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# Everything has its Jaguar. A narratological approach to conceptualising Caribbean Saladoid animal imagery

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# Everything has its Jaguar

A narratological approach to conceptualising Caribbean Saladoid animal imagery

# Everything has its Jaguar

A narratological approach to conceptualising Caribbean Saladoid animal imagery

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*If you don't know the trees you may be lost in the forest, but if you don't know the stories you may be lost in life,* a Siberian proverb.

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[1] A reference that will make sense after you have read this dissertation, since it refers to a (native) concept of "significant other-than-human person".

Nelie Post, Karel van Lambalgen, Hayley Mickleburgh, Henny Noordermeer, Willem Gijtenbeek, Anna Bos, Maikel Kuijpers, Jimmy Mans and Jason Laffoon.

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Lucas and our two children Koen and Wout Arts. I especially hope that Koen and Wout will not only find but also get to know their narratives so that they too will never become lost during their lifetimes.

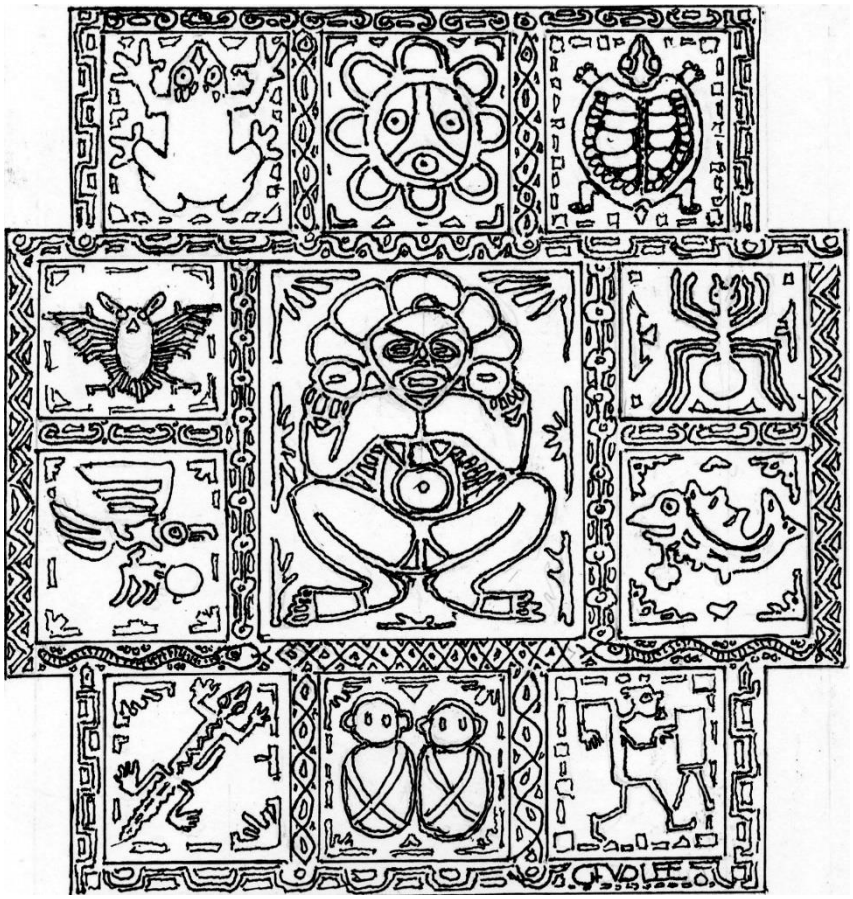

**Fig. i.** Artist's impression of Amerindian stories and related iconography; courtesy of Gerard van der Lee.

# Chapter 1. Everything has its jaguar

The Arawakan proverb: "*Hamáro kamungka turuwat*" (roughly translated as "Everything has its (own) jaguar"[2]), which caught my eye three years ago, inspired me while writing the present dissertation. As with most sayings, it is powerful because it phrases simply yet vigorously a deep understanding of the world. This proverb does not describe (nor transmit) any knowledge, it *is* knowledge. I will not elaborate on these four words at this stage but hope they may continue to linger in your mind as they still do in mine.

The above figure of speech expresses a human assumption on ontology, whereby it not only negotiates what constitutes being "human", or "animal" but also shapes relations with others (both human and non-human, e.g., animals, spirits). The present study deals with Amerindian[3] ontologies and how they form the perception of material culture, specifically in relation to "animal imagery".

Through a comprehensive narratological analyses the present research examines Caribbean iconography which, in our Western perspective, features esoteric and/or fantasy animals. I aim not only at improving our understanding of the social functions of these images and the items on which they are displayed, but also the native perceptions of them as expressed in

[2] Although this is a translation based on an Arawakan dictionary, a more accurate translation ought to be: All things and creatures have their own Jaguar.

[3] Throughout this dissertation the term "Amerindian(s)" denotes indigenous populations as is general practice among the English-speaking residents of the Caribbean and the Guianas.

Amerindian narratives. To this goal, the latter are analysed as expressions of indigenous worldviews.

From *c.*400 BCE on, the (Early) Ceramic Age in the Caribbean is marked by the beginning of a comprehensive cultural local tradition called Saladoid. Its material culture is characterized by extensive animal imagery depicted on ceramics, encountered as amulets and carved in stone, shell or bone. This zoomorphic imagery can be quite naturalistic, but is also intermingled with anthropomorphic elements, resulting in examples of human-animal in-betweenness. Many of these images have been identified as a specific animal or bird, that is as zoomorphic motifs. Whereas previous studies include identified trends and preferences displayed in these motifs, the present research seeks to answer the question: why are certain animals more prominently encountered in Saladoid material culture than others?

Comparative analysis of modelled and incised ceramic animal figurines, or head lugs (*adornos*), serves as a case study in order to determine the most prominent motifs. However, Saladoid animal imagery is also depicted or portrayed by means of mediums other than pottery, e.g., shell, bone, stone amulets, and petroglyphs. Animal teeth and bones are also applied as tools, instruments or means of adornment, hereby facilitating several additional avenues of research. This wide variety of mediums provides an opportunity to explore whether specific zoomorphic motifs and their ways of display are correlated. Moreover, possibilities to extrapolate social functions of animal imagery and (in our view "decorated") goods are opened.

### A story to tell: objectives and research questions

This study thus examines the Caribbean Saladoid iconography identified elsewhere either as being zoomorphic or anthropo-zoomorphic. The indigenous perceptions and (social) functions are problematized in the present publication. It questions that the identification of zoomorphic motifs in Saladoid iconography could reflect the perceptions of the researcher and less those upheld by the creator, the indigenous audience and those who utilise these examples of material culture. This research also aims at further improving our understanding of other ontologies as the analysis of narratives, being considered expressions of indigenous worldviews, is a means to conceptualise zoomorphic motifs. This study further explores possible social functions by correlating specific narratological motifs to the varied manners "animals" (probably) are portrayed (e.g., as modelled figurines on pottery, stone amulets, included in songs/narratives or rituals).

The main objective of this research is: to provide a frame of reference and conceptualisation of ancient (Saladoid) Caribbean animal imagery. How can the conceptualisation of animal imagery inform us about the socio-cultural behaviour of indigenous Caribbean societies? The following additionally specified questions have become key:

(a) which animals are most prominently encountered in ancient (Saladoid) material culture of the insular Caribbean and Venezuela?
(b) which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals in South American oral tradition and with what or whom are they associated within the narratives, and in which context?
(c) why are certain animals more prominent in the iconography than others?

As the Saladoid archaeological record is especially rich in *adornos*, they will serve as a case study in order to explore the most prominent animal motifs. These identified motifs are then contextualised and conceptualised through an analysis of the narratives. The methods utilised here are based on narratology and focus on specific animal actors. In the narratives, the animal actors are staged in specific temporal and spatial settings, in which they are not only ascribed specific attributes and roles but also interact with other actors. The methods of narratology contribute to establishing patterns, trends and deviations. The theory of perspectivism is applied as an indigenous conceptual framework in order to explore the "meaning" of the narratives and the animal actors. To further enrich our understanding of indigenous perceptions ethnographic as well as historical references are included.

Now the main objectives and research question are set, the remaining sections of this first chapter will provide us with a general eco-cultural framework, considering: (a) the mainland of South America as the largest source of narratives, and (b) the Caribbean archipelago from which the archaeological/iconographical materials scrutinised hail from. This duality of geographical areas, to be exact mainland vs. islands, lies beneath this research. Defining these areas as part of a single cultural region justifies this amassing of the Caribbean and South American data. It further contributes to understanding how South American narratives can serve to conceptualise Saladoid Caribbean imagery because they narrate meaning and embody indigenous ontologies.

## 1.1 Interconnected relationships of the Island peoples

Unfortunately, very few indigenous communities still populating the insular Caribbean possess a direct line of descent with the Early Ceramic Age peoples, whose imagery is investigated here. The facts that: (a) South American migrants most probably inhabited these islands (see 1.1.1), and (b) the insular communities have always been part of a broad (multi-regional) sphere of interaction (see 1.1.2), result in it being justifiable to utilise mainland Amazonian narratives for a study on ancient Antillean imagery. Therefore it is imperative for this particular research to comprehend the (cultural) interrelatedness between the insular Caribbean and (in particular) the South American mainland. As will be discussed below, the Caribbean islanders have never been isolated from other islands or from their counterparts residing in the surrounding American mainland areas. Peoples, ideas, forms of knowledge, goods and animals were mobile and/or exchanged (Bright 2011; Curet 2004, 2005; Curet et al.

2005; Hofman & Hoogland 2011; Hofman & Van Duijvenbode 2011; Hofman et al. 2007, 2010, 2011; Isendoorn et al. 2008; Mol 2013; Rodríguez Ramos 2010).

### 1.1.1 Populating the islands

The storyline of this dissertation starts off with the development of ceramic-making horticulturalists (associated with the Saladoid ceramic series) who migrated to the islands in *c*.800-200 BCE. Nevertheless, the populating of the islands began much earlier.

It is generally agreed upon that the first settlers in the Caribbean archipelago originated from various parts of Central and/or South America to reach these islands as early as between 7000 and 5000 BCE. This first wave is referred to as the "Lithic Age". Their exact migration routes and the places of departure are still a matter of debate (Callaghan 2001; Fitzpatrick 2013; Hofman & Hoogland 2018; Hofman et al. 2011; Keegan & Hofman 2017: 25-7; Roksandic 2016: 7-16; Rouse 1992; Siegel 1992; Wilson et al. 1998).

As yet we know very little about this Lithic Age. The earliest sites are located on Trinidad, Cuba, and Hispaniola (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 23). These first settlers have been correlated with the Banwarioid and Casimiroid series in Rouse's taxonomy (Antczak et al. 2018; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Pagan Jiménez et al. 2015; Rouse 1992). Very recent research indicates that early migrants may not only have developed pottery skills even before the arrival of the Ceramic Age peoples (<800/200 BCE) but also managed and modified the landscape (e.g., by means of growing cultivated plants, "home gardening") even further than previously assumed (Chinique de Armas et al. 2016: 146; DeFrance & Newsom 2005: 126; Hofman et al. 2011: 73; Pagan Jiménez et al. 2015; Rodríguez Ramos et al. 2008; Roksandic 2016: 126; Wilson 2007: 84). In addition, ongoing research indicates the coevality of the Late Archaic and Early Ceramic Age, hereby opening the possibility of the transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise between Archaic groups and Early Ceramic migrants (Chanlatte Baik 2013: 174-5; Curet 2005; Hofman et al. 2011: 73; Siegel 2005: xvi).

These Archaic Age travellers were apparently mobile and moved across islands while exploiting a variety of resources (Hofman et al. 2006). This migrating involved seasonal activities as, for instance, has been suggested with regard to the (inland, elevated) Plum Piece site on Saba (3300 BP). This Archaic site which was probably seasonally inhabited between February and July, could have been utilised for manufacturing dug-out canoes and/or gathering plants for consumption and medicinal purposes (Hofman & Hoogland 2003: 17, 21, 23; 2016: 42-3, 48, 52, 2018; Hofman et al. 2018a/b).

The material culture associated with the Archaic Age comprises a variety of woodworking and food processing tools, e.g., grinding stones, mortars, axes and blades (Hofman & Hoogland 2016: 47; Wilson 2007: 31-55). The raw materials applied to produce such items are diverse and include coral, conch shell (*Lobatus gigas*), and stone from which blade and chert flake

tools were made. Certain decorative artefacts have been recovered, too (e.g., shell and stone pendants, polished stone beads) (Wilson 2007: 48, 50). Noteworthy is a coral artefact hailing from Fort Bay Hill (Saba) dated 800-400 BCE which has a bat- or feline-shaped face (Hofman & Hoogland 2016: 66). This object may well be (one of) the first zoomorphic images found in the Lesser Antilles.

The fact that ceramic-making horticulturalists (associated with the Saladoid ceramic series) migrated to the islands in *c*.400 BCE is generally agreed upon. The region(s) of origin and the routes are nevertheless as yet debatable. Associated theories are, for instance, the "stepping-stone theory" (Keegan & Diamond 1987), whereby one moved northwards progressively, or the "direct jump" theory (Callaghan 2013; Fitzpatrick 2013). The latter suits better with archaeological evidence and accepts that the first settlers arrived directly on northern islands and the Greater Antilles (see 2.1). However, the most established theory maintains that (Arawakan) ceramic-making horticulturalists rode a wave of migrations in order to enter the Caribbean archipelago from South America between 800 and 200 BCE. Next, they interacted with the Archaic Age peoples residing on Puerto Rico and the northern Lesser Antilles (Haviser 1997; Hofman & Hoogland 2004; Hofman et al. 2011; Keegan 2004; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Wilson 2007). See 2.1 for a more elaborate description of this subject.

It is assumed that these Amerindians set off from Venezuela and north-western Guyana, travelled down the Orinoco River to settle down in the Lesser and Greater Antilles in an area stretching from Trinidad to Puerto Rico. The sudden appearance of Saladoid culture, the intensification of horticulture and ceramic manufacture as well as the establishment of large sedentary settlements on Puerto Rico and the northern Lesser Antilles marks the beginning of the Ceramic Age (Bérard 2013; Fitzpatrick 2013; Keegan & Hofman 2017: 51-4; Rouse 1986, 1992; Siegel 2005). Alternative models give rise to opinions that divergent and/or multiple origins of the various cultural and ethnic groups are more probable (Bérard 2013; Fitzpatrick 2013; Hill & Santos-Granero 2002; Hofman et al. 2007, 2010, 2011; Laffoon 2012; Rodríguez Ramos 2010; Rodríguez Ramos & Pagán Jiménez 2006).

These new models depict an image of a diversity of communities over space and time, all with strong interaction spheres, exchange networks and a continuity of long-distance voyaging across the islands and including mainland areas of both South and Central America (Boomert & Bright 2007; Bright 2011; Curet 2004, 2005; Hofman & Hoogland 2011; Hofman & van Duijvenbode 2011; Hofman et al. 2007, 2010, 2011; Mol 2013, 2014; Rodríguez Ramos 2010). Especially innovative techniques such as multiple isotope analyses have recently supported these models (Hofman et al. 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011; Hofman & Hoogland 2011; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Laffoon 2012, 2013, 2014; Laffoon & Hoogland 2012; Mol 2013, see 1.1.2).

### 1.1.2 Unity through diversity

In the course of recent decades, Caribbean archaeologists have been able to broaden their field by incorporating the coastal regions of Central and South America, while referring to the pan-Caribbean paradigm (i.e., the Circum-Caribbean cultural area). The pan-Caribbean has proven to be a valuable perspective when studying the complex, multi-faceted archaeological records of the indigenous Caribbean peoples, hereby disclosing broad networks of interactions. The archaeological record shows the interchanging of goods as well as the mobility of peoples between the islands and the mainland. Even from the very beginning of island colonization, the exchange of peoples, goods and ideas indicates a continuity in relative long-distance voyaging (e.g., Hofman et al. 2010; Mol 2013).

The trading of goods through contact with other regions becomes visible when, for instance, non-local materials are discovered at sites. A connection with mainland areas is also clear when considering the iconographical display of mainland fauna, e.g., on ceramics and in the form of pendants made of shell, wood, or precious stone. In addition, bone and the (perforated) teeth of mainland (not native to the Caribbean islands) species (e.g., jaguar, caiman, peccary) are found in the Caribbean islands (e.g., Boomert 2000; Grouard et al. 2013; Hofman et al. 2007; Laffoon et al. 2013, 2014; Plomp 2013; Roe 1989; Siegel 1991).

Moreover, archaeologists have come across other items with a presumed non-local provenance. For instance, Early Ceramic Age jadeite artefacts found on Vieques, Antigua, St. Eustatius with a tentative (even probable) Guatemalan or Dominican provenance (Garcia-Casco et al. 2013; Harlow et al. 2006; Shertl et al. 2018). Links to South America have been suggested based on the evidence of: (a) artefacts, often carved green stone, “frog”-shaped pendants (*muiraquitã*), and (b) the *kwepi* tree (*Licania* sp.) the burned bark of which is applied to temper ceramics on Saint Vincent (Boomert 1987, 2000; Crock & Petersen 2004; Hofman et al. 2007, 2011). A number of these “exotic” goods could indeed have become “social valuables”, even increasing in value as they move from hand to hand (Boomert 1987; Knippenberg 2006; Mol 2007, 2010, 2014; Oliver 2009).

Innovative techniques, such as DNA and isotope analysis, enable archaeologists to better grasp patterns of mobility (i.e., movement of peoples). These studies reveal the presence of non-locals, both human and animals, among local populations (Hoogland et al. 2010: 149; Laffoon 2012; Laffoon & Hoogland 2012; Laffoon et al. 2013, 2014; Plomp 2013; Schroeder et al. 2018). Moreover, they disclose that migration is not a one-directional movement, but rather a diverse, complex, dynamic process (Curet 2005; Curet et al. 2005; Laffoon 2012). These analyses have shown that Caribbean migrations involved small and large-scale movements of groups with various origins (Hofman et al. 2010; Hofman & Hoogland 2011; Laffoon 2012; Rodríguez Ramos 2010).

A number of general mechanisms could underlie the both extensive and complex exchange networks, such as lifeline exchange networks whereby the availability of goods and (marriageable) individuals is ensured (Moore 2001; Walter et al. 2010: 510). Considering the Caribbean, these "lifelines" could interconnect islands as well as link certain islands to the mainland (Hofman et al. 2011; Keegan 2004, 2010). Nevertheless, exchange was and still probably is more than a necessity. It is, in fact, a dynamic social process (Hofman et al. 2007, 2008) as well as a conscious strategy aimed at impacting interaction and regional integration (Hofman et al. 2007: 247; Mans 2012).

The aforementioned studies on ancient mobility and exchange show that migrations and interactions are not only variable, diverse and complex, but also that they reach specific archipelagos to include interactions with mainland areas. Trading (foreign) goods and the movement of peoples also entail an interaction between communities as well as the exchange of information and beliefs, resulting in what we now refer to as the Pan-Caribbean paradigm.

## 1.2 Geographical boundaries

> It is unlikely that prehistoric occupants recognised the same boundaries and responded to the same political forces that operated in the formation of current states, or cities (Siegel 2005: xv).

Defining cultural and/or geographical boundaries whenever any form of research is carried out implies choices and therefore limitations, i.e., which "ethnic groups" and which areas are to be included and which ones excluded? Regardless of the set boundaries, these dividing lines are not likely to reflect actual patterns of past human movement and interaction within the region (Hofman & Bright 2010; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Mol 2014; Rodríguez Ramos 2010). Nevertheless, as arbitrary limitations form a necessity for all scholarly studies, these have been selected to correspond best with the goal of the present research. A broad, inclusive region constrained by extensive spheres of interaction is required, because South American narratives are examined here in order to contribute to our understanding of the Saladoid animal imagery of the insular Caribbean.

The Circum-Caribbean culture area forms a starting point for considering the geographical boundaries dealt with in this research. The concept of the Circum-Caribbean[4] concerns a broad geographical area, including all the archipelagos located in the Caribbean Sea, the Bahamas, and parts of the adjacent continental mainland, namely, the coastal zones of South, Central and North America, from the Guianas to the Florida peninsula, see Fig. 1.1 (Keegan & Hofman 2017; Rodríguez Ramos 2011).

[4] The concept of the Circum-Caribbean was introduced in Julian Steward (1947). Steward postulates that the original hunting and gathering groups that populated South America, developed a culture with pottery, a priest class, and territorial governments (which he describes as "formative"), in the central Andes. From here it spread northward into Central America, northern Colombia, Venezuela and the Antilles, the cultures of which he refers to as Circum-Caribbean.

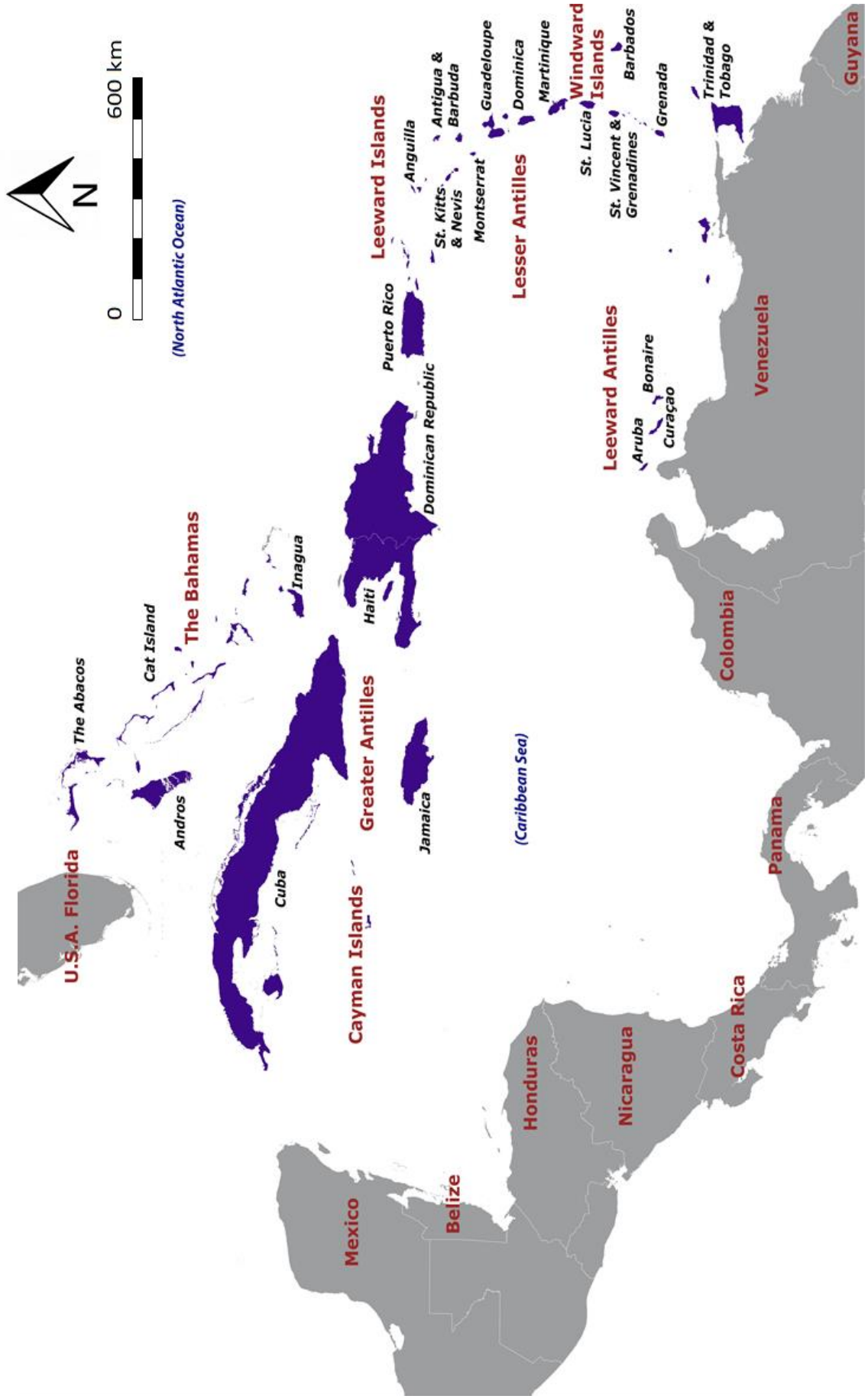


**Fig. 1.1.** The Circum-Caribbean with the insular Caribbean marked; courtesy of P. van der Linden; modified by the author.

The insular Caribbean, a region that partly overlaps with that of the Circum-Caribbean region, comprises a series of large and small islands and archipelagos. However, within the present study, the term "Caribbean archipelago" refers to the insular Caribbean as a whole which includes: (a) the Bahamian archipelago, (b) the Greater Antilles (Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica), (c) the Lesser Antilles (the northern Leeward Islands, and the southern Windward Islands), (d) the South Caribbean islands (including Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, the Los Roques archipelago and other Venezuelan islands). Trinidad and Tobago are sometimes considered part of the Windward Islands, but being closest to the South American mainland (see Fig. 1.1) these islands were connected to the mainland as recently as 6000 BCE, resulting in a more continental fauna and flora (Boomert 2014; Hofman & Hoogland 2018; Keegan et al. 2013; Rouse 1961, 1964; Wilson 2007).

The numerous islands of the Caribbean vary as to landforms and geological features. They include volcanic and limestone islands, which mainly are tropic (i.e., with a wet and a dry season). The vast majority lies within the North Atlantic Hurricane Belt. One of the smallest isles is Saba (13 $km^2$) and the largest island is Cuba (110,922 $km^2$) on which the highest peak measures 1,972 m. Certain isles are relatively flat, others hilly or even mountainous. Trinidad and Tobago closely resemble the mainland conditions and are home to the largest number of mammals. Moreover, Trinidad is the only island with an autochthonous feline species (i.e., ocelot, *Panthera pardalis*). As this research does not focus on (a) specific island(s), this variety of animals is too extensive to discuss here.[5] Several models and theories on the presence of animal species in the Caribbean archipelago which explain their extinction as well as their dissemination across this region nonetheless have been provided.

However, the reader should be aware of this huge variety of environmental conditions, and therefore of the flora and fauna, too. Whenever the mainland is taken into consideration, the number of dissimilarities is even larger. As this research focusses on zoomorphic iconography, the animals dealt with here are also discussed while placed within their natural contexts (see Chapters 5-7). This survey includes the presence of species, their absence and diversity in the mainland of South America (i.e., the original location of the narratives) and the Caribbean archipelago (i.e., the provenance of Saladoid iconography referred to in this study).

### 1.2.1 Study region and core area of narrative collection

Unfortunately, very few narratives have been handed down to us by the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean islands (the Greater and the Lesser Antilles). During the 15th century, Fray Ramón Pané wrote down "Taíno" "myths" originating from the Greater Antilles (Pané 1999 [1498]). In the course of the 20th century, Douglas Taylor recorded narratives from the Island

[5] For further information on this region's biogeography and on its origin, biodiversity, flora and fauna, see Williams 1989, Woods 1989, Wood & Sergile 2001.

Carib of Dominica (Taylor 1938, 1946, 1952).[6] Therefore, narratives from mainland South America have also been incorporated into the present research to complement the limited available insular ones.

The map (see Fig. 1.2) of South America and the Caribbean indicates the study region for the present research, the core area is indicated by means of an ellipsoid. In total 431 (61%) narratives hail from this core area.[7] The core area includes the northern parts of South America which form part of the Circum-Caribbean: Guianas (Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana), Venezuela, Northern/Central Colombia, and parts of Northern Brazil. Narratives originating from Central and North America have not been added to this survey (with the exception of a few stories from Panama).

The majority of the narratives studied here stem from written sources acquired by missionaries, anthropologists, linguists and other researchers. This research thankfully profits from the work not only carried out by predecessors but also by other passionate researchers such as Johannes Wilbert and Karin Simoneau, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Theodor Koch-Grünberg. The hundreds of narratives presented in examples of their extensive research[8] provided me with very accessible data.

Part of the data applied in the present study originates from outside the designated core area i.e., Southern Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and even Argentina (see Fig. 1.2). Narratives from these regions are only incorporated when C. Lévi-Strauss, J. Wilbert and K. Simoneau suggest a strong affinity with narratives known from the core area. Such an affinity stems from similarities in motifs or general themes encountered in the narratives (see also 2.2.1). These conformities are thus incorporated in order to reveal any (regional) continuity of motifs and themes within a broader perspective than the study area. As I did not focus on these areas located outside the designated core area, the selection of incorporated narratives from these other countries/regions is rather arbitrary and in no sense exhaustive. Narratives with similar motifs, or themes, could (and presumably were) part of the repertoire of indigenous peoples not included in this study, such as communities established in North and Central America, or even further afield.

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[6] During the 16th and 17th centuries, missionaries, historian/priests (e.g., Father Raymond Breton, Jacques Bouton, Jean Baptiste Du Tertre) documented general beliefs and customs of the Island Carib. These records do not include (entire) narratives, but provide us with references to "myths" as well as with general indigenous ideas which are added to the present research whenever the animal icons are taken into consideration as to a broader discussion on animal symbolism.

[7] For a complete map with an overview of all narratives, see 4.1.2, Fig. 4.1 (p. 109).

[8] E.g., scholarly publications on the folktales of the South American Amerindians (Wilbert 1974, 1975, 1985; Wilbert & Simoneau 1970, 1978, 1991, 1992) and on the mythology of South America (Lévi-Strauss 1973, 1983, 1990 [1968], 1990 [1981]: see 2.2.1). Theodor Koch-Grünberg, the noted German explorer-*cum*-anthropologist (1872-1924), studied the Pemon Amerindians of Venezuela, the indigenous peoples of Brazil as well as other South American Amerindians (Koch-Grünberg 1921, 1916-1928).

**Fig. 1.2.** Study region with the core area marked (based on iStock/PeterHermesFurian)

Utilising the South American mainland communities as a means to conceptualise Caribbean archaeology is not a new approach. Since the mid-20th century, the concept of Tropical Forest cultures has widely served to interpret both Amazonian and Caribbean pasts (Steward 1947; Steward & Faron 1959; Viveiros de Castro 1996: 180). Originally these cultures are characterized as being nurtured by slash-and-burn manioc cultivators who inhabit autonomous, small-scale villages numbering between 20 and 50 individuals. However, more recent studies indicate that the Amazon region was potentially able to sustain substantially larger populations, also in the (ancient) past. This assumption, once supported by historical references and by the discovery of larger sites (Isbell 2008: 1147; Lathrap 1970: 46-7; Roosevelt et al. 1991; Roosevelt 1999: 19-28), has led to the opinion that the Tropical Forest cultures are in actual fact a more recent development.

Tropical lowland cultures also formed part of broad interaction spheres occupied by peoples from other (more southern) regions. Cartographic knowledge regarding these long-distance (trade) networks is even today preserved in ritual chants and oral histories of Arawakan speakers residing in the north-western part of the Amazon rainforest (Hill 2011: 261-5). Moreover, these broad networks of exchange are also reflected in the oral narratives which display similar motifs and themes as encountered throughout Amazonia and beyond. This is the reason why such a wide variety of narratives is incorporated in the present research (see also 2.2).

What I hope to have shown in sections 1.1 and 1.2 is that setting regional boundaries is problematic, and that the Pan-Caribbean region concept is best understood as multiple-cultural area in which peoples were interconnected through broad interaction spheres. The core area as defined in this study are the regions part of the Circum-Caribbean, but the study region, from where narratives have been collected, stretches even further to establish cross-cultural and regional patterns.

## 1.3 Languages, cultures and communities

The Circum-Caribbean has been described as "a cultural and linguistic mosaic with group boundaries constantly being renegotiated and shifted through time within a multitude of networks that were being formed" (Hofman & Carlin 2010: 107). This region includes a vast variety of communities and cultures. Although languages do not equal ethnic groups, within this research, spoken languages serve as "ethnic" markers (i.e., a means to differentiate). Attempts to explain the distribution of languages and indigenous communities in especially Amazonia are often based on the essentialist assumption that ethnolinguistic groups are more or less bounded, comprising genetically distinct populations that reached their current domiciles by means of migrating (Hornborg & Hill 2011: 1). More recently, researchers identified a much more fluid relationship between ethnic identity, geography, the use of language and genetics (Carlin & Mans 2015; Heckenberger 2002, 2011; Hofman & Carlin 2010; Hornborg & Hill 2011).

When the Europeans arrived they observed a large degree of linguistic homogeneity in the Antilles. Only a few distinct languages were noted: (a) so-called "Taíno", which stretched from the Bahamian Islands to the Leeward Islands north of Guadeloupe, (b) Macorís which is native to parts of Hispaniola, (c) Ciguayo spoken in the northeastern coast of Hispaniola, (d) Guanahatabey spoken in western Cuba, and (e) Eñeri/Island Carib spoken in the Windward Islands. We read: "Certainly from A.D. 1 until about A.D. 500, Taíno was the language of the realm and a lingua franca understood and used by all throughout both the Greater and the Lesser Antilles, regardless of their native tongue" (Granberry 2013: 64).

Taíno is identified as an Arawakan language. The language of the Island Carib, although considering themselves as "Carib", is characterized by two variants of Northern Arawakan: female and male. The latter includes numerous lexical borrowings from the Kaliña (Cariban) language (Taylor 1977). A relatively large corpus of information is available on the "Taíno" and the Island Carib languages (e.g., Breton et al. 1665, 1929 [1609]; de La Borde 1886; Du Tertre et al. 1667; Granberry 2013; Granberry & Vescelius 2004; Pané 1999 [1498]; Taylor 1938, 1946, 1952, 1977; Taylor & Hoff 1980).

Three of the aforementioned languages are discussed, namely Ciguayo, Macorís and Guanahatabey. Links to the Tol language of Honduras, Chibchan and Waroid[9] (Granberry 2013: 62, 68; Roksandic 2016: 12-3) have been suggested. It is further claimed that the earliest arrivals, during the Archaic Age (7000-5000 BCE), were Warao speakers (Boomert 2000: 88; Granberry 2013: 62-3). Their language is an isolate and thus differs from the Arawakan and Cariban languages spoken by the Amerindians during the Contact Period and the contemporary horticultural inhabitants of the Guianas and the Venezuelan coastal zone. This fact is thought to imply that Warao formed the language of the Archaic Age peoples of the Caribbean (Boomert 2000: 88; Granberry 2013: 63-4; see also 1.1.1).

By and large, languages share words. It can thus prove to be very difficult to determine from which language family a word was borrowed. As an example of this take the Warao word for white heron (*wara*), which, however, also occurs in Cariban languages (Hofman & Carlin 2010: 115). Establishing linguistic provenances for toponyms can be problematic, too. For instance, the name for Saint Lucia, Ioüanalao (Island of the Iguanas) is a term which has a Cariban locative (-*lao)* attached to an Arawakan noun *ioüana*- (iguana) which could indeed stem from the Cariban language (Hofman & Carlin 2010: 116). Especially names given to the flora and fauna are similar across the Cariban and the Arawakan languages spoken on the Guiana coast. It is possible that these terms go back to a very early shared (perhaps Tupian) layer (Hofman & Carlin 2010: 116, note 16).

[9] Presuming that, along the Venezuelan coastline, a number of Warao-related languages were spoken, these early Warao communities residing in Venezuela are referred to as Waroid, see Granberry 2013: 63.

Of importance to this research is the realisation that the majority of these identified "Antillean" languages belong to the Arawakan, Cariban, Warao and Chibchan language families. The designated core area of this investigation concerns these four languages. Languages from mainland Amazonia are even more diverse, while the Cariban and Arawakan languages belong to the major Amazonian language families. As the present dissertation includes narratives expressed in a huge variety of languages and (sub)groups, they are discussed here briefly. The main reason of this is: spoken languages serve as "ethnic" markers (i.e., means to differentiate), even though it is acknowledged that languages do not equal ethnic groups (Carlin & Mans 2015; Heckenberger 2002, 2011; Hofman & Carlin 2010; Hornborg & Hill 2011).

Comparative research has revealed a broad linguistic diversity of Amazonian languages. It has been suggested that there are more than 50 linguistic stocks and some 300 languages (Everett 2010; Nichols 1990). The main Amazonian language families are Tupian, Macro-Gê, Cariban, and Arawakan, each of which number approx. 30 languages (Everett 2010: 320). Communities are connected and boundaries are thus, culturally and linguistically, in constant negotiation. The rivers in Amazonia function as means of communication and not as boundaries and the sea provides an "aquatic motorway" (Carlin & van Goethem 2009; Hofman & Carlin 2010: 7-8). Therefore, although the communities differ linguistically and culturally, they also share many cultural traits. Their ways of life were very similar as a result of a shared history, living in similar environments and intensive contacts between the varied linguistic communities.[10]

In this research, the five language families encountered in the core area are: (a) Cariban, (b) Arawakan, (c) Warao, (d) Tupian, and (e) Guajiboan.[11] The families (a-d) are present in the Guianas, the northern (bordering) parts of Brazil and Venezuela. On the other hand, the Guajiboan languages (Sikuani and Cuiva) are spoken on the Venezuelan border with Colombia (see Table 1.1). The "Taíno" and Island Carib (both Arawakan) speakers are also dealt with in this research.

Many Cariban languages (estimated to number between 39 and 60) are now extinct (Carlin 2007: 7, note 4). The 25 extant Cariban languages are mainly to be found north of the Amazon, in the Guianas and on the Caribbean coasts of Venezuela and Colombia (Boomert 2000: 116; Carlin 2007: 7, note 4).

[10] See Hornborg & Hill 2011 for an example of how the Arawakan communities demonstrate a remarkable coherence and persistence with regard to their specific, characteristic cultural repertoires over time (Heckenberger 2011: 57-74; Hornborg & Hill 2011). See Hill & Santos-Granero 2002 for further information on this subject.

[11] A single Chibchan (Cuna; source: Colombia/Panama) narrative is included in this research, see Fig. 4.1. Apparently "Taíno" terms may have been borrowed from Cariban, Arawakan, Warao or even Chibchan languages (Hofman & Carlin: 2010: 115).

The Arawakan language family numbered 65, of which 31 are now extinct. Those still spoken today are encountered in the western part of the Amazon Basin, the Venezuelan and Colombian Llanos, along the coast of the Guianas and, formerly, in the West Indies (Boomert 2000: 116).

Tupian is the third major language family of the northern parts of South America, preceded by Cariban and Arawakan. Tupian languages are predominately distributed in south-east Amazonia. The Tupian narratives included in this research all originate from outside the core area. Tupian languages are, however, currently spoken in French Guiana (see Table 1.1 and Fig. 4.1 (p. 109) for a map of all the narratives).

Warao is a language isolate of which *c.*5,000 speakers can be found in Guyana. It has become (nearly) extinct in Suriname. As many as *c.*28,000 Warao speakers still live in Venezuela (Source: Ethnologue April 2017) (Carlin & Van Goethem 2009: 8; Lewis et al. 2016; Simons & Fennig 2017).

**Table 1.1.** Language distribution in the core area based on (the major) language families encountered in Colombia, Venezuela, the Guianas and northern Brazil.[12]

| Language family | Colombia (northern) | Venezuela | Guyana | Suriname | French Guiana | Brazil (northern) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cariban** | Yukpa | Kaliña/Kari'na | Kaliña | Kaliña/Kari'na | Kaliña | Kachuana |
| | | Yukpa | Waiwai | Wayana | Wayana | |
| | | Macushi | Akawaio | Akurio/Akuriyo | | |
| | | Pemon | Kapon | Trio | | |
| | | Akawaio | Macushi | Sikïiyana | | |
| | | Arekuna | Pemon | Tunayana | | |
| | | Taulipang | Kachuana | (Katuena) | | |
| | | Uapes | | | | |
| | | Yabarana | | | | |
| **Arawakan** | Tariana (extinct) | Lokono Baré | Lokono Wapishana | Lokono Mawayana | Lokono Palikur | Tariana |
| **Guajiboan** | Sikuani | Sikuani | | | | |
| | Cuiva | Cuiva | | | | |
| **Tupian** | | | | | Wayãpi (Oijampi) | |
| | | | | | Teko (Emerillion, Merêyo) | |
| **Warao** | | Warao | Warao | Warao (nearly extinct) | | |

[12] Table 1.1 is not a complete list of all languages or of language families encountered in these regions. It merely mentions all languages referred to in this research. The additional languages mentioned here

The two Guajiboan languages (Sikuani and Cuiva) are not found in the Guianas, but their speakers inhabit the Orinoco River area located in Colombia and Venezuela. Three more languages form part of this language family: Macaguane, Guayabero and Churuya (Adelaar & Muysken 2004). All in all, there are currently *c.*37,000 Cuiva and Sikuani speakers.[13]

All in all, five language families originating from the core area are encountered among communities spread across Colombia, Venezuela, Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana and beyond. Table 1.1 presents the language distribution in the core area based on (the major) language families in Colombia, Venezuela, Guianas, and northern Brazil.

Nevertheless, this study incorporates narratives as well as anthropologic references linked to peoples from beyond this core area, including speakers of other Arawakan and Cariban languages. Focusing on the included material alone, Arawakan narratives not originating from within the core area were shared by Apurinã, Chané, Münkü, Machiguenga, Mojo and Tereno speakers (i.e., from Central/South Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina and Peru). Three Bakairí narratives are the only examples hailing from Cariban-speaking peoples residing outside the core area (i.e., Central Brazil).

In addition, certain peoples border(ed), or live(d) relatively near the core area. For instance, several Tupian narratives were provided by Tembé and Shipaya speakers, who are from the north of Pára and Amazonas, two states located in northern Brazil. The Tucanoan narratives from central Colombia were provided by Cubeo, Tanimuca, and Tucano speakers residing either relatively close to or immediately next to the core area.

Another point to stress here is the fact that the majority of the languages have alternative names, which on occasion are similar (e.g., Macushi, Makusi), whereas others differ (e.g., Kariña, Galibi, Kari'nya). When referring to other authors, I have adopted the name(s) they use and will add them as provided here between brackets (see also 4.1.2).

## 1.4 General outlines

This first chapter has started out with a short introduction to this dissertation, leading to the description of the main objectives and research questions. Next, the geographical and cultural parameters of this research were laid out by introducing the study region and core area, an area covering the Caribbean archipelago and the bordering South American mainland. This

and *not* included are italicised. The languages listed for Brazil are located just inside the core area (i.e., encountered in the most northern parts of Amazonas, Pará, Roraima and Amapá). See 4.1.2, Fig. 4.1 (on p. 109) for a plot displaying all the narratives. Glottolog has served to map the languages (Hammerström et al. 2017).

[13] See *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (Sikuani is “Guahibo” and Cuiva is ”Cuiba”), accessed 13 December 2017; Lewis et al. 2016. https://www.ethnologue.com.

island-mainland link is important because it supports the assumption that the Amazonian narratives can contribute to our understanding of insular Caribbean animal imagery.

Chapter 2 comprises an overview of the current state of affairs, reflecting on the work of scholars interested in both Saladoid (zoomorphic) iconography and narratological studies. Here, the most common Saladoid animal motifs are identified. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical and methodological framework, based on narratology and perspectivism. The studied narratives are presented as a dataset in Chapter 4. This broad overview provides a general backdrop in order to compare the specific (narratological) datasets introduced in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Here not only the roles and attributes of the animal actors but also each animal based on its role in nature, its presence in Saladoid iconography and its place in indigenous cosmologies are examined. In the latter three chapters, two research questions are focussed on: (a) which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals in the South American oral tradition and with what or whom are they associated within the narratives, and in which context? and (b) why are certain animals more prominent in the iconography than others? The outcome of this analysis is dealt with in Chapter 8 which also includes a discussion on the presented data, conclusions and the opportunities for further research.

# Chapter 2. Pottery through narratives

Chapter 2 outlines the current state of affairs as to ancient Caribbean iconography (2.1) and narrative studies (2.2). Section 2.3 is dedicated to the Amerindian multi-layered worldview. Here, too, the manner in which this dissertation builds upon and contributes to the work of others is discussed.

## 2.1 Pottery as a marker

The Early Ceramic Age Amerindians of the Caribbean archipelago are identified by means of shared material culture, as is particular expressed in their "Saladoid" style pottery, named after its type site called Saladero located along the Lower Orinoco River in Venezuela (Boomert 2000; Rouse 1992). This series of styles is characterized by thin-walled, elaborately painted, incised and modelled ceramic vessels and figurines (see 2.1.1). Saladoid material culture also includes carved and ground shells, bones, stones and coral objects (Rouse 1992). The present research will focus on Saladoid ceramic zoomorphic imagery in order to investigate any preferences in zoomorphic motifs. Identified *adornos* (i.e., modelled-incised head lugs attached to vessels) will serve as case studies. An overview of successive series from Early to Late Ceramic Age is now provided, including general observations on their characteristics.

The movement of the Ceramic Age peoples has been traced by means of their successive ceramic series and subseries (Rouse 1986, 1992; Rouse & Cruxent 1963). The origin of the Saladoid series is still a matter of debate, but a general consensus implies, in line with the long chronology, it developed between the Middle and Lower Orinoco River in the course of the

latter part of the second millennium BCE (Bérard 2013; Boomert 2000: 100-1; Rouse & Cruxent 1963; Waldron 2010: 25-6; Wilson 2007). In a wave of migrations, (Arawakan) ceramic-making horticulturalists entered the Caribbean archipelago after leaving South America between 800 and 200 BCE interacting upon arrival with the Archaic Age peoples populating Puerto Rico and the Lesser Antilles (Haviser 1997; Hofman & Hoogland 2004; Hofman et al. 2011; Keegan 2004; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Wilson 2007; see also 1.1.1).

Based on research and radiocarbon dating it is theorized that the earliest migrants may have travelled past the most southern islands, as the earliest dates (yet) to be recorded concern St. Martin (Hope Estate), Montserrat (Trants, Radio Antilles), Martinique (Fond-Brûlé, Vivé) and Puerto Rico (e.g., Tecla and Maisabel) (see Hofman & Hoogland 2018; Hofman et al. 2014b; Wilson 2007: 70). Even the Cedros site of Trinidad postdates several earlier, more northern sites (Boomert 2000: 129-31; Rouse 1992; Wilson 2007: 59-67, 1997: 60-3). The hypothesis is now that several Saladoid influences reached as far as the southeastern part of the Dominican Republic (Rouse 1992; Wilson 2007: 59, 83-4). Simulation studies indicate that a direct migration from South America to the Greater Antilles is, in fact, possible, as an alternative for moving from island to island (Callaghan 2001, 2003, 2013; Fitzpatrick 2013).

In the Antilles, during the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE), the Huecoid and Saladoid series apparently existed synchronously. The social phenomenon leading to this concurrent distribution of styles is subject to debate and referred to as the "La Hueca problem" (Boomert 2008; Keegan & Hofman 2017: 68; Oliver 1999; Siegel 1991; Wilson 2007: 76-81). These two main series differ when considering the set of techniques applied, thickness, vessel shapes, and combinations of stylistic motifs and painting. However, they both share technological and iconographical features such as the zone-incised, cross-hatched decoration referred to as ZIC (Faber-Morse & Rouse 2010; Hofman & Jacobs 2000/2001; Wilson 2007: 67).

The typical Huecoid ceramic vessels take an asymmetric elliptical shape, with one of its extremes in a tabular form, whereas the opposite has a handle with a figurine projected on the rim (Chanlatte Baik 2013: 178). Modes of decoration include modelling and incised (asymmetric) designs filled with white colouration. Most common, however, are examples with fine, incised crisscrossing in zones (ZIC, Chanlatte Baik 2013: 178-9). A trait of Huecoid material culture comprises the high variety, and delicacy, of bodily adornments (nacre, mother of pearl, *Pteria colymbus*, *Pinctada radiata*) as well as an elaborate collection of semi-precious stone pendants (e.g., amethyst, jade, green quartz). They depict dogs, birds of prey, bats, frogs, and reptiles (Boomert 2000; Chanlatte Baik 2013: 177-8; Hofman & Jacobs 2000/2001; Serrand 2001).[14] After 400 CE, Huecoid ceramics seem to disappear, whereas sites with

[14] The hypothesis that the Huecoid ware originates from the foothills of the South American Andes is based on the way in which South American, in particular Andean, fauna is depicted (Chanlatte Baik: 2013).

Cedrosan Saladoid ceramics become more numerous and increased in size (Hofman et al. 2007: 245, 248; Wilson 2007).[15]

The apparent homogeneity of the Saladoid series has also been problematized (Hofman & Hoogland 2004: 52; Keegan 2001, 2004). The broadly shared characteristics of WOR (White-on-red) painting and ZIC could, in fact, conceal variations on a more local level, obscuring divergent regional developments and group identities (see Hofman 1993). This Saladoid homogeneity has therefore been referred to as a "veneer" (Keegan 2001: 258; 2004: 42). Nevertheless, the uniformity of the Saladoid series across a broad geographical area, which continued for over 1000 years, makes it more probable that local variations evolved on the level of decorative motifs.

Barrancoid pottery from the Lower Orinoco River appears alongside the Cedrosan Saladoid pottery and, in *c.*400 CE, reaches Tobago to influence the Saladoid ceramics of the southern Windward Islands (Granberry 2013: 64-6; Hofman et al. 2011: 81; Waldron 2010: 35-6).[16] Barrancoid pottery is not found north of Guadeloupe. However, a Barrancoid influence is reflected in ceramics and other artefacts originating from the Leeward Islands, the Virgin Islands, Vieques and eastern Puerto Rico (Granberry 2013: 65; Wilson 2007: 66). The Barrancoid series is technically sophisticated and highly decorative and is even referred to as "the artistic climax of pre-Columbian culture in the Caribbean, being both highly aesthetic and imaginative" (Boomert 2000: 118). Zoomorphic and anthropo(zoo)morphic depictions of bats, felines, fish and hybrids are common (Wilson 2007: 68).

While the Early Ceramic Age is marked by way of a broadly shared ceramic style, the Late Ceramic Age (600/800-1492 CE) discloses various local styles (Hofman 1993, 2013; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Petersen et al. 2004; Wilson 2007). On Puerto Rico and the Greater Antilles, these ceramics are characterized by the Ostionoid series and, when considering Puerto Rico, also by the Santa Elena, Cuevas, Montserrate styles (Bright 2011: 144; Hofman et al. 2007; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Wilson 2007: 96-101). The Ostionoid ceramics display notable variations as well as a decrease in the use of polychrome painting and incisions for decoration (Rouse 1992). These ceramics take the shape of thin, hard and smooth vessels, and are either largely undecorated or monochrome painted. Simply modelled lugs and geometric figures on vessel walls are uncommon but do increase both in frequency and complexity over time (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 88).

Two other pottery series are encountered in the Greater Antilles (often used to track "Taíno culture"'), i.e., Meillacoid (identified in Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Jamaica) and Chicoid (identified in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and Puerto Rico). Meillacoid pottery

[15] The very late dates ascribed to the La Hueca site (1540 CE) are not generally accepted (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 87, referring to Chanlatte Baik 2013).
[16] The origin of the Barrancoid series is traced to West Venezuela or Colombia (800 BCE).

includes hemispherical bowls and boat-shaped vessels with relatively thin walls and a hard, smoothened but unpolished surface. Colouration includes reddish (either produced from clay or by means of an additive), greyish and blackish tones. Embellishments, which are limited to the panel located between shoulder and rim, include ribbons, cross-cutting incisions, and hand-paw-wing motifs. Punctations on the body or lip and anthropomorphic *adornos* can be identified, too. The Chicoid pottery which has produced a wide range of vessel shapes (including effigies), is rather thick, soft and highly polished. The paste is grey to brown. Rims which on occasion have punctations when flaring outwards are common. Large, modelled lugs and large decorated strap handles are present. Examples of Chicoid ware are also incised with broad lines and have smoothened, rounded edges. Straight and curved lines typically end in dots (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 120-1). However, now and again the two styles are mixed, for instance, in the north-western part of the Dominican Republic where Meillacoid motifs occur on Chicoid vessels, and vice versa (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 127; Ulloa Hung 2014; Veloz Maggiolo 1972, 1993).

In the Lesser Antilles, the Saladoid is succeeded by the Troumassoid series, which in turn comprises a number of subseries and styles: the Mamoran Troumassoid subseries to the north and, in the south, the Troumassan and Suazan Troumassoid subseries. The Troumassoid series consists of thicker, heavier, and softer pottery. The Mamoran Troumassoid subseries is more closely affiliated with the Greater Antilles, whereas the southern subseries are ostensibly more associated with mainland South America (Bright 2011: 144-91; Hofman 1993, 2013; Hofman & Hoogland 2004, 2018; Hofman et al. 2007: 253-4). Overall a general decrease in the number and quality of decorated wares and zoomorphic depictions characterises the Troumassoid series (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 215; Reid 2009: 32-9). A proliferation of human imagery on the Troumassoid ware has been noted. Any fused anthropo-zoomorphic imagery was apparently abandoned in favour of a more generalised, more simplified anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery (Bright 2011: 161). The decrease in zoomorphic *adornos* and zoomorphic depictions is particularly remarkable.

### 2.1.1 Adorned Saladoid pottery

Pottery was mainly applied when cooking, storing and serving. However, the effort and amount of detail put into decorative wares indicate a non-utilitarian or perhaps a more ceremonial purpose. Although this study focuses on Saladoid zoomorphic imagery, it may be mentioned here that the Early Ceramic Age Amerindians decorated their utensils in various ways. Five techniques observed with the Cedrosan and Palo Seco Saladoid ware are painting, incision, punctation, simple modelling and complex modelling (Boomert 2000: 142, 161). Vessel shapes may vary, but the most common are: bowls, dishes and jars. Within these preferences, we find numerous body shapes, bases, rims and handles (Boomert 2000: 132-42; 155-60; Waldron 2010: 43-4).

Saladoid pottery is characterized by a duality of white-on-red (WOR) painted ware and, though more rare, by black motifs and painted ware (Boomert 2000: 131, 142, Cruxent & Rouse 1958-9; see Fig. 2.2,).[17] Zoned-incised, cross-hatched (ZIC) wares are also frequently encountered. The designs are in general non-realistic and often accompanied by a distinctive kind of incision in which continuous curved and straight lines serve either to outline the painted areas or to create purely incised designs (see Fig. 2.1). The decorative motifs on insular Caribbean wares apparently become far more elaborate and numerous, when compared to the mainland wares (Waldron 2010: 29).

