portuaria Río Córdoba in Ciénaga, where they were discussing how traditional fishermen could continue to cover areas that overlapped with the areas of operation of coal exporting companies.

Picture 3. Monoxile as a Pot, South El Rodadero, Santa Marta

Picture 4. Remains of a Monoxile Used for Advertising

Picture 5. Monoxile as a Dinner Table

In addition to the ways monoxiles have been used along the SNSM coastline as decorative elements, one way to draw attention to these technologies has been to graffiti them (see Picture 6). Even in Alta Guajira, in Uribia, we found an old abandoned boat built with planks that was serving as a canvas for the agile hands of a graffiti artist (see Picture 7).

Picture 6. Abandoned Monoxile With Graffiti

Picture 7. Boat With Graffiti

In any case, these appropriations of material culture that is heritage have been a novel way of managing the lack of knowledge about these technologies since, in other cases, the monoxiles have been abandoned to become garbage deposits or as a source of wood for fuel. For example, in the Genemaca inlet in Taganga, a cayuco abandoned approximately 20 years ago has been used as a garbage dump, and recently, fishermen have begun to use its planks as a fuel source (see Picture 8). According to what the Genemaca fishermen told me, this monoxile was abandoned in the early 2000s. It was placed there because the maritime authority ordered the removal of traditional boats from the shore that were not being used. In a sense, this order promoted the disappearance of several cayucos because the maritime authorities considered them unimportant waste. If the Tagangueros have had to face anything in recent decades, it has been the imposition of measures by external entities, such as the National Navy, which ordered the removal of the cayucos from the coast, or National Natural Parks, which up to the recognition of the Cabildo of Taganga considered the Tagangueros themselves as intruders.

Picture 8. Ariel and Nando Reviewing an Abandoned Monoxile in Genemaca, Taganga

The situation with the Colombian maritime authority has changed in the last decade thanks to the creation of the Heritage Group of the General Maritime Directorate (DIMAR). This group has begun to carry out diverse tasks ranging from the nonintrusive prospecting of sites to the monitoring of wrecks such as the San José.

In Colombia, since a few years ago, there has been an academic interest in these technologies, and to date, we can find descriptions of the production of monoxiles in the Pacific (Fuquen Gómez, 2014), the Caribbean (Botero, 2021), and Taganga; however, these are from the perspective of the effects on cultural and environmental rights (Consejo Cabildo de Mayores de Taganga et al., 2021). These important local documents, due to this perspective, do not outline the phenomenon of Taganga navigation in the broader context of the chains of social relations that included the sea, rivers, and lagoons as a source of communication. If we accept what Fals Borda said about Colombia, an amphibious country (I could add "not only terrestrial"), it is clear that the basis for the construction of this sociability was made possible by the various nautical technologies.

Returning to the research background on monoxiles in Colombia, Botero (2021) presents in his book *Canoas monóxilas en Colombia* an overview that allows him to distinguish two major traditional technologies in the country: sawn plank boats and monoxiles. Likewise, Fuquen (2014) does an ethnography of the monoxile canoes in Coquí, in the Colombian Pacific, concentrating on describing the nature of these technologies that are not dissociated from local belief systems. Fuquen teaches how the logs are selected, how they are reduced, how the vessels are shaped through excavation, and how various types are made. In the author's ethnography of this riverside carpentry, it is possible to appreciate how canoes are more than artifacts that, when they complete their cycles, are discarded; on the contrary, their parts are recycled for various daily activities so that the canoe transcends its usefulness as a navigational object and becomes a mnemonic reference. Canoes are not part of history; they are history itself.

An interesting element of this research is that it makes a schematization of the types of local canoes, and this schematization allows us to understand the existence of a technological tradition in which human beings learned to excavate logs to use them as vessels, and depending on their mobility needs, such as going up estuaries, moving through channels, or facing the open sea, they designed extensions that made up for the disadvantages that canoes made of a single log could have.