**Fig. 2.1.** Two examples of Saladoid ware with incised motifs from Pearls, Grenada; left: width c.10.5 cm and right: c.10.9 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

On occasion, complicated modelled-incised head lugs emerge from the walls of vessels, or protrude from their rims and spouts in the form of handles (Petitjean Roget: 1975, 2015). These lugs are called *adornos* (see Figs. 2.3 and 2.4). Waldron focuses on the Cedrosan Saladoid subseries (i.e., *adornos* dating from 250 BCE-650 CE). He decided to do so because the Cedrosan-style pottery is more sculptural, with characteristic "modelled, incised and painted traditions combined to produce a rich figural iconography not always apparent in the older, more abstract painted and incised Saladoid traditions" (Waldron 2010: 3).

Anthropomorphic as well as zoomorphic *adornos* are identified, but any identification is often ambiguous as a result of the in-betweenness, or the "transformative" character of the depictions (e.g., when displaying both animal as well as human characteristics and two- (or multiple-) faced figures (Waldron 2010: 4). In the archaeological Saladoid records of the Caribbean archipelago, zoomorphic *adornos* are identified as the most dominant (see also 2.1.2).

[17] The pigment was applied by means of liquid clay slips, prior to firing. Colour combinations are limited to red, buff (high iron-oxide content), white (kaolinite) and black by utilising either carbon or finely ground manganese, obtained from sooting. (Hofman & Hoogland 2016: 62).

**Fig. 2.2.** Two Saladoid anthropomorphic spouts with white, red and black colouring from Pearls, Grenada; left: width *c.*8.0-6.5 and right: *c.*9.2-8.6 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

**Fig. 2.3.** Two Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* from Pearls, Grenada; (left) a turtle and (right) a lizard; left: width *c.*6.0 cm and right: *c.*15.7 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

**Fig. 2.4.** Saladoid "bat" effigy vessel from Atagual, Trinidad; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 5.1; diameter *c.*25.5 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

**Fig. 2.5.** Saladoid "turtle" effigy from Guayaguayare, Trinidad; adapted from Waldron 2016: 7.39; diameter *c.*20 cm; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

It has been suggested that the figural Saladoid *adorno* is perhaps primarily a Barrancoid development (Waldron 2010: 35-6). However, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic *adornos* and motifs were present prior to any Barrancoid influences. Nevertheless, the impact of the Barrancoid sequence has apparently resulted in a growing complexity and differentiation of Saladoid (zoomorphic) *adornos*, which depict a greater variety of "animals" and "birds" that became even more naturalistic in appearance. Now and again a diagnostic feature serves as a metonym: a caruncúla atop the vulture's beak for a vulture, or an upturned leaf-like nose for a bat (Waldron 2010: 36). The location where potters place the *adornos* indicates that these lugs are more than just an aesthetic feature, because "the points at which the vessel could be 'activated' were marked by *adornos*. [...] Touch, agitation, filling and emptying, and the gaze were merged into one ritual that brought the pot to life, or awakened its spirit" (Waldron 2010: 36-7).

The Caribbean archaeological record is rich in Saladoid material culture, especially pottery. Complete (i.e., intact) effigy bowls are also known. These vessels are shaped in order to resemble an animal (e.g., turtle, tapir) whereby the bowl depicts its body, with modelled heads and/or legs attached (see Figs. 2.4, 2.5; see Hofman & Jacobs 2000/2001). *Adornos* are, unfortunately, often recovered detached from their vessels, namely as loose artefacts.[18] Although these lugs could be identified as anthropomorph or zoomorph, it is unlikely that as independent artefacts, they were ever conceived as such. Each and every step of pottery making is interlinked (see 2.1.3). Therefore an *adorno* is not a modelled-incised decoration added to "finish off", or beautify, but an essential part of the vessel. These items can thus be entangled with additional decorative motifs as well as with their shape, function and contents. From the selection of clay, to shaping and to the final decorative phase (which could include multiple techniques), the potter makes conscious socio-cultural choices, whereby most probably the final product is fixed in his/her mind (Hofman & Jacobs 2000/2001).

[18] See 2.1.2 for a discussion on studies on Saladoid *adornos*.

Unfortunately, *adornos* are mainly recovered in a decontextualised status. However, it should be acknowledged from the onset of this research that these modelled-incised, zoomorphic images were never meant to be displayed on their own, nor to have any independent "meaning", but to act merely within the context of the vessel, its use and display. With the loss of the utensil itself and its former social reality, the *adorno* has thus lost part of its identity (see 2.1.3 and 3.1.1).

### 2.1.2 Facing animal imagery

The Saladoid material culture is characterized by a high variety of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic depictions, displayed in various settings and made from, or adorning, various materials. This raises two key questions: (a) which animals are most prominently present?, and (b) why are certain animals more prominent than others? Influential scholars have dealt (and are dealing) with the topic of (zoomorphic) Saladoid iconography. This section briefly discusses their scientific work to then introduce the present dissertation's additions to their perspectives. Then this section elaborates on a comparative investigation into *adornos* hailing from both Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles as a case study in order to identify the most prominent examples of zoomorphism.

When identifying and interpreting zoomorphic imagery, Henry Petitjean Roget is especially noteworthy for his research on frog and bat motifs (Petitjean Roget: 1975, 1976a/b, 1978, 1997, 2015). His contributions, albeit in very abstract modes of depiction, are still relevant because they show how (almost) geometric patterns may depict a certain zoomorph (i.e., a pattern as a metonym for an animal). His 2015 publication entitled *"Archéologie des Petites Antilles. Chronologies, Art Céramique, Art rupestre, Martinique"* provides a valuable contribution to these and related topics. Here his extensive work on petroglyphs and other means of portraying animals is dealt with. His research has been, and remains, a great source of inspiration and reference to identified zoomorphic motifs (e.g., petroglyphs, pendants). For a discussion on the iconography of specific animals, see Chapters 5-7.

Another source of inspiration has been Arie Boomert's work, which again concerns much more than ceramic *zoomorphic* iconography, including for instance "greenstone pendants" (Boomert 1987). His article on raptorial birds (Boomert 2001) and an impressive publication (2000) on the Trinidad, Tobago and the Lower Orinoco Interaction Sphere contain detailed descriptions, drawings and possible interpretations regarding this iconography. The present dissertation, and especially the sections on predatory (see 6.3) and scavenger birds (see 6.4) is greatly enhanced thanks to Boomert's efforts.

Iosif Moravetz extensively and systematically studied the Saladoid *adornos* encountered on Saint Vincent resulting in a formal, descriptive classification based on the characteristics of the head and face. He identifies various animals and birds and applies an iconographic analysis in order to interpret the basic motifs depicted. In his analysis, he mainly focuses on sea turtles

as they display various stylisations (Moravetz 2005: 56-7). Other animals are identified too: reptiles and amphibians (e.g., frogs, lizards), mammals (e.g., primates, manatees, "small mammals"), birds (e.g., pelicans, parrots, "other birds") and fish.

Lawrence Waldron (2010, 2016) conducts an even more encompassing study into zoomorphic *adornos,* incorporating specimens from mainland Venezuelan as well as Lesser Antillean assemblages. Based on a rich data set, a comprehensive art historical study on Saladoid pottery was executed. It explored the ceramic indicators of cultural change and regional identity of the peoples populating the islands as well as the Venezuelan mainland. His research focuses on iconography and zoomorphic motifs, revealing that zoomorphs outnumbered anthropomorphic portrayals on most islands, albeit that both are often combined (Waldron 2010: 4, see 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*).

As zoomorphic depictions occur on Saladoid assemblages from the islands and from the mainland, Waldron utilised zoomorphic motifs to trace the development of new ideas. He did so by tracking the disappearance as well as the appearance of zoomorphic motifs (Waldron 2010: 5). However, as an art historian, his main interest concerned the analysis and interpretation of these motifs from an iconographical perspective, providing only minor (overall) descriptions of manufacturing methods and ceramic pastes.

During his fieldwork, Waldron documented and photographed Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* kept in various collections, adding references found in written sources such as archaeological reports.[19] Whenever available or deductible, he included information on specific archaeological contexts (e.g., burial sites), and the position of *adorno* on a vessel as well as the (possible) function and the contents of the vessel. This type of "contextual" information was often not obtainable because *adornos* are mainly recovered as loose elements, thus no longer attached or associated with the vessel it was once part of. Hence, Waldron's analysis is limited to image identification (see 2.1.1 and 2.1.3). Nevertheless, whenever any "contextual" information was encountered it is also incorporated in the present study (see Chapters 5-7, all sections about iconography).

[19] For an exact list of Waldron's sources and methods, see Waldron 2010: 9-11. This collection includes items from the Tobago Historical Museum in Scarborough (Tobago), the Peter Harris Collection at the Pointe-à-Pierre Wildfowl Trust (Trinidad), the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda (St. John's), Nelson's Dockyard Museum (English Harbour, Antigua), the John Fuller Collection (Antigua), the Barbados Museum & Historical Society (Bridgetown), the Florida Museum of Natural History (Gainesville, USA), the National Museum and Art Gallery (Port of Spain, Trinidad), Le Musée d'Archéologie Edgar Clerc (Guadeloupe), the Direction Régional des Affaires Culturelles (Guadeloupe), Le Musée Départemental d'Archéologie et de Préhistoire (Martinique), the Direction Régional des Affaires Culturelles (Martinique), The Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, Division of Anthropology (New Haven, USA), the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian (Washington DC, USA), and the Saint Vincent and The Grenadines National Trust (Kingstown, Saint Vincent).

### *Comparing motifs*

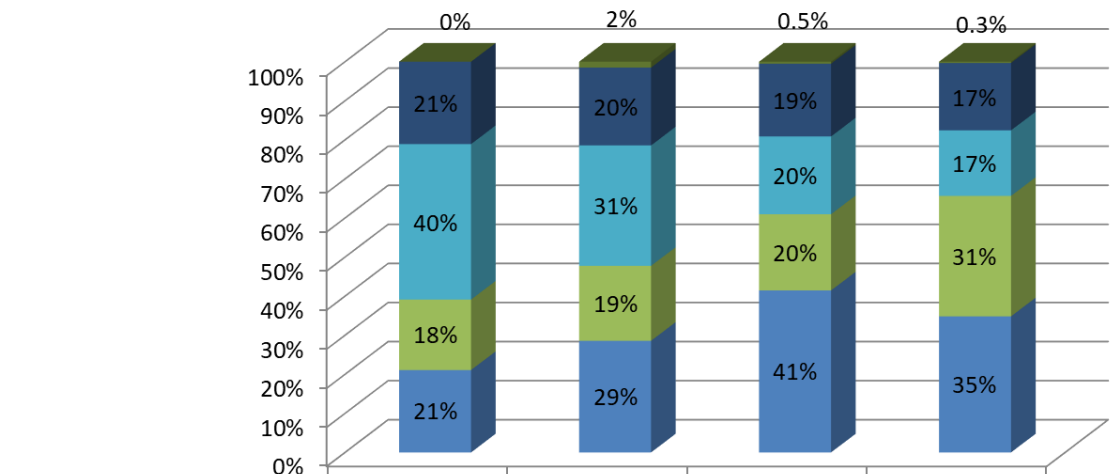
Waldron's research forms the quantitative iconographic basis for this dissertation which, in total, studies 1,958 Saladoid *adornos* originating from Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles. As many as 1,599 (81.7 percent) of these *adornos* are identified as zoomorphs (see Table 2.1; Waldron 2010: 2-7; see also Waldron's Charts 1 & 3, pp. 320-1). A shift in zoomorphic iconography across the islands was observed.

However, identifying *adornos* as zoomorphic or anthropomorphic, let alone down to the level of a specific type of animal is challenging, and even problematic. Many *adornos* demonstrate a form of pictorial dualism: distinct images (faces) when seen from contrasting points of view. Others are hybrid in nature and display both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic characteristics, or characteristics of multiple types of animal. As studies have shown, even a particular part of an animal, or plant, can, *pars pro toto,* represent the entire plant and an element might actually be replaced by another (i.e., figurative substitution or "kennings", see Rowe 1962). This can result in stylized, or abstract lines, dots or patterns depicting a zoomorph, anthropomorph or hybrid. Among the Palikur (Arawak), the clan of Lizards is referred to by means of a triangle which depicts their snouts (van den Bel 1995: 90-6). Another example of this is portraying frogs by the "way they jump" (Arrom & García-Arévalo 1988: Figs. 1 and 3). Even so, researchers such as Waldron have managed to identify *adornos* and established patterns. Even if individual specimens might be up for debate, the overall preferences in certain motifs are supported by various iconographical studies.

For comparative reasons, I have simplified Waldron's data. Instead of differentiating various islands, they are now grouped into Windward and Leeward Islands. In his research, the Leeward Islands comprise Guadeloupe, Antigua and Montserrat. Grenada, Carriacou Grenadines, Saint Vincent, Martinique, Barbados form the Windward Islands. In my research, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is considered a separate category because when considering flora and fauna, it more closely resembles the mainland if compared with the Windward Islands. Although Waldron introduces absolute numbers (and charts) in favour of data comparison, these absolutes are replaced with percentages in Table 2.1. This table provides both the absolute number (below), whereas the graphic displays the percentages.

When grouping Waldron's data accordingly, a shifting pattern surfaces (see Table 2.1), which indicates a decrease in the number of depicted mammals, but an increase of the reptiles/ amphibians, and of the (less significant) birds.

**Table 2.1.** Distribution of identified Saladoid *adornos* in Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands (%).[20]



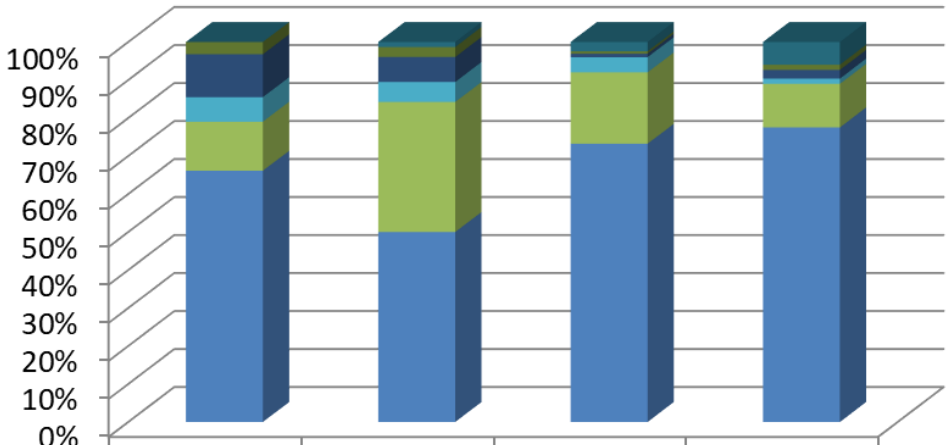

| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fish and others, e.g. insects | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Anthropomorphs | 62 | 53 | 146 | 108 |
| Mammals | 117 | 82 | 156 | 105 |
| Birds | 53 | 51 | 153 | 193 |
| Reptiles/Amphibians | 62 | 76 | 325 | 218 |

Waldron also provides more specific identifications regarding within each class. Appendix C, Table C-1 an overview that discloses the number of identified "animals" and "birds", listed according to class. The distribution of the specific "animals" according to class could illustrate local variations. Tables 2.2 to 2.4 illustrate this distribution for the three major categories: (a) Reptiles/Amphibians, (b) Birds, and (c) Mammals.

Table 2.2 shows that, in the mainland as well as across the islands, turtles and frogs are the most recurrent zoomorphic motifs, whereby frogs are most prominent in the isles of Trinidad and Tobago. The lizards, in general, form a mainland motif, which is still identified within all island contexts. According to the percentages, caimans occur less frequently in the Leeward Islands. However, caiman and lizard motifs are either the third or the fourth most common reptile/amphibian motif on almost all islands.

[20] Table 2.1 is based on Waldron's Chart 2 "Classic Motif Indices in Sample Collections of Saladoid Era Ceramics", which includes unidentified species categorised according to class (see Waldron 2010: 320).

**Table 2.2.** Distribution of identified Saladoid reptile and amphibian motifs in Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands (%).[21]

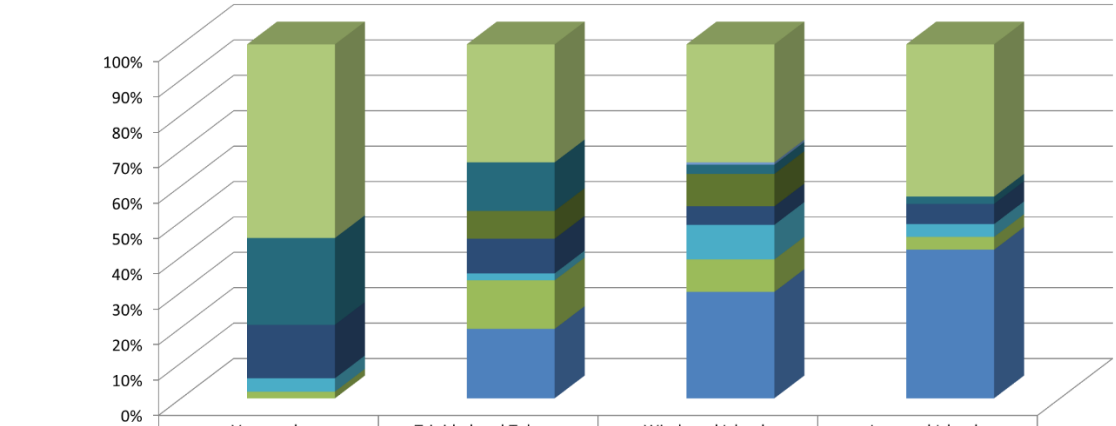



| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified | 0 | 1 | 8 | 13 |
| Snakes | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Lizards | 7 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Caimans | 4 | 4 | 13 | 3 |
| Frogs | 8 | 26 | 61 | 25 |
| Turtles | 41 | 38 | 238 | 169 |

The distribution of identified avian motifs discloses several interesting transformations between the mainland and the islands (see Table 2.3). However, each (specific) bird encountered in Venezuela is also identified in the various island assemblages. Especially the absence of nocturnal bird motifs in the Venezuelan assemblages is remarkable, being the most dominant zoomorphic motif to be found on all the islands, even prevailing in the Leeward Islands (see 8.3.3, for a further discussion on this subject).

[21] Unidentified animals/birds are determined by comparing Waldron's Charts 1 and 2. Chart 1 displays each identified *adorno,* whereas Chart 2 provides the grand total according to class and island (see Waldron 2010: 319-20).

**Table 2.3.** Distribution of identified avian motifs in Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands.[22]




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified birds | 29 | 17 | 51 | 83 |
| Frigate birds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vultures | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Ducks | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| Parrots | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| Stilt birds | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| Pelicans | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Nocturnal birds | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |

Nocturnal birds Pelicans Stilt birds Parrots Ducks Vultures Frigate birds Unidentified birds

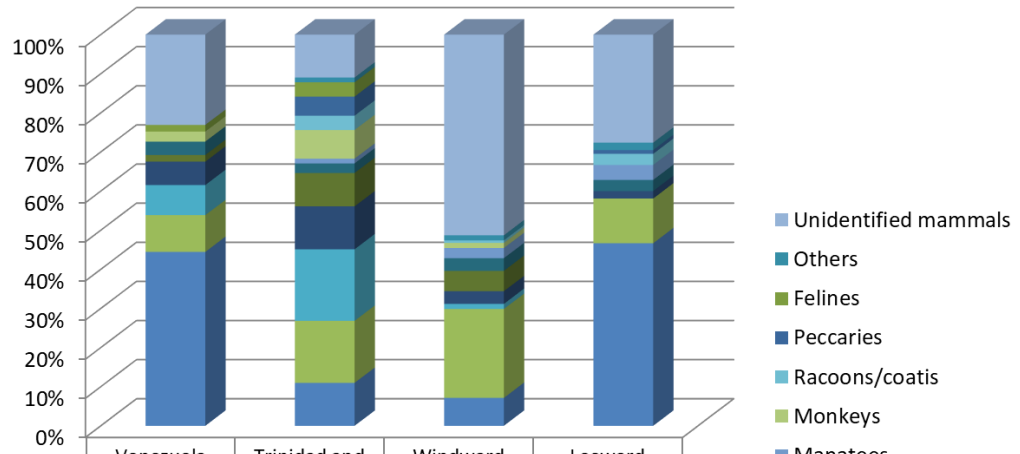
Vultures, on the contrary, are dominant in Venezuela and take in the (shared) second position in Trinidad and Tobago. These birds are significantly less recurrent in the Windward and Leeward Islands. Parrots are similarly distributed when compared with vultures. Parrots, though relatively less prominent in the islands, remain the third most commonly depicted bird. With one exception: parrots occupy the fifth position in the Windward Islands.

The aquatic birds (frigate birds, ducks, stilt birds, pelicans) are more dominant in the islands. Ducks and frigate birds remain unidentified in the Venezuelan assemblages, whereas pelicans are only identified once. Especially the Windward Islands reveal an increase in the number of aquatic birds.

The final category to discuss here comprises mammals which are again identified in Venezuela and in (but a few) islands (see Table 2.4). At first glance, a wide variety in the distribution of specific mammals is apparent. However, dogs and bats are overall recurrent, taking either the most dominant, or the second position in the list of all mammal motifs. Bat *adornos* increase significantly in the Caribbean islands, especially in the Windward Islands. Dog *adornos* are identified in all the islands, however, they are recognised as a dominantly Leeward Island phenomenon (Waldron 2010: 120-1). Anteaters and opossums are also fairly common. Anteaters are only to remain unidentified in the Leeward Islands.

[22] Unidentified animals/birds were determined by comparing Waldron's Chart 1 and Chart 2. Chart 1 displays all the identified *adornos,* whereas Chart 2 provides the grand total per class and per island (Waldron 2010: 319-20).

**Table 2.4.** Distribution of identified mammalian motifs in Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands.[23]




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified mammals | 27 | 9 | 79 | 29 |
| Others | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Felines | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Peccaries | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Racoons/coatis | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Monkeys | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Manatees | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Rodents | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Armadillos | 2 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| Opossums | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| Anteaters | 9 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| Bats | 11 | 13 | 35 | 12 |
| Dogs | 52 | 9 | 11 | 49 |

Various animals with low numbers locally "stand out", for instance, monkeys (n=6) and peccaries (n=4) which are native to Trinidad and Tobago. Moreover, aquatic mammals such as manatees and the two dolphins mentioned in the category "Others" appear in the island assemblages but are conversely absent in Venezuela. The high number of "unidentified" mammal *adornos* originating from the Windward Islands (51 percent) is notable, too.

### *The most prominent zoomorphic motifs*

Summarising, although the various Caribbean islands and the mainland all have their own distribution of zoomorphic *adornos*, the most dominant examples of each category are overall encountered amongst the most recurrent animals and birds to occur across the mainland as well as the islands. Therefore Waldron's research indicates which zoomorphic *adornos* most recur in the Saladoid iconographic dataset. Categorised according to class, the most common creatures are: (a) mammals: dogs, bats, anteaters, opossums, (b) birds: nocturnal birds, vultures, stilts, pelicans, parrots, ducks, and (c) amphibians/reptiles: turtles, frogs, lizards, and caimans.

[23] Unidentified animals/birds are determined by comparing Waldron's Chart 1 and Chart 2. Chart 1 displays all the identified *adornos,* whereas Chart 2 provides the grand total per class and per island (Waldron 2010: 319-20).

These iconographical data have been compared to the narratological data in order to establish if the same zoomorphic motifs are present in the narratological dataset (see 5.1). This combination of dominant zoomorphic iconographic motifs and narratological motifs determines which "animals" will be further focused on in this research.

### 2.1.3 Decision-making chains in pottery production

Within the field of iconography, a scholar often referred to is the art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968). His *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in The Art Of The Renaissance* elaborates on the practice of identification and classification of motifs in images as presenting a method to arrive at an understanding of "meaning" (Panofsky 1939). This approach implies that the process of identification and grouping is already part of the process of unravelling the meaning of that which is classified. The following stages in iconographical research can be distinguished: (a) the description, categorisation and identification of the motifs, and (b) understanding the images. However, classical iconographical approaches focus on the expressions of embellishment as elements to be studied in their own right.

More recently the French "Holistic Approach" introduced by André Leroi-Gourhan (1993 [1964]) has gained in influence. He postulates that each sequence of the pottery-making process is interrelated and must, therefore, be researched interdependently (Stark 1998), hereby assessing the imagery on pottery in relation to the entire vessel-making process, from the choice of clay and temper, to the final product. This operational sequence is referred to as the "*chaîne opératoire".*

The main argument to apply this approach is: each stage of creating pottery is of importance and guarded by human choices. Amerindian potters applied criteria for the manufacturing process based on a collective traditional knowledge passed down through generations. The properties of the selected clay and temper were always closely related to the applied shaping techniques and intended use of the vessel, whether consciously or unconsciously (Hofman & Jacobs 2000/2001: 9-11).

Fully aware of the final product, potters chose and selected their materials and tools from the very beginning, always with the intended use of the vessel in mind. In addition to any general technical commonalities, each utensil has its own sequence of techniques (technological, functional, stylistic) whereby various processes may have coexisted to influence the final product. These consequences can occur during several stages of the manufacturing process and can be the outcome of technological and/or cultural factors.

These factors include the availability of material and techniques for firing. Martijn van den Bel (1995; et al. 1995) illustrates an ethnoarchaeological example of socio-cultural factors involved in the selection of clays and tempers among the contemporary Palikur (Arawakan) of the coastal region of French Guiana. His research indicates a correlation between ancestral

traditions and the choice of burned and pound *kwep, a.k.a. caraipé,* as a temper. Anneliese Vredenbregt provides another example of this interrelatedness between technology and ancestral tradition in her study on the Kaliña (Cariban) of the Maroni River of Surinam which is entitled: *Ori:no Ka:nan Wene:po. Symbolic Content of Kari'na Material Culture. An Ethno-archaeological Case study* (Vredenbregt 2002).

Van den Bel (1995) shows that, among the (Arawakan) Palikur people, the diameter of the base of a vessel and the thickness of its body are clearly related to its shape, size and function but also to the potter's tradition. According to Hofman & Jacobs (2000/2001: 38), the type of decoration, its location on the vessel and its relation to a specific vessel shape must have relied upon defined functional principles, because each item found at the Morel site (Guadeloupe), for example, is characterized by means of a well-defined, not interchangeable set of modes. Hence, decorative additives portrayed or placed on a vessel should be researched within the context of the item of study. A means of adornment, for instance, an *adorno* acquires its significance in combination with the object it embellishes.

This holistic view on image interpretation is integrated into Marlena Mackowiak de Antczak's two-staged model/process of figurine interpretation.[24] She differentiates between "subject identification" as result of the first stage (referred to as "Empirical stage") and the reconstruction of the social reality of a figurine, or high-order representation, as result of the second "Understanding stage" (Mackowiak de Antczak 2000: 74). The first stage includes a morphological analysis, image identification, object/image positioning and is related to the archaeological context. The second stage (re)constructs not only the prehistoric social context but also the place of the figurine herein.

What is the position of this particular research considering the set discussion on image interpretation? This dissertation does not set out to interpret any specific archaeological features but aims at shedding light on trends in the Saladoid display of animal imagery. Not the meaning, or social reality of a specific image, but the prominence of specific animal imagery in itself is worth exploring. The present study seeks to answer the question: why are certain animals more prominent than others? Morphological studies are therefore excluded here. Contextual information on the positioning of (specific) animal imagery in relation to the archaeological site or, in the case of *adornos,* their position in relation to the vessel is only sporadically available. The identified animal images are the point of departure, but understanding the social function *is* central to this inquiry. Here I agree with Mackowiak de Antczak who states: "Important for the archaeologist is <u>not the recovery</u> of the hidden meaning of a figurine, <u>but an understanding</u> of its social function(s) in the context of human

[24] Mackowiak de Antczak (2000) based her figurine interpretation theory on Damerow 1996, a science historian. Her model will be addressed in 3.1.1, see also Fig. 3.1 (p. 64).

activity, i.e., the recovery of the social meanings of a figurine" (Mackowiak de Antczak 2000: 77).[25]

Narratives, as well as historical and anthropological references, are introduced as a means to (re)construct the social context of animal imagery. The present research contributes or adds to works of predecessors whereby the narratives themselves lie at the centre of this inquiry. Looked into both as expressions of indigenous knowledge and as worldviews, they are of interest because they not only frame animals (as actors) within a specific setting in space and time but also in relation to other actors and motifs. Narratives do thus not only express meaning, but they also contextualise animals (as actors) within a narratological setting.

## 2.2 History of narrative research

By conceptualising imagery through narratives, this study introduces a number of scholars who have studied narratives and subsequently influence and inspire the present investigation. How this study relates to my contemporaries and predecessors is discussed below.

Firstly, a more semantic issue will be addressed: the use of the term "myths". Amidst the numerous definitions of myths or mythology, this term has acquired negative connotations. Often opposed to "reality", a myth, therefore, bears suggestions of being untrue, fictitious and unreal. However, in the minds of the indigenous peoples who told and listened to these "myths", they constitute quite the opposite. These narratives are indeed a key component of their oral traditions richly supplied with knowledge and truths.[26] Throughout this research, I will, therefore, apply more "neutral" terms when denoting these traditions i.e., (oral) narratives, stories and, on occasion, lore or tales as a categorical marker. In the scientific discourse, theories and methodologies, however, "myth" and "mythology" were and are terms often encountered even today. When discussing research presented by other scholars, this terminology, therefore, stands out, especially in this section.

As to the structuralistic analysis of myths, Claude Lévi-Strauss, its "founding father", remains to this day influential in studies of South American narratives. Many of the stories he introduced are included in this research. Section 2.2 starts out with his structural analysis of myths. Furthermore, Emmanuel Désveaux's work is addressed, as it is useful here too. Peter Roe and Dimitri Karadimas are also introduced as they too applied narratives as an interpretative model for the understanding of iconography.

[25] It may be added here, that Mackowiak de Antczak in her research focuses on anthropomorph imagery (referred to here as figurines), but for this study I suggest that the same statement holds true for animal imagery, such as zoomorphic *adornos.*

[26] For similar reasons, the concepts "fairy tale" or "folk tale" will not be used in the present study. When utilised by other authors, these terms have been placed between inverted commas.

### 2.2.1 (De)coding narratives

As a cultural anthropologist, Lévi-Strauss conducted a structuralistic analysis of hundreds of North and South American "myths", united in a four-volume publication entitled *Mythologiques* (Lévi-Strauss 1973, 1983 [1964], 1990 [1968], 1990 [1971]).[27] In it, he discusses an alleged paradox that myths seem arbitrary, meaningless and absurd because they do not bear any logic and because in it anything can happen. On the other hand, myths reappear all over the world and are very similar, which does not sit well with their supposed arbitrary nature (Lévi-Strauss 2006 [1978]: 9, 1983 [1969]: 10, 1955: 429). One of Lévi-Strauss's main premises is: myths resemble language (i.e., they function like languages). He, therefore, applies concepts and procedures of structural linguistics in order to make sense of "myths" (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 429-31).[28] The central linguistic principle he extrapolates is: binary oppositions form the basis of structure. In his view, cultural phenomena (e.g., myths) could be reduced to these elementary structures.

Lévi-Strauss further argues that structures are shared, whereas myth content can vary throughout time and between cultures. Adopting this structuralistic methodology, "myths" can be studied in terms of their fundamental functional units (referred to as "mythemes" and thus analogous to phonemes) which are isolated and organised into sets, while their relationship is established on the basis of binary oppositions. Each and every mytheme, therefore, receives its meaning from its position within the entire myth and its relations with other mythemes (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 439-43, 1963: 207).

In addition to studying mythemes, Lévi-Strauss also stresses the importance of examining episodes in myth in order to establish repetitive motifs. As with any communication system, "myths" work through processes of redundancy and repetitions. These repetitions, therefore, indicate significance. However, single "myths" should not (solely) be studied separately, but seen in relation to similar "myths" (i.e., "sets of myths", or "bundles of relations") with contrasting patterns (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 431, 1983: 2-3). Myths encountered in a community are not only studied but also compared to more remote communities (even as far as a myth originating from North American peoples, see also note 27). Studying myths in an interrelated manner discloses their transformative nature, whereby the rules of a transition can be worked out by means of their degree of resemblance.

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[27] Lévi-Strauss departs from a single (Bororo, Gê of Brazil) "reference or key" myth to then research other versions encountered in the same community. Having studied the myths of neighbouring societies, expanding to more remote communities located even as far as North America (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 1-2), he chooses South American "myths" as either a starting point or as his preliminary study (Lévi-Strauss 1990: 1-2, 631).

[28] In his later publications, Lévi-Strauss more strongly relates "myths" to music, albeit as yet based on the premise that both expressions of culture, having stemmed from language, evolved into other directions: music stresses sound, whereas myth stresses (sense or) meaning (Lévi-Strauss 1983 [1969]: 15-8; 26-30; 2006 [1978]: 46-7). In *The Naked Man: Mythologiques*, Vol. 4, this myth-music comparison is referred to as as a leitmotif to the overture of his work (Lévi-Strauss 1990 [1981]: 646).

Myths are thus essentially a product of binary, contradicting values which are not only fundamental to every culture but are also rooted in the nature-culture dichotomy (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 28, 1990 [1971]: 649-50). Examples of such binary values are life/death, cooked/raw, and fresh/decayed. These contradictions, having been "symbolically" processed by means of myths, are resolved by mediating chains of symbols. For instance, Lévi-Strauss identifies "culinary" oppositions which take a privileged position in South American "myths", as they are the most frequent ones (Lévi-Strauss 1983 [1969], 1990 [1981]: 610-24). Associated binary oppositions are: raw/cooked and fresh/decayed. Lévi-Strauss concludes that other codes can be reduced to these oppositions. For example, in certain myths, the contrast fresh/decayed expresses modalities of sexual functioning, or the opposition life/death, noise/silence. In one instance, the hero is threatened because he makes too much noise when chewing roast meat (Lévi-Strauss 1983 [1969]: 148-9). This way of chewing roast meat is then further explained because roast meat is the least "cultural" form of meat, as it does not involve any utensils expressing culture (e.g., cooking pots or pans).

According to Lévi-Strauss, these double oppositions can be reduced to a single bipolar opposition, that is, nature/culture. In his opinion, this opposition lies at the heart of native thought, which he ascribes not only to mankind's unique position as part of nature, but also to mankind as the sole possessor of culture. All that concerns the environment can then serve to enter into a binary opposition with anything else. This opposition of objects can then be applied in order to create category distinctions, often governed by processes of metaphoric transfer or metonymic substitution (Lévi-Strauss 1974). This method results in a very flexible process, in which anything can replace anything else as long as there is a basis of comparison, no matter how far-fetched.

Désveaux (2001), in *Quadratura Americana,* extrapolates a Lévi-Straussian methodology with concept notion of a transformational perspective to other socio-cultural phenomena (e.g., ritual, cannibalism, adoption, masks). Arguing that North and South America should be understood as a single system of transformation, Désveaux studies these socio-cultural phenomena by means of abstract logic and again oppositions i.e, as series of quadrants. However, as to the imbalance between North and South American data, the North American material dominates (Fausto 2004). It may be added here that the majority of the South American references Désveaux presents originate from Lévi-Strauss's *Mythologiques*.

The studies, methodologies and insights of both abovementioned scholars have inspired the present research. They especially empower utilising narratives hailing from South American communities as a framework *because* they illustrate how themes and motifs were and are shared by remote communities. Reducing all themes into (binary) oppositions allows similarities to surface and makes comparisons between large regions manageable. This very reductionist approach clouds both local and cultural variations. As the structural method is quite entangled with western ontology, I question if the identified binary oppositions are not

products of our own Western mind. In the sense that these oppositions provide a means to categorise "myths" in a way they are logical to us, thereby obscuring our understanding of how the "myths" make/made sense to those who told and listened to them. Or, in other words: "the system can mere be a heuristic device" (Green 1982: 458).

Lévi-Strauss succeeds in proving that myths reflect operations of the mind. Instead of focusing on underlying mechanisms, the present research concentrates on: (a) the contexts set in the narratives, and (b) how these contexts, or are not, related to specific events, motifs and actors. Thus the aim here is not to necessarily reveal the functioning of the human mind, but to disclose specifically how narratives may have contributed to the Amerindian understanding of animal imagery. The ascribed role(s) and set context(s) of animal actors are studied as a mirror for their conceptualisation as depictions and (public) display. In fact, my goal differs significantly from the ones Lévi-Strauss and Désveaux aimed at. They established similarities based on underlying unifying patterns of the mind, whereas my research zooms in on the particular, how narratives made sense to those who told and listened to them, *because* narratives are products of the human (both logic and creative) mind, as they so elegantly displayed.

The most important argument not to apply structuralistic methods, or to depend on the set binary oppositions, comprises the underlying view that everything is based on a nature-culture dichotomy. This assumption is deeply rooted in Western ontology but is dissimilarly conceptualised in Amerindian ontologies.[29] As to the interpretative framework set in this research, incorporating indigenous ontologies is crucial in order to reach beyond the generalistic to the (more) cultural specifics of the analysis of a myth, which implies placing indigenous notions and practices at the heart.

### 2.2.2 Stories behind iconography

Lévi-Strauss analyses and compares narratives as a research topic in itself. Other scholars utilise narratives as a means to interpret the iconography of South America. Peter Roe and Dimitri Karadima, in particular, have inspired the present research.

Peter Roe combines archaeology and anthropology in his studies on the Caribbean and South American Amerindians. Focusing on the interrelationships between art style, society and ideology, his publication entitled *The Cosmic Zygote: Cosmology in the Amazon Basin* is a source of inspiration to me as are his observations on the role played by "jaguar" (and "dog") in Amerindian societies (Roe 1982, 1993, 1995, 1995a, 1998). In the above study, he

[29] The discrepancy here is the (Western) notion of mankind as part of nature and the sole possessor of "culture" i.e., one nature and multiple cultures. In Amerindians ontologies, however, "culture" is shared by all (human and non-human) beings i.e., one culture, multiple natures. Therefore the dichotomy structuralists pose reflects our Western notion on what constitutes nature/culture and not necessarily Amerindian perceptions, see 3.4.2 for an elaborate discussion on Amerindian ontologies.

introduces narratives delivered by Tropical Lowland communities (especially the Shipibo of the Peruvian (Panoan) montaña) in order to present a meta-cosmovision for Lowland Amazonia which serves as a framework in the present study, see 2.3.

Roe leans on the structural notions of binary oppositions. Adopting a similar methodology (and underlying assumptions) as with Lévi-Strauss, Roe not only tries to (partly) fill the gap between "… the specific analysis of myth and cosmos among individual and related groups on the one hand and a highly general comparative analysis of individual themes across a whole set of groups on the other" (Roe 1982: xxi). Roe also embraces the "central importance" nature-culture dichotomy, although that dichotomy had to be somewhat modified (Roe 1982: 6).

Having identified the sexual division (male vs. female) as the most prominent binary opposition operating in narratives as well as in worldviews, Roe further deduces other oppositions in relation to the sexual opposition (e.g., wet/dry; sky/underworld; Roe 1982: 12, 43, 187, 242, 265-7). Stating: "Thus the symbolic male associations with the forest and the water and the female associations with the hut and hearth are not arbitrary but derive from the efficiencies of the sexual division of labor itself" (Roe 1982: 167).

After identifying the key players in "myths" and having theorized on "mythical substitutions" regarding mainland icons (e.g., jaguar) now no longer present in the islands (Roe 1982, 1993, 1995, 1998), Roe includes his insights concerning studies on the ceramics, bone carving, petroglyphs and other forms of depictions encountered in mainland South America and in the Greater Antilles.

Dimitri Karadimas while continuing to extend this Lévi-Straussian tradition now focuses on the Bora-Miraña indigenous communities (Colombian Amazon). Figurines and iconography play a central role in his research into the psychological and cultural mechanisms at work in phenomena of perception.[30] In addition to ceramic iconography, the contexts of ritual flutes, masks and dances are studied (Karadimas 1999, 2002, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2016).

Karadimas conceives iconographical display, ritual and dances as complex expressions of knowledge. To us these elements resemble a puzzle, which can only be made intelligible by comparing groups and their "mythologies". Only then do we clearly grasp the analogous conceptions: "The myth - the variations present in other Amerindian groups - permits us to understand how elements of the environment and social relationships are interrelated [...]. Thus the elements that seem specific to a culture are in fact only a weak variable. The mythical

[30] This description is based on the text provided by the Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale (http://las.ehess.fr/ index.php?2120, accessed 13 April 2017), where D. Karadimas served as the CNRS Research Director.

or iconographical combinations that reappear are in fact the result of similar structural relationships" (Karadimas 2002: 92).

Karadimas applies the term "myths" in order to shed light on roof circles, called *maluwana*[31] and on images encountered on war-clubs[32] of the Wayana and Kaliña (members of the Carib language family), hereby suggesting that: (a) their iconographical depictions are inspired by the spots of a ray (Batoidea) (Karadimas 2015: 50), and (b) they are linked to the phenomena of parasitism in Amerindian cosmology whereby the wasp and caterpillar play major roles (Karadimas 2008, 2015, 2016). His hypothesis is based on the comparison of "myths" hailing from various (linguistically and geographically distributed) communities. We read: "A complex scenery of images that quickly becomes an enigma, a real Guyanese mystery made intelligible through a comparison between groups, their mythologies and their knowledges" (Karadimas 2015: 70; translated from French to English by the present author).

The phenomenon of parasitism and associated insects (wasps, caterpillars, tarantulas) are important throughout Karadimas' work. The identification of analogous conceptions of figures contributes to identifying specific motifs (e.g., wasp, caterpillars). He observes that deer antlers may not be depicted, but presumably the mandibles of a male stag beetle (family *Lucanidae*) (Karadimas 2012). In his view, (predatory) insects played and play a significant role in Amerindian cosmovision as well as in iconography (Karadimas 2002, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2016).

**Fig. 2.6.** Maluwana in Apetina, Suriname; photograph by the author (2009).

[31] A *maluwana* is a roof circle made of silk-cotton wood, painted with stylised images, and placed in the centre of the dome of Wayana collective houses, see Fig. 2.6 (Duin 2006).
[32] War clubs encompass a wide variety of (ceremonial) wooden, bone or stone weapons.

Karadimas's hypothesis that parasitism, and associated insects, is entangled with Amerindian cosmovision, myth and iconography opens new perspectives and possibilities. It facilitates a discussion on these "tiny" predators, their prey, and whether they are indeed of more significance, albeit as yet unexplored, to Amerindian iconography and cosmology. To date, parasitism and predator insects remained unidentified as a result of the anthropomorphic way of depicting. As Stéphen Rostain, a French archaeologist specialised in Amazonia, illustrated by means of a drawing on our whiteboard: How would an Ant be depicted? Perhaps it is anthropomorphized and only portrayed by its head. How then would we identify the ant (see Fig. 2.7 for an impression of an "ant", see Rostain, pers. commun., April 2017, Leiden).

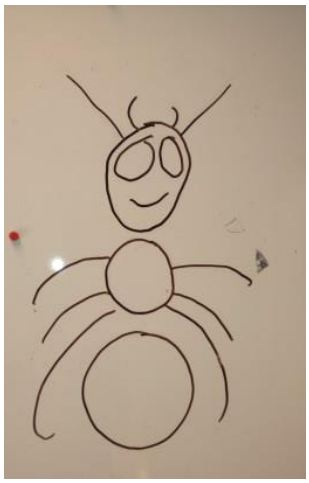

**Fig. 2.7.** "Ant" (?); illustration by Stéphen Rostain; photograph by the author.

Roe and Karadimas have shown how "myths" and iconography *can* be related. The structural analyses of "myths" have illustrated the interconnectedness of not only the Amazonian peoples but also the various groups populating South America in its entirety, as tracing "myths" and motifs across the continent reveals.

However, the present study differs from the research presented by Roe and Karadimas. My, in essence, more quantitative research has a less structuralist character whereby: (a) the goal is: not to draw any direct analogues or parallels between narratives and iconography, and (b) narratives serve to contextualise as well as conceptualise zoomorphic motifs. I wish this research to act as a starting point in order to potentially identify specific iconographical motifs which once identified could also contribute to their conceptualisation.

## 2.3 Worldviews on display

Indigenous South American worldviews underlie Saladoid imagery and narratives. The ongoing depictions of South American flora and fauna by Early Ceramic Age migrants on insular Caribbean pottery suggest a mythological link with the mainland, too (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 79; Siegel 2005; Roe 1982).

In the Amerindian worldview, animals and even "things", including natural phenomena (e.g., rivers, mountains, animals, the sky, the deceased) possess a spirit or soul (Århem 1996; Descola 1994, 1996; Descola & Pálsson 1996; Erikson 2000; Roe 1982; Santos-Granero 2009; Viveiros de Castro 1998). Animistic worldviews are generally characterized by means of reciprocal interdependence, based on giving and taking which links the various both human and non-human beings present on Earth. Indigenous worldviews are therefore essentially a form of social engagement (Descola 1996; for a further discussion on this subject, see 3.4.2).

A meta-cosmovision has been suggested, based on various characteristics and perceptions which South American and Caribbean communities share (Roe 1982; see 2.3.1). A case study presented by Joanna Overing shows that shamans, narrators and artists are all involved in creating versions of the world (Overing 1990, see 2.3.1 under the sub-heading *World making*).

Food taboos are of interest here as any animal display (or use) and the prohibition of eating specific animals may be related. Consuming food is always cosmologically significant: "humans and animals are immersed in a socio-cosmic system in which the direction of predation and the production of kinship are in dispute" (Fausto 2007: 500). Therefore 2.3.2 will focus on indigenous food ways and the identification of potential tabooed (animal) food sources.

### 2.3.1 Three layers

Meaningful when (re)constructing indigenous ancient worldviews are historic documents such as the 15th-century report by Fray Ramón Pané[33] entitled *Account of the Antiquities of the Indies* or the 15th-18th century relatively objective descriptions given by Breton and de la Borde who resided in the Lesser Antilles (Breton et al. 1665, 1929 [1609]; de la Borde 1886; Pané 1999 [1498]). Albeit often first-hand accounts, the author's agenda has coloured this information which abounds in prejudice as well as probable misinterpretations. Nevertheless, such historical sources provide us with a unique glimpse of the (cultural, ceremonial) lives of the islanders (for specific references on this subject, see Chapters 5-7). Another angle on (re)constructing the indigenous cosmovisions of Ceramic Age Caribbean peoples is through analogies with South American (Lowland) indigenous communities (Arrom 1975; Boomert 2001; Roe 1982, 1997; Stevens-Arroyo 2006; Whitehead 2011).

A comparative study of Tropical Lowland communities and their cosmologies (Roe 1982) includes the development of a meta-cosmology of aspects of Amerindian cosmologies shared by these indigenous communities. Their cosmologies are similarly composed independently of the linguistic affiliation or geographic derivation of these communities. This meta-cosmology will be an important asset in the present dissertation.

From an Amerindian viewpoint, the world consists of multiple, equally real layers which are interconnected by means of an *axis mundi*, a gateway or path between the layers, which can, for instance, be conceptualised as a world tree, bodies of water (e.g., lakes, ponds), or caves (Roe 1982, Siegel 1997). Generally speaking, the native cosmos consists of three layers: the sky world, the middle land world and the underworld (Boomert 2000; Roe 1982; Siegel 1995, 1997).[34]

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[33] Fray Ramón Pané belonged to the order of St. Jerome. He accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second voyage (1494) to the West Indies. He was put in charge of gathering the "oral antiquities" of the natives.

[34] The number of layers can vary such as for instance with the sky-layer and its sub-divised layers. The concept of a multi-layered cosmos is evidently part of the meta-Amerindian worldview. The Waiwai (Cariban) distinguish five layers, whereas the sky world has three (Fock 1963: 101-3).

It has been theorized that each layer is similarly organised, but that it possesses its own connotations and is associated with spirits (Roe 1982). The middle layer is depicted as a flat, circular disc in which the village forms the centre. The earth disc resembles an island because it is surrounded by the world sea. Here, in the worldview of, for example, the Warao, a giant tail-biting anaconda resides. Its breathing regulates the rhythm of the tides (Boomert 2000: 446). The Heaven curves downward in the shape of a rainbow. Mountain caves and pools of water or lakes form gateways to another layer. For that reason these natural features play an important role in Amerindian culture and can be seen as, potentially dangerous, entrances to the other layers.

It has been suggested that flora and fauna are both fundamentally connected with the sexual dualism underlying Amerindian cosmology, in accordance with the various forest strata reflecting the vertical division of the stacked universe (Boomert 2000: 445-8; Roe 1982). The sky world is associated with, e.g., the masculine principle, hardness, dryness, land, the phallus, verticality, culture, order, marriage, aggression, the Sun, daylight, fire, life, the jaguar, and the harpy eagle. The sky world is also associated with other fauna populating the middle and upper canopy of the forest above which the colours white, yellow and orange/red, the North and the East, semen, saliva, gold, and quartz crystal are encountered. Fast-flying, brightly coloured birds (e.g., toucans, macaws, hummingbirds) are affiliated with the celestial realm. Symbolised by a male headdress, the Sun is the principal factor of cosmic energy because of its fertilising aspects on Earth (Boomert 2000: 446).

**Fig. 2.8.** Nocturnal curassow (*Nothocrax urumutum*); Avi-fauna, Alphen a/d Rijn, 2017; photograph by the author.

The underworld is associated with feminine principles, such as softness, concavity, wetness, water, the vagina and hollow containers (e.g., a gourd), horizontality, nature (forest), chaos, promiscuity, incest, passiveness, the Moon, darkness, night, and death. As well as associations with the caiman and other animals inhabiting riverine and subterranean environments, in addition to the lower forest canopy (e.g., anacondas, turtles, dolphins, frogs, fish, lizards, tapirs, armadillos), the colours green, black and blue, the West and reluctant flyers, for example, curassows (see Fig. 2.8) and birds with a lustreless, dark plumage such as owls (Boomert 2000: 447; Roe 1982). The abovementioned oppositions are not complete or static therefore mainly masculine symbols may also have female associations and vice versa. Many animals also have both male and female associations.[35]

[35] See Roe 1982 on the opposition of the “Black” and the “Yellow” Jaguars.

Although it is difficult to identify any indigenous cosmological convictions in archaeology, several indications hint to similar ideas existing in the Antilles. For instance, bowls with nostril tubes for inhaling psychoactive substances, small biomorphic dishes for snorting snuff, bottles used as alcohol containers and incised cylinders applied as incense burners are encountered across the insular Caribbean during the Early Saladoid era (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 80). These shamanic paraphernalia serve to communicate with the supernatural (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Shamans crossing (ontological) boundaries*). Various petroglyph sites (e.g., Trois-Rivières, Guadeloupe, see: Hofman & Hoogland 2004) and the circular Early Saladoid village plazas are described as ceremonial places (Keegan & Hofman 2017; Siegel 1996). Amulets and pendants portray alter egos, predatory animals, prey animals as well as other forms of animal imagery (Boomert 1987, 2000, 2001; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Petitjean Roget 2015; Roe 1993, 1995a).

Amerindian worldviews also shape the native perceptions of iconographical depictions and of the narratives. Part of the "meaning" ascribed to them is thus linked to indigenous worldviews. The cosmological layers (and their inherent connotations) are therefore integrated with the analyses of the narratives (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). In Chapters 5-7 each animal is (separately) discussed based on its place and role within the Amerindian cosmovision.

#### *"World-making"*

Joanna Overing (1990) applies the philosopher Nelson Goodman's (1978) *Ways of Worldmaking* as a heuristic approach in her studies on the Piaroa political and religious leaders, called *ruwang,* active in the Venezuelan Orinoco basin. This approach contributes to comprehending how Amerindian worldviews are dealt with and experienced in everyday life. In *The Shaman as a Maker of Worlds: Nelson Goodman in the Amazon* (1990), Overing also demonstrates that cosmic layers are interrelated and that time is a continuous, circular process. All that seems to be obscure, chaotic, ambiguous, and confusing at first sight solely concerns the eye of the beholder. The reason for this: our frame of reference blocks our minds from understanding what to Amerindians is plain and simple, or knowable.

Goodman's conception of versions of worlds and a multiplicity of expressions of knowledge is constructivistic as well as pluralistic. Worlds, in this sense, are non-hierarchical, and equally valid. Science and art are similar. "The scientist, artist, myth teller or historian, and shaman-curer are 'doing much the same thing' in their constructions of versions of worlds" (Overing 1990: 603; see also 3.4.2). These five individuals engage in a creative tinkering and playing with various elements of worlds at hand. By means of this multitude of versions of world as created by painters, narrators and writers, our personal and communal knowledge is fed and our (cultural) frame of references is established. These frames of references and forms of knowledge allow us to make sense of, and experience, the world. "A statement is true, and a description or representation right, for a world it fits" (Overing 1990: 606, citing Goodman

1978: 132). Worlds are thus made out of worlds at hand, which are decomposed and composed into "new worlds".

The Piaroa *ruwang,* officiating as a leader, is the expert on what the universe is and was, and on how beings in it, past and present, daily affect the everyday world of community life. We read how the *ruwang* of the Piaroa create worlds by mixing the "Today time" with the "Before time", "...it was often the case that beings at the 'before time' were depicted in transformations, relationships and events that could only have occurred later in its history" (Overing 1990: 690). There is no clear distinction between past, present and future, all are intertwined. Elements and aspects of the past are gathered in order to comprehend the present.

This knowledge of the universe, and of the past, present and future is vital for understanding why humans fall ill. It is also essential knowledge for healing them. Piaroa distinguish between "Before time" and "Today time". The latter refers to the time of the creator gods while the former time succeeds the rupture of time and space. Power became dispersed throughout the universe and an individualised speciation took place, implying that: (a) animals, plants and humans received their present form, and (b) mankind could no longer mate and lost its human capabilities, whereas other beings transformed into the benevolent *Tianawa* gods residing in the sky world (Overing 1990: 608). Hence many beings, having lost certain capabilities, now sought revenge for this disadvantage.

The *ruwang* is able to travel between the various worlds and times, hereby acquiring the knowledge to understand what has happened within his community and thus enabling him to negotiate with other beings. He is engaged in world-making, not only by utilising the language of chants in order to construct the world from other worlds at hand but also by explaining the present when combining elements from the past and future. His chanting explores moral qualities as well as personal attributes in order to explain why and what evil-minded animals or spirits do. For instance: cause someone to fall ill (Overing 1990: 610-2). The words included in the chant may provide a cure. By applying multiple and complex references, the *ruwang* integrates various times and events, playing with the "Before time" and the "Today time".

Overing shows the interrelatedness between cosmic layers, the circularity (or simultaneity) of time and the importance of the shaman as a communicator and negotiator through world-making. The narrator and potter are likewise engaged in world-making, utilising other worlds at hand.

### 2.3.2 Cosmic food

Eating is always cosmologically significant, as it involves a reciprocal relationship between predator and prey (Ärhem 1996; Fausto 2007: 500). Procedures for making food from animals/plants vary, but whenever the balance of this "socio-cosmic food system" is disturbed

(i.e., food is not properly dehumanized, rules of reciprocity broken), the Masters of the (specific) Animals will retaliate, resulting in disease or death.

Subsistence strategies deserve explicit attention now. The reason for this is the fact that humans in addition to being (potential) prey are also predators. Archaeological research on how animal food is discarded has been interpreted and provided with socio-political theories. For instance, food is a means to either differentiate culturally (e.g., status) or to identify the special purpose of food when interpreted as being ceremonial or ritual. Identifying potential food taboos is the focus of archaeological studies, too. For a discussion on the role of shamans as caretakers of cosmic balance, and their turning animals into "food", see 3.4.2.

### *What's for dinner?*

Diets of pre-Columbian peoples have been studied by means of various procedures such as starch grain analyses, evaluating food-discard contexts and research into human bones and teeth.

When the first peoples migrated to the Caribbean Islands, they were already accustomed to the riverine and coastal environments of present-day Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana (Boomert 2000; Wilson 2007: 85-6). They caught fish, hunted a wide range of animals, and made use of numerous species of plants. Plants and animals were, and remain, important food sources and serve medicinal purposes. Moreover, they facilitate the acquisition of raw materials (e.g., bone, teeth, fibres) utilised as construction materials when creating pottery, basketry, pendants and other forms of adornment, bow and arrows, houses, and canoes (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 126).

The Archaic Age (*c.*7000-5000 BCE) communities upon arrival in the islands encountered a variety of potential marine as well as terrestrial food sources, comprising species with no natural large land predators. Being easy prey may perhaps even have led to their extinction (Morgan & Woods 1986, Wilson 2007: 25-6; Woods & Sergile 2001). From the Archaic Age on, marine sources are always important (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 126). The primary food sources during this era apparently included marine fish, shallow water molluscs and land crabs (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 176). Archaic Age sites disclose hardly any vertebrates, with the exception of several rodents, birds and reptiles. Species of dove (Laridae) and turtle were continuous food sources (deFrance & Newsom: 150, 176). Early migrants not only supplemented their diets with locally available root crops, fruits and seeds, they also modified their environment creating "home gardens" (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 126; Hofman et al. 2011; Hofman & Hoogland 2016: 43; 2003: 22).

These first migrants were very mobile and seasonal activities impacted their subsistence strategies. The more inland site of Plum Piece on Saba, for instance, reveals the dominance of terrestrial (highly seasonal) faunal sources, such as birds and land crabs (Hofman & Hoogland 2016: 80). Nesting birds (Audubon's Shearwater, *Puffinus lherminieri lherminierii*) provided a

ready and relatively easy available prey, as did the migrating (between May and August) mountain crabs (Hofman & Hoogland 2003: 16, 21, Hofman et al. 2006: 152). The Plum Piece middens also contain debris comprising both pelagic and reef fish (mainly *Epinephelus* sp., *Acanthurus* sp., *Lutjanus* sp., *Sparisoma* sp., and *Haemulon* sp.). It may be added here that molluscs are virtually absent (Hofman et al. 2006: 152).

During the Early Ceramic Age, more elaborate horticultural knowledge and practices were introduced to the islands. In addition to horticulture, hunting and fishing remained of prime importance. Certain land mammals were transported between islands and imported from South America e.g., dogs (*Canis familiaris*), peccaries (Tayassuidae). Hutias (Capromyidae) present on Puerto Rico were imported from Hispaniola and later also imported to the Virgin Islands. Both hutias and peccaries were also consumed (Boomert 2000: 311-2; deFrance & Newsom 2005: 177; Grouard et al. 2013; Laffoon et al. 2013, 2014; Plomp 2013; Newsom & Wing 2004)

A comparative study of subsistence strategies through time shows that Early Ceramic Age diets are most diverse (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 177). Terrestrial fauna was hunted, including mammals (e.g., now extinct hutias (e.g., *Isolobodon portoricensis*), rice rats (Oryzomyini), reptiles (e.g., iguana (Iguanidae), snakes), and native or endemic birds (e.g., pigeon (Columbidae), duck (Anatidae)). Nonetheless, offshore, reef and nearshore marine resources were exploited, too, as sites disclose the discard of various (bony) fish, sea turtles (Cheloniidae), molluscs, and on occasion marine mammals e.g., the manatee (*Trichelus mannatus*), dolphin/porpoise (family Delphinidae) (deFrance & Newsom 2005; Keegan & Hofman 2017; Petersen 1997). Without larger mammals, even a small island was able to sustain a community (Keegan & Hofman 2017: 57-8).

Both men and women contributed to subsistence activities. Anthropological studies on Amazonian communities supported by historical sources demonstrate that the main male contribution comprised hunting and fishing. Nowadays men hunt with a shotgun, but 30 years ago a bow and an assortment of arrows were applied (Roth 1924). Now and again, arrowheads were poisoned, for instance, with a secretion extracted from the skin of frogs, utilised when hunting or engaged in warfare (Breton et al. 1665, 1929 [1609]; Roth 1924). Fat animals such as peccaries and monkeys were and are preferred game, but birds and small rodents are caught too. Dogs remain invaluable (Koster 2009; Mans 2012; Rivière 1969; Saunders 2005) and are probably taken along on hunting trips in the islands (see also 5.2.1 and 5.2.4).[36]

The importance of fishing, in the mainland, depends on the size of local rivers. Both men and women apply fishing techniques imported from Amazonia. Islanders do so, too, by poisoning the water, fishing with a hook and line, or harpooning (Breton et al. 1665; 1929 [1609]; Roth

[36] On the importance of dogs to the Waiwai (Cariban), see Howard 2001.

1924, 2001). Horticulture is yet another joint venture. Among the contemporary Trio (Cariban), the men cut the field crops, whereas both genders do the planting after which the women take care of the fields (Carlin 2004: 5).[37]

### *Taboos*

Anthropological studies on Amazonian and other South American communities illustrate that certain edibles were avoided. This phenomenon is often related to specific food taboos.[38] Amazonian anthropologists have delivered several theories on the cause of food taboos which we will now explore.

It has been theorized that, among the Achuar (Jivaroan), large game animals, e.g., deer (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*), tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*), capybaras (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*), sloths (*Megalonychidae choloepus*) and anteaters (Myrmecophagidae) are avoided as they would be an "unstable" food source (Ross 1978). Large game is sensitive to (over)hunting, they reproduce slowly, rendering them "unstable" (Ross 1978: 6-7). Moreover, it takes a greater effort to hunt large game than small game (e.g., rodents, monkeys).

Several anthropologists cite ideological causes of food taboos (Ärhem 1996; Lima 2000; Politis & Saunders 2002; Roth 2011). Consuming certain animals may result in diseases and undesirable physical or behavioural changes (e.g., laziness, aggression, weird nose/feet).[39] Another motivation for such taboos could be: a potential game is not considered an animal, but to be either "like human", or the embodiment of an (ancestral) spirit.[40]

Politis and Saunders have examined the presence of food taboos in the archaeological record, hereby citing information on the Nukak (Makú, isolated language) peoples who inhabit the northwest Amazonian rainforest of Colombia. These taboos "can result in highly specific or confusingly complex distributions of faunal remains across a landscape" (Politis & Saunders 2002: 125) and may subsequently conceal cost-benefit models.

Several points of interest contribute to the identification of food taboos from the archaeological record (Politis & Saunders 2002: 126).[41] For instance, the absence of major food animals, whereas the presence of more species from the same genus does not preclude

[37] For a detailed description of the division of tasks according to gender among the Trio, see Rivière 1969; for more information on the Lokono (Arawakan), Kaliña (Cariban), the Trio and Wayana (Cariban), see Carlin & van Goethem (2009).
[38] See, e.g., Ärhem 1996; Lima 2000; Politis & Saunders 2002; Ross 1978; Roth 1924, 2011.
[39] For references to such ideas concerning the animals on which this research is focused, see Chapters 5-7.
[40] For a detailed description on Amerindian ontologies and perspectivism, see 3.6.2.
[41] Of interest here are the seven indicators of status differences in food discards, see Crock & Carder 2011: 587.

another species.[42] The presence of curated ritual items (e.g., deer bone flutes), but their absence in food-discard contexts may indicate a symbolic importance. Food taboos are common across Amazonia and upheld by the Island Carib during the Colonial Era. The Ceramic Age peoples presumably followed similar taboos.

Several archaeological studies mention the upholding of food taboos in the Caribbean islands where a number of specific animals are identified as possibly being placed under prohibition. In deFrance & Newsom (2005) we read that (sea) turtles have been utilised from the Archaic Age on (*c.*7000-5000 BCE). However, the absence of these marine species (family Cheloniidae) at sites associated with the Huecoid series, has led to the conclusion that they were probably tabooed, especially considering their frequent presence at (contemporary) Saladoid sites (Chanlatte Baik 2013: 177). A taboo on marine turtle meat has also been suggested as to the islands of Saba, St. Maarten and St. Eustatius. The reason for this is: their presence in iconography greatly surpasses any sea turtle remains encountered at sites where food had been discarded (Gijtenbeek 2004). Nevertheless, the limited presence of (marine) turtles in food residues could be explained by anthropologists who suggest that these species may have been processed on the coast, or on boats, hereby explaining their absence at archaeological settlement sites (González Herrera 2016: 175-6).

Toads (*Bufo* sp.), snakes, bats, dogs (*Canis familiaris)* have been marked as potentially tabooed. This observation is based on their prominence in iconographical display and a limited presence in food discard contexts (Gijtenbeek 2004; González Herrera 2016). However, both the consumption of bats and (small non-barking) dogs are reported in historic sources (González Herrera 2016: 172; Veloz Maggiolo 1997; see also 5.3 ("Bat") and 5.2 ("Dog"). Remains of snakes (e.g., the Cuban boa, *Epicrates angulifer*) have been encountered on Cuba and Puerto Rico (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 177; González Herrera 2016: 176). Snakes may not have been consumed in Puerto Rico.

A study on remains of the crab (*Epilobocera sinuatifrons*) describes their abundant presence in a Puerto Rican ritual, cave associated site (San Miguel), whereas they are almost entirely absent from a nearby residential site named Doña Rosa. This cave embellished with petroglyphs is interpreted as a location where ceremonies took place in which crabs played a crucial part (Oliver 2003). Interesting, too, is the large quantity of snake remains discovered in four cave sites located in the Central Mountains near Caguana (Puerto Rico), which may not concern food (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 184, note 1 referring to Narganes Storde). These serpents could be considered part of a certain ceremony or to have fulfilled a specific food-related role.[43]

[42] For a description of the distinction the Juruna (Tupi) make between various species of monkeys and peccaries of which several are tabooed, whereas others are considered "food", see Lima 2000.

[43] As no additional information on this cave site has been provided, its ceremonial use remains hypothetical.

In line with a suggested indication for possibly tabooed animals (Politis & Saunders 2002), body parts of several species served as ritualised items (e.g., inhalers, snuff tubes, adornment), which are not, or not often, included in discard sites. The teeth of the crocodile (*Crocodylus rhombifer*) have been recovered, but any evidence of this reptile being eaten by humans is rare (González Herrera 2016: 176; see also 5.2). However, the Trio (Cariban) people do for example eat alligator meat.[44] Hunting crocodiles could also have been difficult and/or restricted (González Herrera 2016: 176). As to sharks (*Carcharhinus* sp.; Lamniformes), any proof they were consumed is rare, too. Their teeth have been recovered, as has a Late Ceramic zoomorphic inhaler made of shark bone in Anguilla (Crock & Carder 2011: 579). The use of manatee bones is mentioned, but any evidence of these creatures being eaten is rare. This conclusion could, however, also apply to other large aquatic mammals e.g., monk seals and dolphins (González Herrera 2016: 175).[45]

### *Cultural marker*

Studies on ancient food ways reveal possible food taboos, as well as cultural distinctions, e.g., in status. It has been suggested that consumption preferences are a manifestation of cultural differences among the so-called (Late Ceramic) "Fisher-gatherers" groups residing on Cuba (Chinique de Armas et al. 2016: 140). This assumption is based on the identification of two distinct food consumption patterns, one associated with marine resources and the other founded on terrestrial sources (Chinique de Armas et al. 2016: 146). Various subsistence strategies had been established, even among contemporary groups, while the available resources were similar. Taboos regarding specific animals had guided these choices, resulting in the exclusion of these animals.

A relationship between social rank and food consumption has been established (Crock & Carder 2011; Deagon 2004). Based on the En Bas Saline (Haiti) site, it is proposed that elites consumed more mammals and larger, less bony, fish when compared with non-elites (Deagon 2004: 616-8). The comparison of four, partly contemporaneous, sites on Anguilla reveal that one site, that is, Sandy Hill (Late Ceramic), shows four times the largest density of total food remains. This abundance of animal matter, in combination with a high number of serving vessels and "status artefacts", led to the conclusion that this site is related to feasting activities (Crock & Carder 2001: 581, 587, 591).

The fact I do not focus on a specific site or sites, islan or even archipelago obscures the present discussion on potential food taboos and high status, or special purpose (animal) food. The aim is to demonstrate that: (a) Early Ceramic communities exploited a vast variety of faunal resources, and (b) food procurement, practices and consumption are important aspects of

[44] Dr. Eithne Carlin, personal communication, Summer 2018, Leiden.

[45] Remains of manatees and porpoises/dolphins have been recovered at certain Saladoid Puerto Rican/Vieques sites; to a lesser degree, manatee remains have also been found pertaining to examples of Ostionoid/Chicoid culture (deFrance & Newsom 2005: 177, 178). Manatees were eaten on Cuba (González Herrera 2016: 175).

culture and cultural identity, and could even form a means to differentiate from "others". Therefore, taboos may vary through time and place (even between contemporary populations in the same island). An animal tabooed in the Lesser Antilles, or even on a specific island of this group, could have been consumed in the Greater Antilles. Moreover, an animal tabooed in the Early Ceramic Age could later have been a primary source of food. Therefore, extrapolating suggested taboos for other islands or other time periods could be misleading.

Whether or not an animal is consumed is merely one of the key aspects regarding the human-animal relation to be taken into consideration. The natural resources change as the environment transforms from mainland to an island setting, whereby concepts on food and all it may constitute presumably alter, too. Nevertheless, ideas on (food) taboos most probably survived. The indicators of possible food taboos, as provided by Politis and Saunders (2002), could contribute to the identification of tabooed species. Another resource in identifying (possibly) tabooed, or special purpose animals, as a food source are the suggested characteristics for the status differences in diet (Crock & Carder 2011: 587).[46]

The research presented here concerning native food ways indicates that, whenever investigating indigenous perceptions on animals, they limit our intention to only focus on the iconographical display. For that reason, the anthropological and archaeological theories that deal with animal use and indigenous conceptualisations (e.g., the "animal's" place in indigenous worldviews) are included in order to be brought together in Chapters 5 to 7, where specific animals are discussed. However, this study provides a generalistic model in which local variations on the perceptions of animals are lost.

## 2.4 Concluding remarks

Chapter 2 was intended as a backdrop by relating this research to the broader fields of iconographical studies on Saladoid material culture as well as to studies on South American narratives, and to next position this investigation in the set discourses. Section 2.1 began with the introduction of pottery as a cultural marker to then focus on Saladoid material culture in particular. In the present research, Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* serve as a case study not only to determine the most common motifs but also to indicate any differences in motifs between the Caribbean islands and/or the Venezuelan mainland.

These *adornos* were never meant to be viewed, interpreted or to have any meaning as detached "objects", but formed an integral part with the vessel as a whole. However, after

[46] See Crock & Carder 2011: 587 for the suggested characteristics pertaining to the status difference in diets which reveal: (a) higher quantities of food residue than non-elite residences which preservation cannot explain, (b) an unusual distribution among animal classes, (c) unusual taxonomic diversity, equitability or richness, (d) atypical trophic levels, (e) animals which satisfy the appetite in terms of fat content or calories, (f) animals which involve the risk of capture or personal injury, and (g) unusually sized fish.

breakage, they could have acquired an additional function or role (Wauben 2018). From the very start, the potters having selected the materials and tools were fully aware of the end product. Every step in this creative sequence could have contributed to the indigenous perception of the vessel, including its decorations.

The choice to single out these *adornos* is partly the outcome of the fact that part of the vessel has been lost. It is also in part practically inspired: the Saladoid archaeological record is rich in zoomorphic *adornos* enabling a broad comparison among identified (zoomorphic) motifs. Their identification and comparison formed the basis of the first research question's answer (see 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*): which animals are most prominently encountered in Ancient (Saladoid) material culture of the Caribbean? Dogs, bats, anteaters and opossums are the most frequently encountered mammals, as are specific birds: nocturnal birds, vultures, stilts, pelicans, parrots, and ducks. The most prominently displayed amphibians/reptiles are turtles, frogs, lizards, and caimans. In Chapters 5 to 7, these prominent zoomorphic motifs are compared to the identified actors in the narratives.

Extensive studies on South American narratives reveal a great coherence in themes and motifs as publications by Lévi-Strauss, Roe, Wilbert, and Wilbert & Simoneau show. This coherence indicates that South American peoples shared their beliefs and ideas (in addition to goods), which contributed to a widespread meta-cosmovision. Its recurrent elements comprise an animistic worldview in which the world is conceived as multi-layered, whereby time has a circular disposition and is not necessarily always linear. The narratives thus mirror Amerindian worldviews and express significance. Therefore, when considering the present research, I turn to narratives as a means to conceptualise animal imagery, as iconographical features also reveal indigenous worldviews.

The final subject touched upon in this chapter was the tradition of Amerindian food ways. They are of special relevance here because in particular consuming meat was and still is of cosmological importance. Whether or not an animal is either considered "proper food", or tabooe or perhaps even favoured as a special purpose food, is relevant when establishing an "animal's" social functions and indigenous conceptualisation.

In the following chapter, we move on to the introduction of the theoretical and methodological framework, both built on the propositions set here in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 further discusses how the narration and the painting, modelling or carving of animals are intertwined. Moreover, the implications of the Amerindian worldview are explored by means of introducing Amazonian perspectivism.

# Chapter 3. Studying oral narratives

How are the acts of narration and of decorating pottery interrelated? Ellen Dissanayake's theory on "Making special-behaviour" explains that both are expressions of this behaviour (see 3.1). Zoomorphic images and animal actors can be considered cultural signs: a means to share ideas, expressions of knowledge and social codes. This assumption leads to a discussion on "meaning" and "signs". The latter cannot be deciphered, or translated, as a foreign language can. However, they have/had meaning within their own cultural setting i.e., evoked a shared set of sentiments and associations. The animals depicted as signs were thus not merely portraits of an animal, but mental constructs (i.e., high-order representations; see 3.1.1).

Various functions of narratives are addressed (see 3.2) in order to better understand why peoples all over the world tell and listen to stories. As will be demonstrated, storytelling is an effective strategy for the survival of non-literate communities, because narratives transmit and preserve forms of knowledge.

While the first part of this chapter discusses various concepts and theories, the succeeding sections (3.3 and 3.4) develop a methodology for this research based on these theories whereby the first section focuses on collecting, clustering and analysing the narratives (3.3), whereas the second is concerned with theories and methodologies for interpreting the data (3.4).

Section 3.3.1 deals with collecting, clustering and analysing narratological data. First, the first-hand story acquisition is addressed, during my 2009 field trip. In the course of this field trip I had the honour of meeting an Arawak elder who shared his stories with me (see 3.3, under sub-heading *Shared stories*). Next, the focus will shift to how these tales were documented in a database (3.3.1). Here the narratological methodology applied is presented.

The methodology then focuses on the second theoretical tool: perspectivism. This instrument will serve as an interpretative framework in order to not only analyse the narratives but also to better understand the Amerindian contextualisation and conceptualisation of the zoomorphic imagery (see 3.4). Perspectivism is introduced as a more inside perspective and enhances the more structuralistic methodology.

Section 3.5 addresses issues related to adopting written, translated accounts of (once) dynamic oral narratives (see 3.5.1). Next, the use of contemporary, dominantly mainland stories to interpret the Saladoid island iconography is reflected upon (see 3.5.2).

## 3.1 On "making special"-behaviour

What justifies archaeologists to dive into narratives as a means to make sense of iconographical features? The present section poses the theory of "Making special"-behaviour, as proposed by Dissanayake, as an overall framework that interrelates storytelling and adorning which are expressions of this type of behaviour. Moreover, both function as a means to make sense of, and give meaning to, the world in which we live. Narratives in particular are central to this study as they not only narrate but also communicate "meaning", hereby explicitly and implicitly contextualising cultural signs.

Iconography and (oral) narratives are the result of human activity i.e., decorating (adorning) and storytelling. Both these activities apply signs and symbols as a tool of expression, as a way to connect, even though this form of communication may be unintentional. An artefact may be decorated out of boredom, or just to make it "look pretty". Even so, a spectator is likely to be struck by a "feeling/evocation" when looking and/or holding it to perhaps even extract an interpretation from it.

How an individual reacts to, or interprets, a narrative or an adorned object is not only partly personal but also culturally determined. These narratives and items provide a means through which we as individuals become acquainted with "cultural symbols" because narratives feed our forms of knowledge (e.g., semantic or encyclopaedic). They themselves are the products of symbolic knowledge (see 3.1.2; Sperber 1975: 108). Even though a cultural *sign*/symbol** [47] might not be equal to a word or a concept, we are still able to extract information from it (Sperber 1985: 83-4).

[47] Italic words signified with an asterisk (*) are explained in the Glossary.

"Art" can be considered an activity or behaviour that involves the intentional making or expressing of something more than is required for practical purposes and not as the product of such activity (Dissanayake 1980, 1982, 2006, 2008). When presenting an artistic expression to an idea, or recognising it is artistic, we give it (or acknowledge it with) a certain specialness. It is made to be something special, that is to say, to treat it as different from an everyday item. Such behaviour is referred to as "making special" and is the root proclivity from which everything called "art" has developed (Dissanayake 1982: 148). Throughout time and cultures, humankind was and is, involved in transforming ordinary experiences (objects, sounds, utterances, surroundings) into something *extra*-ordinary (Dissanayake 1980, 1982, 2008: 14).

"Making special"-behaviour (e.g., storytelling or decorating pottery) contributes essential social benefits to communities as it expresses or revives or canalises emotions, reiterates social values, mirrors social codes, provides an avenue for shared experiences and comprises a tool for coping with psychological pain (Dissanayake 2006, 2008). However, as a means of self-expression, it trains our perception of reality and also supplies a sense of significance or meaning to life. Expressions of such behaviour therefore not only embody and communicate experience, but they also constitute a means through which we comprehend, give relevance to, and therefore control, the world (see also 3.1.2).

In this sense, adorning and storytelling fit the same behavioural pattern as they take place within the same ("symbolic") cognitive context. Both decorated pottery and oral narratives are the results of this "making special"-behaviour. Both apply (shared) motifs, metaphors and signs that acquire their "meaning" within the cultural frame of reference created by and for peoples who are part of the same cultural framework. It is therefore probable that similar signs, motifs, metaphors and the like are utilised within the act of storytelling and adornment.

Here the concept of "meaning" is not a ready fixed, code-like manner as are words encountered in natural languages. Neither does it imply that decorations (drawings, artefacts) depict indigenous "myths" and/or narratives. Here the term "meanings" refers to the evocations/associations it triggers. What comes to mind when we think about rabbits, bats or lions? The way we interpret cultural *signs** is partly universal, partly determined by culture. Each symbol/sign has a certain meaning that belongs to a certain context, which excludes other contexts. A "symbol" does thus not signify anything but itself. Their force lies in their ability to evoke recollections and sentiments" (Sperber 1975, 1985).[48]

This behaviour of "making special" binds the activities of storytelling and adorning. Iconography and the actual narratives are the results of this behaviour. Signs, motifs and the like are one of the means through which mankind express an "idea". Although in theory,

[48] A reference to a definition, or function, of "symbols", see Sperber 1975: 117-8, 1985; see also 3.1.

humankind has indefinite ways to make something special and ostensibly, bound by both universal and cultural contexts, we apply similar ways to actually do so.

At the same time, iconography and narratives are ways to get acquainted with (cultural) signs. They also communicate the importance and "meaning" of the motifs and signs they themselves display. The manifold meanings of animals are narratively articulated.

### 3.1.1 Signs, icons and symbols in iconography

Studying the "meaning" of zoomorphic iconography could also be considered an investigation into symbolism. The "meaning" of iconographical features cannot be deciphered as with a foreign language, but iconography can be considered as cultural signs which do not refer to knowledge but are knowledge, and as a result, evoke a shared recollection of sentiments (see 3.1).

Controversially this research focuses on animal imagery, implying that depictions are at least "deciphered" or identified as animals, sometimes specific animals, e.g., jaguar, bat or caiman imagery. However, is this identification perhaps not proof of exactly the opposite, i.e., that these zoomorphic motifs can be deciphered? This leads to the principles, or laws, that link a given signifier to a given signified, or an object to a subject (Bayley 1991; Hodder 1987: 3).

The iconographic analysis concerns the relationship between the image (and object) and the subject of the depiction. Or, in other words, the relationship between signifier and signified. Three types of links have been identified (Peirce 1931-36: 36, 1958) and comprise: (a) ***Iconic signs,*** through which the signifier is connected to the signified, through resemblance. The "sign" (signifier, e.g., image, *adorno,* figurine) resembles what it signifies, because it looks like it, sounds like it, smells like it, etc., (b) ***Indexical signs*** tied to what is signified, because they are connected through the principle of contiguity e.g., cause-and-effect, and (c) ***Symbolic signs*** which are artificial, whereby the signifier and signified are linked by means of an arbitrary (human-imposed) convention.

As this research focuses on (identified) animal imagery (e.g., zoomorphic *adornos*) they are not "symbolic signs", but most likely iconic. Resembling a (specific) animal, they could have been, and likely are, also indexical i.e., their "meaning" or what they once evoked is conceptualised differently from "merely" the animal depicted; as signs, they probably serve additional metonymic or metaphoric functions.

Because animal imagery is iconic as well as indexical, the imagery is analogous and constitutes metonymic and metaphoric functions.[49] A metonym signifies a thing through a part or aspect of that what is signified, e.g., jaguar teeth signify the jaguar as a whole. A metaphor evokes similarity, but refers to something it is not; therefore a metaphor forms an implied

[49] The graphic arts follow the style of verbal arts, see Roe 1982: 2-3.

comparison. For instance, a Warao story explains that "to break the legs of a brown heron" is a metaphor for collecting a variety of foodstuffs[50] indicating that for example, an identified frog *adorno* is an iconic *sign** because it depicts a frog (i.e., is analogous to a frog). However, as a metaphoric analogue, that *adorno* could signify fertility, water, rain or transformative power resulting from the frog's life cycle (egg > tadpole > froglet > adult frog). The zoomorphic *adornos* presumably serve a metaphoric function in that they signify a mental concept, related to symbolic knowledge. Therefore they fall in with Sperber's description of "symbols" (see 3.1).

I, therefore, adopt Damerow's two-step order put into practice in Mackowiak de Antczak's study on Venezuelan figurines (Mackowiak de Antczak 2000, referring to Damerow 1996). The model presented there integrates a holistic approach on figurine interpretation (see 2.1.3). The first stage (referred to as an "Empirical stage") consists of five steps and leads to a "subject identification", e.g., depicting a jaguar (see Fig. 3.1). This so-called "first order" identification has been established because the imagery, for instance, when linked to *adornos,* is identified as portraying an animal.

However, in the present research, I consider animal imagery as high-order representations comprising mental objects or ideas communicated by means of signs (e.g., zoomorphic *adornos*). In the abovementioned model, the high-order representations are identified through the four steps of the "Understanding stage", see Fig. 3.1. Based on their metaphoric or metonymic functions, these animal imageries also constitute a high-order representation (Mackowiak de Antczak 2000: 50).

Thus, although the zoomorphic *adornos* underlying the present study are not "symbolic signs" as defined above, they still are the product of symbolic knowledge and signify beyond what they (while serving as an icon or index) display. This research aims to contribute to our understanding of *adornos* as high-order representations and is consequently a study on "symbolism" and "meaning".

In this dissertation, the term "animal", which includes specific "animals", is often written between inverted commas in order to indicate its high order. For instance, whenever an *adorno* is identified as a "bat" *adorno,* a bat may be depicted, but what this *adorno* portrays is *not* a bat (animal), but a mental construct i.e., a portrayal of symbolic knowledge. In the present study, animals presented as mental constructs are (re)constructed by means of their narrated meaning.

[50] Wilbert 1975: 9-11. In this study documented as Story no. 538.

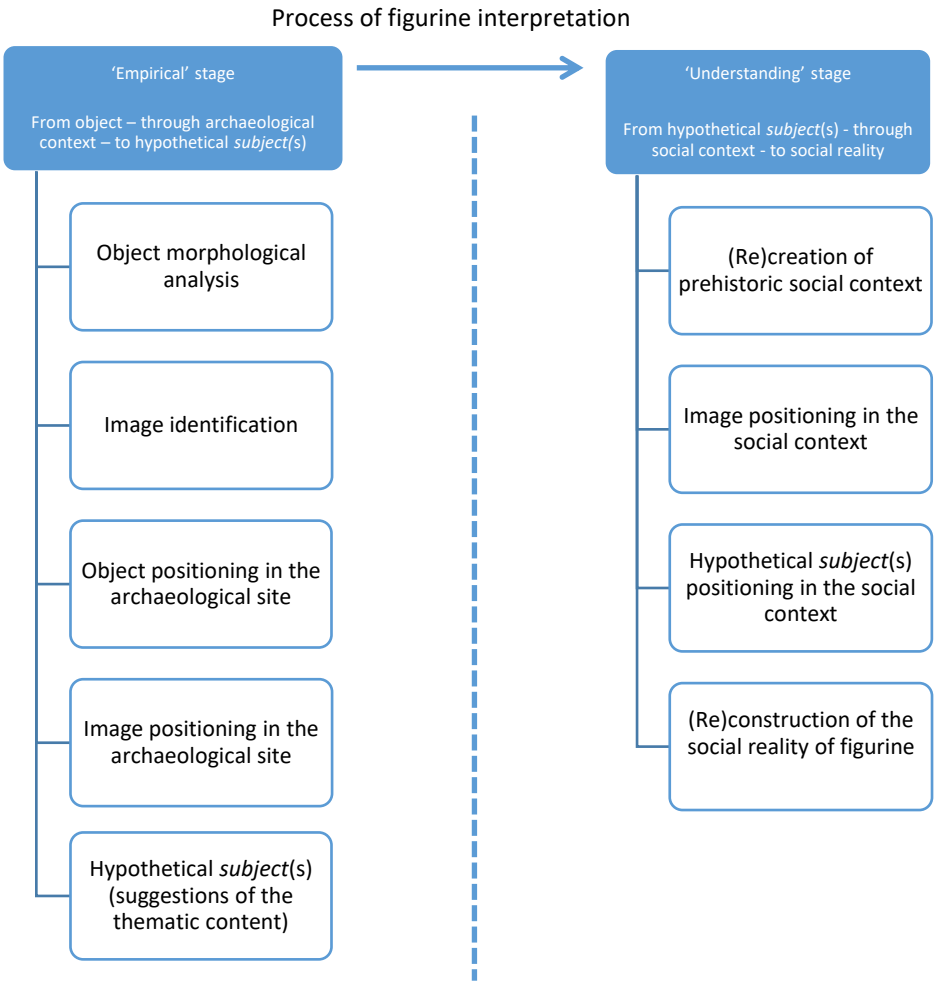


**Fig. 3.1.** Model for figurine interpretation. Two stages and nine elements of the "step-by-step strategy"; based on Mackowiak de Antczak 2000: 7, Fig. 72.

### 3.1.2 Feeding perceptions

"Making special"-behaviour builds upon knowledge of the indigenous peoples, and narratives form an important "feed" to what has been called "symbolic knowledge" (Sperber 1975: 108; 1985: 83-4). They are important because they (literally) narrate meaning. Motifs, actors and contexts can all function as a cultural sign. Within the world of narratives, they are interrelated and therefore contextualised.

However, narratives merely provide a single means through which we make sense of the "symbolic" world. Returning to Goodman's theory on "world-making" (see also 2.3.1), our knowledge and perceptions are informed by a vast variety of world versions originating from science, the works of painters and writers, performances of symphonies, etc. These worlds often contrast to such a degree they are not mutually reducible. Once united all these varied worlds do enter into the process of knowing, perceiving, understanding and therefore of experiencing the world (Goodman 1978: 3, 22).

Knowledge of science and "art" are unified in the processes through which knowledge, in general, is organised and created. "Even if the ultimate product of science, unlike that of art,

is a literal, verbal or mathematical, denotational theory, science and art proceed in much the same way with their searching and building" (Goodman 1978: 107). In this sense, both science and "art" are symbolic systems, a frame of reference in which cultural signs and depictions can be understood.

Scientists build theories, artists paint pictures, narrators tell stories and all do so by keeping other theories, pictures or narratives in mind. They then delete, add and/or alter elements, so that these elements are reshaped and transferred metaphorically. These three (re)creators organise and reorganise in response to their particular theoretical and practical needs. They thus build new worlds from already existing worlds. Creating "new worlds" is in actual fact a process of remaking (Goodman 1978: 6-7).

The premises of these worlds differ as do the signs predominantly applied within these worlds. Nevertheless, all make similar use of metaphors. Any metaphor, or sign, only has a meaning in the world or frame of reference it fits into. Scientists, artists and narrators all provide such frames which we adopt in order to structure the world around us. Only suitable arrangements and groupings allow us to handle vast quantities of materials (and signs) either perceptually or cognitively.

When encountering cultural signs and depictions in various contexts we are able to grasp their "meaning". The iconic, or indexical *sign** "turtle" may, for instance, appear: (a) in a materialist manner whenever a carapace serves as an instrument or food, (b) as an icon in the form of a painting or petroglyphs, (c) within a ritual context forming part of shamanic songs, (c) as a medicine, (d) portrayed in dances, and (e) as a trickster or the mother of culture heroes in narratives. Through all these encounters we not only become familiar with the "turtle" as a cultural *sign** but also with its high-order representation.

### 3.1.3 Challenging "meaning"

The present section elaborates on the difficulties in understanding the meaning of signs as high-order representations. Difficulties in understanding (cultural) signs arise as the evocation of a *sign** is to a certain extent very personal. Every culture has its own cultural signs, including first-order and high-order representations. These signs may not be (easily) translated into words but are nevertheless familiar to members of a culture, as they are products of symbolic knowledge.

Extracting a "meaning" from cultural symbols poses challenges, as research conducted on the Nage indicates, an indigenous group populating eastern Indonesia (Forth 1994, 2004, 2007, 2009). Within this community, increasing awareness of local cultural differences was encountered, accompanied by the recognition of the contrast existing between local and national culture. In his research, Gregory L. Forth applies the forked, engraved wooden post (*peo*) in order to illustrate his viewpoint. When he asked the Nage about their culture, they

showed him a *peo* which served as a marker of their ethnic identity. They also informed him that each carving carried an individual "meaning", which served as a "symbol" for a series of positive qualities or cultural values.

G. L. Forth acknowledges not only that the perspective of the Nage may have been influenced by recent developments, referring to modernism, but also that this view could differ from the perspective adopted in ancient times. In fact, the opinion "motifs constitute a standard and public, or even a culturally and generally accepted code" is criticised. Ideas on meaning and symbolism may be a recent innovation, tied to processes of social change or "modernization". Literacy may have played a role here, too: to read is to collect knowledge. The idea of culture, or of cultural symbolism, as constituting a fixed code analogous to natural language implies that it is learnable and can (and indeed should) be acquired by everyone (Forth 1994: 152).

This is not to state that the notion of meaning which concerns any understanding of expressions of indigenous cultures is completely inappropriate. It is, however, argued that such a meaning is perhaps identified by individuals. Or, such elucidations which anthropologists could refer to as being statements of meaning, characteristically do not forge a stable, public code, and are therefore generally not recognised as collective "culture" (Forth 1994: 152).

Forth's research indicates not only that the concept of "meaning" and "symbol" presumably originates from, and belongs to, the Western literary paradigm but also that these concepts could be alien to the cultures we study. This is in accordance with the lines of thought formed by Dan Sperber, a French social and cognitive scientist, who concludes that putting "symbols" into words may be impossible (Sperber 1975, 1985, 1994). If we do find the words, it is very likely that they will vary as much as humans do. However, as a concept and as to the way in which various signs (e.g., the *peo*) are conceptualised, it is probably very similar.

## 3.2 How storytelling makes sense

Various scholars realise the importance of narration both as a survival strategy and a social binding activity.[51] The practice of storytelling itself is widely spread and has emerged independently among even the most isolated indigenous peoples (Heymans 2003; Scalise Sugiyama 1996, 2001, 2006). Evolutionists consider this shared phenomenon to be a human strategy which can not only store but also transmit valuable information.

[51] See Biesele 1986; Coe et al. 2005; Couch 1989; Dissanayake 2008 (which does not focus on storytelling, but on the general traits of art); Ochs & Caps 1996; Scalise Sugiyama 2001 and 2006; Scalise Sugiyama & Sugiyama 2012.

Various functions of narratives can be distinguished. Within the present research the emphasis will lie on the following themes[52]: (a) ensuring and transmitting knowledge, (b) informing, (c) encoding social behaviour, (d) validating the world, and (e) establishing a group and personal identity. Each theme is elaborated upon in the present section.

### 3.2.1 Ensuring and transmitting knowledge

Within hunter-gatherer societies, knowledge is only transmitted orally. Therefore it is of importance to not only ensure that transmitted knowledge sticks with the subject but also that any information crucial for the survival of the group is not known just to a few individuals but to all. Narratives are a very efficient means to this goal for these communities, for instance, because knowledge is not transmitted directly but additively: it is a "fun" social activity as well as a tool with which to transmit and ensure information (Scalise Sugiyama 1996, 2001, 2006). In addition, information placed within a narratological context is more easily stored, internalised and memorized, because our brain handles bundles of knowledge already presented in an orderly form better than loose pacts (Biesele 1986: 163; Byrne 1995).

Drama is applied in narratives as a mechanism to support our memory and compel involvement (Biesele 1986).[53] All in all, "...narratives that persist in collective memory do so because their content triggers motivational mechanisms [e.g.*, "interest"*] designed to respond to the cues associated with the agents, objects, activities, and/or phenomena represented within them" (Scalise Sugiyama & Sugiyama 2012: 353). The above-italicized term is placed between square brackets by the author.

Pieces of information with historical value can be recorded in the group's collective memory through narratives. According to Sellato (1993), the historical narratives comprise stages whereby: (a) an event or information is directly recorded, (b) original elements are altered and supernatural elements introduced, and (c) a mythical dimension, as well as an intermingling of the human and supernatural worlds, are accomplished. Through each transition, it becomes more difficult to identify historical facts from fiction, objectivity from subjectivity, etc. (Sellato 1993: 157). However, there is a fine line between historical and mythical information (see also 2.3.1, under the sub-heading *"World-making"*), which discusses how the "Before time" (or "mythical" time) is still relevant in "Today time").

The transformation of a historical character into an animal is a common aspect of the evolution when a historical narrative becomes "mythical". This mutation is also stimulated by the fact that animal names are also very commonly utilised as personal and/or indigenous

[52] When analysing each narrative dealt with in this dissertation I identified these five narrative functions (see also 3.3.1, under the sub-heading *General data*).

[53] Crouch and Sellato identify rhythmic qualities of narratives (e.g., songs) as a means to support a memory, because an aesthetic quality is added and a fixed order of words ensured (Crouch 1989: 590; Sellato 1993: 156).

group names as is the case with the *Maya-yana* ("Frog"-people) and *Kaikusijana* ("Jaguar"-people). A Waiwai (Cariban) narrative reports how many peoples are invited to a large feast attended by certain other peoples who "do not like each other". The "Buzzard"-peoples dislike "Jaguar"-peoples because they always bite them. These references could also illustrate historical disputes between various groups and/or peoples (Story no. 397; Fock 1963: 56-67).

The function and content of narratives probably differ when looking into smaller, mobile and non-stratified communities when compared with larger sedentary and stratified ones (Sellato 1993). In the larger stratified communities, aristocratic families preserve (are "keepers" of) tradition and narratives. They may even apply their status as custodians of tradition and "myths" as an instrument with which to mobilise their peoples, for instance, by creating a common goal in order to inspire going to war. Moreover, the elite utilises narratives to justify their status by for example claiming their divine origin. This difference between non/less-stratified and stratified communities could well be reflected in the contents as well as in the structures of narratives.

### 3.2.2 Informing

Narratives are thus by nature an effective strategy for humankind to ensure and transmit various forms of knowledge which can then be (relatively) easily remembered and recalled in times of need. Storytelling is a way to share personal as well as group experiences with a potentially large audience. In this way, the community is informed of all kinds of practical matters e.g., the (in)edibility of plants and animals, which arrows to use[54] when hunting or any geographical/navigational information (e.g., constellations, locations and the names of rivers or mountains).

Western culture would presumably categorise the narratives discussed in the present study as "myths" or "fairy tales/fables" i.e., as fancy and fictional. However, they contain valuable information on the survival of groups and can be considered part of their strategy to transmit knowledge. For instance, narratives about animal characteristics help to identify (edible) species. Moreover, animal behaviour indicates the best season/time of day to chase game. Utilising animal actors by means of anthropomorphism (i.e., attributing human traits to animals) decreases the amount of information a forager must store (Mithen 1990, 2005). It is argued that a pre-existing set of behavioural terminology serves, as do words, to describe human behaviour. Thus, within a single narrative, information on animal behaviour/traits and human sociality can be combined, e.g., on how honey can be found and extracted as well as on marriage and betraying a secret.[55]

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[54] Narratives describing specific arrows with which to catch game are numbered: 52 (Trio, Cariban), 163 (Tariano, Arawakan) and 258 (Kachuana (Cariban). Narratives on curing the ill are numbered: 444 (Warao), 411 (Cariban). Narratives on how to catch fish by means of poison are numbered: 48 (Trio, Cariban) and 131 (Arekuna, Cariban).

[55] See Story no. 132 (Taulipang, Cariban) in Koch-Grünberg 1921: 105-9; see Story no. 274 (Quechua) in Lévi-Strauss 1988: 43; see Story no. 376 (Warao) in Roth 1970: 199-200.

Narratives can contain useful information on interspecies associations. A striking example of this comprises a Yanomamö tale in which the fasciated antshrike (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) mourns its father-in-law the tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) with the cry, "Shoabe!" ("Father-in-law!"), an exclamation which the Yanomamö call the "announcing song" of tapirs. In this case, Antshrike searches for a tapir by following its trail which "… followed a river upstream, meandering along, went past a hill, skirted it then turned back. That was how Antshrike taught us how to follow the trail of a tapir" (Scalise Sugiyama 2001: 233, referring to a narrative reported by Wilbert & Simoneau 1991: 356).

Another important aspect of rendering storytelling an effective tool both for sharing and warranting vital information is the fact that the knowledge of one is shared by many. Narratives are told to many men, women and children at the same time and known by virtually everybody. Individuals do not need to explore the world by themselves but will be able to learn from the experiences of other members of the group. This form of wisdom enables individuals to express pragmatic attitudes that vary according to the necessities associated with the situations he or she may experience.

Storytelling fills a need to acquire knowledge of (potential) dangers, of numerous species of flora and fauna as well as of specific cases of animal and plant behaviour, thereby contrasting any knowledge of general "rules" which are of no use in practical life. This aspect is expressed in oral narratives where the interest focuses on the actors' responses to detailed environmental and social situations rather than to general rules (Biesele 1986: 164). When combined with the multitude of available narratives, a discussion on similar themes and messages actually contributes to the need to acquire knowledge, because the "truth" linked to that which everything one believes lies somewhere amidst all the dialogue.

### 3.2.3 Encoding social behaviour

The third function of a narrative is closely related to the function Informing (see 3.2.2). For, social behaviour is a specific type of information which has a reproductive value. In addition to containing this type of information, storytelling is not only a social activity by nature but also often a dynamic, interactive activity in which the narrator and audience together create a story world. A positive ambience of sharing, laughter and motivation is thus created.

Because their contents comprise elements of sociality, narratives give rise to harmony by means of bringing individuals together. Moreover, they can explicitly and implicitly illustrate how society expects its members to behave. Narratives may indeed: (a) reveal the consequences of behaviour, e.g., when sleeping with your brother punishment will follow, (b) forward implicit indications e.g., husbands must leave game outside the house for their wives to pick up, or that food should be shared with mothers-in-law.

“Traditional children’s stories” fulfil various roles in encoding behaviour, when influencing the (social) behaviour of children and even of distant descendants (Coe et al. 2005). It is argued that narratives are repeated, either consciously or unconsciously, because of their influence on behaviour. They provide moral and evaluative guidance. An important goal is to not only teach children the morals and values of their parents but also to inform them about religion and/or society in general. By reading, or being read to, children follow a social path, learn role orientation, and acquire norms and values. Storytelling therefore did (or does) also function as ideological instructions aimed at moulding the inner nature (Zipes 1991; 1994).

In the majority of the narratives, correct behaviour is not dictated. Instead, the many consequences of actions are portrayed. Underlying metaphors shape any decision making. The huge corpus implies one is able to combine elements from various narratives in order to understand how to act in specific situations, even though this concerns taking by and large unconscious decisions. Reciprocal altruism is a social function which children acquire thanks to narratives. By means of the actions and reactions of protagonists/heroes/anti-heroes, children are informed on not only how to behave but also to subtly discriminate against non-altruists (Coe et al. 2005). Whether a narrative is fictional or not is of no importance to this narrative function. Even fictional, improbable beings can serve as models for the human environment by means of their interactions, as long as these beings exhibit human psyches. The audience is now able to observe the consequences of incest, marital infidelity and homicide (Scalise Sugiyama 2001: 224).

### 3.2.4 Validating the world

Amerindians inhabit a potentially hostile world comprising a forest environment full of predators, both human and non-human. As with other humans across the globe, they must deal with questions of “life”, such as: “why are things the way they are?” Narratives provide us with a means to answer these questions.

A new world is created within a narrative to include demolished frontiers, non-existing juxtapositions and differences. Here, instead of boundaries and contrasts which are evidently present in the practical world, transitions and solutions exist whereby the possibilities are immense such as a world in which animals are able to talk or humans can fly. When we acknowledge that which Goodman refers to as “versions of the world”, the reality of a multiplicity of knowledge, we accept that scientists, artists, narrators or historians do the same (Goodman 1978; Overing 1990) when they construct the world by adopting the same thought processes. However, the premises on which these worlds are based are very different.

Storytelling can be considered to be a process of creating a world because it involves the composition and decomposition of (new) worlds which always consist of other worlds already at hand. Narrators are thus creators, too, as they disassemble and assemble the versions of the world at hand. When forging story elements into a plot, they attempt to not only identify

problems met with in life, but also how and why they emerge, and their impact on the future. Through dialogue, action and reflection, narratives expose narrators, as well as listeners to potentialities for unanticipated pain and joy, encountered while alive, whereby the spiritual and therapeutic functions of narrative activities are included.

Narratives are often launched in response to current anxieties, complaints and conflicts. The reason for this is: comprehending the past is required to understand and cope with such issues. In Amerindian cosmology, the past, present and future are interrelated (see 2.3.1). The past is, therefore, an appropriate indicator of what could happen in the future (Ochs & Capps 1996: 25). It has been argued that history and folklore are necessarily joined. Moreover, historical events cannot be fully grasped without understanding "attitudes and actions of real men and women" encountered in folklore which in turn cannot be comprehended without understanding the historical circumstances of its creation and transmission (Joyner 1989: 11).

Narratives tend to explain why things are as they are. Not only do they clarify natural features concerning animal, plant and human life, they also fulfil a meaningful task in validating the world: things are the way they are because they always have been that way. The narrative activity provides humankind not only with the opportunity to impose order on otherwise disconnected events but also to create continuity between past, present, and imagined worlds. Narratives provide communities with amity by uniting the unseen with the seen, the old with the new. For instance, a shaman applies narratives and/or shamanic songs to bring back order to the (disarrayed) world. He can perceive the true identity of an agent and can cure the ill (Overing 1990; Viveiros de Castro 2004, 2012; see 2.3.1 and 3.4.2). By creating new (story) worlds, humans are able to influence and understand the world they inhabit in order to then impose order to the otherwise disconnected events.

### 3.2.5 Establishing one's group and personal identity

The fifth relevant function of a narrative comprises enabling a group and a personal identity. In many societies, storytelling is a group activity whereby the narrator interacts with the audience. They cooperate regarding the process of world-making, which includes in a way collaborative authorship. Hence, the group builds its own identity, a sense of belonging while achieving its target and communal goal.

Our own self-image is inextricably linked to an awareness of other peoples and things. We define ourselves not only by means of our past, present and future but also by an imagined involvement with fellow humans and things (Ricoeur 1991). Story motifs and metaphors not only describe but also interconnect people, society and the environment. Within narratives, particular events are indeed placed against larger horizons of human virtues, philosophies, actions and relationships.

Narrators together with their audiences evaluate specific events in terms of communal norms, expectations and potentiality. Ideas as to what is rational, moral, appropriate and aesthetic are established. In this manner, we affiliate with other members of society, both living and deceased. Thus a group identity, as well as a personal identity, is built (Ochs & Capps 1996: 40). This identity also constitutes a crucial resource for socializing emotions, attitudes and identities, while developing interpersonal relationships and constituting memberships in a community.

Each narrative situates narrators, protagonists and listeners at the nexus of a morally organised, past, present and possible experiences. Therefore it provides humans with an opportunity to acquire a (fragmented) self-understanding (Ochs & Capps 1996: 22) by means of (a) ensuring and transmitting knowledge, (b) informing, (c) encoding social behaviour, (d) validating the world, and (e) establishing a group and personal identity.

When narrating, drama is utilised as a mechanism in order to improve memory and compel involvement. This fact enables the recalling of the content of narratives and applying the assembled knowledge in a time of need. They can, therefore, be considered an effective strategy to transmit and "ensure" any group knowledge required in relation to the survival of the society.

## 3.3 Breaking down the narratives

Narratives provide non-native researchers with a means to study the significance of Amerindian stories within the cultural and natural context set by and inherent to the story world. The above sections do not only include a general introduction on how narratives and iconography are related but also clarify why narratives form a central feature of this research.

I will now in two steps position the methodologies based on the theories dealt with in the above sections. The first step focuses on collecting, clustering and analysing the narratives by means of the methodology of narratology (section 3.3). The second step concerns theories and methodologies with which to interpret the data, based on perspectivism: a theory of Amerindian ontologies which provides a framework for the indigenous perceptions of "being" (e.g., human, non-human), section 3.4.

### *Shared stories*

The study area for the data (narrative) collection has been defined in section 1.2.1. This study, however, also includes thirteen narratives obtained firsthand. In the summer of 2009, my husband Lucas Arts, an archaeologist with a special interest in the Americas, and I went on a fieldwork trip to Suriname, including a short visit to French Guiana. We stayed near, and repeatedly visited, the Wayana (Cariban) village of Apetina. Richard, a local young man who was learning to be a guide, accompanied and kindly introduced us to the chief and captains of Apetina. During short trips, Richard shared with us his knowledge of local culture and nature. One night was spent at a Maroon village named Granbori.

When visiting Matta, a Lokono (Arawakan) village located in the district of Para, we very fortunate to be joined by Yvonne Ebecilio from Matta. Having informed her of my research, she said that her father was not only knowledgeable but also a shaman and a storyteller, adding that he would very much like to share his stories. On 27 June 27 2009, we had the honour of becoming acquainted with Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916, see Fig. 3.2). However, being unprepared, we agreed to meet again on 2 July in order to have more time. He kindly told us twelve stories, which I recorded and transcribed in order to produce a booklet which was sent to him later to be corrected. Yvonne and Sjaak mentioned he had once owned a notebook containing all his stories, which someone had borrowed and had never returned to him. I felt grateful when able to present him with a number of these tales in a written form.

**Fig. 3.2.** Sjaak Ebecilio (aged 93) at Matta, Para region/Suriname; photograph by L.J.M. Arts (2009).

Sjaak Ebecilio and his daughter provided me with several biographical details. Sjaak is a Lokono (Arawakan) who had also lived among the Carib for many years. Having witnessed the border expedition in 1936-1937, Sjaak even mentioned the reason why certain areas are still disputed: "The Dutch followed the wrong river!".[56] Having participated in expeditions led by de Goeje and Geijskes, Sjaak referred to them as "the Admiral" and "the Baron". In the course of these ventures, he met various Amerindians, including the Wayana. Sjaak Ebecilio served as a teacher of Dutch in a number of indigenous villages. His knowledge of plants and medicines is impressive.

Yvonne remembered how her grandfather used to tell stories especially about stars (presumably constellations [interpretation by the present author]) to all the children. If he had had enough of this, he would tell a "ghost story", causing his audience to run off in fear. Yvonne also shared a narrative with us: which explained why the Carib people do not eat turtles. In Appendix A, all the narratives provided by Sjaak and Yvonne are presented, in both Dutch and English. I am greatly indebted, filled with gratitude and sincerely hope Sjaak will never lose his stories again.

[56] Claudius H. de Goeje (1879-1955) took part in reconnaissance expeditions along the Tapanahoni and Gonini Rivers between 1903 and 1904. These scientific explorations of inland Suriname resulted in topographical maps and ethnographical accounts based on encounters with various indigenous communities. In 1937 de Goeje now on his final expedition to the Southern border of Suriname resided in a Wayana village (Taponte) for nearly 4 months (van Broekhoven 2010: 153).

### 3.3.1 Documenting narratives

Documenting narratives requires a solid database design. A scientifically valuable database not only organises the data for maximum analytic use but also enables the research questions to be answered. In the course of this complex research which attempts to quantify qualitative data, many hours were spent developing the basic design. I worked together with Remco Jansen, a friend and colleague with experience in building databases for research purposes, who studied American archaeology as well. We started with identifying and organising the acquired information, before breaking it down to its smallest logical parts.

The analysis of this study is based on methodological choices. This section is therefore not merely a simple description of the database, but also a detailed discussion on underlying (methodological) choices and on how they contribute to answering the posed research questions. The main research questions to be answered by means of this database are: (a) which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals in South American oral tradition?, and (b) with what or whom are they associated within the narratives, and in which context? Two other research questions are also partly answered: "Why are certain animals more significant than others?" and "How can the conceptualisation of animal imagery inform us about the socio-cultural behaviour of society?".