Given the existence of a long-standing tradition of monoxile manufacturing in Taganga (Consejo Cabildo de Mayores de Taganga et al., 2021), it was possible to conduct research to understand the logic of this technology and how it is associated with various components of society. This allows us to make a comparison with other areas of

monoxile traditions, such as the Southern Cone, where there is an important archaeological and ethnohistorical representativeness (Braicovich, 2007; Carabias et al., 2010; Lira et al., 2015). We also see how the analysis of monoxile construction in Mexico is growing in complexity, where the combination of historical (including codices), archaeological, and ethnographic information has unraveled a complex typology of vessels (Biar, 2017; Williams, 2015).

In any case, the study of the Taganga monoxile tradition brings us closer to solving research problems such as the meaning of circulations in navigation along the SNSM coastline and surrounding areas, the technologies involved in that navigation, and the responsibility of those technologies in the reproduction of social structures involved in exchange circuits. We should even warn that these traditions are not archaeological because they are still in force, as this book proves. Let us return to the project.

The first objective of the project consisted of the reconstruction of at least two cayucos, as monoxile canoes are known in the local language of Taganga. The selection made, mainly by the Cabildo of Taganga, was intended to expose two of the main types of vessels of the local shore carpentry tradition. Before continuing, it is necessary to provide a description of the word cayuco, which has not gone unnoticed in the linguistic studies of the continental and insular Caribbean. According to Castillo (1982), it is a Taino word frequently used in the Colombian Caribbean, even in fluvial areas. It is found in the Lesser Antilles and refers to small boats, not necessarily monoxiles. As can be seen in this hypothesis, cayuco would be associated with indigenous Antillean languages without implying that this relationship determines a Taino technological heritage in the Colombian Caribbean. Although it is not the specific subject of this book to know this etymology, it is very likely that the Taino word was popularized in the western Caribbean as a consequence of the colonial trade that was established in the Caribbean basin.

In order to obtain data related to local techniques that would allow the restoration of a vessel, the project counted on the advice of anthropologist and Taganga leader David Cantillo. David made contacts to locate a Taganga riverside carpenter. That is how we found Mr. Fernando Vázquez. Nando, as this veteran carpenter is known, comes from a family of monoxile builders, and it is clear that he acquired the necessary knowledge for the manufacture of these complex artifacts through his father's line.

In addition to locating Nando, the project involved the search for sites with monoxile remains along the SNSM coastline; it was in this way that we planned tours along the coast commanded by the senior cabildo Ariel Daniels de Andreis and the junior cabildo Aldemar Zúñiga; we were also accompanied and advised by the anthropologists Eduardo Forero Lloreda and Anghie Prado Mejía. These tours were conducted in the last quarter of 2021. With this work team, it was possible to locate several

sites with monoxile remains, and from there, it was possible to select a cayuco that was restored. The other cayuco was obtained in Taganga and was chosen due to its difference in length, which is basically the feature that differentiates the two types of monoxiles that were manufactured in Taganga. In this way, two types of cayucos that represent a part of the traditional maritime technologies of the SNSM coastline were restored. Here, we should warn the reader that the typology of monoxile vessels does not necessarily respond to a regulation of how to make the cayucos; it is necessary to understand the manufacture of cayucos in a more relational context, where diverse variables have influence, such as the need for a vessel for a masculine rite of passage. As can be inferred from the information generated by the project, it is usually men who, upon achieving a certain prestige by being recognized as a skilled fishermen and exemplary fathers of families, could mobilize labor for the manufacture of the cayuco without this necessarily implying monetary payment. As in the case reported by Malinowski, it could be that the carpenter, by investing labor in this artifact, constantly benefited from the fishing and mobility offered by the vessel. This occurred in the past when society was not monetized, and in the last decades, canoes have been purchased from specialized carpenters.

For example, demand for canoes increased due to males coming of age and it becoming necessary for them to command their own vessels. Similarly, the need for a cayuco would come from the inability to repair an existing one. In other cases, the cayucos were simply made on demand; that is, someone had the capacity to pay for a carpenter to dedicate entire weeks to manufacture them. Undoubtedly, this last generation of Taganguero shore carpenters to which Nando belongs had to make their work a specialty, which required charging for their services, but before, with the low circulation of currency, the activity was remunerated by barter. In any case, since canoes are complex artifacts owned by someone who commands an extended family, their possession does not cease to give power not only to those who recognize themselves as canoe owners but also to their families.

This is also not the space to make a robust analysis of the historical documentation, but a look at the Spanish archives makes it clear that canoes in today's Colombian Caribbean were expensive artifacts and, in some way, their manufacture and use gave certain power before the Crown. This is evidenced by documents recording lawsuits brought by canoe owners for nonpayment or mistreatment (see Archivo General de Indias Caracas, 1L.2F.12R-12V, 1593). The above is inscribed in the dynamics of pearl exploitation, which could be considered one of the first export business that took place in the current Colombian territory.

Another factor to take into account is the disposition of the wood. In this sense, when asked to build a boat, the first step to follow was to locate a suitable trunk that would

allow the shaping of the cayuco, taking into account the projections of length and beam; in this way, the size of the boats depended on the supply of resources, and in this transaction, evidently, the idea was to obtain the best results by locating the best wood in a place with easy access to the coastline. David Cantillo commented, in the framework of the project, that there were several stories of carpenters who excavated wild cashew (*Anacardium excelsum*), perhaps the tree of choice for cayucos in Taganga, in areas inaccessible to the coastline; they did this in a way that could only be explained as supernatural, with a single man carrying an artifact as large as a cayuco down to the coastline. There are stories of these carpenters who spent a night digging the tree and had the boat on shore ready for tinkering the next morning. From Sophocles and Aeschylus, through the Trobiandese stories to the Taganguero oral chronicles, the manufacture of boats is a supernatural event.

For the Tagangueros, the cayucos are made mainly from *caracolí* (wild cashew) trees, as in Coquí (Fuquen, 2014), although in the Pacific, this tree is known as *espavé*. In the past, the tagangueros looked for wild cashew trees to make the cayucos, and these trees were found in the upper parts of the dense forest that comprises areas of up to 750 meters above sea level (Rueda and Castellanos, 2010). In the delimitation of ecozones made in Neguanje Bay, in the PNNT, Rueda and Castellanos (2010) generated a typology of the coastal strip that is composed of: 1) mangrove zone, with a predominance of *Rhizophora mangle* (red mangrove), *Avicennia germinans* (black mangrove) and *Laguncularia racemosa* (white mangrove); 2) thorny scrub zone, with a predominance of *Prosopis juliflora (trupillo)*, *Vachellia tortuosa (aromo)*, and *Capparis odoratissima* (olive tree). As mentioned by the authors, in the case of this bay, "the thorny scrub was the main fragmented zone since it is crossed by the entrance road to Neguanje and is also subject to logging and timber extraction" (Rueda & Castellanos, 2010, p. 197); 3) dense forest zone. This is the largest zone because it covers elevations up to 750 meters above sea level. This zone is important because it is dominated by *Anacardium excelsum* (wild cashew), and *Caesalpinia punctata* (ebony). Finally, there is Zone 4, a xerophytic scrub zone, characterized by the presence of *Pereskia guamacho (guamacho)*, *Vachellia tortuosa (aromo)*, *Gliricidia sepium (matarratón)*, *Opuntia caracassana (arepa),* and *Stenocereus griseus (cardón)*.

According to what Fernando and Ariel commented on a tour we made along the coastline of the PNNT, some canoes were made with trees cut from the mountains that protect Cinto Bay. In fact, Cinto is a bay formed by two peninsulas with dry forest that form an inlet; through this accident, a creek runs through it, originating in a mountain range that does not reach 700 meters above sea level and is approximately 4 kilometers in a straight line from the coast (see Picture 9). In this sense, the current dispersion of the *caracolíes* locates them in the high parts of the coast, and at least until the middle of

the 20th century, carpenters that made canoes went to these mountains to prepare the trunks that later would be excavated in situ.