First and foremost, the roles of animal personages are key in approaching the above questions. By applying the narratological approach, the various contexts in which these personages act and with whom they interact are examined interdependently. In addition to the information needed in order to conduct a narratological study, general data have been documented, too, as will be discussed below.

#### *General data*

The source of each narrative is documented, a number of narratives have multiple sources because they have been published by various authors. Throughout this dissertation, the narratives are referred to by means of their (unique) Story numbers and the linguistic affiliation of each indigenous group. Appendix B provides the referential information in relation to each Story number.

##### Summary and initial interpretation

Once created, a summary is included along with a first interpretation which is highly subjective: this subjective interpretation constitutes the initial ideas and notes written down immediately after reading a narrative. Although very subjective, these interpretations are a valuable addition to the followed methodology. The reason for this: any (structural) methodology has the downside of tunnel vision which may lead to overlooking elements because one is simply not looking for them.

### Linguistic affiliation

A language family, when identified by means of the specific language, documents the linguistic affiliation. The websites of Glottolog 2.3 and/or WALS Online were consulted in order to establish geographical coordinates for each narrative, based on its linguistic affiliation.[57] These coordinates were used to plot the narratives on a map.

Whenever the linguistic affiliation is unknown and a geographical area or feature is presented (e.g., "Amazonia", "Rio Negro", "Teffé area") the coordinates are approximated. This procedure is carried out by utilising Google Earth by taking a fictitious point in the middle of the geographical area. In other cases, the specific language remained unspecified. In these instances, the most logical alternative is chosen. For instance, unspecified "Carib" narratives are provided with the (established) coordinates for the Kaliña/Galibi (Cariban-speakers, aka "True Carib"). The coordinates serve to plot narratives on a map of South and Central America not only in order to visualise the distribution of narratives, motifs, actors and/or events but also to analyse any regional similarities and differences.

### Narrative function(s)

The narrative function is another aspect recorded in the database. The five narrative functions have been elaborated above (see 3.2). Identifying these functions enables us to further explore the reason why the Amerindians recall the stories they tell. The narrative function(s) also inform us of their society as well as its socio-political structures. The distinguished narrative functions follow the proposed functions in 3.2. A number of these functions have been subdivided in order to acquire more detailed information regarding a specific function (see Fig. 3.3). These functions do not exclude each other. Multiple narrative functions have if relevant, been documented for each narrative.

## *Narratological data*

I will now apply the layout of the database designed for this research as a leitmotif in order to describe how narratology, as a method, is integrated into this research. Narratology is a generalised method for studying texts which is so widely applicable it can serve the study of visual arts (Asselbergs 2004; Bal 2004; Felluga 2003). Any meaningful analytic categories as to this particular research have been distilled in order to document, compare and analyse the collected narratives.

The two styles of analysis in present-day narratology are: (a) more or less structuralistic and (b) post-structuralistic. The latter comprises numerous approaches and angles e.g., ideological, feministic and ethic narratology.[58] Although many have criticised traditional, or

[57] Glottolog 2.3 (http://glottolog.org/); WALS Online (http://wals.info/; Dryer & Haspelmath n.d.) consulted on 16 July 2014.

[58] Post-structuralists not only broaden the notion of a narrative to the extent that almost anything can be a story but also that almost all expressions of culture (paintings, dance etc.) are narratological. Structuralistic narratology focuses on the intrinsic structures/patterns in a narrative, whereas the post-

structuralistic narratology, most narratologists take cues from it, more or less explicitly, because of its usefulness with regard to the practical study of narratives, hereby labelling the object of study according to specific layers, oppositions and predefined categories. Structuralistic narratology distinguishes three inherent layers: (a) **Text**: a finite, structured unit composed in a sign system, (b) **Story**: the depiction of a fabula, and (c) **Fabula**: a series of logically and chronologically related events brought about or experienced by actors (Greimas 1987).[59]

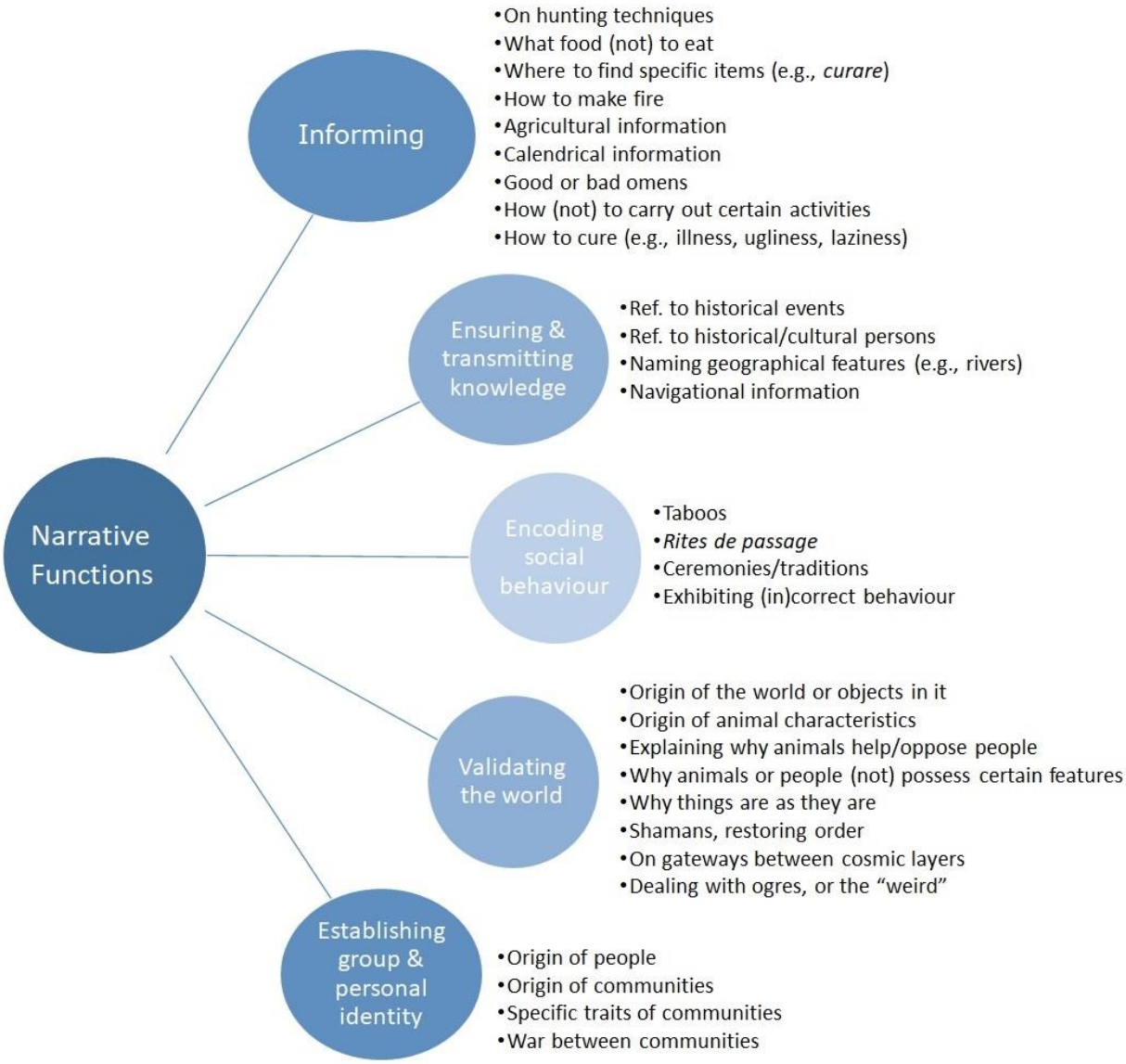


**Fig. 3.3.** Narrative functions including sub-functions; survey composed by the author.

structuralistic reaction includes aspects of ideology, biography, social position, etc. These approaches attempt to fill the gaps the structuralistic method does not face: (a) the strict definition of "text", (b) the rigidity of the layers, (c) the anthropomorphic approach of narrative elements (e.g., focalisator), (d) a hierarchical way of thinking, and (e) the emphasis on the text (Herman & Vervaeck 2005; Hühn et al. 2009; Meister 2009).

59 The three layers can be noted differently, for instance as History, Story and Telling, depending on the author (see Herman & Vervaeck 2005).

Within the Fabula, the following basic elements are defined: events, actors, time and place. The methodology denotes that narratives are to be studied according to the arrangement of these four elements. Their arrangement within a text determines how a fabula is transformed into a Story. Events, actors, time and place are also important when understanding the "creative moment" of a narrative. The phase positioned beyond the text provokes emotions. Semiotics, too, is relevant for a true comprehension of the emotions experienced by the reader/listener, since these experienced emotions depend upon the medium through which a narrative is presented. Semiotics investigate a culture as being processes of communication facilitated by an underlying system of signs.

The three layers all have their own characteristics and are to be studied independently as well as in relation to each other. As the present research is based on written sources, the "telling" itself is lost. Having applied written translations, the "text" itself does not lend itself for a study in semiotics. The words, the grammar and structure were probably altered in order to suit the targeted Western audience. The layer called Text/telling has therefore been excluded from the present research.

### Fabula-layer: actions, actors and setting (fabula)

Fabula, or history, is the most abstract layer and focuses on the sequential occurrence of the events, actors and setting. All three elements can be analysed separately as well as interdependently. The way in which actions, actors and setting are studied is described below. These elements are presented to the reader in a certain manner, which forms the next layer of narratology: the "Story".

Numerous structuralists interested in narratives have studied this layer, even before this field was labelled "narratology". Its early stages can be traced back to the 1920s when, for instance, the Russian scholar-folklorist Vladimir Y. Propp (1958) and the American scholar of folklore Stith Thompson (1934) published important works.

#### *Actions/events*

In order to study and compare the narratives, they have been broken down into motifs. Morphologically, motifs are elements encountered within a narrative which enable researchers to compare and understand its distribution. Therefore a motif needs to be an identifiable unit within the narrative.[60] For a very elaborate index of motifs, see Thompson (1934). His six-volume index describes over 6000 motifs, each containing a letter of the alphabet (hereby coding a theme e.g., an "A" for mythological motifs) as well as a combination of numbers.

[60] A motif is defined as the smallest element in a narrative, having the power to persist in tradition. It discerns the following classes of motifs: (a) the actors in a tale, (b) certain items in the background of the action and (c) single incidents. See Thompson 1946: 413-27 and the Glossary.

Such an index is by no means a static collection of motifs. They change through time in the course of which the index composed by Thompson has often been elaborated on. To date, the essence of his meticulous labour continues to be very meaningful when comparing narratives based on their motifs. Many researchers interested in narratives apply this index. It may be mentioned here that Johannes Wilbert and Karin Simoneau studied South American "myths"/narratives by means of this index (Wilbert 1974; Wilbert & Simoneau 1970, 1975, 1978, 1991, 1992).

Wilbert and Simoneau have investigated various South American indigenous communities, focusing on narratives, referred to as folktales of, among others, the Yupa (Yukpa, Cariban), Warao and Yanomamö (Yanomam) of Venezuela. The motif-index Thompson established serves to classify the motifs encountered within the stories.[61] Several of these he wrote down. For instance, those told by the Yupa (Yukpa, Cariban), Warao, Cuiva (Guajiboan) and Sikuani (Guajiboan). They are also incorporated into the body of narratives dealt with in this research (Wilbert 1974; Wilbert & Simoneau: 1970, 1991, 1992).

Motifs can either refer to an actor (e.g., animal personage, evil relative) or to an action (e.g., murder by poison). They can also be descriptive (e.g., magic tree, excellent swimmer). The present research follows Wilbert's and Simoneau's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, in turn, based on Thompson's index. Motifs can be directly related to the animal personage, but may just as well be a general motif linked to the narrative but not directly to an animal personage. The database provides the possibility to document both. So each documented motif is linked to a specific story, but not necessarily to an animal personage, thus enabling research into motifs directly related to an animal personage, and into indirect associations.

For instance, Jaguar is directly linked to motif "A 1414: the origin of fire", because he owns it. Toad might act as an advisor in that same narrative, but is not directly linked to the motif referred to as "the origin of fire". If Toad does play a role in the majority of, or in all, the narratives about the origin of fire, this motif and Toad may still be interrelated, as a result of implicit knowledge. The relation between a specific animal personage and certain motif(s) might be common knowledge to the audience. Therefore the narrator does not have to explicate it.

As motifs can be linked to the narratives itself as well as to each specific animal personage, a single particular motif can be documented multiple times for one specific case. However, a particular motif can only be related once to a specific animal personage.

[61] Wilbert and Simoneau, when studying South American Amerindian "Folktales", identified and documented the motifs (see e.g., Wilbert or Wilbert and Simoneau: 1970, 1974, 1975, 1978, 1991, 1992).

For analytic purposes, five predefined categories called “main events” have been documented in addition to motifs. A main event forms the core which interrelates numerous motifs, and on occasion even be the core of the entire narrative i.e., the red thread underlying other events. Seven types of “main events” are distinguished based on their repetition in the corpus of narratives. The choice of these main events is not based on a specific method or scientific theory but simply identified as recurrent themes. By identifying these main events, narratives can be clustered whereby recurrent themes are identified in order to be studied in relation to specific narratological contexts and (animal) actor(s). A number of (sub) main events were added after forming the initial database and after the process of filling the database was started.

These five (sub) main events are: (a) the quest for a certain individual or object; (b) the rescue of missing family members after an abduction, or a warning which leads to an escape (e.g., information on imminent danger causing a protagonist to take the appropriate steps in order to stay out of harm’s way; or restoring order (e.g., repainting the sky after it had fallen down); (c) truth finding; (d) a contest of endurance, of speed and of strength; (e) (setting of on) an epic journey; (f) the abduction of a human or an animal, and (g) acts of deception.

To sum up, motifs and main events provide us either with information on actions or events encountered in the narratives, for instance, motifs associated with transformations, murder, various tasks, etc. All identified motifs and main events per narrative are documented in the database. Needless to say, events are often interrelated (an abduction leads to a rescue, etc.). Events are also related to specific (both spatial and temporal) contexts and actors.

*Actors*

The actors have been studied by means of the actantial model developed by A.J. Greimas (Greimas 1987; see Fig. 3.4). This specific research focuses on animal personages thus excluding narratives in which no animal personages or their deeds are mentioned. These personages are documented on the genus/species level (Jaguar, Dog, Peccary) as well as on the class level (Mammal, Avian, Reptile, Amphibian, Insect). Whenever attributes or traits (e.g., spotted, two-headed) are described, these are also documented.

Which role(s) is/are ascribed to each animal personage within the narrative has been documented. This role is also related to specific actions and/or chronotopes, enabling to analyse if, for each animal personage, the specific roles (e.g., helper) are related to specific actions and or (spatial/temporal) contexts.

The actantial model suggested by Greimas is a well-known tool applied in order to describe the six roles fulfilled by actants (or figures). It is based on a subject behaving in a certain manner while it strives toward a certain object. A *destinateur,* also termed a sender inspires this push. The agent benefits from the striving subject, which Greimas calls a *destinataire* (also

designated a receiver). The actor who supports strivers is referred to as a helper, whereas the thwarter is considered an opponent.

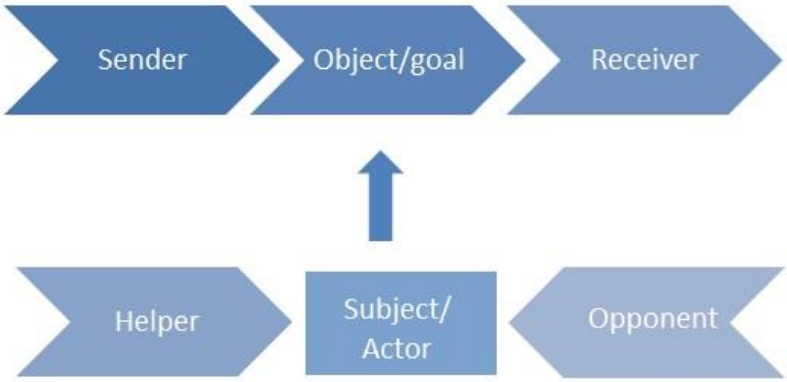


**Fig. 3.4.** Scheme of an actantial model after Greimas (1987); modified by the author.

These roles are abstract and should not be confused with actual personages. A single personage can fulfil all these roles and multiple personages can fulfil a single role. The advantages of this model are its simplicity and applicability, which at the same time are its disadvantages. It is too simple to reduce all personages and motifs to these six roles because this not only results in dealing with all texts in the same way but also does not establish any distinctions.

Within the Amerindian worldview, identity is fluid. Humans and *significant other-than-human-persons** (e.g., animals, spirits) exist in a shared relational frame of interaction (see 3.4.2). In several narratives, it is made explicit that a shaman transforms into an animal or for instance that a spirit "takes the form/wears the clothes" of an animal. In such cases, this "state of being" is recorded in the database.

Based on anthropological/ethnographical as well as archaeological studies it is also apparent that certain animals are kept as pets. References to domestic animals are documented when relevant.

*Setting*

All actions take place within certain settings in space and time. These settings (aka chronotopes) form narratological and ideological centres, shaping the personages as well as actions (Burton 1996, referring to the Russian philosopher and literary critic M.M. Bakhtin (1895-1975)). Moreover, the abstract view of human and humanness (i.e., what it means to be human) and worldviews acquire their shape by means of an embedding of personages (the concept of man) and the events (worldview) within the chronotope.

When describing the setting, one has to consider which terminology and criteria are applied in order to typify it. A trait of the structuralistic approach comprises the preference for dipolar oppositions, such as inner/outer, open/closed, high/low, far away/close by. Elements of time are also analysed according to oppositions: long/short; continuous/interrupted; day/night;

light/dark. Crucial in this characterization of time and space is the adjusted or exceeded border/boundary. Events and actors going beyond these dividing lines are often meaningful. The villain often breaks boundaries, whereas the hero repairs them.

In theory, the number of oppositions to be studied is infinite. As to the present research, the oppositions to be looked into were determined beforehand in order to ensure that each narrative was equally documented to benefit an overall comparison. A downside of predefining any oppositions is: they (can) lead to a self-fulfilling prophesy and blindness as well as to other, perhaps more relevant, oppositions. However, certain categories were predefined to establish a means for comparisons. The predefined oppositions have been based on: (a) my personal knowledge and understanding of Amerindians populating the study region who told/tell these stories, and (b) scholarly publications on the subject.[62]

The oppositions documented in the database, considering their settings in space and time are: (a) forest/village which includes: an abandoned village, a bathing site, a temporary hunting site, a field, a cemetery, (b) day/night which also distinguishes a sunrise and a sunset, (c) cosmic layers i.e., land, water, sky and the underworld and the *axis mundi* (the gateway connecting cosmic layers), cave, cenotes, lakes and the world tree.

Events, actors and settings are all interrelated and all provide each other with significance. Each of these elements cannot fully be understood without taking the other two elements into consideration. The narrator, writer or artist presents these elements in a specific way.

### Story-layer: characterization and duration

The story-layer no longer concerns the abstract logic of sequences, but now deals with the concrete manner in which events are presented to the reader. The three central points of interest in a narratological analysis are: (a) duration, (b) characterization, and (c) focalisation. A narrator/author influences, or operates the narrative's content by means of various tactics. He/she can apply time (i.e., duration) in order to dramatize an action, or an event, by creating a momentum. The reader perceives the narrative world through the eyes of its personages who are of significance when interpreting its content. Which personages the writer presents (focalisation) and how they are presented (characterization) are thus of interest to the story-layer.

The second narratological layer of interest pertains to Story, i.e., the depiction of a fabula. The story-layer comprises the concrete manner in which a narrative is presented to the audience. This layer now poses a problem, as the narratives included in the present research are written

[62] E.g., Boomert (2000, 2001); Lévi-Strauss (1955, 1973, 1974 [1962], 1983 [1964], 1988 [1985], 1990 [1968], 1990 [1971]); Roe (1982, 1995a, 1998); Siegel (1997); Wilbert (1974, 1975, 1985, 1987); Wilbert & Simoneau (1970, 1978, 1991, 1992). See also a discussion on this matter in section 4.2.3 under the sub-heading *The bias of dipolar oppositions.*

translations. It is therefore highly likely that the concrete way in which the "translator" presents the narrative differs from how the narrator may have recalled it. For, the translator wrote it down for a very different audience (in this case Western) when compared with whom the narrator presented it to (see 3.5). Moreover, the narrator as well the translator did so with a very different goal in mind.

As to (b) characterization, the focus lies on how a personage is typified. As to (c) focalisation, the relation between the focalised and the focalisator is central. The focalised comprises a personage, action and/or object presented to the reader. Focalisation suggests perceiving centres within the narrative itself that can think, act and feel. That has given rise to questions if indeed any self-perceiving centres exist within narratives. If so, should these be studied as anthropomorphic "beings"? An example by means of which to clarify focalization now follows. If we read a book about a depressed woman (subject and focalisator), the world (focalised object) she describes may seem a dark, gloomy place. However, because the same book contains more focalisators (e.g., a couple in love, a child) as well as the depressed woman, the image of the world as perceived by the reader will thus be completely different. Taking the focalisator and the focalised into consideration can lead to a better interpretation of the perceived story-world, as discerned by its readers.

As the present research mainly includes documented (written) and translated narratives, I feel "focalization" cannot be studied within this context. The reason for this is: the exact words a personage (the focalisator) chooses are not the words preferred by the narrator, but by the translator. Therefore this investigation into the story-layer has been restricted to characterization and duration.

*Characterization*

Characterization concerns the concrete portrayal of roles. That gives rise to the following questions: how is an actor described or typified within the narrative? Does the reader become familiar with a personage through its actions or through a description of its characteristics? In order to answer these questions, three modes comprising a direct, indirect and analogue characterization can be discerned.

The appearance and inner qualities of a personage are literally described by means of a summarisation of his/her traits in the mode of direct (or explicit) portrayal. Indirect (or implicit) characterization is based on elements related to the contiguity of the personage. Thus, the personage is typified by means of a metonymic ratio. A personage's deeds are related to its character as are, the words it speaks (through dialogues). Analogue characterization is based on metaphoric and not on metonymic images by applying metaphors of the actor e.g., it resembles an angry gorilla.

Analysing characterizations presents us with challenges because characterization is positioned on the level of semantics and of content analyses. The concrete portrayal of personages is an issue that differs from text to text. It is, therefore, less interesting as to the structuralistic approach. However, its significance increases as to the post-structuralistic approaches (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*, note 58).

How the various animal personages are characterized is relevant to the way they are conceptualised by the audience. Are animals introduced or are listeners/readers expected to be able to understand personages without any explicit introductions? Are they described by their actions or appearance? Which elements, attributes and/or characteristics of the animal are emphasized? Caution is needed when drawing conclusions based upon the analyses of the story-layer, as the outcome of this analysis may just as well be based upon the interpretation of the non-native writer.

*Duration/Time*

The narrator is always located in a specific temporal position relative to what he/she is telling. A number of tools are applied in order to utilise time e.g., by summarising, accelerating, an ellipsis (i.e., deliberately not describing an event), setting a scene (in which the story time is real time) and by inserting a pause. Subsequently, narrators are able to differentiate between "real time" and "narrated time" (i.e., the time within the narrative). A researcher can study the use of time by looking into duration, frequency, the order of events and actions. Durations can serve narrators to achieve various ends. "Real time" can be expanded within the narrative whereby an entire book can report the final seconds before someone passes away. A narrative can be shortened. Moreover, an event can be described according to "real time", for instance, in a dialogue.

How a storyteller/writer plays with time can be examined by relating "real time" (i.e., the time required to read, or which the narrator needs to tell) with narrated time (i.e., the time frame within the narrative itself). When one listens to or reads, a dialogue, the "tell time" and the narrated time are the same. However, this method poses the following practical queries: how to determine the narrated time? And, how long does a narrative spend on an action? Is that quantifiable by the number of pages needed to describe an action? The "tell time" poses a similar problem when it is a written source.

I here apply predefined categories for the narrated time, because this enables a comparison between the narratives. Five time span categories have been distinguished: (a) shorter than or equal to one day, (b) a couple of days, (c) weeks, (d) months, and (e) years. The narrated time is not explicitly mentioned in most narratives. Therefore determining a narrated time is indeed difficult, or at least highly subjective. Whenever the life of culture hero(es) is concerned, the narrated time can be presumed to be years or at least months. However, when a narrative deals with a journey to other realms, or if it is a lengthy story, it is not clear if it

took days, weeks, months or even longer, rendering any establishing of the narrated time subjective in nature.[63]

For each narrative, the page numbers of the original source are registered. The number of pages required serves as an indication for "real time". This presents a further issue, as this designation is related to the type, size, letter format/size, line spacing of the pages and the presence of illustrations. To partly refract these obscuring difficulties only three, rather broad, categories have been defined: (a) 1 to 5 pages, (b) 6 to 10 pages, and (c) more than 10 pages. The duration is studied by means of interrelating the narrative's actual length (the total number of pages) and the narrated time.

## 3.4 Towards an interpretation

The description of the first stage of a two-step methodology comprising collecting and analysing the narratives has been presented in section 3.3. We now, of course, must move beyond an "etic"-based methodology towards a more "emic" interpretation of the data.[64]

A perspective from within the Caribbean cultural lifeworlds poses various difficulties since the participants (i.e., the Caribbean peoples of the Early Ceramic Age, 800/200 BCE-400/600 CE) lived in the far past. Therefore, in the field of archaeology, "emic" approaches are often based on a direct historical approach, thereby adopting the perspectives of (nearest) descendants. Only a small number of direct descendants of the peoples hailing from the insular Caribbean still inhabit the islands, constituted by small indigenous communities located on Trinidad, Saint Vincent and Dominica.

Because the migrants of the Early Ceramic Age presumably originated from the Orinoco area and because they are most likely Arawakan speakers (see 1.1 and 1.1.1), the indigenous groups from the tropical lowlands could be considered linguistically and culturally affiliated. The Early Ceramic Age islanders remained in touch with their mainland counterparts by means of extensive exchange networks (see 1.1.2). The present research thus incorporates mainland Amazonian narratives as well as ethnographic accounts.

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[63] A further complication as to the supposed narrated time is: South American Amerindians consider time to be non-linear or even simultaneous, whereby the past, present and future are interrelated. Although this concept comes the closest to quantum time, it does not comply with our (Western) linear notion of time (see also 2.3.1).

[64] Kenneth L. Pike first introduced the terms emic/etic in his *magnum opus* entitled *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior* (Mouton, 1967). From then on, his publication has been part of the epistemological discourse and adopted by the social sciences. For a discussion on and an overview of how these concepts have been applied over time, see the essay first published as Chapter 1 in T. Headland, K.L. Pike and M. Harris (eds.), *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 1990). Basically the emic perspectives attempt to study a culture (including its products and a participant's behaviour concerning that culture) as its participants observe it. The etic approach pertains to a scholarly "outsider" view held by the researcher(s) engaged in studying a culture.

Furthermore included in this study are certain (primary) historic accounts reporting on island peoples i.e., the "Taíno" from the Greater Antilles and the Island Carib of the Lesser Antilles (see 1.3). These accounts provide various relevant observations regarding the island peoples, their lives, worldviews and first-hand narratives.[65] In addition, in the course of a field trip in Suriname (2009), ten stories were recorded directly in the Dutch language (see 3.3 under the sub-heading *Shared stories*).

The following paragraphs: (a) address the theory of perspectivism as a framework when interpreting data, and (b) serve as a model in order to better grasp the Amerindian contextualisation and conceptualisation of animal imagery.

### 3.4.1 Illusion of the true perspective and objectivity

Western methodologies and approaches are often equated with truth and objectivity. This Western (etic) discourse has been challenged because its concepts (e.g., truth and objectivity) are now under scrutiny if pertaining to notions rooted and shaped in Western discourse.[66] In my view, achieving objectivity should be attempted albeit in itself an elusive goal. We, humans, possess opinions, preferences, biases shaped by shared historical, political and socio-cultural backgrounds. Being subjects, we always conceptualise the world based on this inherent context. This forming of concepts rings true for the outsider studying a culture and for the participants active *inside* that very culture.

This assessment implies that, whenever any indigenous community experts are involved, their considerations and interpretations provide us with a valuable perspective. Nonetheless, their explanations do not necessarily display a privileged authoritativeness, nor does our exterior "scientific" perspective. No outsider or insider holds the true perspective or objectivity. Incorporating both factors is, in my opinion, therefore most fruitful. As this study focuses on narrative meaning, the Amerindian perspective expressed by insiders is essential. In accordance with the doctrine of *Verstehen* (as opposed to *Erklären*), mental constructions can only be understood when "folk-psychology" and interpretations of those involved are taken into consideration (Bransen 2001).

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[65] As to these primary sources, the historical and political contexts in which they are created and which concern intended audiences, as well as their purposes and motives must be taken into consideration e.g., missionary accounts of "savages" who needed to be taught the "right" way (i.e., Christianity). The writers of these reports had their own agendas. Nevertheless, being the only primary sources, they form a valuable addition to the present research.

[66] See 2.3.1 for a further discussion on versions of worlds. As to how "truth" relates to the world it fits in with, see Goodman 1978. Looking into scholarly articles reveals that the "myth of objectivity" has been argued in disciplines such as journalism, psychology, law and epistemology. For an overview pertaining to how "objectivity" as a concept has changed over the past 100 years in the view of American historians, see Novick 2005.

### *Etic and emic perspectives combined*

As to the present research both exterior and interior perspectives are considered valuable. By means of etic approaches and methods, certain patterns of similarities or differences could be observed which participants may, or may not, perceive, but which still hold important insights into indigenous concepts. The fact that these patterns are the outcome of an etic analysis does not necessarily imply it is not "true" in the sense that this result has no value. *Verstehen* being the main objective of this study, the Amerindian perspective is of vital relevance when venturing beyond descriptions and comparisons aimed at comprehending any *symbolism** and *meaning** i.e., mental constructs. This procedure should ultimately lead to a better understanding of indigenous Amerindian zoomorphic *symbolism**.

Both iconography and the narratives are considered to be indigenous Amerindian expressions, and both acquire significance by means of their very creators. These narratives mirror Amerindian thought, concepts and worldviews because they were not only devised by the narrator but also built on other worlds at hand (see 2.3.1 under the sub-heading *"World-making"*). They are therefore indigenous products and expressions through which symbolic knowledge is articulated as well as shared.[67] Narratives are indeed a world in which *signs** are contextualised by and for an Amerindian audience.

The motifs, events and actors have been researched within the context of the narratives. Thus, on a meta-level, they are organised, compared and analysed by means of a methodology based on narratology. On a micro-level (i.e., when interpreting and studying the narratives), a more inside approach has been attempted by incorporating perspectivism as an interpretative discourse (see 3.4.2). This approach serves to not only improve the comprehension of the narratives but also to conceptualise the animals as *signs** (i.e., in an iconic, indexical and symbolic manner) based on their role and position within the Amerindian worldview and ontologies.

A more holistic approach is pursued when conceptualising the "*meaning*(s)*" of animals by means of their roles in nature, in narratives, in iconography and in indigenous cosmologies. These roles in nature are especially significant as the island potters who modelled zoomorphic *adornos* inhabited a very different environment (i.e., insular Caribbean) when compared with the mainland peoples who recall and listen to the narratives. It may be added here that available historical records on the Island Carib of the Lesser Antilles as well as accounts concerning the "Taíno" peoples inhabiting the Greater Antilles provide firsthand descriptions not only of the Amerindian belief systems but also of traditions associated with various animals.

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[67] One consideration is the fact that the narratives applied in the course of this research are presented in a translated and written form. Therefore the once dynamic accounts have now become static. Moreover, any translation involves the loss of idiom. See 3.5 for a discussion on this methodological contemplation.

### 3.4.2 Perspectivism as an interpretative model

As explained above, perspectivism is posed as an interpretative model in order to study and comprehend the narratives from a more interior point of view. Perspectivism is an anthropological theory that describes the underlying conceptual basis of the relationship between humans and non-humans. It unites the point of views of all beings (i.e., human, spirit, animal) because there is in fact only a single point of view: the human one. This assumption implies that every being with a conscience considers itself to be human, thus all beings possess a common *anima* termed "interiority". That gives rise to the following questions: what would the world look like if all beings were to hold a "human" point of view? How are "others" then perceived? What happens when an Amerindian meets a "jaguar" who sees itself as being human?

According to perspectivism, human culture is shared by all who can either think or possess consciousness (i.e., humans, animals, plants, "things" and spirits).[68] All such beings hold their own points of view, regarding themselves as "persons" while considering other beings as non-persons or non-humans. This situation entails that everyone sees themselves living in villages as a community, feasting, drinking *cassava** beer (*cassiri**), etc., whereas "others" are seen as either prey animals or predatory animals, or spirits (Halbmayer 2012: 11; Viveiros de Castro 2012: 33). Having a viewpoint also implies that each being, human and non-human, observes the world through its own eyes and in a characteristic way.[69]

All beings with a consciousness (i.e., a point of view) are united by means of a shared humanity, their interiority. Their "physicality and affects" (i.e., their nature) divides them, as these factors result in varied points of view (Halbmayer 2012: 13; Viveiros de Castro: 1998, 2004, 2012).[70] For instance, the jaguar considers itself to be a person, as a human being, with the same culture as the Amerindians. Thus, from this animal's viewpoint, through its eyes, it resides in a village along with its family, owns a home, goes out to hunt, etc. Any "cooked food" in a jaguar's opinion is "raw meat" when seen from the Amerindian perspective; that which Jaguar considers to be *cassiri**, is blood to Amerindians. This example forms the basis of the assumption that the interiority of Jaguar and Amerindian is identical as they share the same culture, whereas their viewpoints differ, each observing the world around them in a characteristic manner.

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[68] This shared "human" quality is explained by the fact that (a) animals are "ex-humans" and (b) humanity is the shared original condition from which animals are differentiated (Halbmayer 2012: 13; Viveiros de Castro 2012). Artefacts, or "things", also appear to have existed prior to other forms of being and are assigned a crucial function in creation (Santos-Granero 2009: 5). See also 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Nature and the intensity of subjectivity*.

[69] Similar concepts have been applied such as the "ecology of selves". We read, *"…* all beings, and not just humans, engage with the world and with each other as selves - that is, as beings that have a point of view" (Kohn 2007: 4). Those having souls, or those being souls are distinguished, see Lima 2000: 45.

[70] Differentiating factors that render the body of every species unique are the "affects, dispositions or capacities"; the body is merely a bundle of influences and capacities, see Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478.

Therefore all species are defined by means of a shared humanity, or "are supposed to have a spiritual component that qualifies them as "people" (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 465). The outer appearance which is often referred to as clothing conceals this interiority. This difference between interiority and exteriority can be literally displayed as for instance in narratives about a dog-woman. Here, when a hunter is chasing game, his dog transforms into a woman whereby the clothing is removed, allowing the interiority (i.e., humanoid form) to appear. Having returned home, the huntsman burns these clothes, after which this dog-woman cannot return to being a dog and keeps her female (human) form.

Changing clothes means transformation. Shamans and spirits can transmute, because they dress in the clothing of "others", for instance, the coat of a jaguar, peccary or of a human being. However, each species has its own unique key attributes that clothing cannot replace. For instance, spirits wearing human clothing (i.e., with a human appearance) speak with a speech impediment, whereas jaguars dressed in human clothes don their claws and fangs as bodily adornments. These unique physical attributes constitute the nature of each being, as it distinguishes them to result in different points of views.

A common interiority covered by clothing implies that appearances can deceive *because* they "hide" specific points of view. The "clothing"/physical is observed from another subject who can only see with its own eyes and with another viewpoint. The perspectives of different beings, let us say humans and jaguars, are incompatible because they are not capable of seeing each other simultaneously as humans (Viveiros de Castro 2012: 34). Therefore, whenever a jaguar and Amerindian meet, they cannot see each other as being humans. When Amerindians see the jaguar as a human being, this implies that the Amerindians have entered Jaguar's perspective and thus according to the jaguar the Amerindians would have become a peccary (i.e., prey). Only a shaman can enter the perspective of another and return to tell the tale.

If all beings with a point of view share a common interiority, how do they relate to each other? All see themselves as being human, while others are classified as either "other-than-human" or "*significant other-than-human-person**". Considering the Juruna (Tupian, Brazil), this differential is best understood as wild vs. civilised (Lima 2000: 45, 48, note 15). This implies that "others" are related to in terms of being more/less wild/civilised than the Self. The "wildness"/"civilisedness" can be a differentiating factor *within* and *between* beings. For instance, the category "wild" can be linked to the jaguar as well as to an unknown human-group (Lima 2000: 46). The "other" occupies a higher position in the scale of "otherness" if it is least "civilised", or the most "wild". For instance, spirits are *significant other-than-human-persons** and can appear as humans, but nevertheless lack a key aspect of being "civilised". As to the Trio (Cariban), spirits do not possess a "human-language", because they speak with an impediment. These most important qualifiers concerning "civilised" vs. "wild" vary among

groups, resulting in categories referred to as human, *other-than-human-person* and *significant other-than-human-person**.

A worldview is always embedded in a specific language. Various Amerindian languages linguistically mark "otherness" and transient states. Carlin (2004) describes several such markers encountered in Trio, a Cariban language. The Trio apply a marker, the suffix *–me*, in order to illustrate that: (a) one knows the denoted is not inherently what it appears to be as the noun is in the (transient) state of being (Carlin 2004: 124, 128), or (b) a former belief has been falsified whereby it is linguistically marked that something was mistaken for something else, or (c) one is uncertain as to the identity of a perceived object (Carlin 2004: 128).

An example which clarifies the suffix *–me* consists of the Trio designating a jaguar (spirit)-man as a "human"-*me* (i.e., *wïtoto-me*): he looks like a human, talks like a human but is not human in essence, because he is, in fact, a jaguar. Another marker, referred to as *apo*, signifies resembling a being as to its behaviour or marginally having its appearance. For instance, to eat like a caterpillar implies eating leaves (Carlin 2004: 213-5). Moreover, the marker *-re(pe)* denotes that semantic expectations inherent to the noun are not met with. For example, if a key semantic feature of that noun is not fulfilled. In that case, a spirit is able to speak, but with a speech impediment. These linguistic markers all not only indicate how the worldview is embedded in their language but also how appearances can deceive.

The varied implications of this worldview encompass a multiplicity of incompatible points of views. If all beings with a point of view share their interiority, then what would an Amerindian eat without this becoming an act of cannibalism? How can the ill be cured, if that which causes the disease cannot be understood? This goal can only be accomplished when Amerindians enter the perspective of another subject. The only ones capable of doing so are shamans.

### *Shamans crossing (ontological) boundaries*

Only shamans are able to enter the point of view of other beings, because they are, or can be, the conductors of perspectives. Entering another perspective as such is not the problem, but re-entering your personal perspective can be. A Trio (Cariban) narrative about a shaman visiting the water world (Carlin 2004: 511-6) describes that the way leading towards this realm resembles a path. Having walked into a hole in the water, he arrives at a path leading to Anaconda village. Here the locals are feasting, singing, dancing, drinking and trading. The shaman joins in dancing and singing. Next, the giant otter (the shaman's familiar i.e., helpful spirit) warns him not to drink too much, or else he would be "blocked from going back" as the path would completely close. In another Trio narrative, two brothers each transform into a jaguar. However, in spite of being warned, the younger brother, having tasted blood (Koelewijn 1987: 118-20), has to remain a jaguar and is not able to return to his personal viewpoint. Therefore his elder brother has no choice but to kill him. The reason for this was

the fact that having transmuted into a true jaguar and provided with its point of view, the younger sibling now sees humans, even his elder brother, as prey.[71]

The two above examples point to the existence of behavioural restrictions whenever a shaman enters the perspective of "others". Breaking these limiting rules not only implies crossing the ontological boundary but also the "closing" of the path leading back to his personal ("human") perspective. It also often involves eating and drinking (e.g., do not drink a jaguar's *cassiri**, or pineapple juice, for it is in fact blood). Sexual restrictions could also be imposed. Rules vary among the Amazonian communities but always concern entering into the perspective of "others". Only shamans can do so, thereby holding on to, or returning to, their personal point of view if not crossing an ontological boundary.

Shamans have the ability to "see" with the eyes of the other, hereby observing as the other (i.e., jaguar, spirit) observes itself. Having identified the other realising whom/what he or she truly is, the shaman can act, or respond, accordingly in order to protect his personal perspective. Acting accordingly here implies that he should never cross any ontological boundaries, that is never fully adopt the perspective of the "other". It is therefore *because* a shaman can identify the interiority of the other and *because* he can observe with the eyes of the "other", without completely losing his own perspective (i.e., realising the *cassiri** is in fact blood) that he can not only maintain this perspective but also return to tell the story. Never capable of completely crossing an ontological boundary, the shaman enters the perspective of an "other" which entails controlled conditions and limitations (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 471).

A shamanic trait is being able to "see" with the eyes of "others", from their point of view. Importantly, it allows a shaman to cure the ill, or to invest himself, or others, with predatory capacities. Moreover, he can "dehumanize" game animals. Shamans can not only understand but also communicate implications of any socio-cosmic relations which humans maintain with non-humans, past and present. Moreover, shamans are able to enter other perspectives and travel through both time as well as various cosmic layers.

A Piaroa shaman (*ruwang*) had to travel between the "Before time" and the "Present time" in order to understand who is causing the diseases or death. They are often jealous beings, who no longer possess the capabilities they had during the "before time". They now predate on

[71] Losing your own personal point of view, or "becoming", does not necessarily imply that your "appearance" (clothes) changes. However, your perspective does alter whereby you can no longer recognise any next of kin. Your Amerindian relatives and friends are no longer "human" if observed from your (altered) perspective but have changed into prey e.g., a peccary. This mutation is the outcome of sharing the perspective of a predator in the form of an evil spirit or jaguar, etc. See Kohn 2007: 7; Lima 2000: 47-8; Viveiros de Castro 2012: 36.

the ill to then devour his or her body (Overing 1990: 608-9).[72] By chanting, the *ruwang* urged beings from other realms to enter the bodies of the ill to next defeat those causing the disease. We read: "The words of chant had the force for curing: through and in them the ruwang willed beings of other realms to enter the body of the patient in order to enter into a cannibalistic battle with beings causing disease" (Overing 1990: 609).

The above illustrates that shamans can enter the perspective of "others" not only in order to understand them but also to request (in actual fact "will") other beings to render assistance. This same proficiency allows shamans to be "induced", or to lead Amerindian warriors to be instilled with the powerful, predatory abilities of for instance the jaguar or anaconda. As a result of this, the shaman/warrior would become unbeatable in battle.

Curing and inducing the qualities of other beings implies entering the perspective of "others", and observing the world from their perspectives. Another meaningful role to be fulfilled by shamans comprises protecting and keeping the "cosmic balance". This task is especially important in relation to food which needs to be rid of its human-quality, or else its consumption would amount to cannibalism.[73] In addition to the act of dehumanizing food, hunting and eating also imply a reciprocal relationship with the Master of Food or the Master of the Game Animals (Descola 1996).

Eating is always cosmologically significant: "Humans and animals are immersed in a sociocosmic system in which the direction of predation and the production of kinship are in dispute" (Fausto 2007: 500). One can devour someone (cannibalism) or maintain the practice of eating together, referred to as commensality which then becomes a device for producing an identity within and across "species". Cannibalism has a strictly alimentary objective: the appropriation of the victim's animistic capacities. In that case, you eat it "raw". As to commensalism, the subject has to be made into food, which requires work (i.e., shamanic interference). This fact also implies that it needs to be cooked. "Its subjective condition must be neutralised through cooking" (Fausto 2007: 504).

[72] Each cultural aspect (e.g., hunting, gardening), having been lost due to a "Before time" animal, has a certain disease as its counterpart. These creatures now cause illnesses. For example: the aquatic creatures owned the phenomenon fire, before they lost it during the course of the "Before time" era. They now spread skin ailments, after being burned by the fire which the water creatures possessed. See Overing 1990: 613.

[73] See Århem 1996 for more information on the food taboos of the Makuna, a North Amazonian community. Århem correlates prey animals with women: a hunter has to seduce his prey. Setting off on hunting expeditions also encompasses reciprocal obligations, whereby the shaman not only has to return something to the "Owner spirits" but also remove human qualities from the prey. Similar expressions of belief have been encountered among the Yukaghirs, a small group of indigenous hunters residing in north-eastern Siberia (Willerlev 2007).

The process of dehumanizing is necessary for all beings endowed with subjectivity (i.e., those with a conscience) in order to turn these beings into proper food. This, however, does not imply that all plants and animals need to be de-humanized.[74] Even a differentiation within a family/genus is possible, for instance, as to certain monkeys or peccaries. For example, the Juruna people (Brazil, Tupian) differentiate between the white-lipped peccary and the collared peccary or between the night monkey and the capuchin monkey. The latter is considered an edible animal, whereas the night monkey is thought to be a spirit, and thus inedible (Lima 2000: 47-8). The hierarchy between animals with subjectivity has been referred to as the food chain's "cardinal index of agency" (Fausto 2007: 503). Various groups harbour discrepancies, but in general large predators are located at the top of this hierarchy, while plants and fish are positioned lower. Among the animals, carnivores are placed above herbivores. As a result, the procedures, or care, required in order to transform these animals/plants into food varies. When the balance of this "socio-cosmic system" is disturbed (i.e., food is not properly dehumanized and rules of reciprocity are broken) the Masters of the Animals will retaliate, causing disease or death to befall the Amerindians.

### *Nature and the intensity of subjectivity*

In the previous section, the "cardinal index of agency" is referred to as an index, or a scale, in order to quantify the subjectivity of food, e.g., plant or (game) animal. This scale is also relevant for all, human and non-human, beings who possess subjectivity whereby the "amount" and the "nature" of subjectivity of beings differs.

The nature of subjectivity has been described by means of: (a) the degrees of personhood/animacy (i.e., possessing the quality or condition of being alive or animate) and intentionality/agentivity (i.e., the quality or fact of being an agent), and (b) a notion of biological life being independent of social intelligence (Halbmayer 2012: 14; Hornborg 2015: 39-40, 43-4; Santos-Granero 2009: 9). The underlying idea is apparently that certain beings are conceived as "persons", with a soul/subjectivity, but without any capacity to act on their own. Therefore, they possess animacy, but no agency. Beings in the possession of animacy but without any intentionality require another agency (either human or non-human) in order to activate their agency (see under the sub-heading *The subjectivity of "things"*).

This distinction results in the following categories on the nature of subjectivity comprising: (a) beings with animacy and agency, (b) beings with animacy but without (active) agency, and (c) beings with no subjectivity e.g., an animal, plant or "thing". Categories (a) and (b) include beings with (potential) subjectivities i.e., points of view. As to these categories, agency represents the differentiating factor, but in which way?

[74] It has been argued that an agency is not merely humanized and personalized, but also non-personal, hereby constituting a notion of biological life independent of social intelligence. For instance, stones can contain expressions of agency and power, but are not personalized (Halbmayer 2012: 14).

Among the Kalapalo (Cariban, Brazil) not all beings are attributed the same kind of "powers" characterized by: (a) possessing particular types of communication skills, and (b) being able to act only upon beings of the same class or classes with lower degrees of animacy (Santos-Granero 2009: 9). The Achuar, Juruna and Kuna describe similar ideas regarding the hierarchical classes of animacy (Descola 1996: 375-6; Kohn 2007:13; Lima 2000: 47-8). For the Kuna (Chibchan), any communication between beings with subjectivity of a different status is not reciprocal (Kohn 2007). Beings with a higher hierarchical position can without any alternate action understand others positioned lower down in the hierarchy. For instance, Masters of Animal spirits comprehend humans. However, if a subjectivity wishes to understand someone who occupies a higher position in the hierarchy, it needs to enter a shamanic state, enabling it to traverse ontological boundaries (Kohn 2007: 13). This observation shows that, at least for a number of Amazonian peoples, communication with other subjectivities can only be established with a subjectivity located on the same or on a lower scale of agency. Any communication with a higher/stronger subjectivity is only possible under special conditions such as a ritual trance, a dream state, etc. (Santos-Granero 2009).

### *The subjectivity of "things"*

"Things" too can possess subjectivity (Hornborg 2015; Santos-Granero 2009; Henare et al. 2007). The category of "things" includes artefacts, images, songs, names, and designs as well as natural objects and phenomena (Santos-Granero 2009: 3). In addition, "Multiple ways of being a thing" have been distinguished, based on how they originate and the nature (or absence) of their subjectivity (Santos-Granero 2009: 8-9).

There are "subjective" and "subjectivized" objects. The former are conceived of as persons i.e., they possess souls and are agents. In contrast, the latter do own some kind of "soul substance", the quantity or quality of which impedes them from acting on their own. These "subjectivized" objects require the intervention of human agents in order to activate their agencies. We read: "Native Amazonians distinguish objects according to their use-value, opposing artefacts of daily use to those used in ceremonial contexts" (Santos-Granero 2009: 10). Which "things" are "subjective" or "subjectivized" differs among communities. Nevertheless, the fact that (certain) "things" possess subjectivity and that several even possess strong agencies seems to be a broadly shared notion, as is also documented for the "Taíno" of the Greater Antilles who worshipped *zemis,* three pointers and other idols (Breukel 2013; Mol 2007; Oliver 2005, 2009).

The subjectivity of "things" may also be relational, especially when an object itself has no agency. Their agencies can be activated either by intimate contact or shamanic intervention (Santos-Granero 2009: 14-6), thereby implying that they are conceived of as extensions of their Masters/Owners. On occasion, objects need to be de-subjectivized. Among certain Amazonian peoples (inalienable) objects have to be abandoned or killed (i.e., become de-subjectivized), when the owner passes away. If not, (part of) the soul of the deceased could

haunt the living. Other objects are handed down from generation to generation (Hornborg 2015: 45; Santos-Granero 2009).

Turning subjectivities into objects (referred to as "objectification", see Santos-Granero 2009: 16-9) can, for example, be carried out by: (a) producing artefacts through craftsmanship, (b) shamanic rituals, and (c) de-subjectification. Whenever artefacts are produced, they constitute the objective expression of their makers' knowledge, skills and effects and thus share their subjectivity. Therefore, these artefacts are frequently described as "children", or extensions of their creators (Hornborg 2015: 45, 48; Overing 1988; Rivière 1969). Shamans can, however, objectify powerful subjectivities, for instance, in order to produce powerful ritual objects. This procedure often involves shamanic chanting (Hill 2009; Santos-Granero 2009). Moreover, shamans can also de-subjectivize "things", hereby transforming them into merely (inanimate) objects.

The role of certain properties ascribed to artefactual assemblages should be reconsidered when generating any specific varieties of human social organisation (Hornborg 2015). This implies that any power asymmetries addressed in studies on political economy should enable the tracing of specific human-object relations (Hornborg 2015: 40). This reconsideration would result in artefacts being conceived as playing the role of powerful agents and would in turn be of significance when understanding socio-political organisations. In the field of archaeology, e.g., "prestige-good systems" are identified in which high-value goods appear to have circulated widely. In the Caribbean and Amazonia, such products have been identified in the distribution of: the green-stone amulet (Boomert 1987), feather headdresses (Basso 2011), the "Taíno" *zemis*/threepointer** (Mol 2007; Oliver 2005, 2009), shell beads and snuff trays (Hornborg 2015: 40). Archaeologists have not only attempted to reconstruct the emergence of these prestige-good systems but also to establish how the expanded circulation of subjectivized artefacts has generated new as well as more hierarchical forms of social organisation in prehistoric times (see also 1.1.1, 1.1.2).

Amerindians are thus part of a broad, cosmological web of social relations which include various human and non-human subjectivities. The concept to be addressed now concerns "mastery", or "ownership"', which is not restricted to humans and conceptualised differently when compared with our one-directional, hierarchical idea of "ownership". I regard mastery as a key concept for our comprehension of relationships extending across subjectivities.

### *Mastery or "ownership"*

The relationships between beings, both human and non-human, are often regarded as identical to relations between prey and predator. This observation is perhaps best illustrated by the following Arawakan saying: *hamáro kamungka turuwati* (lit.: everything [all things and creatures] has [its own] tiger [jaguar]). It signifies that everyone is afraid of someone (Viveiros de Castro 2012: 29). Being apparently equally embedded in Amerindian worldviews that everything has its own master, results either in a mode of relationship or in a schema of

mastery and ownership (Fausto 2008). This schema is not only intertwined with perspectivism but also embedded in the narratives, and therefore dealt with here.

Master, also referred to as "owner", is considered an important indigenous Amazonian category. Its reciprocal terms designate a mode of relationship that applies to humans, non-human beings and objects (Fausto 2008: 329).[75] The "Master"- concept involves both control and protection. Moreover, it defines a relation between subject and a resource whereby the Master is not only the mediator between subject and this resource but also the collective to which it belongs (Fausto 2008: 330).

To illustrate this concept of mastery or "ownership", an example from the narratives will now follow in which on occasion protagonists meet a Master, often a Master of a specific Animal, such as the Master of Peccary, or an Owner of "Things" (e.g., the Master of the Mountain or the Master of Water). In a certain Cariban narrative (Story no. 403), the protagonist hunter meets another man (i.e., wearing human clothes) with whom he sets off on a hunting trip. When this hunter hears parrots in the distance and wishes to chase them, his companion turns into a large parrot and hits him. Having now grasped what had happened, the hunter from then on only hunts parrots as a means of reprisal. He understood that he had in actual fact been accompanied by the Master of Parrots, who had forbidden him to chase parrots. This example indicates that the Master of Parrots mediates between the Amerindian huntsman and all parrots, the collective to which he belongs.

The "Master"-concept entails more than "merely" portraying that which, or whom, is owned. The Master/Owner contains the collectivity within himself, whereby the owner comprises a plural singularity. Therefore the owner/master is the form through which a plurality appears as a singularity to others, such as shamans. Usually, this Master/Owner concept manifests itself in the eyes of others in the form of a predator e.g., a jaguar, anaconda or harpy eagle (Fausto 2008: 334). In the above example in which a large parrot hits the huntsman, the Master appears to the hunter not only as a man but also as a large parrot i.e., as a singularity. He is indeed a plurality and depicts all parrots.[76]

A category entitled Master/Owner also implies an "owned" category which is best understood as either a pet or an adopted child. The relation between the Master/Owner and the "owned" is conceptualised as a form of adoption. The concrete schema as to this ownership relation has been described as *familiarizing predation* and converts predatory relations into an

[75] The term "ownership" can be problematic because, in Western discourse, this implies a mono-directional relationship between human beings and (often) "things". The Amerindian concept of mastery is not restricted to "human beings" or mono-directional, but more reciprocal. In the present study the term "master/mastery" is thus preferred over "owner/ownership".