Picture 9. Majagua Tree on Cinto Beach

As could be seen during the tour, Cinto is an important place for the Taganga fishermen, not only because the mangrove fringe has wood for the canoes, but also because, in addition to providing rods for various maneuvers, it has the famous majagua, whose scientific name is *Pseudobombax septenatum* (see Figure 9). Majagua fibers were used to make *chinchorros* (see Picture 10) with which the Taganga fishermen fished in the coves; they then distributed the catch among families (Köster et al., 1978). Regarding the use of the majagua, Ariel Daniels pointed out that its management implied an ex-

tensive family network since the braiding of the threads as well as the weaving of the net required a lot of time. Thus, *chinchorreros*, unable to pay someone to weave the majagua, turned to their extended families to produce the nets needed to make the *chinchorro*. In fact, that seems to be the only way a majagua *chinchorro* could be made: with family support. This seems to be the sense of what in a political economy Marx (2004) called the continuity between humans, labor, and nature as a defining feature of the economies that preceded capitalism, especially what he called the Asian mode of production. It is necessary to point out that the reading of Marx and his reflections on precapitalist societies implies appealing to more complex models than those that founded Reichel's ideas; it is one thing to affirm that in pre-Hispanic times there were caciques or chiefdoms, but another to affirm that there were extended families producing complex artifacts such as *chinchorros* and cayucos, which sustained coastal fishing and the reproduction of social structures that lasted for centuries until they were incorporated into the North Atlantic circuits in the 16th century. In any case, it is not an issue that we can resolve now; however, the hypothesis remains that, in pre-Hispanic times in the western Caribbean, there were village social structures that were linked to a larger unit, as evidenced by the remains of exchanges between present-day Colombia and Costa Rica. The question remains as to the economic and political differences between these pre-Columbian units and the similar ones described in the Asian mode of production. According to the trend that can be observed in archaeological records, relatively autonomous villages that were interconnected with larger units did indeed function in this part of the world in pre-Hispanic times, as attested by the presence of similar artifacts between present-day Costa Rica and Colombia. However, it does not appear, as in Asia, that this larger unit hoarded surplus production to generate public works, so exchanges seem to be more oriented to maintaining village systems that complemented each other through the exchange of various goods and, surely, services. Let us return to the coast.

This is not the place to address such a technical discussion on whether or not there were chiefdom formations in pre-Hispanic times. But the reader will be able to verify in the literature cited, especially in the work of Reichel-Dolmatoff, his or her ignorance of the theories of political economy that addressed the problem of precapitalist economies and the reasons for the transformations that led to the appearance of labor detached from the objective conditions of production, which would be, for Marx (2004), small property and collective property (p. 67).

Returning to our journey, as can be seen in Picture 11, today, Cinto continues to be an important point of reference within the Taganguero landscape for making these nets, and although the majagua *chinchorros* are no longer made, family nets continue to be used to make a living.

Picture 10. Chinchorro (Fishing Net)

Picture 11. Weaving a Chinchorro

We learned from these tours through the Taganga territory that there is an intrinsic relationship between the *caracolí* cayucos and the majagua *chinchorros*. These two technologies are the pillars that support all the reproduction strategies of the local social structure. It is very clear that this family energy investment began to see complex fragmentations with the introduction of nylon nets and the use of fiberglass to make

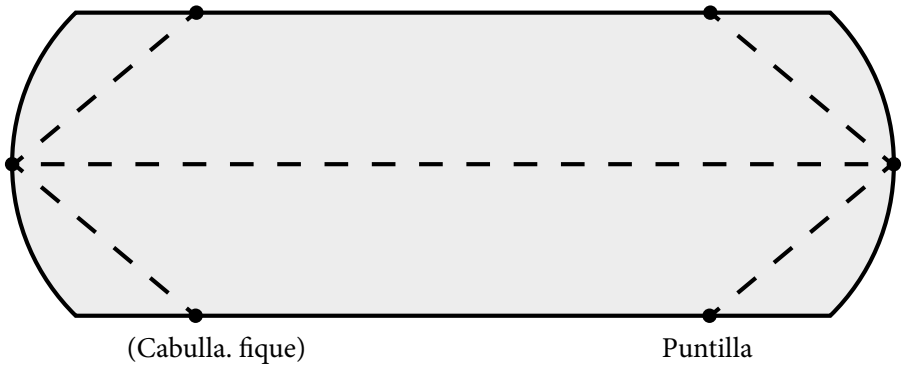
boats. Unlike the majagua, nylon is already woven, and it is only a matter of joining nets to assemble the *chinchorro*. The same thing happens with fiberglass. Its use makes it possible to shape the bodies of boats without the hassle of sawing large logs, digging them out, and placing them on the shore. Another effect of the introduction of these technologies is that it became possible to increase the number of *chinchorros* because when the process of commercialization of fishing began, money was obtained and invested in more fishing technology, which generated a change in social relations that has yet to be evaluated.