[76] A shaman is in addition to being a chief is in fact the Master/Owner of a community who, when interacting with other Masters/Owners would, in the eyes of the community members, be a predator i.e., a jaguar.

asymmetric relation of control and protection conceptualised as a form of adoption (Fausto 2007; 2008: 330, 333).

The relation between Master/Owner and adopted/pet is not given but constituted. To the adopted, it is not merely a negative and inescapable restriction, but also a way of eliciting attention as well as generosity. For the owner, this relation not only involves prestige but also the responsibility of taking care of and of feeding. In the eyes of the adopted/pet, the owner is thus a protective father. However, in the eyes of others (especially humans), it is a predatory (often jaguar) affine (Fausto 2008: 334).

It is not only the Master/Owner who is double-faced, but the adopted/pet will also never entirely lose its wildness, and consequently never be tamed or domesticated. The reason for this: the adopted/pet still has its subjectivity, its own point of view. Therefore any relationship between the master and the adopted is not a given, but a continual process: "[Masters/Owners are] … forever on the verge of adopting the perspective of the others contained within themselves" (Fausto 2008: 342). This observation implies that the perspective of the adopted/pet could prevail over the opinion of the Master/Owner. It may also explain why pet animals receive treatment that could be described as both cruel and caring: the possibility of the dog's point of view to overhaul its Master's opinion.

### *Concluding remarks on perspectivism*

"Lowland Amerindian concepts and ways of perception are in significant ways more complex than generally assumed" (Halbmayer 2012: 12). This complexity refers to a conceptualisation of animals, environment, life and the world as encountered in Amerindian cosmologies.

In sum, according to the Amerindian worldview, all human and non-human beings share an inner quality, which is culture. Appearances can deceive because culture merely comprises outer clothing, and is always perceived ("seen") by another subject with his/her own eyes. Every creature has its own predator (e.g., jaguar) and its own prey (e.g., peccary). The schemata of familiarizing predation constitute the relation between Master/Owner and adopted/pet. The Master thus does not merely portray but indeed contains the multiplicity within itself, which others conceive of as a predator, often a jaguar. Only shamans can enter the perspective of another and "see" in order to observe with the eyes of the other how they see themselves i.e., enter the perspective of "jaguar" who sees itself as Amerindian. Therefore shamans can interact with Masters in order to protect the cosmic balance.

This section begins with the question: "What would the world look like if everybody displayed a human point of view?" A world in which you might lose your own opinion by being overpowered by a dominant point of view. Once again citing Viveiros de Castro, we read that this fear of *potential* danger almost always occurs: "This is precisely how the subjectivities [others with a point of view] that wander the forest are typically experienced by the Amerindians- they are usually almost-seen, communication is almost established, and the

result is always an almost-death" (Viveiros de Castro 2012: 37-8). This implies that Amerindians do not walk around in fear. Thus when spotting a deer, peccary or parrot they probably see potential food. However, it is only through interaction with these non-humans that it can be determined if they are indeed animals or rather beings dressed in animal clothes.

The theory of perspectivism foremost serves to improve any comprehending of the narratives, but it can also contribute to our understanding of iconographical display. In this respect, the following aspects need to be taken into consideration: (a) the unstable, transformational nature of body forms implies that any materialisation in clay or stone of a particular body form may disclose the intention to reverse or prevent the dangers of body transformation, and (b) the external, visible manifestation of bodies does not necessarily correspond to the inner essence of beings as portrayed by means of ceramic or stone figurines, but instead may depict transitory conditions (Barreto 2017: 422).

In pre-Columbian Amazonian figurines, the subjectivity of non-human beings is visualised by means of tridimensional perspectives in which either dual or multiple forms are revealed when viewing a figurine from different angles (Barreto 2017: 7-8). The fluidity of identity is also displayed in Saladoid iconography e.g., the two-faced *adornos* or the placement of an "alter-ego" on top of another anthropomorphic or zoomorphic *adorno* (Boomert 2001; Oudhuis 2008). These forms of display ostensibly support notions regarding the fluidity of identity as well as of animistic ideas. Nevertheless, the ontological grounds associated with perspectivism are difficult if not impossible to picture. The reason for this is that everyone sees the world through his or her own eyes. Through one's own eyes everyone is human. Therefore, depicting an "animal" from its own perspective would imply depicting a human being.

Perspectivism is a modality that can be included in a more general ontology involving anthropomorphism, whereby everything is placed in terms of human reference (Karadimas 2012: 49). The most problematic aspect of perspectivism is the absence of a "third eye": we cannot "see" through the eyes of a non-human being. Therefore depicting a non-human being (e.g., jaguar, bat) from its perspective is impossible. Displaying another creature with human-like traits is possible, whereby it concerns an ontology of anthropomorphism (Karadimas 2012: 29).

These considerations are of interest when studying iconography in the light of perspectivism. Could it be the intention to reverse or prevent any dangers as to transformation? What is implied if the essence of what is depicted does not necessarily have to correspond with its outer appearance?

## 3.5 Musing the methodology

Having dealt with the theoretical and methodological background, two issues are to be considered. In the following paragraphs, the "status" of the narratives is addressed. Once dynamic accounts, they are now embodied in static, translated and written sources. Another deliberation encompasses the discrepancy between the use of narratives originating from contemporary mainland peoples in order to conceptualise Saladoid insular iconography. A discussion on considerations and their implications follows.

### 3.5.1 Lost dynamics

"Making special"-behaviour provides us with a unifying context of both the act of storytelling and iconography (see 3.1). It explains why and how narratives contribute to a contextualisation as well as to an understanding (i.e., conceptualisation) of *symbolism**. The narratives included in this research are written and translated versions of what once were orally transmitted, dynamic accounts.

The appropriateness of applying translated and written sources highly depends on the set goals and purposes of their usage. It is naive to expect that oral traditions should coincide with archaeological observations. The present research does not intend to discuss the subject of historical accuracy. Moreover, it does not propose that the content and structure of the narratives did not transform. They are considered "mirrors" of Amerindian worldviews because the narratological worlds are, and were, built on other worlds at hand. As animal personages are contextualised within these narratives, they serve the present study which also discusses the attributes and the contexts of these personages and with whom or what they are associated. Concerned with "*meaning**", the goal of this research is to conceptualise zoomorphic imagery and therefore not to draw a direct analogy between specific narratives and imagery.

#### *From oral to written accounts*

Although this investigation builds on oral traditions, written sources are also utilised. Writing down oral narratives can lead to important information (e.g., the body language) which is lost, as was the case when these stories were performed and as to the interaction between the narrator and his/her public (Thompson 1946: 5). Often a narrative develops during and by means of this interaction between the narrator and the audience (Basso 1990; Gazin-Schwartz & Holtorf 1999; Honti 1975; Vansina 1985). Writing down narratives causes the record to become and remain static. This record can therefore only be studied from a fixed, non-dynamic perspective, rather than by means of the dynamic event the narrative formed when told/performed.

When the oral traditions were written down, not only was information lost concerning the act of storytelling, an interlingual translation (or translation proper) took place, too. Any (interlingual) translation also means the loss of information because one language cannot be replaced with another, considering that not every word has the same meaning as the translated word. A worldview lies hidden within a language and one is bound by language

and/or vocabulary, implying that "language is a guide to social reality" (Sapir 1926). A translation involves far more than replacing lexical and grammatical elements. It is therefore vital to possess a sound comprehensive knowledge of the language and culture, hereby understanding, for instance, the applied idioms and metaphor (Bassnett-McGuire 1991: 13-38).

Insufficient attention paid to details of alien ontologies or on versions of the world can lead to misunderstanding metaphor and logic. The reason for this is that if we wish to grasp what the narrator is saying we should be aware that misunderstanding and confusion are not (only) the outcome of "the poetic mind at work creating obscurity", but by and large a result of a difference in basic metaphysical principles i.e., premises as to what we assume the world is (Overing 1990: 610).

The majority of the tales dealt with here were written down by long-time residents among the indigenous peoples. They spoke the native languages and had acquired a profound understanding of the Amerindian culture. Local translators and guides were involved for example if any interpretation was required. The latter procedure cannot be proven, nor is it suggested, regarding all narratives. Therefore a loss of metaphors and/or a misconceiving can be assumed. Adding numerous narratives, from various sources and affiliations, also (partly) contributes to overcoming any biases resulting from the individual collectors of these stories. This is all the more the case here as this research focuses neither on individual narratives nor on those belonging to any specific Amerindian culture. This study aims at establishing an overall shared conceptualisation of "animal imagery" through an analysis of animal personages as well as their ascribed attributes and roles.

Another countermeasure directed against any misinterpretation of indigenous symbolism and metaphors includes not only anthropological theories on Amerindian ontologies (i.e., theory of perspectivism, concept of mastery) regarding the interpretation of the narratives but also the examination of the (zoomorphic) *signs** within the context of the Amerindian ontologies and worldviews (see 3.4.2).

### 3.5.2 Through time and place

Oral traditions contain messages transmitted beyond the generations from which they arose. Nonetheless, narratives were and are also dynamic accounts, which have passed through a continual process of adapting as well as discarding elements. Built on worlds at hand, tales transmute as "other worlds" change. Cultures were and remain dynamic while dismissing and adopting ideas, beliefs and customs. Certain events have an enormous impact, for instance, the European invasion and the introduction of African slaves. They comprise in addition to their on occasion political (or religious) assignments, their own worldviews, sign systems and narratives, resulting in a dialectic between varied cultures, all influencing each other, to an unequal degree.

Certain scholars would argue that, when the impact of the present is assessed, no message at all from the past remains (Beidelman 1970: 74-9). If this is the case, how then can we explain any social continuities? Moreover, where would social imagination encounter the ideas on which to base inventions? At any rate, the Western and African influences on Amerindian folklore are evident (Thompson 1946). Although stemming from another reference system (i.e., Western and/or African), these "alien" traits can and have altered indigenous messages subsequently to become part of the Caribbean system.

That gives rise to the following question: can any written narratives, documented mainly during the 20th century, serve to better understand the Saladoid zoomorphic imagery? If indeed the case, it is only feasible if we accept that throughout the aforementioned processes of alterity a certain amount of continuity remains. Even when in-coming (foreign) ideas, beliefs and motifs are introduced, they are not only included but also combined with existing motifs and beliefs, causing indigenous worldviews and narratives to be altered. However, being built on worlds at hand, this was and remains a gradual, conscious transformation comprising the inclusion, exclusion and even the abandoning of elements. Accepting these premises implies that studying the (stable) motifs, associations and attributes related to animal personages can indeed support our understanding of these creatures as iconographical features.

This research incorporates many narratives provided with a high degree of variation as to linguistic provenance. Thus, independent of any linguistic affiliation, similarities in motifs, ascribed roles and attributes can be established. Associations shared by a large number of South American cultures are also the most likely to have persisted throughout time and place. Archaeology shows continuity in zoomorphic iconography: the same animal-shaped features occur throughout the core are of this study, including mainland and islands contexts. This consistent existence in the archaeological records is also persistent throughout time, from the early Saladoid up to the "Taíno" era (*c.*800/200 BCE up to 1492 CE). As these zoomorphic depictions have remained reasonably stabilised, these animals would probably also have been, and remained, part of Amerindian stories.

Though tempting, applying certain narratives when interpreting specific iconographical features is not the purpose of this research.[77] The premise here is not that the same narratives are told in Amazonia during the 20th century as they were amongst the Early Ceramic Age

[77] Anthropological studies reveal the importance and the usefulness of this type of study when applying narratives in order to understand iconography. This procedure is especially fruitful among living Amerindians and the complex iconographical constructions that combine various identifiable elements. See the research carried out among the Mariña Amerindians, especially an analysis of musical instruments made of deer skulls (Karadimas 2012), on the four monkeys constellation (Karadimas 1999, 2015: 22-6) and on identifying the wasp, tarantula and stingray iconography and their interpretations (Karadimas 1999, 2016). Archaeologists use mainland narratives in order to interpret specific iconographical findings, a process that has even seen several scholars verify myths through archaeology (Fewkes 1903; Godo 2005; Piggot 1941; Waldron 2010).

peoples populating the insular Caribbean. The premise here is: the conceptualisation of animals by the Amerindians remains fairly stable throughout time, even if one migrates to the islands. Narratives serve as a mirror of this conceptualisation of zoomorphic signs. Therefore studying the attributes, roles, contexts and associations of animal personages encountered in folklore not only contributes to our understanding of these animals as iconographical *signs** but also to better grasping the reason why certain creatures are depicted more often than others.

As the main interest of this study lies in the stable elements (e.g., motifs, ascribed attributes, roles), it makes sense to incorporate stories originating from various linguistic and cultural communities forged by the Arawakan, Cariban, Warao and Tupian peoples who at least partly share a historical and cultural background. We read: "… tropical America was inhabited in very early times; … numerous tribes were frequently in movement in various directions; … demographic fluidity and the fusion of population created appropriate conditions for a very old-established syncretism, which preceded the differences observable between the groups; and that these differences reflect nothing or almost nothing of the archaic conditions but are in most cases secondary or derivative" (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 8-9; see also 2.2.1).

## 3.6 To round off

Certain key concepts underlying this study have now been discussed. The two-step methodology was outlined which firstly comprises the collecting, documenting and structuring of the narratives followed by applying perspectivism as a means to interpret.

This research deals with concepts of "*meaning**" and "*symbolism**", with a view to better grasp the "meaning" of the Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos*. These are not symbols in the sense that the signifier (the zoomorphic *adorno*) is not completely arbitrary to the signified, but are identified as a specific "animal". However, these *adornos* are also not pure icons, because although it is possible to identify what they depict, or signify, it is probably not (merely) that animal. Their meaning (i.e., all they evoke) is linked, but not identical, to the depicted "animal". Thus even when the first-order representation may be established (e.g., when identifying an *adorno* as a jaguar, bat, bird, etc.), the high-order representation (i.e., its meaning) will not yet have been established and is, therefore, the focus here.

Therefore, throughout this dissertation, the word "animal", including specific "animals" is often written between inverted commas in order to indicate a high-order representation. For instance, when an *adorno* is identified as a "bat" *adorno,* a bat may be depicted. Nevertheless, this *adorno* concerns a high-order and *not* a bat (animal), but a mental construct, i.e., an image of symbolic knowledge.

Narratives dealt with in this research are crucial to understanding zoomorphic *adornos,* for the stories themselves are and were an important means to share and transmit knowledge.

Moreover, they are a product of symbolic knowledge, as are *adornos.* Narratology lies at the basis of the analytical method and of the inherent database. This analysis adopts two of the three layers of a narratological analysis: fabula and story. The third layer, text, has been excluded as the present investigation utilises written, translated versions, and as it focuses on how the writer/storyteller has focussed on the narrative.

Perspectivism has been introduced as an interpretative model to better comprehend the narratives and roles the animal-like personages play here. This theory contributes to understanding how the Amerindians conceptualised humans and non-humans and illustrates the difficulties and limitations of the term, or concept of, "animal". Perhaps this term should be completely avoided, as it does not fit any indigenous conceptualisation. However, replacing it would be problematic because that would obscure the focus of the present research and estrange the Western readers. All the more so since this study deals with zoomorphic *adornos* and focuses on "animal" personages and connotations. However, caution when employing the term "animal" is essential, for that which is depicted, or acts, or is referred to in the narratives probably was not the "animal". The very nature and means of indigenous conceptualisation itself lie at the heart of this research. Therefore this term is either placed between inverted commas (i.e., "animal"), or the term "animal-like" is applied, as is the case when referring to specific animals (e.g., "Jaguar").

In order to enrich our understanding of how (and which) meaning is ascribed to zoomorphic motifs, the conceptualisation of animals as *signs*/symbols** is also approached from the perspective of their role, appearance and place in nature. This procedure further contributes to the holistic approach in which animals as signs/symbols are studied within a variety of contexts, i.e., in nature, narratives, archaeology/ iconography and cosmology.

# Chapter 4. The oral narratives of Amazonia. What 706 stories tell us

This chapter, combined with Chapters 5-7, forms the core of the present research. It introduces 706 narratives as a single and integral data set in order to establish an overall outline.

Chapter 4 contains an analysis of cultural phenomena established from the perspective of an individual who does not participate in the culture being studied (i.e., etic field research). Here the narratives are analysed by means of the (Western) narratological and structuralistic methods. This approach is chosen in order to: (a) identify any patterns or structures which enable a comparison as well as an analysis of the narratives, and (b) contribute to the clustering of the narratives based on either similarity in themes or shared motifs. For further details on the research methodology, see Chapter 3.

The basis of this chapter also serves as a background in order to investigate and interpret the clustered narratives central to this research. This procedure facilitates a more statistic approach which demonstrates that, for instance, certain motifs are related to specific actors.

The research question addressed here not only concerns which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals within the South American oral tradition but also with what or whom they are associated in the narratives, and in which context. Moreover, light is shed on the most common animal personages related to their ascribed roles as well as on the various

contexts (spatial and temporal) in which they act. By studying the various narrative functions the reasons for telling and listening to these narratives are also addressed.

Chapter 4 starts out with a number of general remarks on the 706 stories. In 4.1 (see below) their narrative functions and the linguistic affiliation are dealt with. This affiliation is also applied in order to illustrate their geographical distribution.

Following the set methodology, the narratives are then analysed according to the two narratological layers: fabula and story. The former layer comprises a series of logically and chronologically events caused or experienced by actors. These elements (actors, events, chronotope) are studied in 4.2, including their interrelatedness. The story-layer focuses more on how narratives are presented to an audience. This layer's elements, i.e., characterization and duration are addressed.

## 4.1 General remarks

Although the set methodology is based in the narratological layers, certain other qualifications are documented for each tale. Narrative functions (see 3.2) are documented in order to better understand why peoples tell stories. Next, linguistic affiliation is addressed. Although an exact geographical reference is usually absent, this affiliation does provide us with information not only on the storytelling peoples but also with an indication as to the regional context (see 1.3).

### 4.1.1 Narrative functions

The present research distinguishes five narrative functions which are all subdivided. Appendix C, Table C-2 provides us with the total number of narrative (sub-)functions as recorded for the 706 stories. Multiple narrative (sub-)functions can be encountered in each narrative. Table 4.1 delivers a visual presentation of the distribution of the various narrative functions, indicating the three dominant herein: (a) validating the world (40 percent; n=860), (b) encoding social behaviour (29 percent; n=633), and (c) informing (24 percent; n=512).

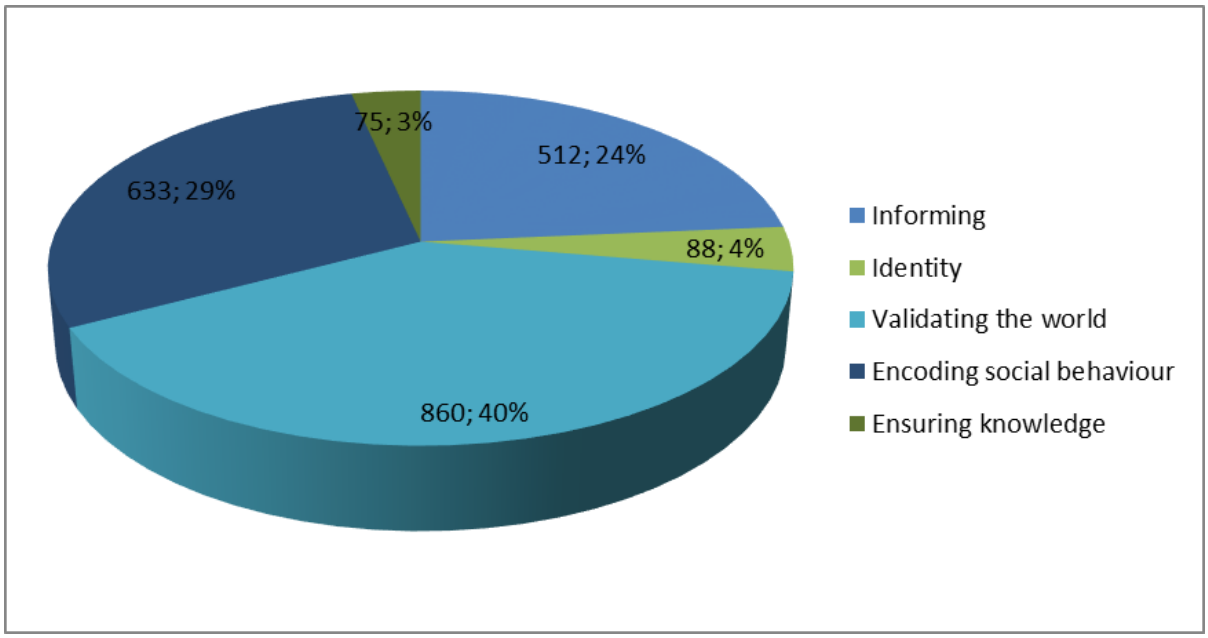
It is hereby shown that tales play an important part in understanding the world the Amerindians live in. As stated earlier (see 3.1.2), by creating new (story) worlds humans can not only influence and understand their world but also impose order to the otherwise disconnected events.

Encoding social behaviour prevails, too. By listening to narratives one becomes familiar with role orientation, shared norms and values. The underlying metaphors shape the skill of decision making. Needless to say, the act of storytelling, as well as the social context in which the act takes place, the act of "telling " itself, all, have a function pertaining to social cohesion.

Moreover, the total corpus of tales enables humans to combine elements as well as to understand how to (re)act in specific situations, both consciously and unconsciously (see also 3.1).

The narrative function informing endorses the importance of stories as a strategy to share and memorize information in the broadest sense. For instance, the sharing of individual and group experiences as well as more practical information on how to carry out certain activities e.g., hunting a certain animal, finding useful plants, building houses (see also 3.2).

**Table 4.1.** Distribution of narrative functions within the 706 stories (%).




### 4.1.2 Geographical and linguistic distribution

As discussed in Chapter 3, the linguistic affiliation is documented by means of language family and, when identified, the specific language. Geographical coordinates have been established for all these languages in order to plot the narratives (see also 3.3.1). Appendix C, Table C-3 lists the linguistic affiliation of all the recorded narratives (multiple language families have been recorded in certain cases e.g., Warao and Cariban versions). Table 4.2 presents an overview of the distribution of the various languages. For a visual presentation, see the map (Fig. 4.1, p. 109) of Central and South America indicating all documented languages for the narratives dealt with in this research.

**Table 4.2.** Linguistic affiliation of the narratives according to the language families (%).

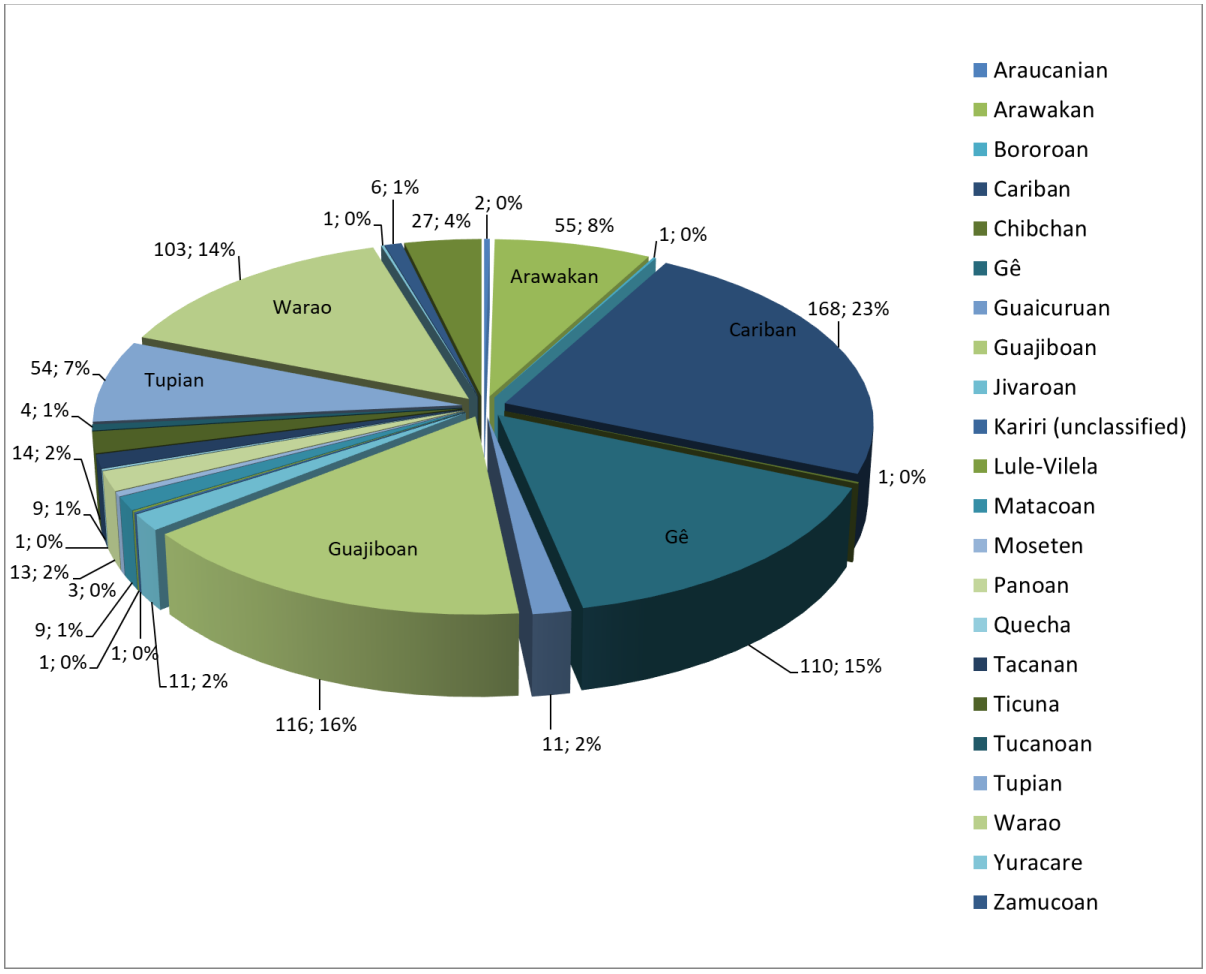



Fig. 4.1 illustrates the distribution of all the documented narratives referred to in the present research. As each language is only dotted once, a single dot can refer to a single as well as dozens of tales.[78] Close to 60 percent (n=419) of all narratives originate from the core area. Those not stemming from inside this core area, but from other parts of South America, are only included in order to indicate a wide distribution of motifs and themes (see 1.2.1). This approach explains the huge variety in language families, languages, the dominance of certain languages (i.e., core area) and the low number of other languages.

[78] Narratives with multiple records on language are encountered, for instance, when a Cariban as well as a Warao version of that same folktale exists. All in all, the 706 cases include 723 records on linguistic affiliations.

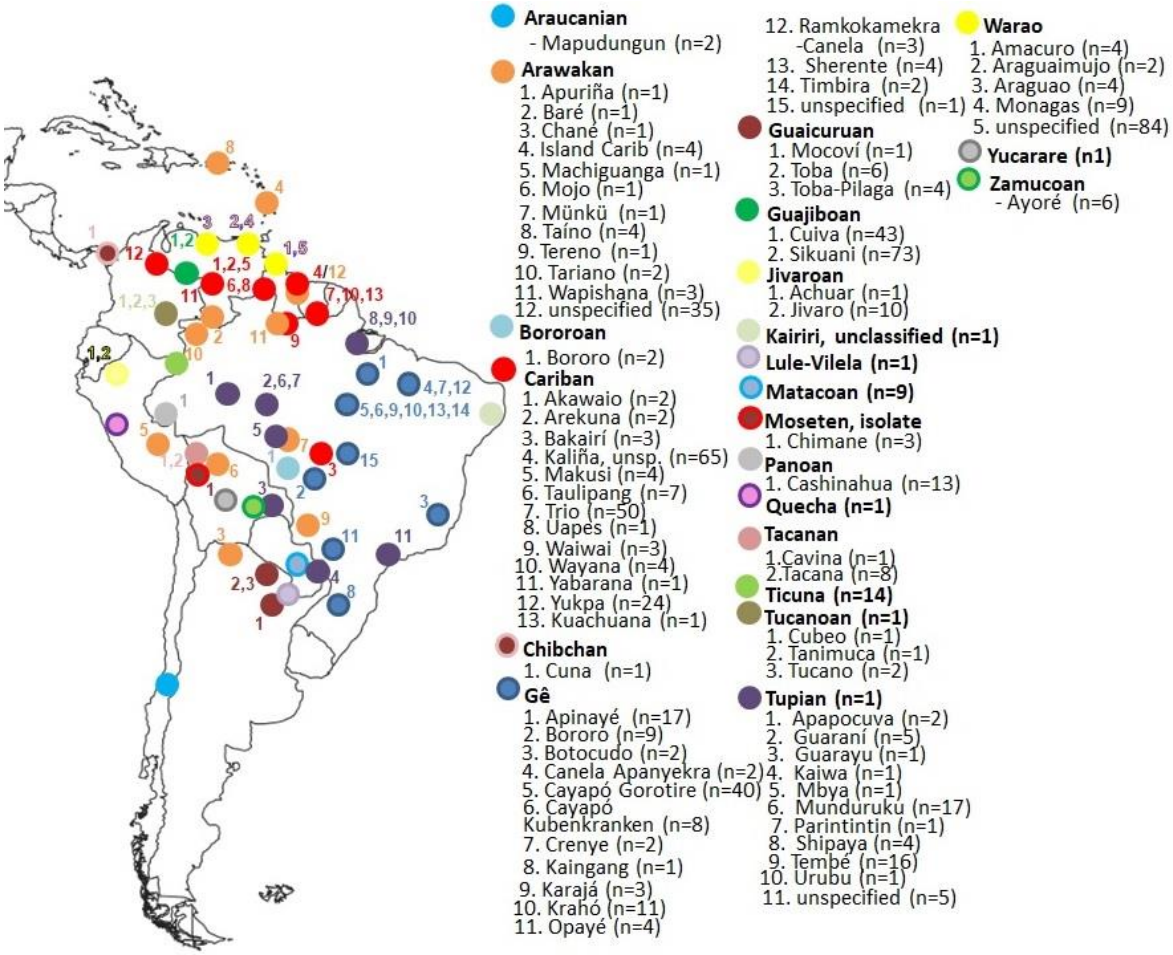



**Fig. 4.1.** Plot of all narratives (according to linguistic affiliation) in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

### 4.1.3 Final remarks

This section concerns the linguistic and geographical distribution of all narratives as well as the recorded narrative functions. Of the 706 cases, 60 percent stems from the core area. In total 81 languages, originating from 20 families, are dealt with. The Cariban, Guajiboan, Gê, and Warao are the most documented language families.

Here five types of narrative functions were examined. They serve to better comprehend the reason why the Amerindians told and tell these narratives. The most dominant functions are referred to as validating the world, followed by encoding social behaviour and informing. Ensuring knowledge and identity are the least common.

## 4.2 Fabula-layer: events, actors and settings

A fabula consists of a series of logically and chronologically related events either caused or experienced by actors. Here the fabula is researched according to the events/actions, actors and the chronotope of the narratives. These three elements are not only studied as separate phenomena but also interdependently. The reason for this is: their settings determine how a fabula is transformed into a "story".

Numerous motifs comprise direct descriptions of (major) events. Another way of viewing events is to look into main events, such as a quest (4.2.1). Next, the (animal) actors are described following the actantial model of Greimas (1987), to be succeeded by a description of the chronotope, i.e., the setting in space (forest, village, sky world, etc.) and time (day, night, sunset, etc.) in which the narrative unfolds and in which the actors and action are positioned. The final section (4.2.5) interrelates all the elements encountered in the fabula-layer.

### 4.2.1 Events: motifs and main events

#### *Motifs as descriptions of major events*

The narratives are categorised according to their motifs, while based on the methodology developed by Thompson and Wilbert (Thompson 1934; Wilbert 1974; Wilbert & Simoneau 1970, 1978, 1991, 1992; see 3.3.1). Certain motifs comprise a direct description of the (major) events within a particular narrative (e.g., A 541: a culture hero teaches arts and crafts). In total, almost 2,000 motifs were recorded for the 706 cases analysed for the present research. Here, in 4.2.1, the focus lies on motifs describing actions/events.

Table 4.3 includes the "Top 15" which lists motifs that either describe or announce an event/action. In general it becomes apparent that these events are universal themes directly related to the narrative functions: validating the world (motifs with Nos. 2 and 11 as mentioned in Table 4.3), encoding social behaviour (motifs with Nos. 3, 10 and 14), and establishing group and personal identity (motif No. 6). The fact that the event "transformations" is positioned at No. 1 here is to be expected because a fluid identity forms the basis of the Amerindian worldview. The motifs described as quests (No. 5), Tasks (No. 7), Journey to the other world (No. 9), Escapes and captures (No. 8) and Pursuits (No. 15) concern universal events on which most tales are built.

**Table 4.3.** "Top 15" of events/actions described according to motifs.

| | Description of motifs | Motif identification (letter+number) | Motif in X narratives |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Transformations (all variations) | D 90-800 | 586 |
| 2 | Origin of world and all in it (incl. animal traits and habits) | A-diverse | 504 |
| 3 | Deeds punished and punishments | Q 200-600 | 471 |
| 4 | Murder/death | B/C/D/F/G/ H/K/N/Q/S/T | 436 |
| 5 | "Quests" (for missing persons, objects etc.) | H 1200-1400 | 236 |
| 6 | Marriage (incl. offspring from marriage) | A/B/F/H/T A753.1.4/736.1.4; B600-655; F420.6.1/441.6.1;H301/310/382; T111-311 | 183 |
| 7 | Tasks (stealing, cutting trees, capturing animals etc.) | H 1010-1200 | 164 |
| 8 | Escapes and captures | K 500-800 | 159* |
| 9 | Journey to other world | F 10/11.3/30/62.1/ 80/92/101/112/117/127 | 106 |
| 10 | Thefts | A/D/F/H/K A1415.02;D657/2087; F357.+.; H1151.+.; K300/331/341.2.2/ 420/437/1643.+. | 99 |
| 11 | Universal calamities (flood/deluge/ fire) | A 1000-1010 | 77 |
| 12 | Man, woman hunting or lost has adventures | N 771.+. / 785 | 57 |
| 13 | Valuable secrets learned | N 440 | 56 |
| 14 | Punishment for breaking taboo | C 900-999 | 56 |
| 15 | Pursuits | C/E/F/R C986.1; E261.1; F402.1.10; R260 | 38 |

**Escapes 91x; Captures 58x*

### *Main events as predefined categories of actions*

Although numerous motifs provide an insight into the events or actions encountered, the narratives are also documented by means of predefined categories referred to as "main events" (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). The main event concerns: (a) the central point within the narrative, (b) the basis of all the other events, and (c) potentially the "quest" for a specific object. Sub-events could comprise pursuits, escapes, marriages, etc. Nonetheless, these main events do not exclude each other. For, in a single tale, more than

one (main) event can take place and perhaps even more records concerning a single main event, after being sub-divided. These events are documented in relation to the role of the animal actor (if any), and the setting in space and time. For instance, an abduction is related to the jaguar, which plays the role of an opponent within a forest setting. The present section provides an overview of these main events as well as a number of general remarks.

Based on the 706 stories, initially twelve events were differentiated to be subsequently categorised into the following main sections:

1. Quest for certain persons or objects
2. Rescue
   - of a missing family
   - after an abduction
   - warning leading to an escape
   - restoring order (e.g., repainting after the sky had fallen)
3. Truth finding
4. Contest
   - of endurance
   - of speed
   - of strength
5. Travelling, epic journey
6. Abduction of a person/animal
7. Deception.

The two most common main events, quests and rescue, are both also listed in the "Top 15" of most common motifs, see Tables 4.4-4.6. The motif quests holds the fifth (n=236) position, but quest as a main event is the second most dominant (n=81). The "Top 15" (see Table 4.3) does not include a category referred to as rescue. Nevertheless, the motif "escapes and captures", which occupies the eighth position (n=159) is intertwined with this main event. Both incidents are omnipresent in the cases studied within the scope of this research.

The third most common main event is referred to as deception (n=42). This theme is closely associated with trickster stories in which a personage acts clownishly/foolishly, breaks taboos, cheats and deceives others, etc. Motifs in the "Top 15" probably related to this main event, are for instance deeds punished, murder/death, thefts, and pursuits. Trickster tales are very common in Central and South America and very often directly linked to a specific personage such as the coyote (*Canis latrans*) of the Southwestern United States or the raven (e.g., in British Colombia). It may be added here that the trickster phenomenon is encountered across the globe (Abrams 1977; Reder & Morra 2010; William 1993). For all the main events interrelated with animal personages/roles, see 4.2.4.

**Table 4.4.** Main events recorded for the narratives.

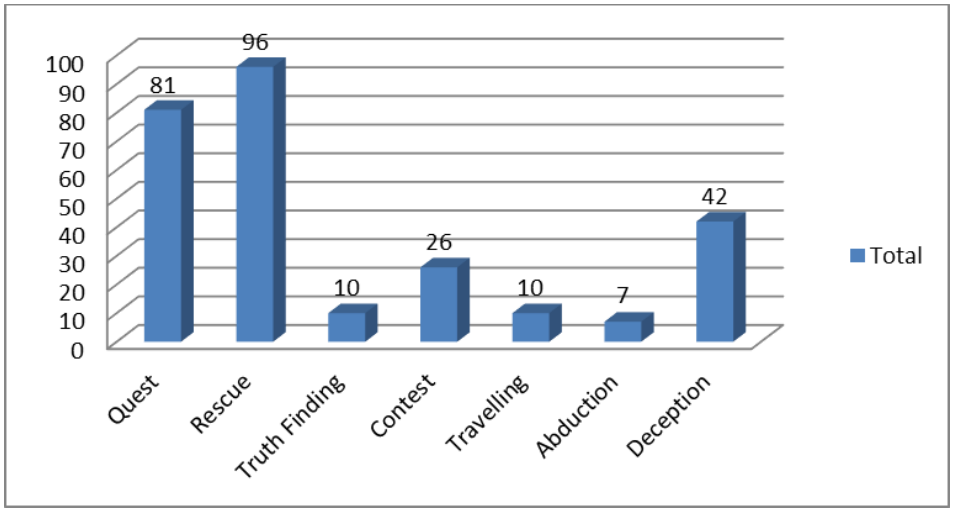



**Table 4.5.** Sub-division of the main event rescue (%).

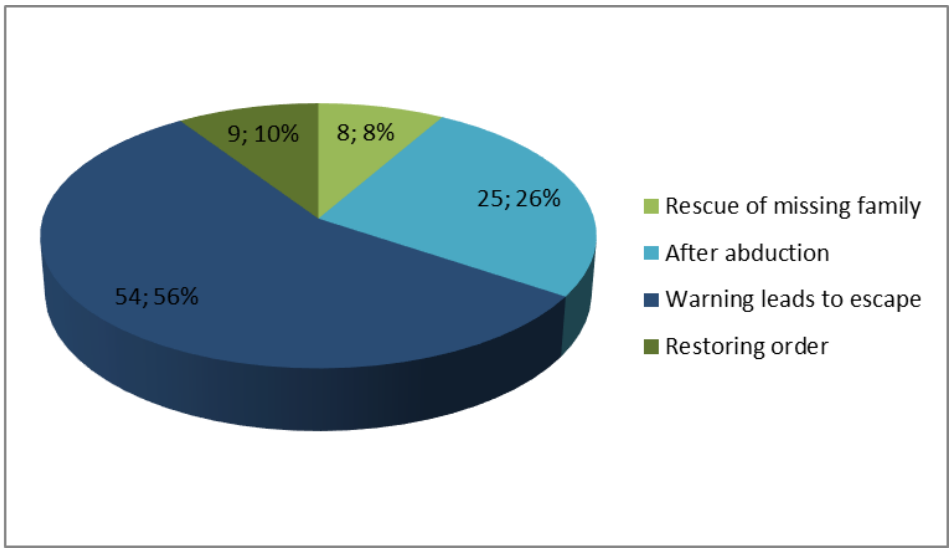
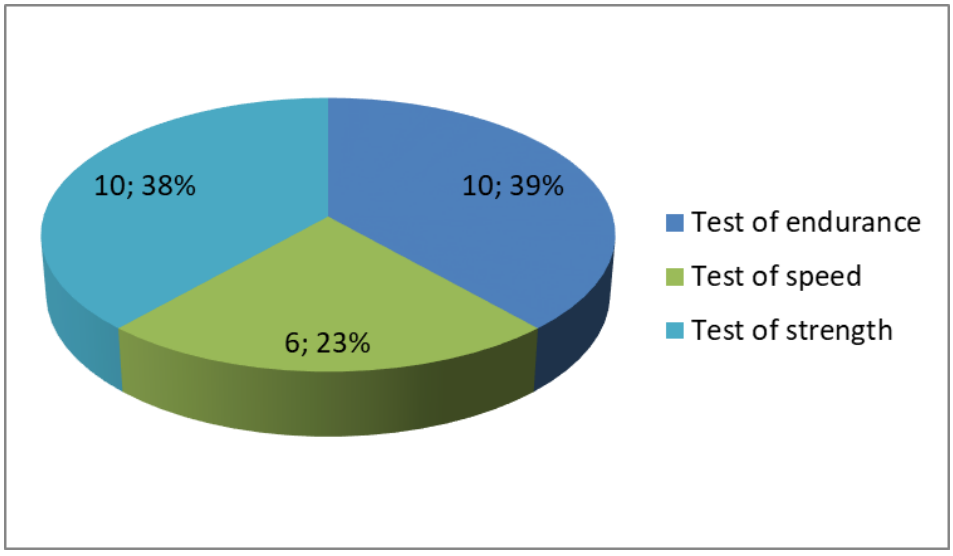



**Table 4.6.** Sub-division of the main event contest (%).

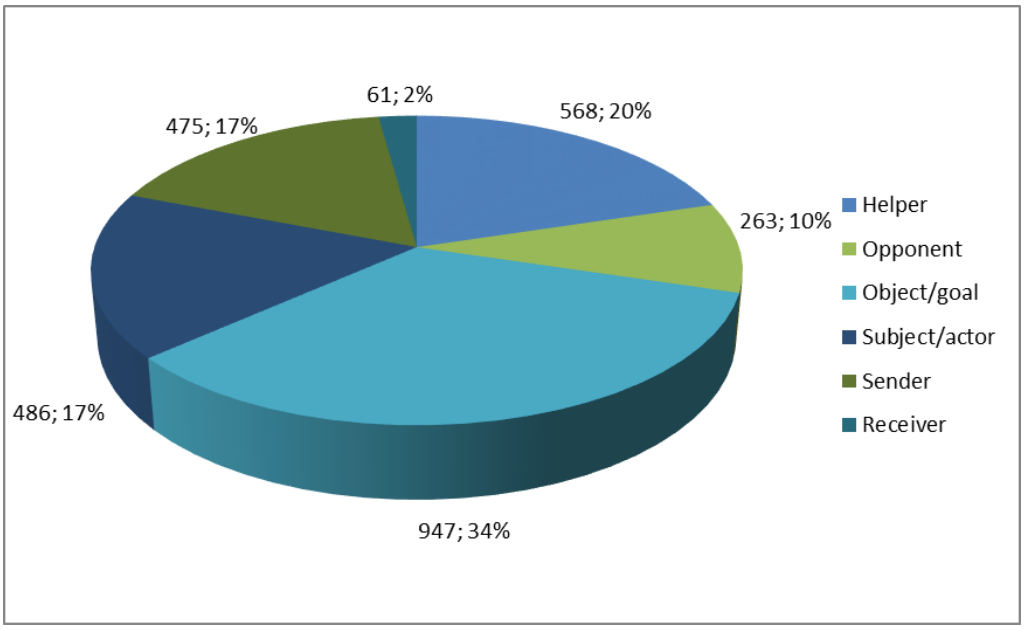


### 4.2.2 Actors (actantial model, Greimas)

Although the actantial model is very simplistic and (over)generalist, it fits the present research very well, considering the aim is here not to engage in a narratological study *pur sang* but to create a frame of reference for the archaeological interpretation of, for example, animal imagery. The role(s) ascribed to specific animal personages contain(s) certain implicit as well as explicit insights as to how these animals are perceived by members of indigenous ethnic groups who are either friend or foe.

Table 4.7 displays all the recorded roles for the animal actors mentioned in the narratives, illustrating not only that the role of helper dominates over opponent but also that the animal personages are more often object than subject. The role of receiver was least recorded, whereas the role of sender was repeatedly documented for the animal personage.

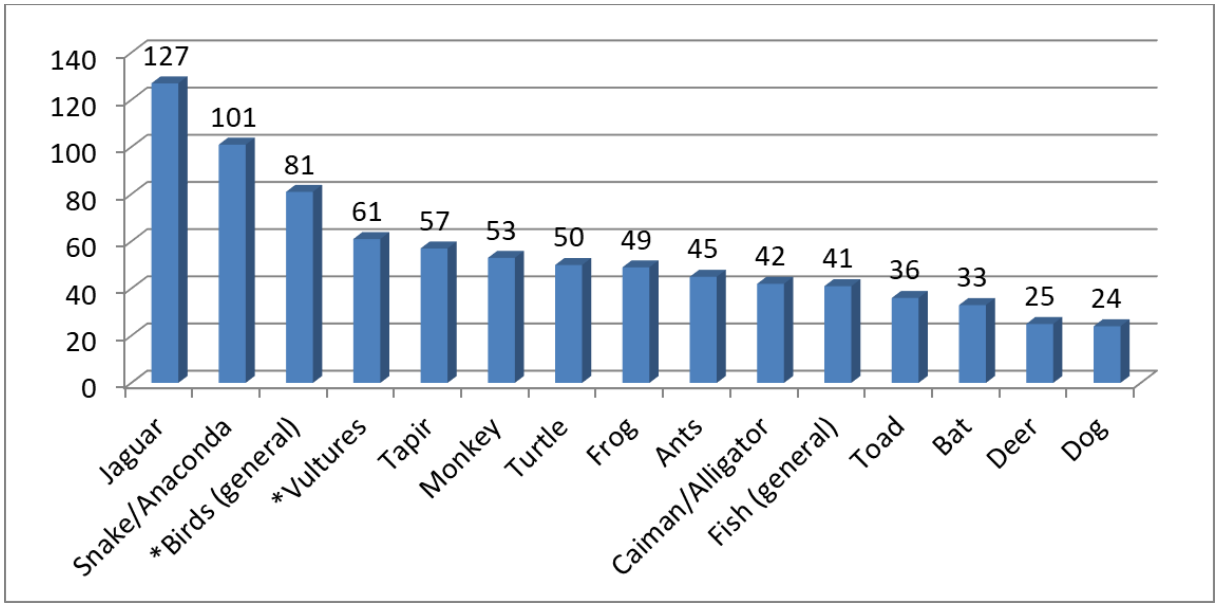
**Table 4.7.** General distribution of Greimas's actants.




#### *Animal actors, symbols and/or references in the narratives*

The analysis of the narratives focuses on the animal personages while including explicit as well as implicit references to animals (*signs*/symbols**). For instance, when an analogy is made: as strong as a jaguar. Or, for example, when parrot feathers are described as part of the Sun's headdress. Therefore not all references to animals imply a "role" for them within a specific narrative. As to instances whereby an animal fulfils a specific role, this has nevertheless been documented. Based on the 706 cases as many as 165 animals (including birds, fish, insects, etc.) have been recorded, resulting in 1640 records in total. Table 4.8 discloses the "Top 15" of most documented animals.

**Table 4.8.** The "Top 15" of most documented animals as encountered in the narratives.[79]




Nos. 1-3 tower high above the rest. No. 1, "Jaguar", greatly surpasses "Snake", whereas No. 3, "Birds (general)", form an ambiguous category. The reason for this is: it comprises an accumulation of unidentified, unspecified "birds" as well as general comments on "birds", which makes "Vultures" even more interesting as it is the most dominant of all specific "birds" (see note 79). Apparently, Table 4.8 reflects a preference towards certain animal personages (e.g., "Jaguar" occurs 5.3 times more often than "Dog").

### *Roles in relation to animal actor*

The next step is to look into the parts played by the various animal actors. Is there perhaps a correlation between an animal personage and its ascribed attributes and the role(s) it fulfils within the narrative?

Table 4.9 displays the fifteen animals along with their most ascribed roles. This table only provides us with a general comparison and is based on absolute numbers. Therefore, not surprisingly, the "Jaguar" scores high in all roles, being the most frequently documented animal personage, as indicated in Table 4.8. It must be taken into consideration that these roles are abstract and should not be confused with actual personages. It may be added here that a single personage can fulfil all these roles. Moreover, multiple actors can perform one and the same role within the same narrative.

[79] References to "Birds" occur most often, but references as to specific birds also exist of which the Vulture is observed most frequently. However, other specific birds are omitted from this "Top 15" in order to avoid any dominance of birds. Other specific birds to be listed the "Top 15" based on the number of occasions they occur are: the Birds of prey (n=57), Parrot-like birds (n=49), Nocturnal birds (n=40), Shorebirds and waders (n=34), the Woodpecker (n=31) and the Hummingbird (n=27). Needless to say, if all birds were to added up and placed in a single category, it would be the most dominant of all animal references.

**Table 4.9.** "Top 15" per actantial role.

| | Helper | Opponent | Sender | Receiver | Object/goal | Subject/actor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Birds (34/81) | Jaguar (51/127) | Jaguar (56/127) | Jaguar (8/127) | Jaguar (108/127) | Jaguar (76/127) |
| **2** | Jaguar (35/127) | Anaconda/ Snake (22/101) | Frog (27/49) | Birds (7/81) | Anaconda/ Snake (72/101) | Turtle (23/50) |
| **3** | Vulture (33/61) | Bat (13/33) | Vulture (27/61) | Turtle (4/50) | Tapir (43/57) | Anaconda/ Snake (23/101) |
| **4** | Anaconda/ Snake (26/101) | Vulture (13/61) | Birds (23/81) | Anaconda/ Snake (4/89) | Monkey (33/53) | Monkey (19/53) |
| **5** | Woodpecker (27/31) | Caiman (10/42) | Anaconda/ Snake (22/101) | Parrot-like (3/45) | Vulture (33/61) | Vulture (18/61) |
| **6** | Ant (25/45) | Monkey (10/53) | Tapir (20/57) | Monkey (3/52) | Caiman (31/42) | Frog (16/49) |
| **7** | Frog (19/49) | Birds (9/81) | Turtle (18/50) | Vulture (3/61) | Birds (26/81) | Tapir (15/57) |
| **8** | Hummingbird (17/27) | Owl (8/18) | Monkey (18/53) | Fox (2/16) | Peccary (27/33) | Birds (15/81) |
| **9** | Dog (17/24) | Fish (8/41) | Toad (16/36) | Opossum (2/19) | Frog (26/49) | Toad (14/36) |
| **10** | Parrot-like bird[80] (18/45) | Frog (8/49) | Fish (11/41) | Bat (2/33) | Bat (26/33) | Dog (13/24) |
| **11** | Monkey (15/53) | Mosquitoes (7/11) | Hummingbird (10/27) | Toad (2/36) | Fish (25/41) | Woodpecker (12/31) |
| **12** | Caiman (13/42) | Tapir (7/57) | Parrot-like bird (10/45) | Tapir (2/57) | Turtle (25/50) | Woodpecker (11/31) |
| **13** | Toad (12/36) | Turtle (6/50) | Tortoise (9/16) | Kiskadee (1/3) | Parrot-like (24/45) | Sloth (9/15) |
| **14** | Otter (10/19) | Ant (5/45) | Bat (9/33) | Duck (1/14)[81] | Toad (17/36) | Fox (9/16) |
| **15** | Fish (9/41) | Stingray/Otter (4/9; 19) | Deer (8/25) | Dog (1/24) | Deer (16/25) | Nightjar (9/22) |

In Table 4.9, the first number placed between square brackets concerns the total number of narratives in which the animal fulfils that specific role. The number following the slash refers

[80] The parrot-like birds recorded are: the ara, macaw, parrot, and parakeet (n=49 for 45 narratives).
[81] Other receivers with singular appearances are: woodpecker, lizard, heron, sloth, dog, spider, mosquito, eel, frog, wasp, otter, guinea pig, deer, ant, crow and gull.

to the total number of instances a certain animal has been documented. Therefore these numbers combined illustrate the relevance of that specific role for that specific animal personage. For instance, “Jaguar” holds the second position as a helper (i.e., Table 4.9 “Jaguar (35/127)”, as it occurs as a helper in 35 cases, but that is in 35 out of 127 occasions in which “Jaguar” is recorded. On the other hand, “Woodpecker” is encountered as a helper in 27 out of a total of 31 narratives.

For certain roles, a more detailed differentiation has been observed. For instance, the helper-role is further categorised in “provider of goods”, “animal helps with task”, etc. Table 4.9 reveals the total number of cases in which an animal fulfils a specific role. Therefore if in one narrative an animal is ascribed more than one category of (a) role(s), it has been scored as one.

### Helper versus opponent

Although it could be expected that helpers and opponents exclude one another, Table 4.9 shows that more than 50 percent of the most frequent helpers also appear in the “Top 15” of opponents. This is partly caused by the fact that the aforementioned Table is based on absolutes, and perhaps even because this dichotomy between helper and opponent, “good” versus “bad”, might not be that absolute. Nevertheless, when looking into the figures a number of general remarks can be distilled.

The “Jaguar” takes the role of opponent in 40 percent (n=51) of the cases this feline features, whereas in 28 percent (n=35) it plays the part of helper. “Bat” is present as an opponent in 39 percent (n=13) of the narratives it features in and is absent as a helper in the aforementioned “Top 15” (n=5; 15 percent). “Vulture”, on the other hand, has been ascribed the role of assistant in 54 percent (n=33) of the cases it appears in and in 21 percent (n=13) as an opponent. As to “Birds”, in 42 percent (n=34) helpers and opponents are encountered but in only 11 percent (n=9) of the narratives. “Ant” also occurs both as a helper and an opponent i.e., in 56 percent (n=25) as a helper and in 11 percent (n=5) as an opponent.