Regarding the hollowing out of the trunk to build the cayuco, David Cantillo characterized it with the help of Fernando Vázquez. For Nando, remembering the arts of cayuco making is an exercise that evokes memories of deceased carpenters, such as Esteban Matos, Martín Matos, Martín Vásquez, Víctor Asís, Lorenzo Tejeda, Bartolo Matos, Calixto Tejeda, Octavio Tejeda, and Juancho Daniel. We owe a debt to these teachers, whose memories still live on in Taganga.

According to this characterization, the first task in the manufacture of the cayuco is the *tumbe* (the cutting of the tree). As its name indicates, it is a matter of making the trunk available to the carpenters for digging out. Although we do not have very extensive details about the criteria for choosing the trunk, without a doubt, the most influential elements are height, width, and consistency, that is, that the trunk is not hollow. According to Nando, one way to distinguish the suitability of the trunk is to make sure that it is not hollow, which can be determined by detecting whether there are dry branches in the crown. According to Nando (little Fernando), before cutting the trunk, it was necessary to ask permission from the owners of the trees, and it was advisable to do this in the waning moon when the trees' internal fluids are stabilized. The fact that the forest is full of beings is not something new, but in any case it is recognized that the supernatural beings should be consulted and compensated when borrowing elements such as trees. It should be noted here that, in a traditional *tumbe* task, the person who motivates the whole process would be the owner of the canoe, who is not necessarily the carpenter or the sawyer. In recent times, a canoe owner might pay for carpentry and sawmilling services with money, food, or fuel.

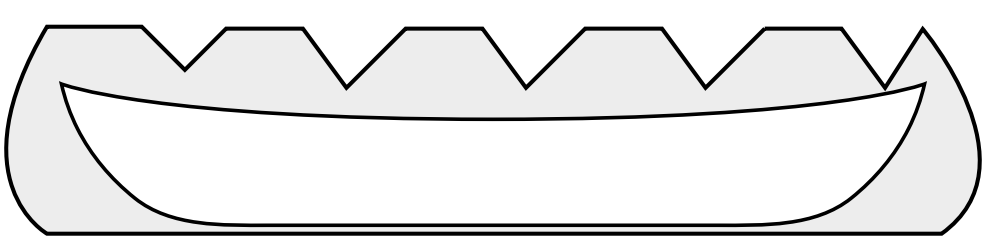
After the tree cutting comes the shaping of the log. In this case, the length and beam will be calculated, and the bow and stern will be defined. As the trunk is still whole, a cord must be nailed to the two ends of the trunk, and a fique rope must be tied to it. Since the idea is to have symmetry, the cords should be arranged horizontally in the middle of the trunk so that the line that is formed is a sort of false keel. Then, this false keel would go from bow to stern. After tracing this line, some cords are nailed before the maximum length line, and with a fique rope, the acute angles that will give the shapes to the stern and the bow are traced (see Picture 12).