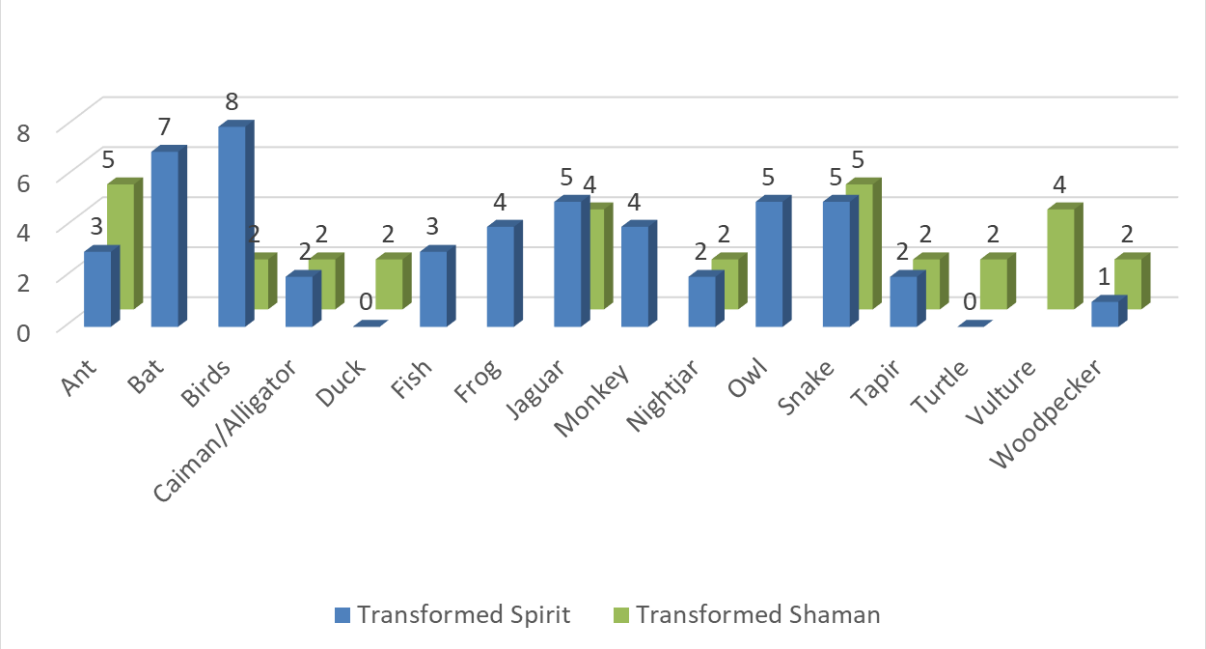
However, animals that “relatively” stand out as a helper are all absent in the “Top 15” list under opponent. The “Woodpecker” in 81 percent (n=25) is ascribed the role of helper, as are “Hummingbird” in 67 percent (n=18) and “Dog” in 71 percent (n=17). The same rings true when considering the animal personages that “relatively” catch the eye as opponents are: “Owl” 44 percent (n=8), and “Mosquito” 64 percent (n=7). Both are not mentioned in the “Top 15” list under helper.

### The secular versus “spirits” or shamans

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, which deal with the Amerindian worldviews and perspectives, humans and *significant other-than-human-persons** (e.g., animals, spirits) exist within a shared relational frame of interaction (see 2.3 and 3.4.2). That which is recorded as an “animal” personage could be the animal, animal-human or animal-spirit. In a number of

narratives it is explicit that a shaman transforms into an animal or, for instance, that a spirit "takes the form/wears the clothes" of an animal. This metamorphosis has been documented in relation to the animal personage, see Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10.** Animals explicitly described as (transformed) shamans and/or spirits.




It may be added here that the numbers as displayed in Table 4.10 should be studied in relation to: (a) the total number of occasions an animal has been recorded in the narratives, and (b) its role(s) and context within the narrative itself. Worth mentioning here, too, is the fact that "Bat", "Fish", "Frog" "Monkey", and "Owl" have merely been documented as transformed spirits.

Members of the category "Bat" are described as transformed spirits in seven out of 33 (21 percent) and as "Owl" in 5 out of eighteen cases (28 percent). "Fish", "Frog" and "Monkey" are less frequently described as spirits, when considered in relation to their respective total recurrences within the narratological data set. We encounter "Fish" in three out of 41 (7 percent), "Frog" in four out of 49 (8 percent) and "Monkey" 4 out of 53 (7.5 percent) tales.

The animal actors referred to as "Duck", "Turtle" and "Vulture" are only portrayed as (transformed) shamans. However, these totals are not very conclusive in absolutes nor are the relatives, in relation to the total number of records concerning these "animals". The category "Duck" includes a transformed shaman in two narratives out of a total of fourteen (14 percent). The reader should also keep in mind that these numbers only refer to records of "animals" explicitly described as a shaman/spirit. Several "animals" have been attributed with shaman-like qualities (e.g., "magic" curing, cursing).

### 4.2.3 Chronotope: a setting in place and time

In 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, the events and actors are the main focus point. The category setting forms the third element of the fabula-layer (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). Although all elements are intertwined and interdependent, they have been studied separately. As each personage and event is shaped within a context of time and space, part of their significance depends on this context.

The chronotope forms the background, as well as the context of an unfolding narrative and, must, therefore, be studied within its context. For a number of general remarks based on the documented dipolar oppositions, see sub-heading *The bias of dipolar oppositions*. For an in-depth analysis of the chronotope in relation to personages and events mentioned, see Chapters 5-7 (all sections under the sub-heading *"Animal" in the narratives*) and Appendix D for the full analysis of the stories.

#### *The bias of dipolar oppositions*

The most frequently applied method to research the setting within a narrative by means of a structuralistic approach comprise studying dipolar oppositions (e.g., inner/outer, light/dark). In theory, the number of oppositions to be investigated is infinite. However, as to the present research, the oppositions were determined beforehand in order to ensure that each and every narrative was equally documented, for the benefit of an overall comparison (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Fabula-layer*).

The downside of predefining oppositions is the fact that one is explicitly searching for them whereby overemphasising certain oppositions and underemphasising others is a possibility. I am well aware of the fact that this means of predefining creates a tunnel vision and in a sense enables a self-fulfilling prophecy. For instance, the opposition village versus forest is an opposition broadly accepted in academia as an inherent cultural opposition encountered within the study region (Caribbean and South America). Predefining village and forest as an opposition does indeed suggest the importance of this dichotomy.

However, what should be taken into consideration is: whose village or forest does it concern? For, in Amerindian cosmologies, humans and *significant other-than-human-persons** not only share a relational frame of reference but also uphold their own point of view. Animals and spirits, therefore, conceive their respective living quarters as a "village". All things categorised within a village or forest context is documented from the perspective of the human protagonist. This means of recording clearly limits the significance of this bipolar disposition. As to a narrative which unfolds in, for instance, a "Jaguar's village", this village setting is documented as a forest setting. The ambiguous, confusing element is: when interacting with "Jaguar" in its village, the context itself presumably transforms into "village" from an indigenous perspective. For analytic purposes, this very etic, i.e., Western-based, dichotomy serves to differentiate between events which either took place inside the village of the

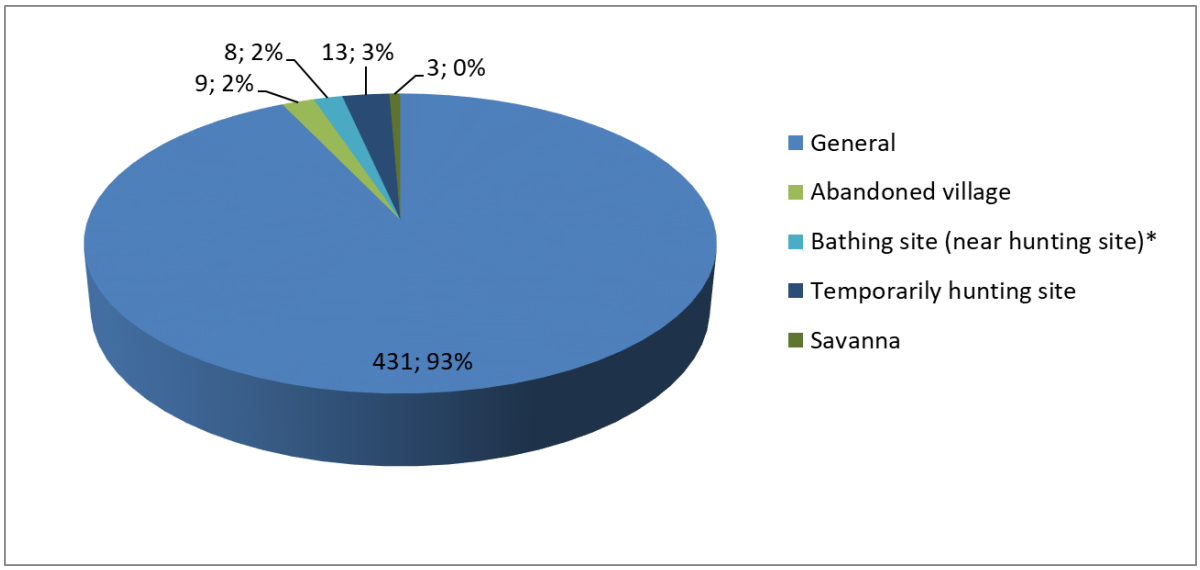
Amerindian protagonist or outside this context e.g., in a forest. Temporal hunting sites included in the present study are therefore part of the forest setting, too.

The predefined categories applied here comprise the spatial categories of village vs. forest and the temporal categories of day and night. Both the spatial and temporal categories are also subdivided. The subcategories for village and forest are entitled: (a) abandoned village, (b) bathing site, (c) temporary hunting site, (d) home garden/field, and (e) cemetery. Moreover, the subcategories for the provisional categories are sunrise and sunset.

### *The spatial setting: forest versus village*

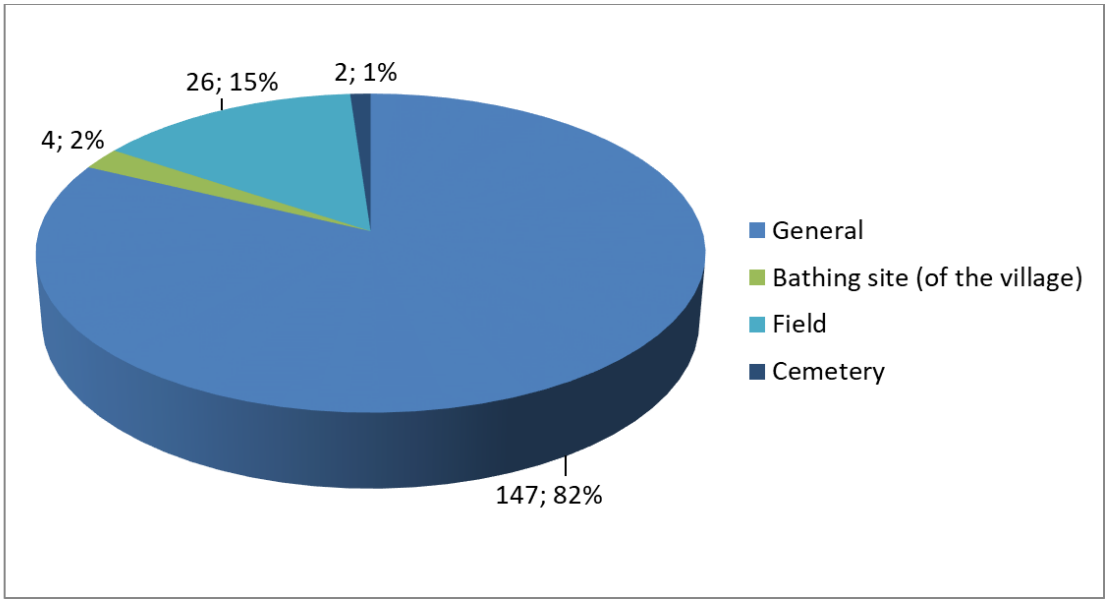
The forest (seen from the perspective of "humans") is associated with danger caused by predators, spirits (*significant other-than-human-persons**), whereas the village is associated with safety and nurture (see 2.3 and 3.4.2). If considered relevant, this dichotomy is documented for each and every acting animal personage. In total, of 643 records as many as 464 (72 percent) refer to a forest context and 179 (28 percent) to a village setting. For both settings sub-categories are established, see Tables. 4.11 and 4.12.

**Table 4.11.** Forest contexts as documented for the narratives.[82]




[82] Bathing sites frequented when hunting are differentiated from those that play a role in village life which are adjacent to and considered part of the village.

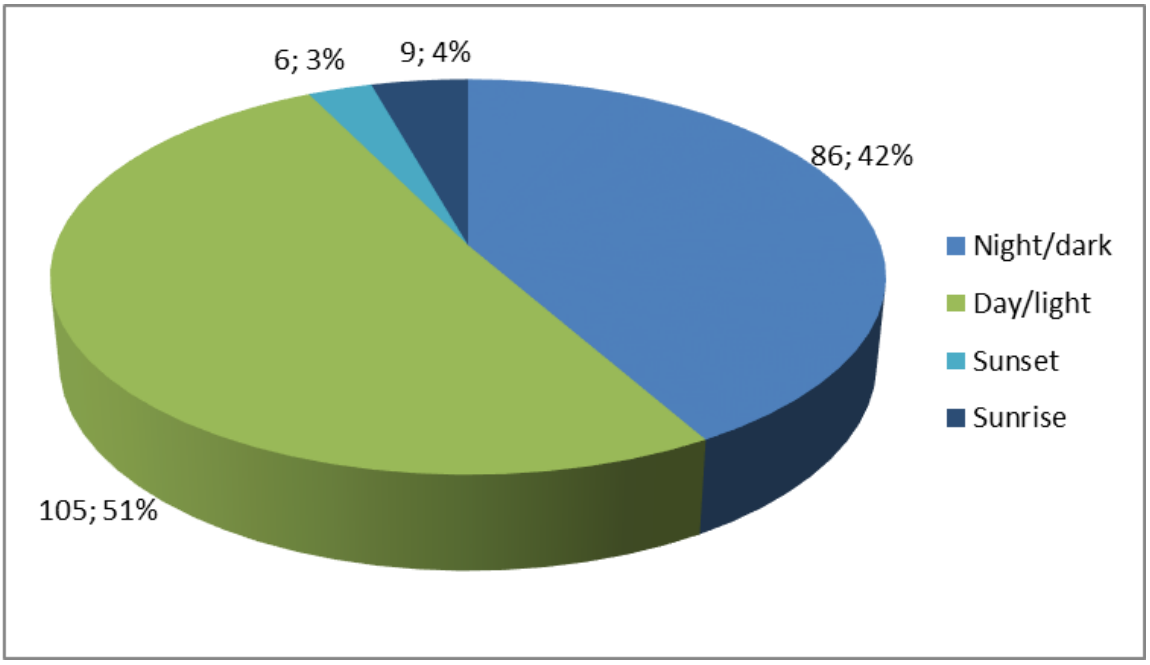
**Table 4.12**. Village contexts as documented for the narratives




### *The temporal setting: day versus night*

The opposition village versus forest resembles the opposition day versus night whereby the daytime is associated with the realm of humans and village life and considered to be (relatively) safe. On the other hand, the night which is associated with the realm of spirits and the forest is seen as dangerous. However, sunset and sunrise are also significant when referring to symbolism because of their liminal position: dusk and dawn are neither fully day nor night. Moreover, they can be considered gateways between the two separate realms in which humans and spirits reside. In Amerindian cultures, liminality and liminal positions are imbued with (ceremonial) symbolism.

**Table 4.13.** Distribution of the temporal settings.

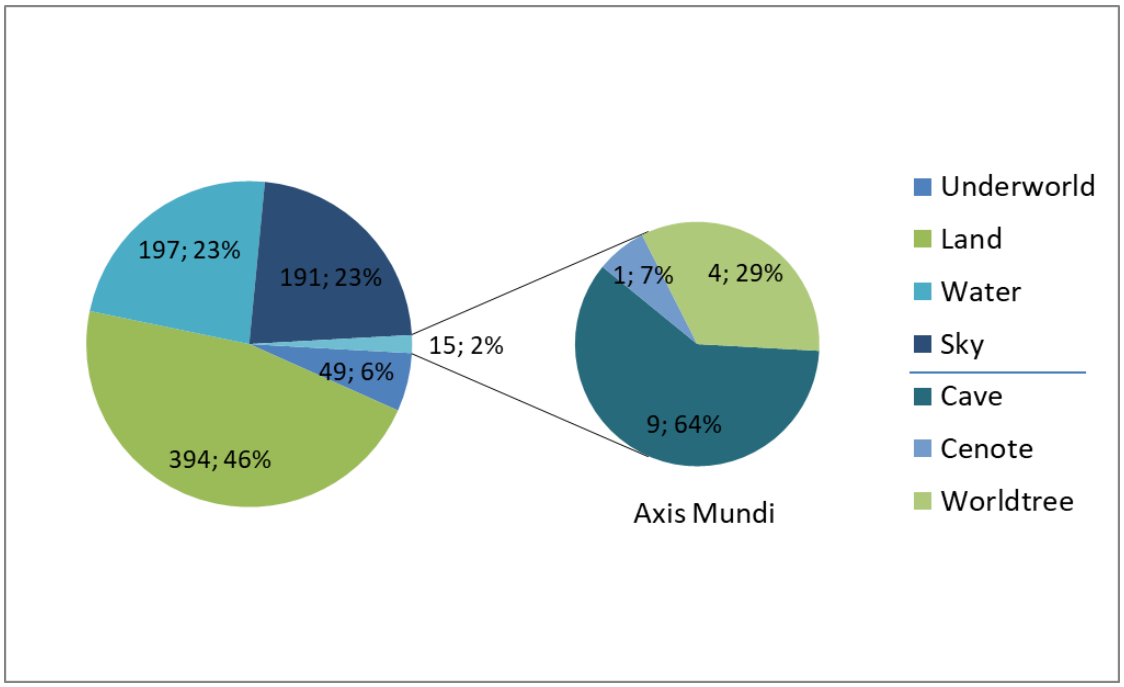


As Table 4.13 illustrates, narratives express only a slight preference towards a daytime temporal setting. Correlating this opposition in relation to the animal personages and the spatial setting is of interest. Is the phenomenon night significantly more associated with a forest and dangerous/malevolent creatures? And, does the liminal position of sunrise/sunset correspond with animals considered "liminal"? In Chapters 5-7, the animal personages are analysed not only by means of their various roles but also in relation to the setting of space and time. Each animal actor, or role, in relation to its temporal setting can then be compared to this general survey in order to determine if it is notably more associated with a certain setting (e.g., related to a daytime setting in considerably more, or less, than 51 percent of the narratives).

### *The setting in relation to cosmic layers*

Although the discussed oppositions provide us with certain insights regarding the setting of space and time within the narratives, the following categories have been predefined which are based on the Amerindian worldview and its cosmic layers: (a) land, water, sky, underworld, and (b) the *axis mundi* (a connection between the cosmic layers), e.g., cave (cenote), lake, world tree.

**Table 4.14.** Distribution of the cosmic layers.




The cosmic land-layer is most frequently encountered within the narratological context, followed by the water and sky-layers (see Table 4.14). The underworld occurs far less often. Caves linked to the *axis mundi* are the most common and are followed by the world tree.

As land is the realm of humans it is to be expected that the cosmic land-layer forms the preferred decor for any interaction. However, the significance of the cosmic layers can only

be revealed within a broader context, having been studied in relation to various other aspects of the chronotope, actor and actions.

### 4.2.4 Interrelated actors, actions and setting

The interrelatedness between the various elements of the fabula-layer is difficult to look into on a general level, as it is almost impossible to interpret the results. Certain aspects have nevertheless been highlighted here. They deal with: (a) the interrelatedness between the main events and the animal roles, and (b) the relatedness between animal roles with the setting in space (forest/village and the cosmic layer). In Chapters 5-7, this interrelatedness is analysed on the level of (smaller) clusters of narratives, to which the results of the present chapter are then compared in order to establish if any striking variations appear.

The results presented in Table 4.15 can be studied either based on the perspective of the main event, or that of the animal role. Apparently, when researched in the former manner, three of the aforementioned events (truth finding, travelling and abduction) are insufficiently dealt with.

Considering the interrelatedness between the main event and animal role (see Table 4.15), only the role of receiver (totalling 5) shows to be insignificant. The role helper is dominated by the main events rescue (50 percent) and quest (39 percent). The same pattern unrolls as to the opponent role for which the most dominant main event is once more rescue (39 percent), again followed by quest (27 percent).

**Table 4.15.** Interrelatedness between the main event and the role played by the "animal".

| | Helper | Opponent | Object/ goal | Subject/ actor | Sender | Receiver | *Total*[83] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Quest** | 34 | 12 | 20 | 17 | 10 | 1 | ***94*** |
| **Rescue** | 44 | 17 | 19 | 12 | 10 | 2 | ***104*** |
| **Truth Finding** | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | ***11*** |
| **Contest** | | 2 | 9 | 7 | 16 | | ***34*** |
| **Travelling** | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 4 | | ***10*** |
| **Abduction** | | 5 | 2 | | | | ***7*** |
| **Deception** | 4 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 9 | 2 | ***45*** |
| *Total* | ***88*** | ***44*** | ***60*** | ***58*** | ***50*** | ***5*** | |

The similar results for rescue and quest could be explained by the more epic nature of these main events. Little wonder they are also the only events in which all roles occur as do classical

[83] Discrepancy between these totals and the totals provided in Table 4.4, see p. 113 (displaying main events for all narratives) is caused by the fact that multiple actors in one narrative can be related to a single main event. For instance, when two animal actors are engaged in a contest with each other, they are counted as two records in Table 4.15 and only once in Table 4.4.

themes which perfectly fit the roles established by Greimas: "(rescuing) someone or something" leads to a narrative which features both a helper and an opponent. A clear objective, as well as a subject/actor striving towards this goal, can be observed here.

Regarding the two least recorded main events, in this case, truth finding and abduction, the former occurs most commonly in combination with the role of opponent which is followed by object/goal. Needless to say, the event of an abduction both encompasses an enemy (the abductor) and an object, which could either be the person abducted or the abductor (sought after in revenge). As to truth finding, not a single role sticks out. Both these main events are likely to occur in combination with one of the two dominant main events. Whenever someone has been abducted, a quest or rescue is likely to ensue. Truth finding would also presumably evolve into a quest.

As to the role the object/goal category plays, not only the main events quest (33 percent) and rescue (32 percent), but also contest (15 percent) and deception (12 percent) occur frequently. The role object/goal fulfils is also common both to a contest and a deception because an "animal"-actor is often the object (goal) of a contest. In addition, during a contest, the opponents often deceive one another.

As to the role subject/actor: the main events entitled deception (31 percent), quest (29 percent) and rescue (21 percent) are most dominant. The sender-role is linked to the main event entitled contest (32 percent). The probable reason for this is: a contest often starts, or is initiated by something an animal says or does, provoking another to enter a contest. Once again main events quest and rescue are related to this particular role (20 percent).

### *The roles in relation to the spatial context*

The roles, as well as the spatial context (village versus forest), are not interrelated and the variation is not significant (see Table 4.16).[84] For instance, within the forest context, in 21 percent of the documented roles, we observe an assistant, compared to 19 percent within the village context.

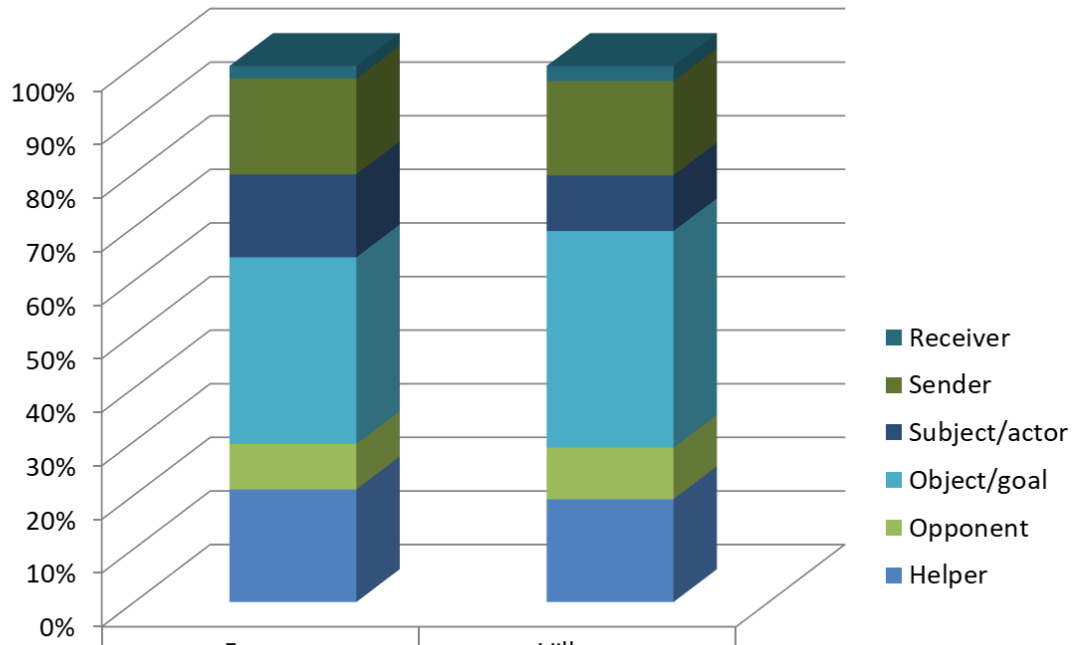
Even more surprisingly, whenever the roles are considered opposites (opponent vs. helper or object vs. subject) there is ostensibly little difference in relation to the spatial context. For instance, as much as 82 percent of all documented helpers appear within a forest context, compared to 78 percent of all the opponents. However, a minor discrepancy occurs as to the subject/actor-role vs. object/goal-role. Up to 86 percent of the recorded subject/actor elements appear within a forest context, compared to 78 percent of the object/goal elements. All in all, when investigating the variation in roles, the presupposed dichotomy between village and forest does not become apparent.

[84] $\chi^2(5) = 6.09$; $\rho = 0.30$ (not significant).

Contrary to the apparently absent interrelatedness between roles and the "village vs. forest" context, Table 4.16 does seem to indicate that the cosmic layers and roles are intertwined.[85] The underworld is dominated by the object/goal role, which could indicate that animals hide inside this cosmic layer, or perhaps even that animals originating from the underworld are hunted. The same goes for the dominance of the object/goal role in the water and a*xis mundi*-layers.

The elements subject/actor and object/goal feature most prominently in the land-layer. This observation was to be expected because the majority of animal personages are active within a forest/land setting. Animals associated with the sky-layer are more likely to serve as helpers, but also act as the object/goal. Again numerous protagonists travel in order to escape to the upper world. Birds are often caught (= object/goal) as their eggs, feathers and meat are desired.

**Table 4.16.** Distribution of roles in relation to the spatial context: village vs. forest.

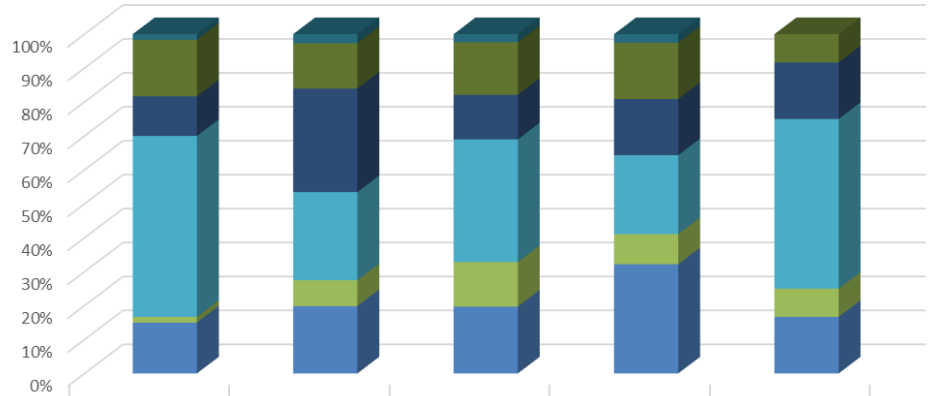



| | Forest | Village |
|---|---|---|
| Receiver | 24 | 7 |
| Sender | 181 | 44 |
| Subject/actor | 157 | 26 |
| Object/goal | 353 | 101 |
| Opponent | 86 | 24 |
| Helper | 213 | 48 |

[85] $\chi^2$ (23) = 74.58, $\rho < 0.01$ (significant). In this Chi-squared analysis, the category a*xis mundi* is omitted as it only consists of twelve records. This low number would obscure this statistic analysis (i.e., result in an expected value to fall below 1).

When these numbers (see Table 4.17) are examined from the perspective of the various roles it becomes evident that the helper is significantly more associated with the sky layer. The categories opponent, as well as object/goal, seem to be more related to water. The element subject/actor dominates the land-layer. The role of receiver is again insufficiently referred to albeit evenly distributed amongst the various cosmic layers.

**Table 4.17.** Interrelatedness between the "animal" roles and space (cosmic layers).




| | Underworld | Land | Water | Sky | Axis Mundi |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Receiver | 1 | 7 | 8 | 8 | |
| Sender | 10 | 35 | 52 | 52 | 1 |
| Subject/actor | 7 | 80 | 44 | 52 | 2 |
| Object/goal | 32 | 68 | 121 | 73 | 6 |
| Opponent | 1 | 20 | 44 | 28 | 1 |
| Helper | 9 | 52 | 66 | 101 | 2 |

Helper Opponent Object/goal Subject/actor Sender Receiver

### 4.2.5 Conclusions as to the fabula-layer

The fabula-layer considers the narratives to be a series of logically and chronologically related events either caused or experienced by actors. Its elements (actor, events, setting) are looked into both individually and interdependently because the arrangement of the abovementioned elements determine the way a "fabula" is transformed into a "story".

Central to the present study are the animal personages encountered in the narratives. By far the most frequently recorded "animal" is the jaguar. Snakes/anacondas, birds (in general), vultures, tapirs, monkeys, and turtles are repeatedly documented, too.

These "animal" actors are studied by means of their ascribed role(s) related to the context (both in space and time) in which they occur. The context of the narrative itself is crucial to the understanding of these roles. In each case they are shaped and interrelated: the protagonist strives for a specific goal while being assisted by some and opposed by others. Certain actors may profit, whereas others may not. Considering the six actants developed by Greimas (1987), the role object/goal dominates. A specific animal can be ascribed this role for

various reasons: it is being hunted or sought after in revenge. It can also be the object of one's desire (as a lover or (potential) spouse). Animals most often observed in this role are jaguars, snakes/anacondas and tapirs.

Three other common roles are: helper, subject/actor and sender. The helper role occurs twice as often as the less documented opponent-role. This indicates that, in general, animals regularly assist the protagonist to act as less frequently as an adversary. It has become apparent that certain "animals" are more likely to be depicted either as an opponent or a helper than others. In order to truly appreciate and soundly research any roles, the narratives themselves need to be investigated. This issue lies at the heart of Chapters 5-7.

Besides dealing with the ascribed role(s), it has also been documented which animal personages are clearly, and in a detailed manner, portrayed as (transformed) shamans and/or spirits. Owls and bats are more frequently described as (transformed) spirits, whereas ants, vultures, ducks and turtles are more often considered to portray shamans.

Events have been researched based both on (descriptive) motifs as well as on predefined categories of main events. The most common main events are: quest, rescue and deception (in which one tries to outsmart the other). However, murder and punishments are most dominant if any individual motifs are also taken into consideration. Other motifs deal with transformation, the origin of the world and all it consists of.

Any conclusions based on this general overview of events are in a way insignificant, as the events only subscribe what is widely accepted: the fact that, across the globe, stories include similar themes and describe similar events. This assessment is the outcome of the fact that: (a) the function of storytelling is universal in nature, and (b) the world created within a narrative is based upon worlds already at hand (see 3.1 and 3.2). It is perhaps far more interesting and meaningful to analyse the interrelatedness between animal actors/roles and the abovementioned events. Are certain animals indeed significantly more/less related to certain events? The present general overview forms the basic background to a more profound analysis of these events in relation to the actors and the context. For a further clustering of these narratives, see Chapters 5-7 and Appendix D.

The actors, as well as the events, are portrayed in a certain context (or chronotope) in space and time. The most recurrent setting in space comprises the cosmic land-layer and a forest setting as is to be expected because the land-layer is the domain of peoples. In addition, the relatively unsafe forest confronts the actors with ample opportunities, choices, problems and dangers. It is, therefore, the perfect setting for the five functions which storytelling encompasses. It may be added here that their internal time setting does not reveal a notable difference between day (light) and night (dark).

The interrelatedness between the various roles and the spatial contexts have also been analysed. This procedure disclosed no significant variation in any ascribed roles related to a forest or village context but did reveal an important variant whenever roles are related to the various cosmic layers. Hereby, when compared with other cosmic layers, the underworld seems to be attached to the role of object/goal, whereas the role of helper is apparently more linked to the sky world.

## 4.3 Story-layer: how the events are presented to the reader/listener

The story-layer concerns the concrete way in which events are presented to the reader/listener: the characterization of actors and the role time (duration) plays (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). Section 4.3 sets out to study the story-layer, taking the total dataset consisting of 706 narratives into consideration.

The way the animals are typified is the main focus of 4.3.1. This observation is succeeded by the second element of a narrative, i.e., time or duration and can be seen as an instrument with which to emphasize certain events/action and to deemphasize others, either by means of: (a) accelerating the course of events within a narrative, or (b) effectuating the complete opposite by lengthening the time span of a narration by way of describing (simple) events in great detail.

### 4.3.1 Characterization: the way the animals are introduced

Certain things are just not worth telling, as they are already both obvious and clear to the audience. A bird has wings and can fly. A jaguar has four legs and a tail. Therefore, matters made explicit or kept implicit provide us with a clue as to how an animal personage is perceived. A jaguar clearly has impressive claws and fangs. Nonetheless, these traits are emphasized whenever specifically mentioned by the storyteller.[86] Of course, everything presented in an explicit fashion is subsequently much easier recognised by a non-native researcher, contrary to the case whereby elements considered common or shared knowledge are omitted.

It has been established (see 3.1) that not only various types of knowledge exist, of which "symbolic knowledge" is one, but also that they are all interrelated and applied to make sense of the world. Moreover, they explain how *symbols** are conceptualised and therefore "understood" by humans (see 3.1.2). The explicit characterization of animals provides us with a direct link to their ascribed attributes.

[86] The animal personage includes the animal-spirit and the animal-human. The reason for this: physical and behavioural attributes are on occasion provided. For instance, the Jaguar-man dons a necklace consisting of jaguar teeth, or the Vulture-man owns a dirty black hammock, etc. For a more in-depth discussion on this subject, see 3.4.2.

The following types of characterization are established: (a) a direct mode whereby the storyteller describes each animal (or its aspects), (b) an indirect mode whereby no description is given; hereby the reader/listener thus only becomes familiar with the animal by means of its actions and role within the narrative, and (c) an analogous mode of characterization through a description (e.g., as fierce as X; a head resembling Y).

**Table 4.18.** Distribution of the modes of characterization.

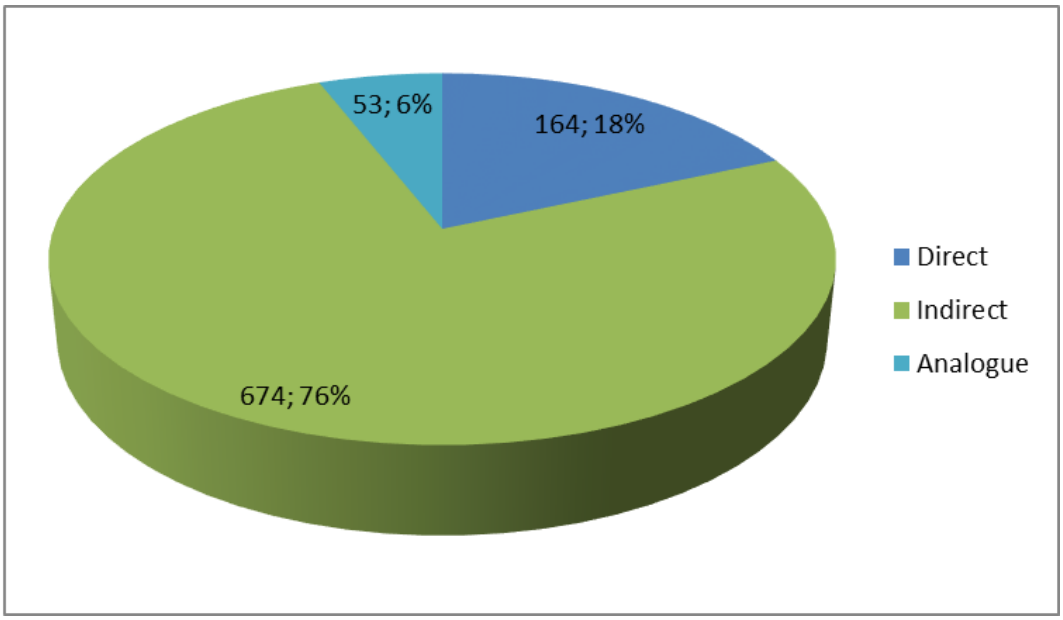


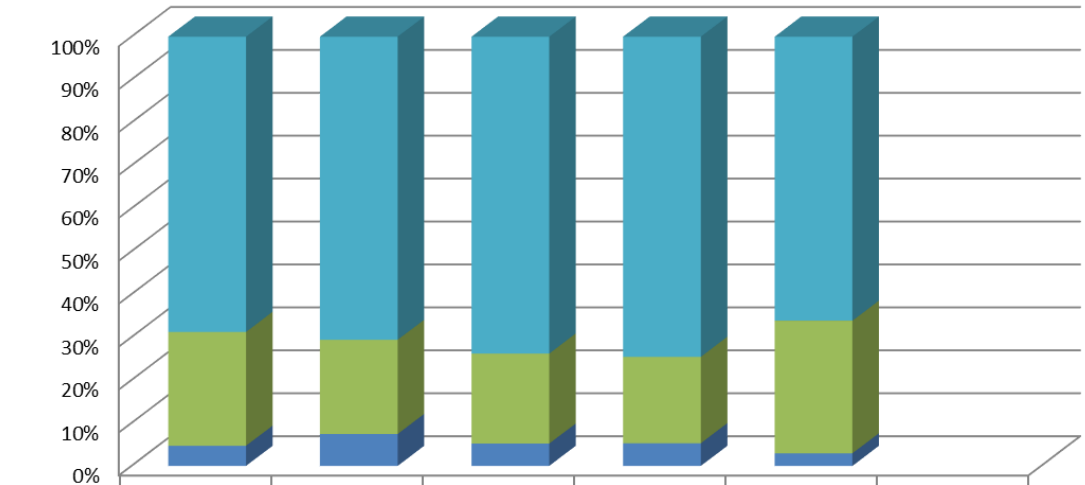

Table 4.18 discloses that 674 (76 percent) of the animal personages are indirectly introduced. As few as 164 (18 percent) of these personages are described directly, to a certain extent, by the narrator. In as little as 6 percent, the latter adopted an analogy in order to introduce or describe an animal personage.

It is expected that narrators prefer an indirect characterization. The reason for this is: a simple introduction of animal personages is often more than sufficient for an audience to conceptualise the animal as an actor/personage.

Table 4.19 zooms in on the way animals are characterized (Analogue, Direct or Indirect) in relation to their role(s) within the narrative. Again, a single animal may fulfil multiple roles in one and the same case. Whenever indirect characterization is considered the norm, the roles of the receiver and opponent are most likely to be emphasized by means of applying a different type of characterization. The role of sender is most often indirectly sketched, followed by the role of subject/actor. However, statistically one cannot encounter a significant variation between the various modes of characterization and any ascribed roles.[87]

[87] $\chi^2(10) = 14.17$; $\rho = 0.17$ (not significant).

**Table 4.19.** Interrelatedness between the "animal" roles and modes of characterization.




| | Opponent | Object/goal | Subject/actor | Sender | Receiver |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indirect | 205 | 618 | 412 | 367 | 45 |
| Direct | 79 | 192 | 117 | 99 | 21 |
| Analogue | 14 | 65 | 29 | 26 | 2 |

It would be interesting to assess whether any other modes of characterization are indeed chosen if a role is presented "out of character", or if other modes of characterization are preferred in combination with specific motifs or narratological contexts. If so, this will become clear in Chapters 5-7 (all sections under sub-heading *"Animal" in the narratives*) when the analysis focuses on specific "animals".

Table 4.20 displays all the ascribed roles of the most recorded animals ascertained by means of the types of "characterization": "**A**nalogue", "**D**irect" and "**I**ndirect". It may be added here that in each case an animal actor can be ascribed multiple roles. When considering each role, the mode of characterization is identical. One also comes across narratives as to which any records regarding the mode of characterization are absent.

Analysing Table 4.20 and zooming in on these roles as opposites (helper vs. opponent), this dichotomy may be related to the preferred mode of characterization. For instance, having studied the modes of characterization in relation to the ascribed roles of "Birds", it turns out that the role of helper prevails. The reason for this is: this role numbers 24 records, compared to eight for "Birds" as an opponent. Regarding helper, as much as 75 percent (n=18) of "Birds" is indirectly characterized, whereas 25 percent features a different mode. However, as to the role of opponent with regard to "Birds," only 62.5 percent (n=5) is indirectly typified and 37.5 percent (n=3) of the "Bird" actors is described according to a different mode of characterization. Table 4.20 illustrates that the same holds true for the "Snake" and "Vulture" categories, which are also more often ascribed the role of helper than of opponent. Being ascribed the latter role, snakes and vultures are more frequently classified as examples of the Direct or Analogue mode. This observation may indicate that a different mode of characterization is chosen whenever an animal acts "out of character".

**Table 4.20.** "Top 12" listing the "animal" personages by means of their ascribed roles.

| | Helper | | | Opponent | | | Object/goal | | | Subject/ actor | | | Sender | | | Receiver | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A[88] | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I | A | D | I |
| **Ant** | - | 1 | 7 | - | - | 3 | 4 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 1 |
| **Bat** | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 | - | 12 | 12 | 1 | 4 | 5 | - | 4 | 3 | - | 1 | - |
| **Birds** | - | 6 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 5 | - | 4 | 6 | - | 3 | 7 | - | 1 | 10 | - | 5 | 2 |
| **Caiman** | - | 6 | 10 | - | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 20 | - | 2 | 6 | - | 1 | 7 | - | - | - |
| **Frog** | - | 3 | 17 | - | 5 | 5 | - | 8 | 20 | - | 3 | 13 | - | 4 | 17 | - | - | - |
| **Jaguar** | 3 | 6 | 27 | 4 | 8 | 41 | 8 | 17 | 70 | 5 | 13 | 57 | 2 | 9 | 42 | - | - | 6 |
| **Monkey** | - | 1 | 5 | - | 2 | 8 | - | 5 | 20 | - | 2 | 13 | - | 3 | 12 | - | - | 2 |
| **Snake** | - | 3 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 36 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 1 | 4 | 15 | - | 1 | 2 |
| **Tapir** | - | - | 7 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | 24 | - | 2 | 12 | - | 1 | 13 | - | - | 1 |
| **Turtle** | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 3 | - | 3 | 11 | 1 | 4 | 16 | - | 1 | 12 | - | 1 | 2 |
| **Vulture** | 1 | 7 | 24 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 18 | - | 2 | 2 |
| **Woodpecker** | - | 5 | 13 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 7 | - | 2 | 9 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 1 |
| ***Total (n)*** | ***4*** | ***39*** | ***148*** | ***9*** | ***32*** | ***100*** | ***27*** | ***78*** | ***244*** | ***9*** | ***43*** | ***169*** | ***4*** | ***35*** | ***156*** | ***0*** | ***10*** | ***19*** |

The object vs. subject dichotomy is apparently not related to a preferred mode of characterization. The reason for this is: in the "Bat", "Jaguar", "Turtle" and "Woodpecker" cases, the ratio is very similar. There are nonetheless a number of exceptions in which the "Caiman", "Snake", and "Tapir" illustrate that the variation in modes of characterization is higher in the preferred role. The characters are almost always ascribed the role of object/goal in which they are by and large dealt with either by analogy or directly. Therefore, the preferred mode of characterization cannot be considered a tool with which to place an accent whenever any "acting out of character" occurs.

The aforementioned dichotomy is studied in more detail (see Chapters 5-7 and Appendix D). Table 4.20 only concerns the numbers based on the total dataset, which obscures any interpretation. The reason for this is: one personage may fulfil multiple roles within a single narrative, or that one case may entail multiple animal personages playing various roles (e.g., one "good" and one "evil" jaguar).

[88] These columns disclose the three modes of characterization for the ascribed role: Analogue (A), Direct (D), and Indirect (I).

### 4.3.2 “Time”: a tool with which to (de)emphasize

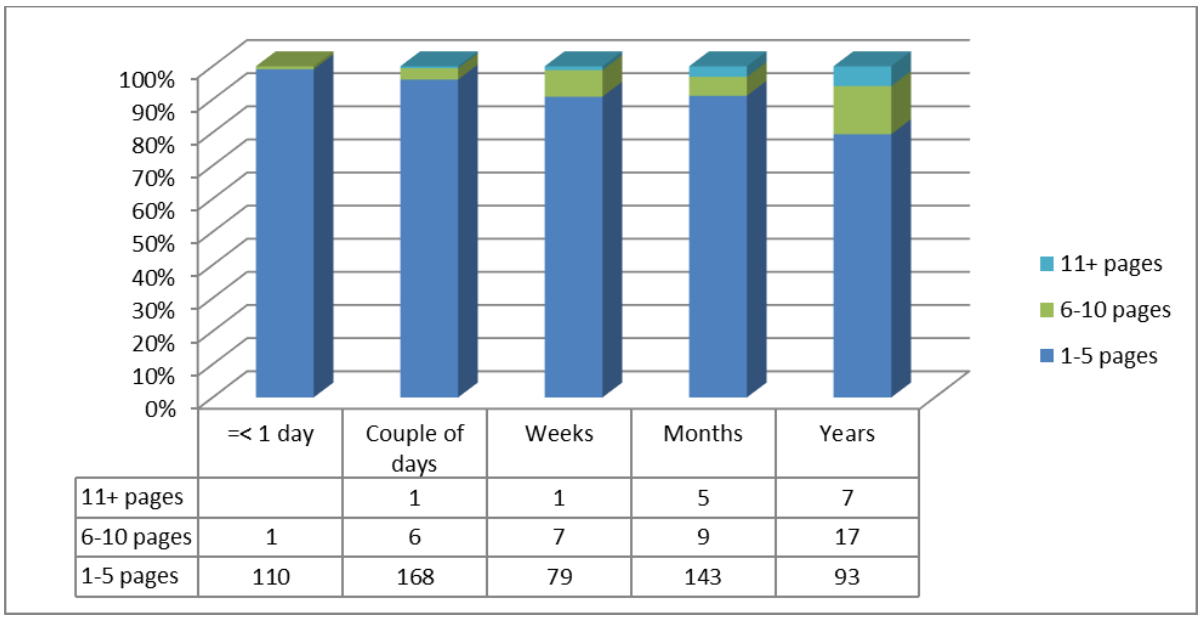
In the field of narratology, “Time”, also called duration, is studied according to the relationship between: (a) real time, approached by means of the length of the narratives often linked to the total number of required pages, and (b) narrated time, i.e., the time as described in the narrative itself (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*). For example, a single page can describe the origin of the universe over millions of years, whereas ten pages can describe the final seconds before a certain personage dies. All narratives dealt with in the present research are short: as much as 91.7 percent comprise between 1 and 5 pages. The lengthier examples cover up to ten pages. The techniques (e.g., summarisations and accelerations) the narrator adopts in order to manipulate time seem to be limited. In general, he or she describes scenes by means of dialogues which results in the equation: narrated time = real time.

Whenever any data on the narration time spans are recorded, the following distinction within the narrative is drawn between the below duration of time spans: (a) 1 day or less, (b) several days, (c) weeks, (d) months, and (e) years.

It has proved difficult to define the narrated time span. This issue is caused by the fact that, in the narratives, the elapsed time/duration is seldom explicit. Narratives with a short narrated time span and those with a lengthier narrated time span seem to be equally distributed. As many as 286 cases covered a short narrated time span (i.e., between a single day and several days), 87 cases a narrated time span of weeks and 274 cases a narrated time span of months or even years. Table 4.21 illustrates the ratio between the number of pages the narratives take up (i.e., real time) and the various categories of narrated time (i.e, the time in the stories themselves). Table 4.21 indeed reveals a relation between the two. Stories with a lengthier time span are also longer in real time, that is to say: they take up more pages.[89]

[89] The Chi-squared analysis confirms a link between “real time” and narrated time: $\chi^2(4) = 36.84$, $\rho < 0.001$ (significant).

**Table 4.21.** Duration: the narrated time in relation to real time.[90]




| | =< 1 day | Couple of days | Weeks | Months | Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11+ pages | | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| 6-10 pages | 1 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 17 |
| 1-5 pages | 110 | 168 | 79 | 143 | 93 |

The order of events does not often serve as an instrument to manipulate the contents of narratives. By and large, events are described in chronological order. It should nonetheless again be noted that these oral stories have been written down by non-native writers/researchers who may have utilised dissimilar techniques when compared with the (indigenous) narrator, simply because the audience of the non-native, often Western, writer is very different. He or she may have not only altered the sequence of events but also modified the use of time in order to suit his or her Western audience, adopting techniques familiar to us. By doing so the native tales become more accessible to the Western reader. Therefore only their literal transcriptions are in fact helpful when researching the native techniques which storytellers utilise. Unfortunately, the scope of this study does not include these transcriptions, as quantity is preferred over quality. A decision was taken to analyse a large number of narratives thereby renouncing an even more thorough narratological study on individual examples based on transcriptions. This quantitative approach provides the profound contextualisation of numerous animal actors, contributing to our understanding them to be *signs**.

It can be concluded that narratives dealt with in the present research are indeed short. Therefore, the techniques of summarisation and acceleration encountered here, for instance, relate to the numerous narratives which describe the lives of culture heroes from birth to adulthood. Here, too, the narrated time covers many years, whereas the real time can extend from between several minutes up to 60 minutes.

[90] The narrated time has not been recorded for all narratives (n=647 for 706 cases). Moreover, because certain examples are recorded by means of various sources, more than one record on one narrative is possible (only "real time" (i.e., number of pages) might deviate in those instances).

### 4.3.3 Conclusions on the story-layer

As the layer concerns the concrete manner according to which the narrator unfolds a story to his/her audiences, it is challenging to, on a general level, deal with all the layer's elements. Nevertheless, a number of general remarks have been placed regarding the two narrative elements referred to as "time or duration" and "characterization".

Apparently, by and large, the preferred mode of characterization is indirect. Nevertheless certain roles i.e., opponent and object/goal, the other two types of characterization occur relatively more often. In Chapters 5 to 7, the form of characterization is analysed on the level of clustered narratives. This may provide further insight into how narrators apply any characterizations in relation to specific animal personages and their ascribed role(s).

The presupposed relatedness of narrated time and "real time" is disclosed by means of this dataset. The longer the time span continues within the tale itself is, the more pages are filled.

## 4.4 Summing up

In the present chapter, the 706 narratives underlying this study have been analysed as a single dataset. The main goal was to reveal and research general patterns. This chapter is therefore very etic, hereby dealing with the data from a Western perspective by means of looking into structures as well as similarities. The data extracted from Chapter 4 are then compared to the data presented in Chapters 5-7, which will focus on narrative clusters.

At the heart of this research lie the featuring "animal" personages. In which chronotopes do they act? Which attributes and roles are ascribed to them? And, with what or whom are they associated with as to the narratives, and in which context? Various narrative functions have also been taken into consideration in order to better understand the narrators and their audiences.

### 4.4.1 Linguistic distribution and narrative functions

Of the 706 cases as many as *c*.60 percent originate from the core area. In total, 20 language families are represented as encountered in 81 languages. The fact that narratives from outside the core area (on occasion even far beyond) are included enables a broader perspective on the distribution of motifs. A wide circulation of motifs and themes indicates they are not only broadly known geographically but most likely are consistently present throughout time, too.

Information on narrative functions has also been documented in order to better comprehend the reason why the Amerindians told and continue to tell these stories. The most frequently encountered function is: validating the world, followed by two less frequent functions: encoding social behaviour, and informing. Less often represented are the narrative functions referred to as ensuring knowledge and Identity. This indicates that narratives most probably

served (and still serve) to not only make sense of the world but also to indirectly discuss either approved or disapproved behaviour, as well as social conventions.

### 4.4.2 "Animal" actors

The present chapter also disclosed which "animal" personages feature most prominently in the narratological corpus. The most recorded was, by far, the jaguar (*Panthera onca*). Other "animals" repeatedly documented were (aquatic) snakes (of the genus *Eunectes*), birds (in general), New World vultures, Central and South American tapirs, monkeys, and turtles. Although the iconography leads us towards the choice as to which creatures are to be further analysed in Chapters 5 to 7, certain "animals" (referred to as "anomalies") are also included. A premise of the present research deals with the fact that creatures often portrayed in the narratives are also likely to occur in the shape of iconographical zoomorphic features, see 3.1.

An important aspect of studying animal actors concerns their allocated attributes and roles. As to the six roles, or actants, proposed by Greimas, the object/goal role dominates. A specific "animal" actor can be entrusted with this role because it is either hunted or sought after in revenge. It can also be the object of one's desire (as a paramour or - potential - spouse). Three other common roles are: helper, subject/actor and sender. The opponent role is less documented and helper, for instance, occurs twice as often. This indicates that, in general, animals assist the protagonist more often than that they act as its adversary. The present chapter also demonstrates that certain animal personages are more likely to be assigned to specific roles.

It may be added here that owls and bats are more frequently and explicitly described as (transformed) spirits, whereas ants, vultures, duck and turtles are more often expressly depicted as shamans.

### 4.4.3 The events, motifs and setting in space and time

Another element of the fabula-layer comprises the most common events which all were related to quest, rescue and deception (in which one tries to outsmart another). However, when individual motifs were also taken into consideration (which concern transformation and the origin of the world and all it contains), we observed that murder and punishments were the most dominant.

Actors, as well as events, are portrayed within a certain context (or chronotope) in space and time. Events mainly take place in wooded areas during the daytime. Zooming in on the various cosmic layers, the land-layer prevails, followed by layers encountered in the water and sky worlds. The interrelatedness between these roles and their spatial contexts have also been analysed. This procedure did not disclose any significant variations in the ascribed roles related to a forest or village context but did whenever roles were related to cosmic layers. The underworld seems to be linked to the role of object/goal whereas the helper's role is more linked to the sky world when compared to other layers.

### 4.4.4 Characterization and duration

In the present chapter, the story-layer has also been the subject of analysis. This layer focuses on the concrete manner in which events and actors are dealt with. The way the animal actors are characterized (also referred to as the mode of characterization) is also discussed. Preferably, in general, this mode is Indirect. However, for a number of roles, opponent and object/goal, the other two types of characterization, have been applied relatively more often. These two modes (i.e., direct and analogue) can be seen as instruments with which certain aspects (both physical as well as behavioural) of a specific actor can be emphasized. Therefore it is interesting to investigate which aspects either explicate or emphasize a certain animal.

The presupposed relatedness of narrated time and real time, i.e., duration, does occur in this data set. The longer the time span within the narrative itself continues, the more pages are required. This aspect of duration cannot be studied without taking into consideration the fact that all tales met within the present study are written-down transcriptions. The techniques (e.g., acceleration and summarisation) applied in order to manipulate the narrated time may just as well have been added by the (Western) researcher/transcriber. In general, the duration of a narrative provides us with certain information on its nature. Is its contents more epic? Does it entail various episodes or challenges? Does it continue for months or even years? Does the tale resemble a fable in which a single event (e.g., challenge) is the main focus?

Chapter 4 forms the foundation, a basis for comparison and a tool to not only test but also interpret the outcome of the analysis of the clustered narratives dealt with in Chapters 5 to 7. Therefore the results of Chapter 4 facilitate a more statistic approach to Chapters 5 to 7.

# Chapter 5. Becoming acquainted with “animal” actors

In the previous chapter the general patterns, most common actors and motifs are identified regarding the 706 Amazonian narratives. This chapter, in combination with Chapters 6 and 7, will shift the focus from the general to the particular. The narratives here serve to create a frame of reference in order to better understand the “animal” Saladoid imagery. The following questions are therefore central: (a) which roles and attributes are ascribed to “animals” in the stories?, (b) with what or whom are they associated?, and (c) which “animals” are the most prominent within the Saladoid archaeological record of the Caribbean?

In all, three chapters are dedicated to the discussion of various “animal” tales. Chapter 5, the first one will address mammals. Chapter 6 discusses feathered creatures and Chapter 7 “others”. All these three chapters have a similar layout and are designed to resemble.

In 5.1 it is established which “animals” are addressed further, which determines the focus of this research. This issue will be decided upon by means of: (a) the identified prominent Saladoid zoomorphic incidents, and (b) prominent actors encountered in the studied narratives, which may not (yet) have been identified within the Saladoid material display. In 5.2 to 5.4 and in Chapters 6 and 7, each “animal” is addressed based on its roles and attributes observed in: (a) the narratives, (b) nature, (c) material culture, depiction and display, and (d) its position within Amerindian cosmologies.

The roles, attributes and contexts of "animal" actors is established in the section under the heading *"Animal" in the narratives*. Here the methodology of narratology has been applied in order to analyse the narratives. The results of this analysis are compared to the general patterns established in Chapter 4, whereby visualising patterns relate to specific "animals". The complete analysis is provided in Appendix D. Here only the highlights per "animal"-cluster are presented, with references for further reading.

The sections under heading *"Animal" in nature"* describe the physical and behavioural characteristics of each animal. Both indeed seem to inspire the "animal's" ascribed roles within the narratives as well as its position within Amerindian cosmologies. Any physical characteristics described in the stories are likely the identifiable features regarding their display by other means, too, e.g., *adornos,* pendants, petroglyphs.

After discussing the "animal's" role(s) within narratives and nature, the "animal" presence in the archaeological/iconographical records are dealt with (i.e., in sections headed *The iconography of "Animal").* The Saladoid zoomorphic imagery is the main focus of the present research. However, as will become clear, it may help us to understand to look beyond ceramics thus assessing other forms or means to depict and display "animals" as zoomorphic symbolic/iconic *signs**. Whenever the archaeological record is a rarity, ethnographic accounts are included. They provide us with valuable additions because the archaeological registers merely deliver a glimpse of the once extant material culture.

The cosmological setting is the fourth context to be addressed in these chapters. The "animal's" position within the Amerindian worldviews, combined with our present knowledge and opinions based on ethnographical studies, contributes to our comprehension as to how Amerindians may have perceived and understood "animals" as *signs**. Again historical, as well as ethnographical references, are incorporated here, as these accounts provide insights into the ascribed position of the "animals" within Amerindian worldviews.

Each section addressing a specific "animal" has a concluding paragraph which recapitulates the preceding paragraphs in order to outline not only the Amerindians' contextualisation but also the conceptualisation of the "animal". Each conclusion thus unites the narratological, iconographical and cosmological contexts which shape and contextualise zoomorphic signs.

In section 3.1.1 the use of quotation marks around the word "animals" and specific animals was already addressed. The reader is reminded that these are used to stress that the word between inverted commas might be a high order representation, which is a mental construct. From now on "animals" will be capitalised when referring to an actual personage in the stories (e.g., "Jaguar"), but not capitalised when referring to an "animal" as identified zoomorphic motif, or a reference to "animals" from ethnographic reports (e.g., "caiman" *adorno*). In the

sections called “in nature” no quotation marks will be used since these sections describe the animals in their natural settings from a Western perspective.

## 5.1 The “animals”

The underlying premise is: the same “animals” act within the narratives as are/were depicted, or displayed, in pottery, rock art (petroglyphs, pictographs), motifs adorning utensils and amulets, etc. (see 2.3 and 3.1). Therefore, this section begins with a comparison of the data dealing with zoomorphic Saladoid *adornos* (as a case study) and the identified “animal” motifs with the narratological data presented here. All “animals” discussed are based on this comparison.

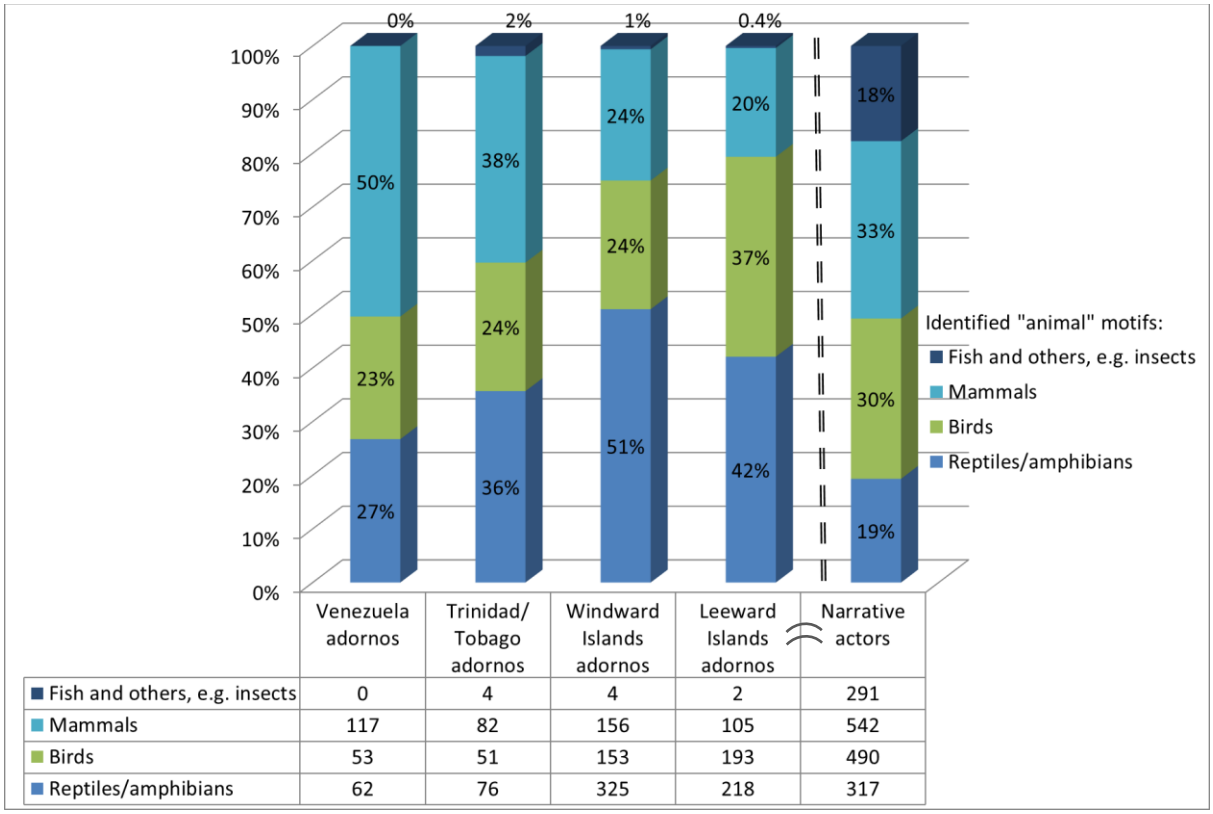
### 5.1.1 Zoomorphic *adornos* versus “animal” actors

The zoomorphic iconography of the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE) is introduced in 2.1. The most common zoomorphic *adornos* are identified, too. Especially Waldron’s analysis on Saladoid *adornos* from both Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles (Waldron 2010, 2016) can serve to establish a comparison with the data resulting from the present research. He identified and categorised almost 1,600 zoomorphic *adornos* and, if possible, identified their class, and sometimes to genus/species.

Table 5.1 illustrates the identified zoomorphic *adornos,* categorised according to their derivation: Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands, and the Leeward Islands. Next, they are compared to the identified “animals” (also categorised according to class) as encountered in the (mainland) tales. Comparing Waldron’s data with those provided here results in a simplification. Here, instead of differentiating the numerous islands, they are grouped into the Windward Islands and the Leeward Islands. In Waldron’s research, however, the Leeward Islands include Guadeloupe, Antigua, and Montserrat, whereas the Windward Islands include Grenada, Carriacou, Saint Vincent, Martinique, Barbados, Trinidad, and Tobago.

In addition to the category of the Windward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago are treated as a separate entity because, when considering its flora and fauna, this twin-island nation more closely resembles the mainland than the other Windward Islands. Waldron delivers absolute numbers in his research (and charts). In order to compare these absolutes, they have been replaced by percentages. Table 5.1 forwards absolute numbers in the legend below. The narratological data resulting from the present research are placed in a category entitled “In the narratives”. The various identified “animal” personages have been divided into class categories, too, hereby matching Waldron’s categories.

**Table 5.1.** Classes of identified zoomorphic *adornos* compared to the identified "animal" actors.




| | Venezuela adornos | Trinidad/ Tobago adornos | Windward Islands adornos | Leeward Islands adornos | Narrative actors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fish and others, e.g. insects | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 291 |
| Mammals | 117 | 82 | 156 | 105 | 542 |
| Birds | 53 | 51 | 153 | 193 | 490 |
| Reptiles/amphibians | 62 | 76 | 325 | 218 | 317 |

This comparison illustrates Waldron's observed shift as to the Saladoid zoomorphic depictions between the islands and the mainland. Within a mainland setting, the "mammal" *adornos* dominate, whereas in the islands the "reptiles/amphibians" and "birds" motifs prevail. The narratives utilised in the present research originate from Amazonian/South American peoples. The data largely are in line with the identified zoomorphic iconographical motifs stemming from either Venezuela or Trinidad and Tobago. The focus thus lies on "mammal" actors, followed by the "Reptiles/Amphibians" and "Birds" actors. Unfortunately, the quantity of narratological data encountered on the islands does not suffice to conclude if any observed shift in the zoomorphic *adornos* is also discernible in the stories.

The next step entails zooming in on specific "animals/birds" of which Waldron identifies fourteen examples (see 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*). Table 5.2 again delivers a comparison of Waldron's findings with the accumulated data provided in the present research. However, as many as 165 different "animals" have been identified in the narratives. Waldron lists the animals according to class (Reptiles, Avian, Mammals) in descending order of occurrence (see Tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, pp. 34-36; and see Appendix C, Table C-1 p. 445 for a complete list based on Waldron's research). The frequency of the identified *adornos* is again compared with the number of the identified "animal" actors encountered in the narratives (see Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2.** Identified zoomorphic *adornos* compared to "animal" actors.

| Class | Animals identified by Waldron | Number counted by Waldron | Number counted in the 706 narratives | Remarks based on data drawn from the 706 narratives |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Reptiles/ Amphibians** | Turtles | 486 | 65 | incl. tortoises* |
| | Frogs | 120 | 85 | incl. toads* |
| | Caimans | 25 | 41 | incl. alligators and crocodiles* |
| | Lizards | 16 | 15 | |
| | Snakes | 9 | 89 | |
| | Unidentified | 24 | - | |
| **Avian** | Nocturnal birds: owls, nightjars, oilbirds | 137 | 39 | 18 owls, 21 nightjars |
| | Parrots | 32 | 48 | incl. aras, parakeets, macaws |
| | Pelicans | 29 | 0 | |
| | Vultures | 28 | 70 | incl. all scavenger birds |
| | Stilts: herons, ibises, egrets | 25 | 34 | incl. all identified shorebirds and waders |
| | Ducks | 18 | 14 | |
| | Frigate birds | 1 | 1 | |
| | Unidentified | 180 | 284 | The present study contains 81 narratives with (a reference to) a "Bird" actor, hereby excluding 67 specific birds. In 303 narratives, 490 records of birds (incl. "birds" in general) occur |
| **Mammals** | Dogs | 121 | 22 | |
| | Bats | 71 | 32 | |
| | Anteaters | 26 | 12 | |
| | Opossums | 23 | 19 | |
| | Armadillos | 15 | 23 | |
| | Rodents | 14 | 33 | 2 mice, 10 rats, 10 squirrels, 3 guinea pigs, 6 capybaras, 2 "rodents" |
| | Monkeys | 11 | 52 | |
| | Manatees | 9 | 4 | |
| | Procyons: raccoons, coatis | 7 | 2 | coatis |
| | Peccaries | 5 | 29 | |
| | Felines | 3 | 128 | 127 jaguars, 1 wild cat |
| | Unidentified | 149 | - | |
| **Others** | Porcupine [2], dolphin[2], snail [1] | 5 | 6 | 5 dolphins, 1 snail |
| **Discrepancies** | Absent in Waldron's survey, but present in the Top 15 of most recurrent animals personages in the 706 narratives | - | 57, 45, 25 | Tapir, ant, deer |

* These animals have been grouped together because it is difficult to discern differences between the iconographical depictions of a turtle/tortoise, frog/toad, and caiman/alligator/crocodile.

The data (see Table 5.2) should, however, not be studied in absolute terms but in relation to each other, thus by order of occurrence. Interestingly, of the "Top 15" of most documented "animals" in the narratives, 81 percent (n=13) have also been identified by Waldron as iconographical motifs (see 4.2.2 and Table 4.8, p. 103 for the "Top 15" of "animal" personages in the narratives). The common "animal" personages in the narratives, which are *not* identified as a zoomorphic motif by Waldron are: deer, tapir and ant. However, various specific birds also remain (as yet) unidentified as Saladoid *adornos* from the insular Caribbean, e.g., woodpecker, hummingbird, and birds of prey.[91]

When assessing the categories comprising Avian and Reptiles/Amphibians, the numbers Waldron counts apparently correspond to those mentioned in the narratives. Remarkably, in the latter category, "Snake" occupies the No. 1 position here to nevertheless take in the lowest in Waldron's iconographical data. This may be a result of the fact that "snakes" are depicted more often, but have not (yet) been identified because of an abstract mode of depiction. Another explanation could be: the largest snake species are not omnipresent and thus do not feature in the local iconographical contexts of the islands. Waldron identifies two "snake" *adornos* (see 2.1.2 and Table. 2.3, p. 34) within the Venezuelan assemblage.

As to the avian category, it is interesting to note that "nocturnal birds" have been overrepresented in Waldron's data when compared to their occurrences in the narratives. The "vulture" category would be underrepresented in his data whenever merely the Island iconography is considered. However, here the mainland specimens have been included. For that reason, "vultures" still occupy the fourth position as most identified avian *adornos.*[92] The absence of the "pelican" as an actor within the (mainland) narratives was, of course, to be expected – its habitat is near the sea. The absence of identified "birds of prey" in iconography cannot be reduced to environmental conditions, as various species both inhabit the mainland as well as the Caribbean archipelago.

The majority of the discrepancies are to be observed in the category of mammals. The "Jaguar" is by far the most common "animal" personage encountered within the narratives. However, its imagery is almost absent not only in the Antilles but also in Venezuela. Most inconsistencies can be explained by the fact that almost 90 percent of all (large) mammals (e.g., monkeys, sloths) native to the islands have been extinct since the Ice Age/Pleistocene (*c*.2,588,000 to 11,700 years ago).[93] At present, certain mammals such as the common opossum (*Didelphis marsipualis*) can be found on Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands and the Grenadines

[91] Two possible identifications of hummingbird *adornos* have been established, see Waldron 2010: 344-7.

[92] For a discussion on the distribution of the identified avian motifs across the mainland and the islands, see 8.3.3.

[93] For more information on the extinct species of Caribbean isles, see: MacPhee 2009; Morgan & Woods 1986; Wilson 1997; Woods 2001.

(Gardner 2007: 23). Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Grenada, are home to the nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) (Gardner 2007: 134). The collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*) is native to Trinidad (Grubb 2005).

In sum, the comparison of data confirms that, within a mainland setting, the emphasis lies more on mammal iconography. In the mainland narratives, too, the most common personages belong to the mammal category. Nevertheless, all the birds and reptiles/amphibians we know from the island iconography are present within the (mainland) narratological context.

### 5.1.2 Determining the central "animals"

When the identified Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* are compared to the narratological data, the resemblance of the zoomorphic motifs is striking. Hereby any environmental differences, to be observed between the South American mainland and the Caribbean archipelago, should be taken into consideration. These dissimilarities could (partly) explain the absence of any depictions of predators (e.g., "jaguar") and large mammals (e.g., "deer", "tapir") in the Island iconography. However, the absence, or marginal display, of "ant", "fish", "woodpecker", "hummingbird", and "birds of prey" cannot be contributed to this environmental variation.

The main aim of this section is to justify which "animals" and therefore which narratives are to be included in the present dissertation. Based on the majority of the identified zoomorphic iconographical *adornos*, the following "animals" will be utilised in order to cluster the narratives. They will be discussed by means of their roles in nature, iconography and indigenous cosmologies, categorised as follows: (a) mammals: "Dogs" and "Bats", (b) reptiles: "Caiman"[94], (c) avian: "Nocturnal birds", "Vultures", "Stilt birds", "Parrots", and "Ducks".

#### *Included anomalies*

In addition to the above-described, several other "animals/birds" are relevant: "Jaguar", "Birds of prey", "Woodpecker", "Hummingbirds", and "Ants". The "Jaguar" is by far the most common "animal" personage encountered in the tales, but it does not occur (frequently) in iconography. Its absence in the Island assemblages could be explained by environmental conditions, but its absence in Venezuelan iconography cannot.

Moreover, we do not come across any natural/geographical explanation for the (almost) non-appearance of "ant", "birds of prey" (e.g., hawk, falcon), "hummingbird" and "woodpecker" as zoomorphic motifs adorning Saladoid pottery. All these creatures are native to the Caribbean islands and South American mainland and will, therefore, be discussed. Could their underrepresentation in identified iconography be because they have not yet been identified

[94] "Turtle" and "frog" have been omitted here as they are discussed in Paulsen 2007, but more importantly they are thoroughly studied by predecessors also in relation to (South American) narratives (e.g., Arrom 1975, 1988, 1997; Godo 2005; Moravetz 2001, 2005; Petitjean Roget, 1975, 1976b, 1978, 1997, 2008, 2015; Roe 1982, 1993, 1995b, 1997; Steven Arroyo 1988, 2006; Wassén 1934a, b).

as zoomorphic iconographical motifs? Or, are they simply not displayed as for instance *adornos,* but as abstractifications? Were they considered unsuitable or inappropriate for display on ceramics, for practical/aesthetic and or spiritual (i.e., tabooed) reasons? Perhaps studying the narratives can provide us with a better conceptualisation of these "animals" both as a motif and a device with which to identify them, or even with a better understanding of their non-appearance.

The "animals" discussed in this dissertation are clustered in three separate chapters, mainly in order to improve readability. Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 deal with mammals (i.e., "Dog", "Bat", "Jaguar"). Chapter 6 is entitled "Feathered creatures" as it is in line with (most) indigenous Amerindian categorisations of what we refer to as "birds". Chapter 7 concerns not addressed animals: "Caiman" and "Ants".

## 5.2 "Dog"

In this section, the "dog" as a cultural *sign** is broader contextualised. Its role in lore is followed by its role in nature, in iconography and in the cosmologies of the Amerindians. All these contexts shape(d) their conceptualisation.

### 5.2.1 "Dog" in the narratives

> A man is lost in the forest and asks his Dog for directions. The Dog removes its clothes and teaches the man a lesson: "You never listen to me, you treat me badly (i.e., bad food and hitting)". But then the Dog tells the man which direction to take and the man has learned his lesson. [Story no. 41 (Trio, Cariban); abridged]

The present research includes 24 "Dog" narratives, which having been integrally analysed, are subdivided into several separately studied clusters. The key issues of this analysis are presented in the following sections (see Appendix D, Section C for a full analysis of the narratives).

Of the 24 "Dog" narratives, only two fall beyond the core geographical area: Story nos. 555 and 556; Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê), see Fig. 5.1. The linguistic affiliation of Story no. 71 is as yet unknown. Based on its similarities with the other cases mentioned in the cluster of "Dog as wife and paramour", it most probably stems from the core area. The two Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê) narratives do not fit into any of the identified clusters. Interestingly, both are part of three narratives which describe the "Dog" as an opponent, in a (near) water setting.

Statistical analysis of the narrative functions has not disclosed any significant variations. However, more stories have informing and a slightly less number validating the world as a function (see Appendix C, Table C-4 for a complete list of all narrative functions of the "Dog"

stories.[95] When zooming in on informing, the "Dog" narratives include the most common sub-types of this category which deal with: (a) what food (not) to eat, (b) how certain things should (not) be done, and (c) hunting techniques, so dominantly related to foodways.

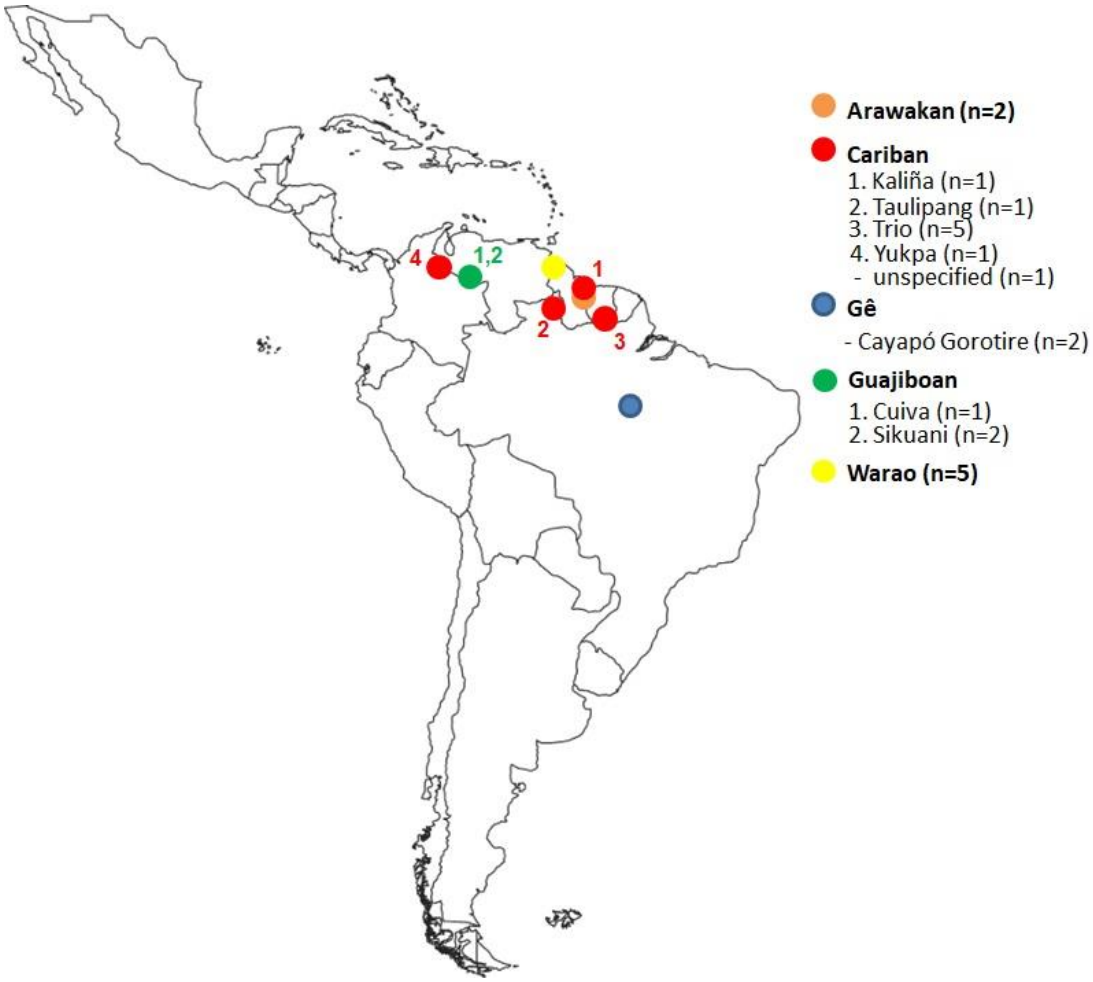



**Fig. 5.1.** Plot of "Dog" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

### *Actors, events and settings ("fabula")*

Quest and rescue are not only overall the most common (see 4.2.1) but also the only two main events documented for "Dog" narratives. Remarkably not a single narrative portrays the "Dog" as a trickster or deceiver. Two major themes, or sub-clusters, have been identified and discussed: (a) "Dog" as wife and paramour, and (b) "Dog" as helper or hunting companion.[96]

[95] $\chi^2(4) = 4.88$; $\rho = 0.3$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section C. General remarks for a discussion on narrative functions for "Dog" narratives, and section 4.1.1 for a general discussion.

[96] Narratives forming part of the first cluster (n=7) are numbered: 19, 20, 71, 358-9, 478, 710 (3x Cariban, 3x Arawakan, 1x unknown). Tales belonging to the second cluster (n=10) are numbered: 35, 41, 82, 423, 461, 465, 611, 660, 689, 709 (4x Cariban; 3x Guajiboan; 3x Warao). See Appendix D, section C1 and C2.

The “Dog” personage in the narratological context is very closely linked to the Amerindians as a pet, spouse, companion, and helper. This becomes apparent in the (secular) roles ascribed to the “Dog” personage and the dominant village context in which it acts. The prominence of the village context (74 percent; n=17) sharply contrasts with the generally preferred forest context (see 4.2.3). Four records associate the “Dog” with the water realm, one of which also includes the underworld. All in all, land-layer prevails. In two of the three cases in which the “Dog” plays the role of opponent, it acts on the water-layer (see Appendix D, section C. Fabula).

Considering the 24 “Dog” narratives, as many as 74 motifs are directly linked to the “Dog” actor. The most common motifs are: (a) the helpful “Dog”, (b) the “Dog” as a pet, (c) the transformation by removing clothes, and (d) the marriage of an Amerindian to a “Dog” (see Appendix D, section C. Fabula). Compared to the overall distribution of Greimas’ roles set in Chapter 4, “Dogs” show no significant variation regarding roles.[97] However, “Dogs” are more often ascribed the roles of helper and subject/actor, and less often the roles of sender, opponent, and object/goal (see Appendix D, section C).

The “Dog” personage is apparently linked to situations in which the “Dog” assists others. Interestingly, this motif is absent in the “Top 15” list of all motifs (see 4.2.1). The second most frequently encountered motif, “Dog” as a pet, is related. As a “pet”, the “Dog” assists its owner. In four narratives, the “Dog” contributes to hunting trips and is released in order to catch prey (see Story nos. 35, 71, 427, 611; Trio, Yukpa (Cariban); Cuiva (Guajiboan); unknown). The “pet Dog” stays at home (or returns home) to cook dinner and clean the house (see Story nos. 19-20, 358-9, 710; 3x Kaliña/Cariban, 2x Arawakan, see Fig. 5.2). In Story no. 41 (Trio, Cariban), it gives advice/directions.

Transformation is overall the most common motif (see 4.2.1) and therefore not surprisingly also one of the most dominant motifs concerning the “Dog” personage. In many cases, the transformation is the result of the “Dog” removing its clothes, which on occasion are then thrown on a fire (Story nos. 19-20, 41, 71, 358-9, 478, 710: Cariban (5x Kaliña, Trio; 2xArawakan; Warao). In Story no. 611 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), humans turn stones into “Dogs” who then assist them when hunting.

As stated above, the “Dog’s” association with hunting dominates the second cluster. In this role, it is also depicted as a protector and avenger. This relationship between the “Dog” and the Amerindian peoples is based on reciprocity and mutual obligations. The underlying motif or theme “Treat your Dog well” (Story nos. 41, 465, 709; 2x Trio (Cariban), Warao) is perhaps supported by the concept of “Dog” serving as the guardian of the soul (Story no. 423; Yukpa,

[97] $\chi^2(5) = 9.26$; $\rho = 0.1$ (not significant).

Cariban). Indeed any mistreating of “Dogs” may lead to your soul being excluded from the land beyond (see also 5.2.4).

Stories nos. 555 and 556 (Gê, Cayapó-Gorotire) portray the “Dog” as an enemy in which the “Dogs”, or “Dog”-people, having killed and devoured Amerindians, are slain in revenge. In Story no. 555, an Amerindian who wished to catch one of the (huge) “Dogs” was killed during an attempt to do so. Other Amerindians then utilise meat in order to distract the “Dogs” and then steal two of their pups. In Story no. 556, the “Dog” peoples murder and later devour a small number of Amerindians who had, in spite of being warned, stayed in a campsite near a lake.

**Fig. 5.2.** “Dog” wife prepares dinner; artist’s impression of Story no. 359 (Arawakan) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

### With whom is the "Dog" associated?

In all narratives containing "Dog" personages, we can observe an interaction between the "Dog" and Amerindian(s). They also interact with other "animal" personages. The "Parrot" and "Jaguar" which both recur in "Dog" narratives are linked to specific clusters.

Within the cluster "Dog as wife and paramour", the roles of "Parrot" and "Dog" personages are either interchangeable or indeed exactly the same. In Story nos. 19, 358 and 710 (Cariban), the "Dog" and "Parrot" personages interact in a very similar fashion when either performing (or part of) the same events/actions within the same spatial and temporal context. However, these three Cariban stories are presumably versions of one and the same narrative. The fact that Amerindians are known to keep parrots in cages binds these two "animals", as Amerindian pets.

"Jaguar" is by far the most recurrent "animal" personage within the narratological content of this study. It is, therefore, no surprise that this mammal is also encountered in the "Dog" narratives. In three cases, included in the cluster entitled "Dog as helper or hunting companion", the "Jaguar" appears, too. All three narratives are Warao, but in this case not versions of the same narrative, as was the case with the "Parrot" and "Dog" stories. In Story nos. 82 and 465, the "Dog" kills and/or devours a devastating "Jaguar" (one who kills Amerindians). In Story no. 461 (Warao), the "Jaguar" kills the "Dogs" that accompany their Amerindian owners. In these three cases, the "Dog" and "Jaguar" are opponents, just as the "Jaguar" opposes the Amerindians within the narrative.

### *Characterization & duration ("story")*

The mode of characterization of "Dogs" is in line with the general distribution (see 4.3.1). The number of records is, however, too small to conduct a reliable statistical analysis. As much as 83 percent (n=20) of the records consist of indirect characterization, while two analogue descriptions stress the behavioural qualities of "Dogs". Story no. 63 (Trio, Cariban) deals with the excellent sense of smell of "Dogs". Interestingly, we read (see Story no. 478; Warao) that Warao are distrustful and flee from fellow humans, as "Dogs" do. The reason provided in the story itself is: Warao are the offspring of an Amerindian with a "Dog" wife.

In Story no. 555 (Cayapó-Gorotire, Gê), "Dogs" are described as being "huge", equal in size to houses and as dangerous killers. Two pups raised by Amerindians are the ancestors of the larger breed of "Dogs".

Although a statistical approach could not be conducted due to the small number of records, the duration apparently agrees with the general pattern set in Chapter 4. Twenty-three narratives (96 percent) fall within the short range, taking up between 1 and 5 pages. (compared to 94 percent in general). Only one case falls in the middle range (i.e., covering between 6 and 11 pages). The narrated time also matches the general pattern: with nine (38

percent) narratives with a short narrated time: up to several days. All remaining cases have a narrated time of either weeks (n=4), months (n=6) or years (n=5). For a more elaborate discussion see Appendix D, section C. Story-layer.

To sum up, in general, the "Dog" has a positive connotation in the narratives, acting in close association with Amerindians as helper, guardian and hunting companion. Qualities made explicit here are its excellent hunting skills, an admirable sense of smell and its fearlessness. A "Dog" is also the caretaker and preferable spouse. In its role as a "pet", it is interrelated to the "Parrot". As a protector and a "hunting dog", it is interrelated to "Jaguar".

### 5.2.2 Dog in nature

Dogs presumably accompanied the Paleo-Amerindians (i.e., the first peoples who entered the Americas) into North America. Faunal remains suggest these animals were next brought to South America.[98] The two canine species native here are: the bush dog (*Speothus venaticus,* see Fig. 5.3) and the short-eared dog (*Atelocynus microtis*). Both may well have been domesticated during early prehistoric times.

Based on historical and linguistic evidence, it has been concluded that dogs were native to the Guianas and the Orinoco River basin. However, many Amazonian societies apparently lacked dogs until the historic period, others only acquired dogs in the course of the 20th century (Koster 2009: 576; Schwartz 1997). They were apparently the first domesticated animals to be introduced to the Caribbean islands and are thought to have arrived here in *c.*100 BCE (Plomp 2013; Newsom & Wing 2004).

**Fig. 5.3.** "Chien des buissons" (bush dog, *Speothos venaticus*); original by Spaycific'zoo, 2010. Licensed CC BY-SA 3.0, accessed by EOL.

The bush dog's presence ranged from Panama and historically may have extended as far north as Costa Rica, through Venezuela, the Guianas, Bolivia, Paraguay, and southern Brazil (DeMatteo et al. 2011; de Mello Beiseigel & Zuercher 2005; Wilson & Reeder 2005: 574).

The short-eared dog is native to the Amazonian basin. This species inhabits the rainforest located in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and the Guianas.

[98] Koster 2009: 576, referring to Fiedel, S. J. 2005. "Man's best friend - mammoth's worst enemy? A speculative essay on the role of dogs in Paleoindian colonization and megafaunal extinction" in *World Archaeology* 37: 11-25.

### *Physical and behavioural attributes*

Both canine species have (partially) webbed feet, which are utilised when digging up prey. Bush dogs have a head-body length of between 57 and 75 cm. Their tail measures *c.*13 cm. They have relatively short legs, a short snout and relatively small ears (de Mello Beiseigel & Zuercher 2005). The short-eared dog has short, slender limbs, a bushy tail and a fox-like head with short, rounded ears.

Bush dogs are native to lowland forests, wet savannas and habitats located near rivers. These social animals occupy burrows in extended family groups. They hunt either in pairs or in small groups. Needless to say, the hunting skills and the social behaviour of dogs render them to be perfect "pets". These traits are reflected in the stories (see 5.2.1).

The short-eared dog prefers a solitary lifestyle and tends to avoid contact with humans. Males can spray a musk when agitated. Its paws are webbed, an adaption to its partly aquatic habitat (Leite-Pitman & Williams 2011; Wilson & Reeder 2005: 582). The narratives reveal a link to this habitat, as the water-realm is the second most common spatial, cosmological setting here (see 4.2.3).

### *Human interactions with dogs*

The bush dog and the short-eared dog can both bark. The small barkless dogs Christopher Columbus came across had probably been specially bred for their silence (Columbus in Hume 1992: 66; Waldron 2010: 119). Spaniards, as well as Amerindians, ate these dogs. The latter also kept larger hunting dogs that did not serve as food for humans (Roe 1995a; Veloz Maggiolo 1997).

In the 17th century, Island Carib kept dogs called "chóu-chou". These medium-sized animals had upright, fox-like ears. Trained to hunt agoutis and lizards, the dogs chase after the agouti, which hides in tree hollows. The dogs catch it when the Carib forces it to abandon its hiding place (Breton et al. 1665: 35 of 50).

The importance of dogs as hunting companions has been described thus: "…they are trained to seize the game and to stay its flight until the huntsman comes up to kill it" (Schomburgk 1848: 48, note 1). Dogs are frequently taught to hunt only one particular animal (e.g., deer, peccary), but certain canines are able to chase after several kinds of creatures indiscriminately. In the latter case, the Amerindians can tell which animal a dog is pursuing by means of its bark. Investing in raising good hunting dogs makes sense as they deliver a high return rate, even higher when compared to firearms (Koster 2009: 575, 585).

Trained dogs were and are a desired trade item for which Amerindians would have travelled from afar to acquire. Warao Amerindians were known to peddle their canoes to Trinidad in

order to trade hunting dogs (Koster 2009: 588-9; Saunders 2005: 96). Even today the Amatopoan (Trio, Cariban) and Waiwai (Cariban) trade hunting dogs (Mans 2012: 114-5).

Strontium isotope analyses of canine teeth also indicate their movements, as the examined prehistoric (not exclusively Saladoid) dogs had been imported from another location than where they were recovered. Canine teeth from burial and domestic sites on Grande-Terre (the eastern island of Guadeloupe), i.e., at Morel, and at Anse à la Gourde include teeth of non-local dogs (Laffoon et al. 2013). These animals could either have been traded or have accompanied their owners when moving to settle on another island.

Dog burials are known throughout the Caribbean. The majority are associated with human burials (Grouard 2001, Grouard et al. 2013; Hofman 1999 et al.; Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013; Shev 2018; Walker 1985; Watters & Petersen 1995: 137; Wing 1991). In certain cases, the dogs were interred separately and presented with their own burial gifts (Hofman 1999 et al.; Plomp 2013). At La Sorcé (site Vieques, Puerto Rico) no less than 20 dog graves were discovered. The legs of several dogs had been tied together, presumably as part of a ritual (Grouard 2001; Saunders 2005: 159). In a number of human burials, "dog" figurines were encountered, which are interpreted as portraits and replacements of the actual dog itself (Hackenberger 1991: 169; Roe 1995a: 163, see also Wauben 2018).

Dogs were evidently traded between the mainland and islands, and between islands. The widespread occurrence of dog remains suggests the possibility that they have circulated as companions, food, ritual items or social valuables (Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013; Shev 2018).

### *Dogs in relation to other animals/birds*

Hunting dogs are especially helpful when chasing prey animals that seek refuge or assume a defensive posture when attacked. The prey most closely associated with hunting dogs include the agouti, paca, collared peccary, brocket deer, and tapir (Koster 2009: 581-2, Table 1). Jaguars may also chase, or even kill, dogs brought along when hunting. Dogs are sometimes even brought along in order to serve as buffers against jaguars.

Whether dogs are also useful when hunting tapirs or white-lipped peccaries is questionable, because they might scare off these prey animals before the hunter is able to shoot. The large white-lipped peccary moves around in large herds, leaving behind a characteristic trace consisting of disturbed vegetation that hunters can track. Whenever large groups of hunters are formed in order to confine a herd, the dogs may actually scare off the peccaries (Koster 2009: 583).

Jaguars or other feline predators are known to attack hunting dogs. Peccaries, coatis and giant anteaters may attack these dogs, too, which if defending themselves can be fatally wounded.

Dogs can succumb to snake bites and scorpion stings. Fire ants cannot kill hunting dogs but may cause blindness.

### 5.2.3 The iconography of "dog"

"Dog" iconography has been identified not only on ceramics but also as zoomorphic depictions of for example wood or precious stone. Wooden, canine-shaped benches have been recovered from the Bahamas, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Jamaica as have pictographs and petroglyphs (Ostapkowicz et al. 2011: 152; Plomp 2013). Dog burials and canine teeth transformed into pendants have been excavated at various sites in the mainland as well as in the islands. Such pendants hail from the Huecoid and Saladoid contexts of Hope Estate (St. Martin), Sorcé (Vieques), Hacienda Grande and Maisabel (Puerto Rico) (Boomert 2000: 412; Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013). Hardwood "Dog"-shaped pendants are also encountered in this region: "jaguar" and "dog" hardwood pendants can probably be ascribed to the burial context of the Morel I site on Guadeloupe (Boomert 2000: 414; Hofman et al. 2014a; Petitjean Roget 1995).

Perforated circular cranium fragments of dogs originating from the Huecan deposits of Sorcé, Vieques have been discussed (Boomert 2000: 412; Chanlatte Baik & Narganes Storde 1989). Isolated dog mandibles and/or crania have been encountered at Vivé (Martinique), Sorcé (Vieques) and Hacienda Grande (Puerto Rico). It has been suggested that teeth and workable bone are "curated" to serve as sources of workable material applied when creating bodily adornments (Boomert 2000: 412; Plomp 2013: 100). Pierced, incised, polished canine bones and a fragment of a tube consisting of dog bone were found on Guadeloupe at the Anse à la Gourde site (Grouard 2001; Hofman & Hoogland 2011; Plomp 2013: 97, Fig. 17).

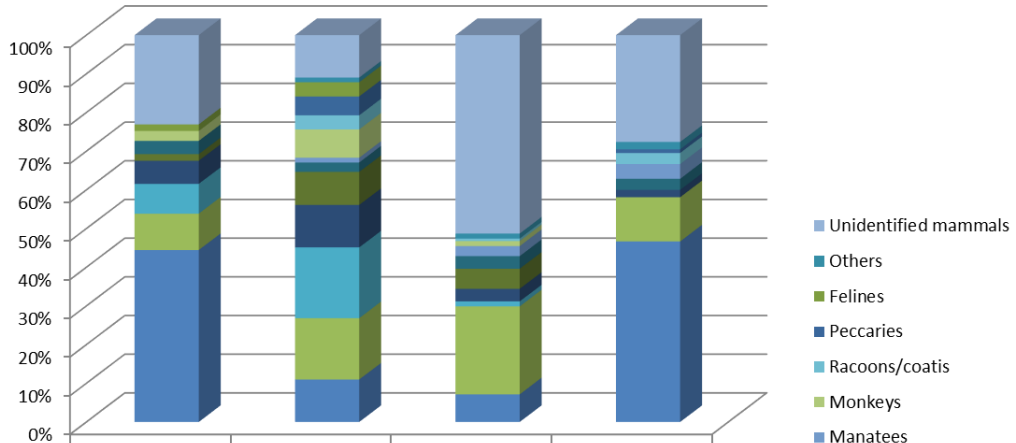
Dog teeth and pendants may have either indicated male prowess or been utilised as a means of protection. It has been suggested that, in the islands, canine teeth replaced jaguar and peccary teeth (Roe 1982, 1995). Isolated crania and mandibles could well be the sources of these teeth and the workable bone material applied when creating bodily adornments (Boomert 2000: 412). Early Saladoid (*c.*800-200 BCE) modified dental canine elements with perforated or carved roots have been recovered from Puerto Rico and St. Martin. These items, however, also occur in contexts associated with the "Taíno", from the Dominican Republic (Ortega 1978; Plomp 2013: 46; Samson 2010: 103-4, 161, 177, 207, 265).

During the Late Ceramic Age (600/800 CE - 1492 CE), an increase in skeletal and dental remains of dogs, as well as the production of "dog" imagery is evident with regard to the Greater Antilles (Shev 2018). However, this era also witnessed a decrease in dog burials and depictions of "dogs" across the Lesser Antilles (Plomp 2013: 100; compare Figs. 2 and 3 for an overview of sites with dog remains known from the Early Ceramic (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE) and the Late Ceramic Age; Shev 2018).

### *"Dogs" depicted on ceramics*

The "dog" imagery, in the form of *adornos,* observed on mainland, as well as island ceramics, is a common phenomenon in the Saladoid series. In the Saladoid ceramics from the Eastern Caribbean, "dogs" now and again appear on certain islands occasionally and more frequently on others (see Table 5.3a/b). Huecoid ceramics produced in the Leeward Islands hugely enhance the quantity of "dog" images in the Caribbean islands (Chanlatte Baik & Narganes Storde 2005; Waldron 2010: 120).[99]

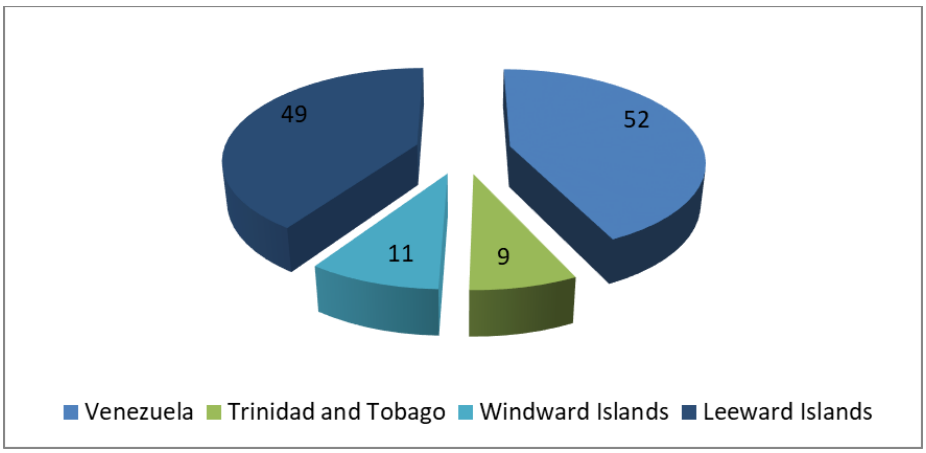
**Table 5.3a.** Identified "dog" *adornos* and their dispersal.




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified mammals | 27 | 9 | 79 | 29 |
| Others | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Felines | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Peccaries | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Racoons/coatis | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Monkeys | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Manatees | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Rodents | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Armadillos | 2 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| Opossums | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| Anteaters | 9 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| Bats | 11 | 13 | 35 | 12 |
| Dogs | 52 | 9 | 11 | 49 |

[99] See Waldron 2010: 403, 406 and 424-7 for illustrations of Venezuelan canine *adornos:* Figs. 2.13; 2.23-left; 4.25 and 4.29; Saladoid: Figs. 2.33; 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30; Huecoid: Figs. 4.26, 4.34, and 4.35.

**Table 5.3b.** The absolute dispersal of identified "dog" *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela.




As to Venezuela and the Leeward Islands, more than 40 percent of all Saladoid mammal *adornos* are identified as "dogs". On Trinidad and Tobago and the Windward Islands resp. 11 percent and 7.1 percent of the mammal *adornos* portray a canine. "Dog" features appear in ceramic lugs (Mattioni & Bullen 1974: 163-4) as well as large, free-standing ceramic effigies (Ostapkowicz et al. 2011: 152; Roe 1995a).

Huecoid "dog" *adornos* occur at sites where almost every other zoomorph follows the Saladoid style. It has been argued that canine *adornos* display certain levels of "stylistic mélange" (Waldron 2010: 121). The diagnostic elements, which are the same for both the Saladoid and Huecoid ceramics are: a small, round head with a frontal point, as opposed to elongations observed with "opossums" and "anteaters" (see Figs. 5.4 and 5.5, p. 157-157). In the case of the Saladoid/Huecan "dog" *adornos* not only the face but the entire body of a canine has been modelled, allowing them to be easier identified (Waldron 2010: 121). However, *adornos* associated with the "Taíno" only display the heads and are identified by a combination of a relatively short and round snout with nostrils (Oudhuis 2008; Wauben 2018).

The Saladoid "canine" *adornos* are mainly positioned on the handles of the vessels. Dog bodies may even form the handles. A zoomorphic *adorno* faces either outwards, upwards or inwards protruding from the rim of the pot (Waldron 2010: 125). The Huecoid "canine" *adornos* are also located on the handles (typically placed on round or oblong vessels). They face inward, peering over the rim into the interior. Several *adornos* are placed not on the exterior, but on the inside of the vessel. They often possess a series of protuberances on their back. The legs are in a squatting position. On occasion, they tilt their heads and look upwards through ringed eyes (Waldron 2010: 125).

**Fig. 5.4.** Saladoid "dog" *adorno* from Vivé, Martinique; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 4.15; length *c.*6.5 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

**Fig. 5.5.** Saladoid "dog" (?) *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; upper right: width *c.*6.0 cm and below *c.*8.1 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

### 5.2.4 “Dog” in Amerindian cosmologies

Dogs and people have interacted throughout history. The domestication of dogs dates to early prehistory. “Dogs” not only seem innate to an ambiguous trait comprising both familiarity and closeness, a pet and a guard (even in the afterlife) but also show the characteristics of a predator and of a “hunting dog”. These qualities have also been recognised in the narratives: (a) being a helpful companion and wife, (b) being a guardian of the souls of the deceased, and (c) expressing qualities as a hunting companion, with an excellent sense of smell and a killer instinct.

“Dogs” are associated with the land-layer as well as with the water-realm and the underworld. The latter two associate the “dog” with the realm of the dead. Encountered in villages and when hunting in the forest, this “animal” interconnects these two realms; it is both a “pet” (civilised) and predator (wild). As a trade item, “dogs” also create a bridge between villages (Plomp 2013: 61-2).

As a guardian of souls, “dogs” are also part of the underworld. They guard and protect the soul of their owners throughout dangerous travels across dark waters. As described in 5.2.2, we know of numerous dog burials, some of which are associated with human burials, while others are linked to their own burial location. “Dog” figurines have been discovered in human graves (Hackenberger 1991: 169; Hofman 1999 et al.; Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013; 1995a: 163; Walker 1985; Watters & Petersen 1995: 137; Wing 1991). These finds further support the conceptualisation of “dogs” as guardians of souls.

#### *“Dogs” as pets or as hunting companions*

The Amerindian peoples have great respect for their (hunting) dogs which they look after well. They do not share their dwellings with their “dogs” but do provide them with their own platforms so they do not have to sleep on the ground (Ahlbrinck 1956: 46). “Hunting dogs” are given names which among the Warao Amerindians are carefully chosen, inspired by creatures known to be skilled hunters, e.g., ants, bees, wasps, giant anteaters, sharks, etc. (Roth 2011 [1915]: 304 [266]).

“Hunting dogs” undergo the same rituals and ceremonies as the hunter does in order to assure success. For instance, a Roucouyennes (Wayana, Cariban) ritual prevents a “jaguar” from attacking the “dog” or the “dog” from being bitten by blood-sucking ticks. This tradition is observed among the Trio and the Wayana, both Cariban groups (Roth 2011 [1915]: 272 [234]). Throughout the Neotropics, a “broad variety of magic, rituals, and charms to enhance their hunting success is employed” (Koster 2009: 589). Recent ethnographical studies carried out among the Waiwai (Cariban) discuss similar ordeals (Howard 2011; Plomp 2013).

The “hunting dog” can be considered a provider of food, but is not hunted itself as a game animal in any tale. A small “dog” called “*aon”* consumed by “Taíno” (Arawakan) has

nonetheless been referred to, but the larger hunting dogs are never eaten (Roe 1995a; Shev 2018; Veloz Maggiolo 1997).

It has been argued that "dogs" form a means of mediation between humans and spirit masters (Brightman 2011: 141; Erikson 2000: 17). This view is based on the fact that the relation between spirit masters and their "animals/pets" is similar to the relation humans uphold with their "dogs" (Plomp 2013: 58; see also section below heading "Human-dog relation").

Interestingly, women take care of the "dogs" (even "suckle them as babies") and enjoy meals together (Howard 2001; Koster 2009: 589-90; Plomp 2013: 61). Men go out hunting with the "dogs" which are not often explicitly trained, but are rather "brought along" in the hope they will learn by means of imitation (Koster 2009: 589), as is also observed among the Corentine Arawak (Roth 2011 [1915]: 272-3 [234]).[100]

Researchers noted a discrepancy in the way "hunting dogs" are treated. Dogs considered "good" hunters apparently receive better treatment than less successful ones (Koster 2009: 575; Plomp 2013: 62). Moreover, "dogs" survive by scavenging for left-overs and food scraps, even consuming human excrement on a regular basis (Koster 2009: 589-90).[101]

With the Runa (Quichua, Ecuador), humans and "dogs" live in separate worlds. "Dogs" are often ignored and not always fed. On the other hand, the lives of the Runa and "dogs" are interwoven not only within the context of the village but also as a product of their interaction with the "biotic world" of the forest and the socio-political world beyond. We read: "Dogs have penetrated human social worlds in such an extent that they even exceed chimpanzees in human understanding. Becoming 'human' … is central to surviving as a dog in Ávila", i.e., a village of the Runa (Kohn 2009: 9).

### *Human-dog relation*

The entanglement of humans and "dogs" as described above could also be conceptualised by means of the scheme of familiarizing predation (Fausto 2008).[102] Familiarizing predation is a mode of relationship in which predatory relations are converted into asymmetric relations of control and protection, which is conceptualised as a form of adoption. When converted, the Owner/Master (i.e., "magnified person") holds not only control and prestige but also the

[100] Plomp (2013) presents various recent ethnographical studies on the use of pets by contemporary Amerindian communities (Waiwai, Trio, Wayana (Cariban)). As a case study, Howard's research among the Waiwai, indicates that men train the hunting dogs to be good hunters (Plomp 2013, see also 5.2.2).
[101] Koster (2009) based his statements on anthropological research carried out among the Mehinaku (Arawakan, Brazil), Juma/Kagwahiv (Tupi-Guarani, Brazil), Yaruruos (unclassified, Venezuela) Shipibo (Panoan, Peru), Cayapó (Gê, Brazil), and Macushi (Cariban, Guyana) communities.
[102] Fausto in his (2008) article "Too many owners" discusses the indigenous Amazonian concept of mastery (owner/master versus adopted/pet/child). See also section 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or "ownership*".

responsibility to take care of the adopted (Fausto 2008: 330-1). From this point of view, this relation enables the eliciting of attention and generosity. Both the Owner and the adopted must, however, contain their own subjectivity (being merely an "incomplete filiation"). This implies not only that the adopted can never become entirely tamed and domesticated but also that the chance (fear) remains that the adopted might dominate the Owner.

The relations of mastery are "multiple and potentially infinite. Neither are they given once and for all" (Fausto 2008: 339). The Masters, or magnified persons, are constituted by incorporating relations with other "selves" (beings with a conscience and will). Imposing their own perspective, they are at constant risk of losing this viewpoint (Fausto 2008: 341).