Picture 12. Profiling the Trunk



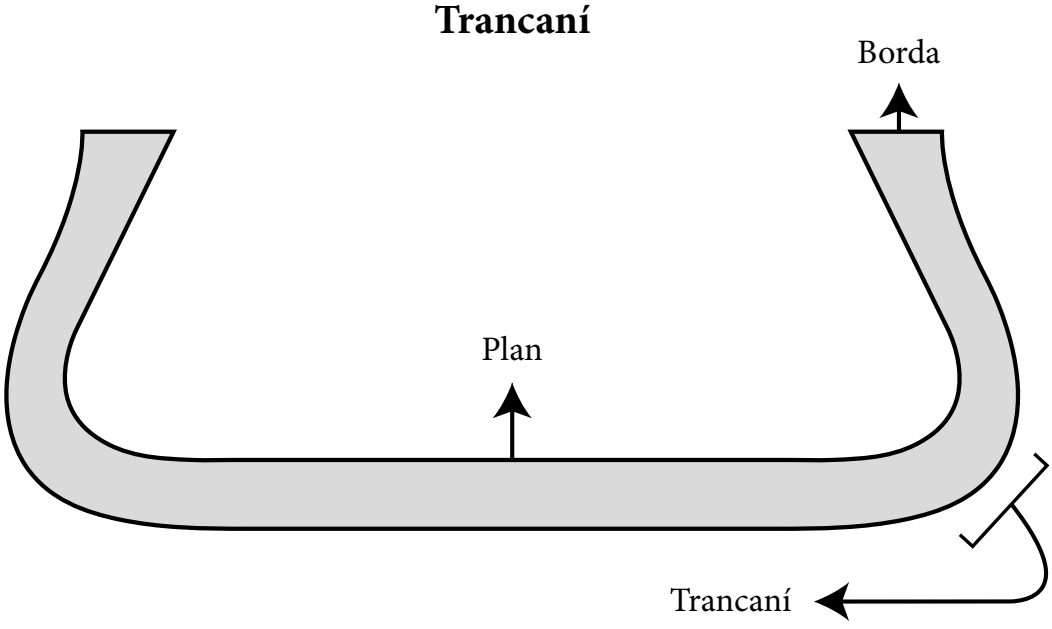
Once the trunk is outlined at the top, the profile is marked with paint that is applied to the rope bow. Once the rope is soaked in paint, the rope is tightened and released so that the paint marks the lines that will guide the excavation. The definition of the bow will be made by forming a fin that fades into what would be a keel line that is lost in the flat part of the cayuco. Once this occurs, the excavation of the trunk begins, and trapezoidal cuts are made so that wedges appear to be dislodged from the trunk. When the freeboard line is reached, the remaining trapezoids are cut, and the cayuco reaches its final height. The pieces that remain from this first reduction are called *cofles* (see Picture 13), and with them, it is possible to make *bateas* that are used for various domestic tasks. For example, some researchers report the use of small canoes that are used as drinking troughs for goats, as well as being used as *jagueyes* lids (Rosado et al., 2020). In other words, we must be clear that the excavation of wood blocks is not only done to make canoes but that this technology covers a wide variety of uses ranging from containers to lids.

Picture 13. Hood Extraction Diagram



With the stern and bow and the height of the gunwale having been defined, the cayuco was then shaped. It had to have a *trancaní*, which is a sort of extension of the base of the canoe (see Picture 14). In this way, the cayucos tagangueros are not usually V-shaped but U-shaped, and it is said that when a cayuco is unbalanced, it is because it does not have the stability of the *trancaní*. As I was able to verify, the cayucos tagangueros are characterized on the coast of the SNSM by their stability, something that, apparently, was not a rule of other cayuco manufacturing zones, such as Pueblo Viejo in the CGSM or Camarones in La Guajira.

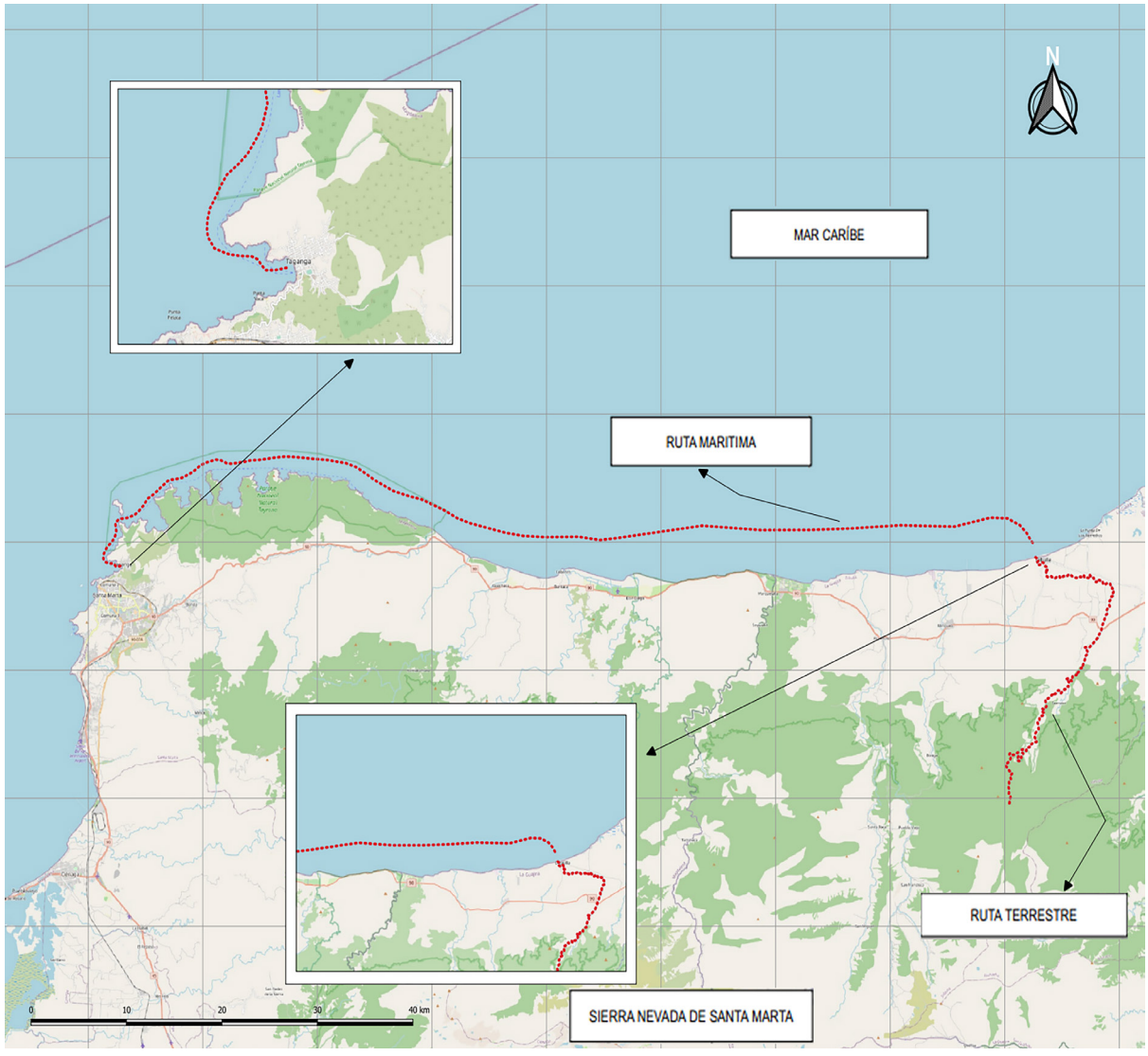
Picture 14. Trancaní



Regarding the size, six and seven-rod cayucos were made and used to extend the *chinchorros* in the coves, and 11 and 14-rod cayucos were used for transporting personnel, especially in the search for freshwater or for longer trips north to Dibulla or beyond. It should be noted that these vessels were used to reach high river basins that flow into the Caribbean Sea, such as the Ancho River, where the Tagangueros went to look for wives in what seems to be an exogamous marriage pattern. There is not much published information on this, but it is clear from what Ariel Daniels said that the Tagangueros were exogamous and could marry women from the Gaira, Mamatoco, or Kogi areas, such as those in the upper basins of the Ancho or Dibulla rivers. Some older adults living in areas such as the Bonito Gordo cove in the PNNT recall that as children, they practiced

rites such as feeding the black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), a scavenger bird that is present in the mythologies of the highland peoples and that does not go unnoticed in the collections of pre-Columbian goldsmiths throughout the intermediate area.

Map 1. Traditional Route Taganga-Dibulla



As we can see in Map 1, a traditional route was traced between Taganga and Dibulla, towns between which marriage alliances were established. In addition, these high basins have *ezuamas*, or sanctuaries, where payments are made according to the needs of each person. It is very clear that this connection, this generation of networks, would have been impossible without the maritime technologies involved.

Among the components of the canoe is the prow, or *proba*, which is distinguished by being the highest part of the cayuco. There is also a rope, the *bosa*, which is used for disembarking (see Picture 15). Then, there is the stern, where the skipper's or captain's bench is located. There is a rectangle with a hole where the mast of the sail rests, called *carlinca* (see Picture 16). The benches usually go in the middle of a *gag*, which is a rectangle formed by wooden slats that are glued to the boat's gunwale. In addition to the benches that are supported by clamps, there is a crossbeam that is used to give stability to the boat. On the gunwale, there is a plank with a concavity surrounded by a rope onto which the oars are fitted. This rope is called *chumacera*, and it was once made of cowhide. Another important part are the curves of the cayuco, which are made of *trupillo* and serve to keep the boat's shape.

Picture 15. Bow With Bosa

Picture 16. Carlinca, Chumacera, Mordazas Y Bancos (Carlinca, Bearing, Jaws and Benches)

Conclusion

At the end of 2022, I went to Camarones to interview the famous Wayuu Cayuco carpenter Belisario Pushaina. Belisario inhabits the shores of the Navío Quebrado lagoon.

Belisario occasionally tours the lagoon. He has a map of his own that explains the settlement of the region and describes which clans are responsible for the manufacture of cayucos. He is a local historian, as Ariel Daniels is in the case of Taganga. He recalls that in the past, people used to sail from Camarones to Riohacha, and it was feasible to find cayucos coming from Ciénaga or Pueblo Viejo. Moreover, he says that in Camarones, there are several foreign cayucos that were left there for various reasons (for example, gambling debts).

He shows me two cayucos: One has a prow that forms an obtuse angle, and the other has a prow that forms an almost right angle. He tells me that they have no use for such raised canoes and that they prefer their canoes with finned bows to help break the resistance of the water. He speaks Spanish, which sometimes combines with Wayuu, and I deeply regret not knowing this language so that he can explain to me the complex world that forms his knowledge.

After Camarones, we go to Cabo de la Vela. There are also monoxiles there. And we see them as we pass by the coasts of Manaure and Uribia. I open Google Earth, and I see the coast of the Macuira mountain range. There, I see some more monoxiles, surely made from wild cashew. The SNSM enabled the carpenters to make monoxiles, and, given the current circumstances, it will be impossible to find new trees to make the boats.

With Belisario, I realize that ethnographies that address maritime connections with the coast must face interactions and exchanges. The sea is a world of exogamy, of differentiation, of multilingualism. Thus, those cultural approaches that try to look for homogeneity establish a limit on the understanding of the Caribbean or the Caribbean as a diverse melting pot. Belisario, with his story of the cayucos, lost in games of chance in Camarones, tells us something else that had not been said before: We must understand the coastline of the SNSM as a line of dots that represent the jetties that allowed cabotage and the exchanges involved. Now, it is feasible to see the SNSM coastline as a string of

ports, and if we remember Karl Polanyi (2007), ports were born from places of transshipment; ports are places of crossing. Their main function is to combine destinations. This was not seen by anthropologists like Reichel-Dolmatoff, who came from a historical-cultural background that defined areas by cultural traits. No, this is the wrong image. The SNSM could not be understood as a cultural area without segmenting it and without extracting from it these marine avenues that linked the Sierra with the Caribbean and the Caribbean with the interior of the country. And that was the function of the coastline: to allow the communities to connect.

The use of the cultural–historical approach to understand the SNSM coastline led people like Reichel to consider the Kogis as a pristine culture with no contact with the outside world. Ethnography drew the Kogis with their backs to the sea. But this image is not correct. The Kogis connected with the coast by coming down from the villages to the mouth of the river and then traveling by cayuco. This mobility dynamic was broken by the formation of national borders. The definition of republican boundaries created a segmented image of the Caribbean, but, as we saw in Chapter 2, that segmentation is being deconstructed as interest grows in understanding those pre-Hispanic connections that founded the world of the Chibcha-speaking communities. Perhaps this should be our legacy: to open up ways to understand coastal communities without Andean-centric limitations.

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