This risk of losing one's perspective also applies to the human-dog relation. Humans are the Masters, who are obliged to care and protect. We also live in fear that the subjectivity of the "dog" (its untamedness) may prevail over us. This could explain the ambiguity of this relationship and result in owners maltreating their "dogs" i.e., leaving the "dogs" to look after themselves. In certain narratives this phenomenon has been contextualised as the dog-woman whose "dog clothing" (i.e., physical attributes, or dogness) needs to be set alight and burned, allowing the protagonist to marry the "Dog" (see 5.2.1).

Presumably contributing to this ambivalence as to the human-dog relationship is the fact that "dogs" also act as the protectors of humans. In a number of cases, the "Dog" actors on occasion even protect or revenge their Masters. This is, in fact, the type of behaviour expressed by the Master/Owner and not the adopted. Moreover, this relation is not fixed, because you can never be sure who is the Master and who the adopted.

### *Taboos concerning "hunting dogs"*

Menstruating women are prohibited to consume the meat of tapirs, turtles and fish, or any prey caught by "hunting dogs". According to the Lokono (Arawak) who reside near the Pomeroon River (Guyana), pregnant women should not eat large game "animals", nor any meat obtained by means of "hunting dogs" (Roth 2011 [1915]: 321 [280]). According to the Kaliña (Cariban), pregnant women may cause a "dog" to lose its hunting skills (de Goeje 1943: 30; Roth 2011 [1915]: 321 [280]).

In order to ensure success hunters and their "dogs" are subjected to similar ordeals (Descola 1994: 232; Howard 2001: 242; Roth 1924: 178; Schwartz 1997: 47-9). These trials often involve food taboos. A Jibaro (Jivaroan) rite carried out by owners of a "dog" they wished to breed involves not only abstaining from certain kinds of "animals" and/or parts of "animals", but also not looking at certain "animals" (e.g., "jaguars", "snakes"). A large feast after which the "dog" is inaugurated as a "hunting dog" concludes this ceremony (Karsten 1935: 70).

As to food taboos for "dogs": they must never feed on certain kinds of "animals" or they will lose their hunting skills (Ahlbrinck 1956: 46; Karsten 1935: 165; Roth 2011 [1915]: 292 [251]).

If any beaks of the *kinoros* bird (*Ara Canga*) are thrown into the river, "dogs" could be poisoned. The wings and the breast bones of specific "birds", and other animals including those of *labba* and *acouri* are hung high above the ground in order to prevent "dogs" from eating them. If they do, "dogs" will never kill that particular animal again (Roth 2011 [1915]: 292).

"Dogs" are fed *cassava** stuffed with a certain kind of ant (in Arawakan: *kudu-kudu-barilya*) which is roasted in order to turn them into excellent hunters (Roth 2011 [1915]: 275 [236]). For the Runa (Quichua, Ecuador), the soul of each "animal" is located in specific body parts and is transferable via the ingestion of these parts. "Dogs" are for instance fed the bile or sternum of an "agouti" in order to increase their awareness of the "agouti", that is to enhance their ability to detect prey (Kohn 2007: 8). It is an Arawakan practice to tie a lazy "dog" near a nest of wasps or poisonous ants (de Goeje 1943: 58).

### *Guardian of the soul*

The "dog" as guardian of the (underworld) realm of the dead is a theme encountered in stories across the globe and is thus also common to Amerindian narratives, especially in the region stretching from Mexico to Peru (Berezkin 2005; Schwartz 1997). Therefore, the fact that this theme rarely appears in the corpus of the present research is perhaps a surprise. For, only in Story no. 423 (Yukpa, Cariban) do we come across this theme and adjacent motifs. However, a reference does occur concerning a "Taíno" myth, which mentions a "canine" ancestral spirit (*zemi*) called Opiyel Guobirán: the guardian spirit of the dead (Keegan 2007: 38-9; Oliver 1998: 137-8; Shev 2018; Stevens-Arroyo 2006: 232, 237; Waldron 2010: 122). The absence of the "dog" as guardian of the soul in the Amazonian narratives has been described as a discrepancy (Benson 1991).

With regard to the "dog" as guardian of the souls, this animal was killed and buried along with its owner in order to protect him, not only to keep an eye on those who had killed him, but also to supply the deceased with food by hunting for them in the afterlife (Boomert 2000: 396; Cárdenas-Ruiz 1981; de la Borde 1886: 252; Plomp 2013; Roth 2011 [1915]: 95 [76]). The "dog" also serves as a guardian of the Path of the Souls (Ahlbrinck 1931: 206-8). Various Cariban indigenous groups believe that whenever an individual passes away, he or she is waited for by spirits. The Kaliña refer to them as *pero-tamula* (lit.: "grandfather-dog"), the Taulipang as *aimalaga-podole* (lit.: "dog-chief") and the Lokono (Arawakan) as *pero-oyo* (lit.: "mother-dog") (de Goeje 1943: 12, see also note 14).

According to a Taulipang (Cariban) belief, the souls of the dead travel along the *Seelenwege* leading to the East (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 173-4) where the *Aimalága-pódole,* the "Father of Dogs" (or *pero-oyo,* lilt.: "mother-dog"), who owns many "dogs" resides (de Goeje 1943: 11, note 12; Koch-Grünberg 1923: 173-4). Whenever a "dog" on Earth is mistreated and dies, its soul complains to the "Father of Dogs". After the abuser has passed away and his soul travels on, the "Father of Dogs", knowing what had transpired, orders other "dogs" to grab and kill

this soul. Whenever the soul of a good person appears, they let it through enabling it to enter a large house inhabited by many other canines (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 173-4). Analogous beliefs (including a "dog" as guardian of the Path of the Souls) have been encountered among the Rama, Chibchan speakers of Costa Rica (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 173, note 3).

The soul has to confess its evil deeds, is urged to meditate on its life on Earth and is assisted in order to purify itself (de Goeje 1943: 12, note 14). When passing by its "dog"-spirit, the soul is asked whether it ever has harmed a "dog", man's friend. If it has been good to a "dog", the spirit wags its tail. Next, the mother-dog provides the deceased's spirit with for instance *cassiri**. Did it indeed ever harm a "dog", the spirit of that canine will bring a charge against it. If the mother-dog founds it guilty, the spirit will receive nothing (de Goeje 1943: 11, note 12).

According to Kaliña (Cariban) beliefs, the deceased visits the "toad"-grandfather to confess whether it has killed any "toads" (i.e., has harmed anyone). After looking up the grandfather-dog in order to disclose whether he has killed "dogs" (i.e., had engaged in faithlessness, seduction, treachery, perfidy), the soul can travel further (de Goeje 1943: 84).

This reference to the "dog" as a guardian of the deceased does fit in well with the theme observed within the analysed narratives which refer to "Dogs" being treated well. To the Amerindian audience, it may even be clear that this theme is related to this particular role played by "dogs".

### *Shift in display and connotation between the South American mainland and the Lesser and Greater Antilles*

It has been argued that the increase of modifications of dog teeth during the Late Ceramic Age (600/800 CE-1492 CE) indicates a change in perception as well as an enhancing significance of these teeth as social valuables (Plomp 2013: 120, 128). The mobility of dogs may have decreased as has the mobility of individuals during this era. Any "dog" depictions or related forms of display, such as teeth, may well have now grown in importance (Plomp 2013: 130).

The Huecan "dog" ceramic imagery is considered the link between a contrasting discussion on canine images created in the earlier eastern and later northern culture. Waldron's main argument for this conclusion is: the position of the Huecan "dog" *adorno.* He describes that Huecan *adorno* placement on the vessel is a deviation (from its Saladoid counterpart), because the Huecan "... canine bodies almost all double-back to peer over the pot rim into its interior". Or the Huecan *adornos* are placed on the inside, just below the rim and therefore "… do not constitute the usual Antillean (i.e., Saladoid and Barancoid) nexus between the practical handle and the symbolic adorno" (Waldron 2010: 215). It is therefore concluded that Huecan "dog" *adornos* "… enter into a closer relation with the vessel contents: presumably water and

other liquids; and the meanings of those liquids", and are thus more associated with water and the underworld (Waldron 2010: 125-6).

### 5.2.5 Concluding remarks

Dogs accompanied Paleo-Indians into the Americas but dogs were apparently not present within many Amazonian societies until the historic period. However, the imagery of "dogs" and burials have been identified as dating from the Early Ceramic Age in the Lower Orinoco, Guianas and the Caribbean islands.

Certain indications reveal that native dogs are less suited to hunt when compared with European dogs. Early signs of domestication have been reported. These local dog species are quite capable of digging up prey. They also could have assisted when hunting smaller prey (e.g., amphibians, birds, small mammals). In particular, references to "non-barking" dogs inhabiting the islands could indicate their significance as hunters. The hunting dog is one of the main sub-clusters identified in the "Dog" narratives (see 5.2.1). Historic sources, as well as archaeological evidence, confirm that canines were mobile, kept as pets and presumably traded.

Various "dog" portraits, worked teeth and crania and "dog" burials found on a number of islands demonstrate their significance to the Amerindians, which is also associated with the Saladoid style. Ethnographic accounts and the many narratives which include "Dog" personage(s) further support their relevance.

In addition to assisting when hunting, dogs were probably taken along on journeys as a means of protection. Although larger predators were absent in the islands, the "dogs" may have served as a safeguard during journeys to other islands, war, raids and possible encounters with *significant other-than-human-persons** with whom the Amerindians share their place in the world. In addition, it has been mentioned that the "dog" acts as a keeper of the deceased, by leading and/or protecting its Master's soul.

The Amerindians as Masters/Owners of "dogs" conceptualise a dualistic relation between peoples and their dogs in which both are entangled in familiarizing predation that could evolve in two directions. This relation involves prestige as well as the responsibility to take care of the adopted, whereby, however, only an incomplete affiliation is possible: "the adopted" is never completely tamed and/or domesticated, but has its own subjectivity. In the narratives, this ambiguity is presumably related to the various taboos entangled with "dogs" in order to maintain mastery/ownership.

As a guardian of the deceased, a "dog" is also linked to the realm of the underworld and to crossing water in order to reach this realm. Various "dog" burials support this association which has not been identified as a motif in the mainland narratives investigated during this

research. Motifs related to treating a “dog” properly could, however, indirectly refer to its role as guardian in the afterlife.

The conceptualisation of “dogs” may have shifted between the Early and Late Ceramic Age, for instance, when considering: (a) an increase in iconographical occurrences, and (b) a decreasing number of burial sites which could indicate that the “dog” display gained in importance. The quantity of “dog” *adornos* increased when communities during the Ceramic Age (Early 800/200 BCE-400/600 CE to Late 600/800 CE-1492 CE) migrated to the islands. The “dog” was primarily displayed on ceramics. On the other hand, the “Taíno” of the Greater Antilles portrayed “dogs” on precious stones, shells and wood to perhaps serve as items of worship.

Canine bone material and teeth may have been another means through which “dog” is displayed. Pendants made of dog teeth have been recovered from the mainland and from islands as were pendants consisting of other materials. Worked bone material also occurs. These teeth were probably worn to either protect or to serve as signals of male prowess and hunting skill.

Saladoid imagery and *adornos* were common, too. Especially the Huecoid ceramics greatly enhanced the quantity of identified “dog” iconography. The most recognisable features comprise a short, round head. The majority of the *adornos* even display entire bodies rendering them even more straightforward to identify. Positioned on the vessels, their bodies form the handle and tend to face outwards, upwards or inwards. In general, the Huecoid specimens face inwards.

“Dogs” were part of exchange networks not only within the insular Caribbean and beyond, but also with mainland regions. Portraits of “dogs” as well as “dogs” themselves may have been social valuables (Plomp 2013: 128-30, 133). The decline of the number of dog burial sites and *adornos* in spite of an increase in other forms of display (e.g., dog (teeth) pendants) could suggest their rise in status as a social asset. Moreover, these depictions may well have surpassed the importance of the (physical) “dogs” themselves.

The present research was launched in order to create a frame of reference to better interpret and understand the zoomorphic Saladoid imagery. How the Amerindians interpreted (or actually interrelated with) a specific bowl, amulet or archaeological find cannot be entirely established. The inherent dualism of the “dog” as a domestic animal and a predator presumably shaped how Amerindians interrelate with canines. “Dogs” are predators, hunters, food providers as well as guardians of the living and of the deceased. A dog’s bark informs the Amerindians, leads them to prey, and through life and afterlife. Pet “dogs” are faithful, but also ambiguous companions. The entire corpus of “Dog” narratives, imagery and the everyday interaction with canines may well reflect this interrelatedness.

As a frame of reference arising from the South American mainland, spreading throughout the Lesser and the Greater Antilles, from the Early to the Late Ceramic Age, the "dog" has ostensibly been a predator i.e., a hunter, a provider of food, a friend/pet, and a guide for souls.

## 5.3 "Bat"

The "bat" as a cultural *sign** will now receive a broader contextualisation. Firstly its role in the narratives, then inatural behaviour and physical characteristics are described. Next, the focus will rest on "bat" imagery and on other occurrences in the Caribbean (and Venezuelan) archaeological records. Further information on the position of the "bat" in indigenous cosmologies, including ethnographic and ethnohistoric accounts, has been added (see 5.3.4).

### 5.3.1 "Bat" in the narratives

> A man, a Trio takes shelter for the night in a house in an abandoned village. In that house, he finds graves and dead bodies. He couldn't sleep. Spirits came, they were Bats. The Bats entered the house and went to the graves. The Trio blew on a piece of wood and threw it into the grave where all the Bats were. The Bats disappeared. The next day he went to another place, but that night the Bats attacked again. They followed the Trio but then he stabbed them, the spirits were dead and the Trio went home to tell about his ordeal. [Story no. 369 (Trio, Cariban); abridged with a shortened introduction]

"Bat" is indeed a common actor (or motif) in narratives. The present research includes 33 examples of these tales (see Appendix D, section D). They have been recorded for all the most prominent language families encountered in and outside the core area: Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Panoan, Tacanan, Ticuna, Tupian, and Warao (see Fig. 5.6).

The identified narrative functions of these stories are in line with the general pattern.[103] The three most common functions are entitled: (a) validating the world, (b) informing, and (c) ensuring knowledge (see Appendix C, Table C-5 for a list of all narrative functions of the "Bat" narratives). The Amerindian audience is for instance reminded not go about at night. And, if you must stay out at night, at least build a suitable hiding place. Moreover, you are enjoined not to interact with, or to behave in a "Bat"-like manner, or else you will transform into one.

Overall the image of "Bat" as a *sign**, when presented in the narratives, is very homogenous. The reason for this is: they display similar motifs as well as a spatial and temporal setting for the "Bat" personage.

[103] $\chi^2(4) = 7.07$; $\rho = 0.13$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section *D. General remarks* for a more elaborate discussion on narrative functions.

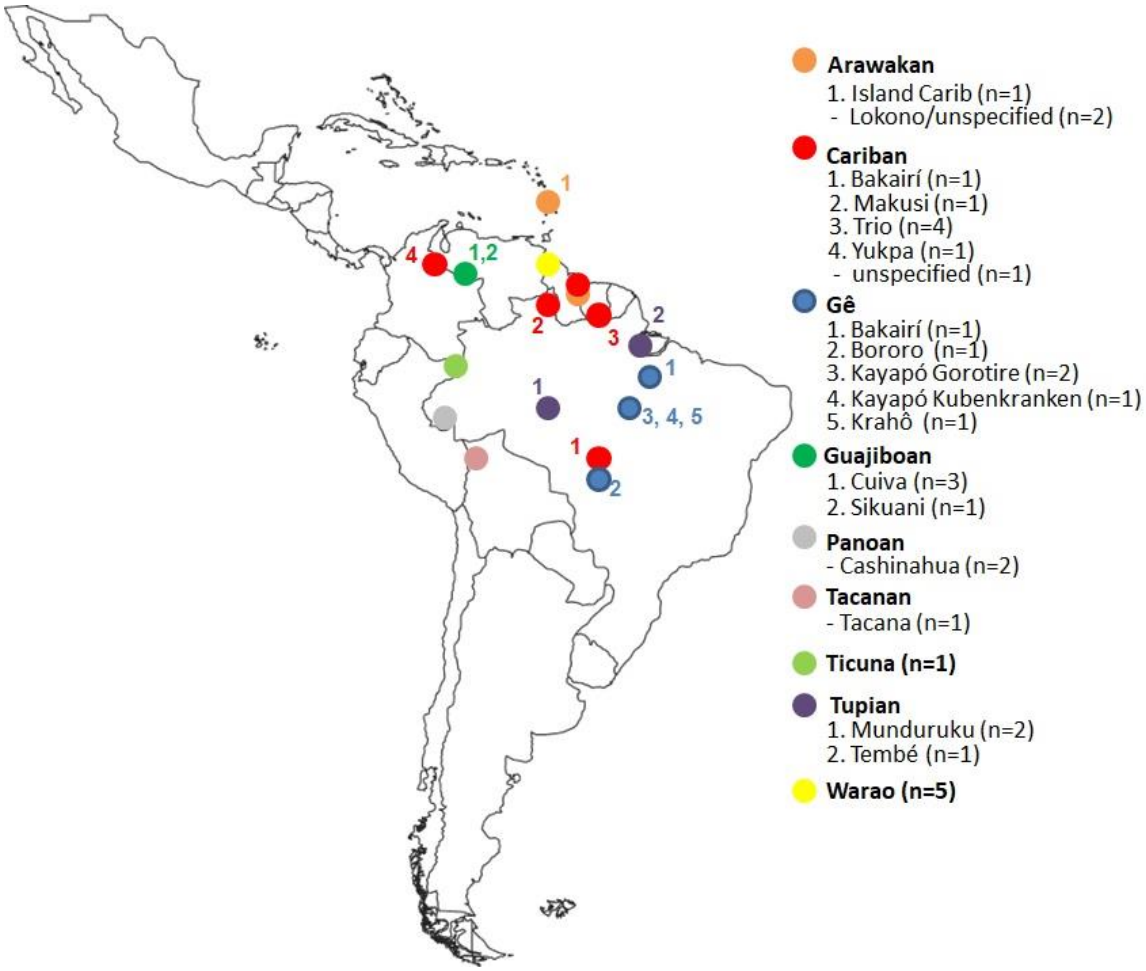



**Fig. 5.6.** Plot of "Bat" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

### *About actors, events and settings ("fabula")*

The most prominent frame set for "Bats" comprises a malevolent "animal" (opponent) often explicitly described as a spirit, associated with the nocturnal hours. Within this category, the following sub-clusters have been established: (a) Devastating "Bat" (n=20), (b) "Bat" as a creature of the night and darkness (n=6), and (c) "Bat" and laughter (n=5). The sub-cluster (a) includes three related major themes: the evil "Bat" (n=10), the bloodsucking "Bat" (n=4) and the "Bat" as a spirit (n=8, see Appendix D, section D1).

Roles played by the "Bat"-actor demonstrate a significant variation.[104] A "Bat" is more often ascribed the role of an opponent and object/goal, not so much that of a helper and sender. The other parts played are in line with the general pattern. Often the opponent, the "Bat" frequently becomes an object for people to hunt and kill in response. For instance, the "Bat"(-spirits) is/are destroyed by flames when either its/their hiding places (e.g., a tree hollow) or habitat (cave) is set alight.

[104] $\chi^2(5) = 13.78$; $\rho = 0.02$ (significant). See Appendix D, section D. Fabula for more detailed information on ascribed roles.

The dominant motifs are reflected in the sub-clusters. Their "Top 5" comprises: (a) the devastating "Bat" (n=20), (b) various transformations (n=8), (c) night/darkness (n=6), (d) the "animal's" haunt (n=6), and (e) the bloodsucking "animal" (n=5) (see Appendix D, section D. Fabula).

A forest setting dominates the spatial setting in which the "Bat" is framed. Cave (i.e., part of the *axis mundi*, see 4.2.3) is the prevailing cosmic layer, followed by sky, land (specifically: mountain) and underworld. It is noteworthy that (hollow) trees are frequently mentioned as places where "Bat" hides. Both caves and (hollow) trees are indeed natural habitats for this nocturnal species. These spatial contexts are thus to be expected. Moreover, "Bat" repeatedly acts as an opponent in the sky setting, whereas generally speaking the sky world has a positive connotation.

As to the temporal setting, "Bat" is generally active at night. Only a single reference is found concerning a dusk setting. As bats become active when the sun sets, one would expect more references to that temporal context (see Appendix D, section D. Fabula for more details on the setting).

### Devastating "Bat"

As a (malevolent) spirit or "animal", "Bat" is portrayed as an opponent that injures, abducts (Story nos. 371, 410, 558; 2x Cariban, Gê) and kills (Story nos. 53, 145, 371, 505, 558: 2x Cariban, Tupian, Warao, Gê) Amerindians during the night. Other narratives depict "Bat" as a vicious bloodsucker against which you should protect yourself by means of adequate shelter. Bloodsucking is associated with the "Bat", and even serves as an analogy: sucking blood is indeed being a "Bat". Or, "Bat" as a malevolent nocturnal spirit causes diseases and death. In other cases, "Bat" is linked to death, as "Bat" spirits visit burial grounds in order to feed on corpses. In Story no. 369 (Trio, Cariban), "Bat" wears human fingers as adornments attached to its wrist. [105]

In eight narratives, "Bats" are directly related to spirits and are indeed described as spirits (Story nos. 9, 53, 145, 204, 369-70, 374, 505; Island Carib of Dominica (Arawakan), 4x Trio (Cariban), Munduruku (Tupian), Gê, and Warao). An analogy between fruit-eating bats and ancestral spirits occurs in "Taíno" myths written down by Fr. Pané during his travels with Columbus (Pané 1999 [1498]; see 5.3.4). In certain instances, "Bat" is associated with other "animal" spirits. Interesting is the hierarchy among these ("animal") spirits as dealt with in a Trio narrative (Story no. 370; Cariban); "Bat" (*matïtïkïri,* Trio Cariban) officiates as the

[105] All narratives in this sub-cluster are numbered: 9, 53, 145, 155, 204, 210-11, 369-72, 374, 410, 435, 450, 505, 558, 612, and 703 (Arawakan (i.e., Lokono, Island Carib), Cariban (i.e., Trio, Makushi, Yukpa), Gê (i.e., Apinayé, Cayapó-Kubenkranken, Cayapó-Gorotire), Guajiboan (i.e., Cuiva), Panoan (i.e., Cashinahua), Tupian (i.e., Munduruku), and Warao).

President of Spirits and gives orders to "Nightjar" (*mirokoko*), who is a minister (see also under the heading *With whom is "Bat" associated*).

### "Bat" as a creature of night and darkness

Narratives featuring "Bat" as a nocturnal creature attest the interrelatedness between "Bat" and the night and darkness.[106] This fact has already become apparent through the predominance of the night-time as a temporal setting for all "Bat" narratives. This sub-cluster also encompasses motifs concerning "the origin of the night" and "primeval darkness" (see Story nos. 116, 146, 158; Bakairí (Cariban), Tembé, Munduruku (Tupian)), as well as motifs linking the night to behavioural aspects of "Bats" (e.g., "Bat" heralds the night; "Bat" is only active at night; Story nos. 158 and 212: Tembé (Tupian), Tacanan). As these creatures are nocturnal and become active at dusk, this association is rooted in natural behaviour (see Appendix D, section D2 and 5.3.2).

It should be noted that all stories included in the sub-cluster entitled "Bat as a creature of the night and darkness" stem from outside the core area. However, these motifs likely have been familiar to the Amerindians residing in the core area, because these motifs are so widely spread, and because of the natural behaviour of this species, "bat" is likely to be associated with the night. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that in the core area, too, the "Bat" is linked to the night by means of its temporal setting. Interestingly, in the cluster "Bat as a creature of night and darkness", its ascribed roles are not dominated by an opponent, but indeed attributed to the role of helper: once as an advisor (i.e., disclosing where the protagonists could sleep) and once as a guide to lead others out of the impenetrable darkness.

### "Bat" and laughter

Yet another recurrent motif in the corpus of "Bat" narratives is "laughter" (see Story nos. 211, 212, 374, 559; 2x Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê), Tacana (Tacanan), Trio (Cariban)). "Bat" is laughed at (with a negative outcome for the Amerindians), "Bat" laughs (with a negative result for itself), and "Bat" causes the Amerindians to laugh (with negative results for both). Laughing (often considered taboo) is a frequent motif in Amerindian narratives. Uncontrolled laughter is considered effeminate (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 122). Remarkably it is repeatedly encountered in "Bat" narratives. This association could be rooted in natural behaviour (i.e., the cackling sound a larger species produces, see 5.3.2). Again, in this cluster, "Bat" is not portrayed as a dangerous opponent although the subsequent laughter does have a negative outcome. Story no. 211 (Cayapó-Gorotire, Gê) explicitly states that "Bat" means no harm when caressing the Amerindian. This cluster also reveals a discrepancy in spatial setting. For, in 75 percent of the cases "Bat" (also) acts within a village setting, whereas overall the forest setting dominates in the "Bat" stories (see also Appendix D, section D3).

[106] All narratives with "Bat" as a nocturnal creature are numbered: 116, 146, 158, 212, 516, 558 (Cariban (i.e., Bakairí), Tupian (i.e., Munduruku, Tembé), Tacanan (i.e., Tacana); Gê (i.e., unspecified, Apinayé)).

### Cultivated plants/tobacco

The “fruit-eating bat” has been identified in “Taíno” folklore (see 5.3.4), whereas associations with “Bats” and plants or with fruits appear to be rare in mainland narratives. However, the ecological role of bats in fertilising plants and dispersing seeds could also have been witnessed by mainland Amerindians. Nevertheless, only four narratives interrelate “Bats” with certain plants (see Story nos. 9, 181, 204, 452; Island Carib (Arawakan), Cashinahua (Panoan), Bororo, (Gê) and Warao.

In Story no. 452 (Warao), “Bat” and cultivated plants are the result of a single transformation whereby the ashes of the “Howler monkey’s” wife and a paralysed servant transform into (presumably nocturnal) “Black birds”, “Bats”, “Lizards” and cultivated plants. In Story no. 181, an elderly rat decides to transmute into a “Bat” because it, too, wishes to live at night and eat ripe bananas or papayas. However, it is also explained that these “Bats” bite us humans.

In Story nos. 9 and 204 (Arawakan, Gê), an association between “Bat”(-spirits) and tobacco is established. In Story no. 204 (Bororo, Gê), the (spirit) Master of Tobacco appears in the form of a “vampire” to teach Amerindians how to smoke tobacco correctly. In Story no. 9 (Island Carib, Arawakan), a woman visits the cave home to a zombie to collect a charm. If one comes across this zombie somebody will die soon. She wishes to apply this charm in order to give commands to her husband, who mistreats her. When visiting this place you should take with you a white rooster or at least some powdered tobacco to present to the “Spirit of the Rock”. This narrative apparently refers to a “Bat”-spirit. However, as tobacco is in general considered the food of spirits, this supposed association is very weak.

On the basis of the four stories just mentioned, any suggested link between “Bats” and cultivated plants/tobacco is not very strong, because these stories (Story nos. 9, 181, 204, 452) are not very consistent. However, at least three of the four cases directly interconnect “Bat” to respectively cultivated plants and tobacco and they stem from various (regionally dispersed) language families (see also 5.3.4).

### With whom is “Bat” associated?

When looking into the issue with whom is “Bat” associated in the studied corpus, the following “animals” occur in multiple narratives: “Birds” (in general), “Lizards”, and “Vultures”. Other “animals” (in this case “Owl” and “Fish”) are also of interest as they interact directly, or are directly associated, with “Bats” (see also Appendix D, section D1. Fabula).

#### *“Birds”*

In Story no. 146 (Munduruku, Tupian), humans originated from the underworld. The unattractive, lethargic humans turned into “Birds”, “Bats”, “Pigs” and “Butterflies”. In Story no. 452 (Warao), the ashes of a “Howler monkey’s” wife and of a paralysed servant transformed into “Black birds”, “Bats”, “Lizards” and cultivated plants. In Story no. 9 (Island

Carib, Arawakan), a husband changes into a “Bird” to leave behind his wife who no longer needed him. Prior hereto his wife had visited the (“Bat”) spirit in order to gain control over her husband who mistreated her.

In two instances “Birds” and “Bats” (indirectly) oppose each other. In Story no. 145 (Munduruku, Tupian), “Birds” inform the protagonist how to escape from the “Bloodsucking bat”. In Story no. 158 (Tembé, Tupian), “Birds” asked “Bat” to help them to raise the sky, but “Bat” refuses, resulting in it having to sleep upside down. Although “Bats” and “Birds” co-occur on seven occasions, they apparently do not interact directly. “Bird” is, in general, a recurrent zoomorphic actor, or motif, within narratives (see 6.1).

*“Vulture”*

“Bat” and “Vulture” feature together in four narratives. In Story no. 612 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), “Bat” and “Vulture” play the same role: they attack the returning protagonist, who had visited the upper world. Following “Heron’s” advice, the protagonist paints his face and is thus protected against his attackers. In Story no. 116 (Bakairí, Cariban), the Twin Heroes take the Sun from “Vulture” and subsequently had difficulties sleeping. A “Bat”-wife suggested to them to fetch sleep from “Lizard”. Story no. 115 (Arawakan) consists of two episodes: one concerns the dangers of a “Bloodsucking bat” and the other a “Vulture” that teaches Amerindians how to paddle. Forming completely separate episodes, there does not seem to be any direct relatedness between the two.

Story no. 171 (Cashinahua, Panoan) concerns a chopped-off head stuck onto a stick. This head mentions it could transform into “Scorpion”/“Bat” that would bite, so that people would have to kill it. At first, people try to carry the head by putting it in a basket, but it keeps falling out. As this is regarded as a bad omen, they leave the head behind. Having set off in pursuit, it persuades the people to give it a strand of yarn. Heavenly “Vultures” next help this head by taking the yarn and travelling with it to Heaven where the “Vulture” ties the yarn to the head, then puts the other end in its mouth to become the Moon.

In sum, the narratives differ greatly. The “Bat” and “Vulture” interact directly in only one case. The sky world ostensibly links “Bats” and “Vultures” which both interact or feature within this particular context.

*“Lizard”*

Story nos. 116, 452, 505, 653 feature “Bat” and “Lizard”. Two of them are related to transformations of which Story no. 452 (Warao) is mentioned above. In Story no. 505 (Warao) a girl “escapes” from evil spirits by turning into a “Lizard”. Later on in this tale, the malevolent spirits turn into “Vampire bats”.

In Story no. 116 (Bakairí, Cariban), a “Bat” wife advises Twin protagonists to fetch sleep from “Lizard” after they had taken the Sun from “Vulture”. In Story no. 653 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), both “Lizard” and “Bat” play a role whereby “animals” try to cut down the magic, fruit-bearing tree. When “Lizard” crawls into the anus of the Master of Axes, this results in retrieving the axes and other tools. After death and disease had arrived on Earth, “animals” wish to enter the upper world. A “Vampire bat” prevents other “animals” from doing so.

The only direct association here is: (a) they are the outcome of the same transformation, and (b) a “Bat” wife directs the protagonist towards “Lizard” in order to fetch sleep. Due to a lack of coherence, it is not clear if “Bats” and “Lizards” are truly interrelated motifs in the narratological context.

*“Owl” and “Fish”*

As to the analysis of the clusters, two others are worthy of mentioning: the “Owl” (see Story nos. 158 and 372), and “(Cat)Fish” (see Story nos. 115, 703, 204). The fact both fly at night links “Owl” and “Bat”. In Story no. 372 (Warao), they are explicitly related (as brothers-in-law). Together they set off at night in order to scare people at which “Owl” is more successful. He warns “Bat” not to try to scare people by itself. Having ignored this warning, “Bat” is killed by the Amerindians after which “Owl” brings “Bat” back to life. In Story no. 158 (Tembé, Tupian), the sounds of “Bats” and “Owls” among other creatures audible from inside a pot inform the protagonist it contains the night. Various authors have written extensively on this shared connotation as being embodied spirits (e.g., García Arévalo 1988; Roth 2011; Waldron 2010). See also 8.3.3 (under the sub-heading *Embodied identities*) for a discussion on their shared attributes and association.

“Bat” co-occurs with “Fish” in three cases, but only in one are “Fish” and “Bat” related. In the Story nos. 115 and 703 (Arawakan), Amerindians set off on a “quest” travelling to various places. In a certain episode, they visit “Fish” nation and, in another instance, the Land of “Bats”. More interestingly, in Story no. 204, Amerindians find tobacco in the stomach of a “Catfish”. They first smoke it incorrectly. Next, the spirit of tobacco appears to them in the form of a Vampire and teaches them how to smoke.

*Fellow spirits*

Certain “animals” are evidently interchangeable with the “Bat”. They, too, are malevolent (nocturnal) spirits. This phenomenon may concern the “Nightjar” (see Story no. 370; Trio, Cariban) and the “Opossum” (see Story no. 53; Trio, Cariban), bearing in mind the discrepancy whereby both “Nightjar” and “Bat” are described as “night spirits” and act as companions, side by side (as is the case with the aforementioned interaction between “Owl” and “Bat”). Here the “Bat” (officiating as president) instructs all spirits not to harm the elder woman. “Opossum” is merely mentioned thus: “Everywhere he [the Amerindian protagonist] went he found the same situation ... sick people, sick people everywhere. And also all sorts of spirits,

opossums, bats. He burnt them all to death" (Cited from Story no. 53; Trio, Cariban). In Story no. 505 (Warao), malevolent "Bat" spirits hide inside a hollow tree in an attempt to fool pursuers by stating they are a "Grandfather of Howler monkeys".

The "Bat" personage is apparently first and foremost associated with "animals" that share its connotations as a nocturnal creature and as an embodiment of spirits such as "Owl", "Opossum" and "Nightjar". As a "flying opponent", the "Bat"-personage also co-acts with "Vulture". Only a single narrative links tobacco to both "Fish" and "Bat".

### *Characterization and duration ("Story")*

Although "Bat" is frequently indirectly characterized, a number of specific details, both physical as behavioural, concerning "Bat" have been described directly. These explicit attributes are therefore highly likely also to be present in other forms of display of "Bat" as a *sign**. For the aspects encountered in the various narratives, see Table 5.4.

Interestingly, a direct description in Story no. 369 (Trio; Cariban) mentions that "Bat" wears human fingers as a wrist adornment (see Appendix D, section D. Story-layer for more details on characterization).

**Table 5.4.** The physical and behavioural features of "Bat" as described in the narratives.

| Physical | Behavioural |
|---|---|
| (Bat) wings | Sucks on clothes |
| Feet | Only flies by night |
| Long pointing nails | Active at night; eats fresh bananas and papayas |
| Nose patches | Sleeps upside down (see Fig. 5.7) |
| Enormous ears (vampire bat) | |
| Long snout for sucking blood | |

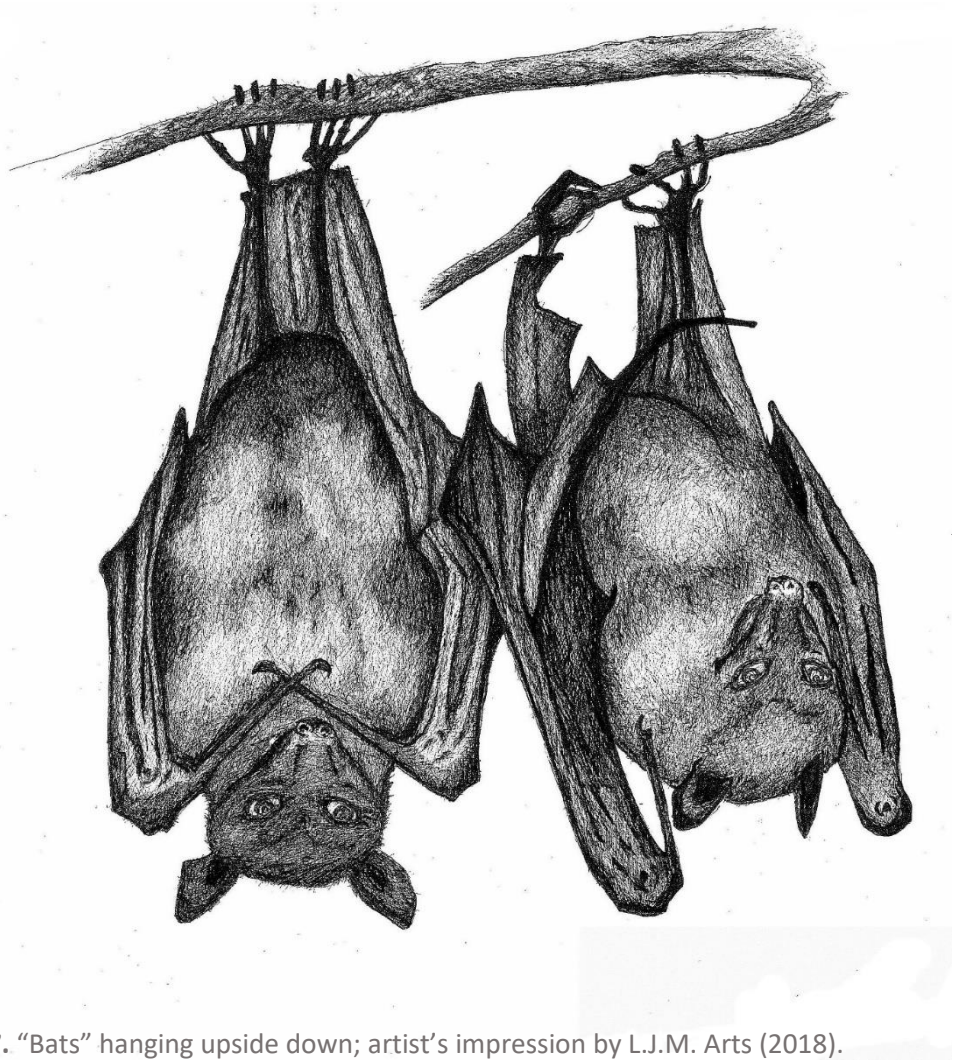


**Fig. 5.7.** "Bats" hanging upside down; artist's impression by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

The "Bat" narratives number 26 records on duration which is in line with the general pattern set in Chapter 4.[107] Story nos. 53 and 171 are considered as being in the middle range and cover between 6 and 11 pages. Story no. 65 covers 14 pages. All the remaining narratives (88 percent) are short. Studying the narrated time, nine (n=16; 62 percent) cases are short (continuing for up to several days) whereas all the others have a narrated time of either weeks (n=1), months (n=4) or years (n=5).

### 5.3.2 Bat in nature

During the Pleistocene, bat species populate the islands after departing from Central and South America. Since then they have evolved to become truly occupants of the Caribbean inhabiting specific niches (Rodrígues-Dorán & Kunz 2001: 355-9).

[107] $\chi^2(2) = 3.92$; $\rho = 0.14$ (not significant). As a result of the low quantity of records, one of the expected values is below 5, rendering this test less accurate. Nevertheless, 14 percent is far from the critical 5 percent required when establishing any significance.

Caribbean bats mainly feed on pollen, nectar and fruit. In addition to these nectarivorous and/or frugivorous species, others are omnivorous, eating either animals and fruit or insects and fruit, in varied nightly or seasonal combinations.

Bloodsucking (sanguivorous, see Fig. 5.8) bats are native to the mainland and are almost absent in the islands. The three species comprise: the common vampire bat (*Desmodus rotundus*), the white-winged vampire bat (*Diaemus youngi*) and the hairy-legged vampire bat (*Diphylla ecaudata*). The first two species are also native to Trinidad (Barquez et al. 2015a). The fossil remains of a bloodsucking bat have been discovered on Cuba. The extinction of this species (*Desmodus puntajudensis*) is thought to have taken place during the Holocene (*c*.11,700 BCE) (Suárez 2005: 766). New evidence has revealed the extinction of the latter species occurred far more recently, as it was an inhabitant of post-Columbian Cuba, between 1950 and 1990 CE (Orihuela 2010).

**Fig. 5.8.** Common vampire bat (*Desmodus rotundus*) running on the ground; original by U. Schmidt, 2014. Licensed CC BY-NC 4.0, accessed by EOL.

The habitat of bat family Noctilionidae (aka bulldog bats or fisherman bats) is found near bodies of water, situated between Mexico and Argentina, in the Caribbean islands in both the Lesser and the Greater Antilles. The lesser bulldog bat (*Noctilio albiventris*) is mainly insectivorous. The greater bulldog bat (*Noctilio leporinus*) also feeds on fish (Barquez et al. 2015b; Hood & Jones 1984). When searching for prey, these bats will fly high in the air in circles and may also hunt by dragging their feet across the surface of the water.

### *Physical and behavioural attributes*

Bats are mammals that can fly by flapping their spread-out digits, which are covered with a membrane (patagium). Their wings are much thinner and consist of more bones when compared with the wings of birds, allowing more accurate manoeuvres as well as a flight with more lift and less drag. These delicate wing membranes tear easily. However, the tissue of this membrane skin can regenerate, enabling small injuries to heal quickly. The Amerindians may well have observed this rejuvenating ability.

Further “typical” physical bat traits are of course species specific. The body and on occasion the heads of bats are covered with fur, most commonly coloured brownish orange. Accommodated with legs, certain species can stand upright. All bats have a thumb, which sits along the propatagium: the leading edge of the patagium. Their agile fingers are suited for climbing, food handling and fighting.

Several physical features are potentially ideal for identifying certain species. For instance: large, round or pointed ears and an up-turned nose leaf which enables the *adornos* to be

recognised as the fruit-eating bat (*Phyllostomidae* sp.) (Petitjean Roget 1978: 45). Several species have no (external) tail, presenting yet another means of identification.

Bats perform a crucial role in maintaining a healthy ecology, as they not only pollinate flowers but also disperse seeds contained within fruits. Bats prefer fleshy, sweet fruits which they remove from trees with their teeth. They take a piece of fruit elsewhere before consuming it, then suck out the juice and drop the seeds and pulp on the ground, hereby contributing to the dispersal of seeds. Bats also feed on insect pests. As the bloodsucking species are not native to the Caribbean islands where the fruit-eating species dominate, their specific ecological role has presumably become more relevant. It may be added here that more than 150 plant species depend on bats to reproduce.

Bats sleep during the daytime hanging upside down in (hollow) trees, caves and houses. These locations are the most prominent spatial settings to be associated with the bats encountered in narratives. These spaces are mainly inhabited in groups, but certain species are more solitary. Bats appear at dusk in order to hunt during the night, navigating by echolocation. They rarely fly when it rains, as their echolocation is now interfered rendering the finding of their food impossible. Turning up at sunset they are true herald of the night, a dominant link within the narratives, too.

Considered cosmological gateways to other cosmic layers, caves are laden with connotations (see 5.3.4). Bats are also known to form colonies in the hollow culturally significant silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*).[108] Bats are frequently observed at or near burial sites, and also enter the domestic sphere when hanging upside down inside houses.

In several tales, the bat is associated with laughter, presumably, the result of the (natural) sounds they produce: a chattering sound in flight and a cackling sound when hanging in trees or in caves. They can also produce high-pitched, squeaking sounds when in distress. Studies have shown that bats can identify fellow individuals by means of signatures of communication (Melendez & Feng 2010).

In sum, the various behavioural and physical characteristics of bats contribute to their being considered a "symbolic" *sign**. As a flying, but non-feathered animal (or "bird"), residing in caves and (hollow) trees, appearing at sunset and hunting during the night, they follow a wide range of feeding habits ranging from fructivorous, insectivorous, carnivorous and even to bloodsucking.

[108] For more information on the importance of the Silk cotton tree (*Caiba pentandra*) with regard to the Amerindian cosmovision as a true spirit tree, see Boomert 2000: 446 and Saunders 2005: 229, 289.

### *The bat in relation to other animals/birds*

Carnivorous bats hunt for insects, fish, frogs, small birds, small mammals (including other bat species), amphibians and reptiles. The common bloodsucking bat (*Desmodus rotundus*) feeds on the blood of mammals, whereas the hairy-legged vampire bat (*Diphylla ecaudata*) and the white-winged vampire bat (*Diaemus youngi*) feed on the blood of birds. The bulldog bat or fisherman bat (Noctililionidae) preys on small fish.

Bats are in turn predated on by hawks, falcons, owls and even spiders. Predatory, as well as nocturnal birds, are known to hunt and feed on bats. The fact that birds are both prey and predator to bats may have contributed to their co-occurring in a number of tales.

The bat is also related to nocturnal birds, in particular, the owl and the nightjar. Although bats and nocturnal birds share a temporal habitat as night creatures, in the analysed narratives they are also repeatedly correlated by means of the sounds they produce (see 5.3.1).[109] Although bats, according to Western taxonomy, are classified as mammals, various indigenous groups across the globe place bats into a category of winged animals that includes birds (Forth 2009). For the Amerindians of the study region, bats are apparently categorised together with nocturnal birds, especially owls and oilbirds. Bats are deemed "anti-birds" inhabiting the reversed, nocturnal world (García Arévalo 1997; Waldron 2010: 68, 162-6).

## 5.3.3 The iconography of "bat"

In addition to the numerous "bat"-shaped *adornos* encountered on (Saladoid) ceramics, "bat" imagery also occurs among zoomorphic pendants found in the islands. Saladoid "bat" pendants have been recovered from Huecan deposits located at the important archaeological site named Sorcé located on the south side of Vieques near the town of Esparanza, Puerto Rico (Boomert 2000). These pendants were made of mother-of-pearl and wood, perhaps even fossil wood. Also, at Sorcé, a Saladoid locus, two "bat"-shaped pendants were found (Boomert 2000: 414, note 45).

The basketry designs of the Yekuana (Carib) also include stylised "bat" designs, called Dede (Guss 1989: 116). The bodies and heads of "bats" are depicted in the form of two diamonds with the wings spread out resembling a V. De Goeje identified similar designs as "swallows, bats or dancer" (Guss 1989: 116).

### *"Bat" adornos*

The "bat" imagery is a "pan-Saladoid phenomenon" which has been discovered on sites located at the Lower Orinoco up to the Leeward Islands. It originates from Early to Late

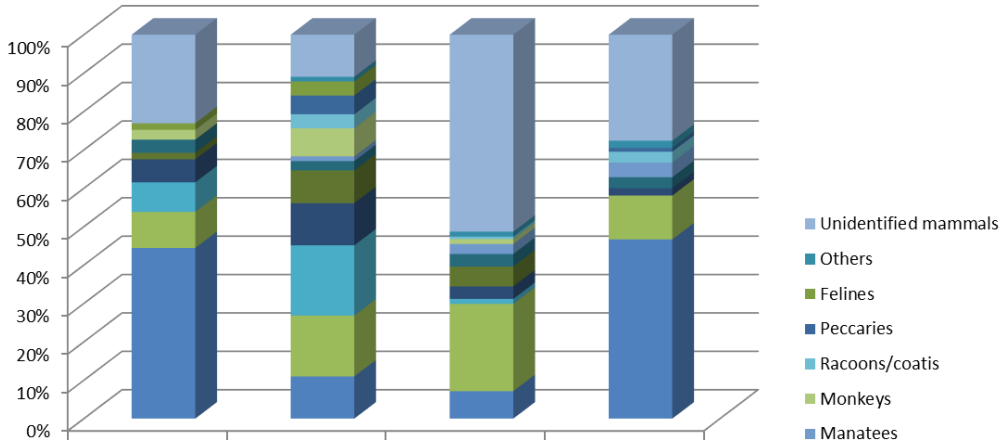
[109] Gregory Forth identifies the importance of auditory sense and bird vocalisations to Nage bird "symbolism" as encountered on Flores, Indonesia. Their vocalisation rather than their appearance is relevant (Forth 2004, 2007). G. Forth also notices that among the Nage the particular sound of bats is one of the reasons they are not considered "witch birds" containing owls and other nocturnal and predatory birds (Forth 2004, 2009).

Saladoid contexts (Waldron 2010: 71), but is also known from Late Ceramic Age contexts. We read: "... bat heads [that] were featured as *adornos* on the rims of various containers. Their wings also were rendered on vessel walls and their bodies were sometimes incorporated into the bodies of pedestals, bowls and dishes with the handles of the vessels often resolving into the head of the animal" (see Figs. 5.9-5.11, pp. 178-180; Waldron 2010: 71, 416).

As Table 5.5a/b indicates, the majority of the identified Saladoid "bat" *adornos* hail from the Windward Islands. Waldron identifies them as relatively the most dominant depicted mammals (2010, 2016). As to the Venezuelan mammal *adornos,* 9.1 percent has been identified as "bat", see Table 5.5a.

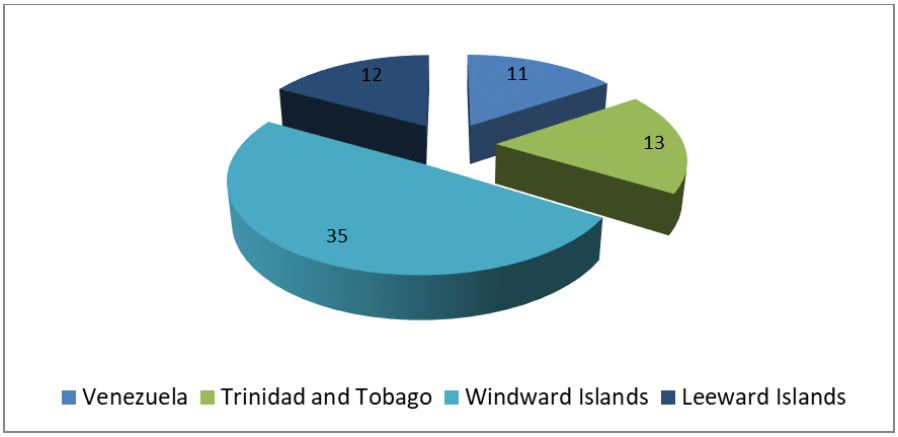
"Bat" *adornos* appear in various forms and styles, from the naturalistic to the more stylised. Many anthropomorphized "bats" have been identified. An increase of these "were-bat" depictions dating from the Palo Seco (Saladoid) Phase (on Trinidad) results in the conclusion that this "might well have marked the emergence of an ancestral bat cult in Saladoid religion" (Waldron 2010: 92). This "were-bat" could also portray the *goeíza*, the former human soul of the ancestors, at the very moment of transformation into the mutable afterlife *opía* (Waldron 2010: 79-80).

**Table 5.5a.** Identified "bat" *adornos* and their dispersal.




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified mammals | 27 | 9 | 79 | 29 |
| Others | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Felines | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Peccaries | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Racoons/coatis | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Monkeys | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Manatees | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Rodents | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Armadillos | 2 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| Opossums | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| Anteaters | 9 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| Bats | 11 | 13 | 35 | 12 |
| Dogs | 52 | 9 | 11 | 49 |

**Table 5.5b.** The absolute dispersal of identified "bat" *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela.




The identifiable traits of "bat" imagery comprise its (usually round) head, its nose and slit (turned-up) snout, its ears either pinched to a point or otherwise modelled, often in a more anthropomorphized fashion. Its wings may be abstractified resulting in more geometrical motifs, see Figs. 5.9 and 5.10 in which these features are marked and compared to the leaf-nosed bat, family Chiroptera (Gijtenbeek 2009; Oudhuis 2008: 52-3, 65, 81-2; Waldron 2010: 70-4). The abstractification of bat wings was further geometricized into triple triangular or zigzag shapes as encountered on the "Taíno" pottery of the Greater Antilles (García Arévalo 1997: 115; Waldron 2010: 72).[110] The identifiable features are also the physical attributes described in the narratives (see 5.3.1 under the sub-heading *Characterization*).

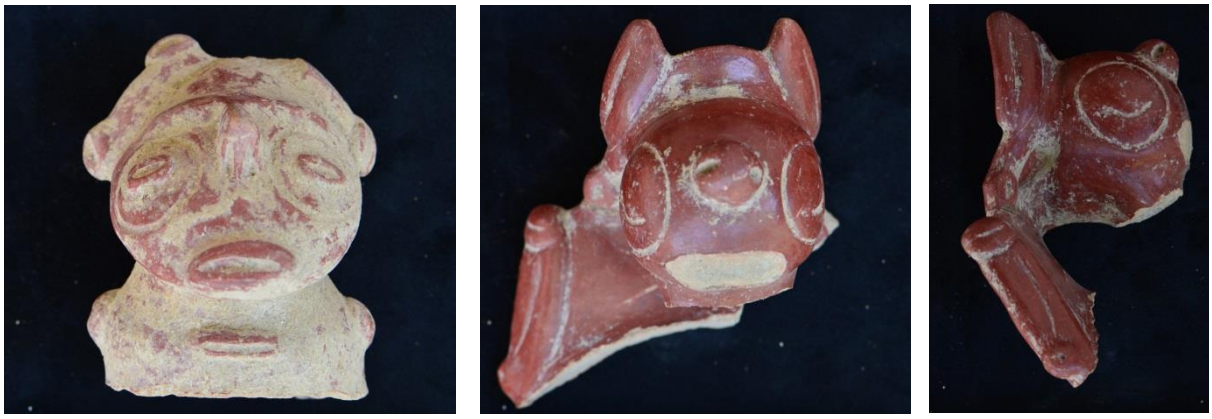


**Fig. 5.9.** Two Saladoid "bat" adornos from Pearls, Grenada; left: width c.7.3 cm and middle c.9.1 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

[110] See Waldron 2010: 72-3 for a more elaborate discussion on bat wing "symbolism" and on how the "Taíno" V-shaped (wing) motifs have been traced back to the Saladoid and Barrancoid assemblages.

**Fig. 5.10.** Leaf-nosed bat compared to a "bat" *adorno* (Fig. 5.9). The identifiable features are marked.

Numerous "Taíno" narratives first recorded by Fr. Pané (1999 [1498]) were used to conceptualise the (zoomorphic) images and have served identifying and examining the "bat" and "(tree) frog" (Petitjean Roget 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1978, 1997). In the primeval world, as encountered in narratives, women were "frogs" and men were "bats". The depicted "frog" is, in reality, Atabeira (Taíno, Arawak), the primeval mother of humankind. The "bat" depicts "the hero who brings to mankind the cultural goods" (Petitjean Roget 1997: 105, 108). Therefore, the "frog" is always positioned above the "bat" and portrayed by means of button-on-bar motifs.

In addition to an analysis of the distribution, identification and alteration through time, the potential ritual contexts and functions of any "bat"-adorned pottery has been addressed (Waldron 2010: 87-90). Its shape, size and apparent utilisation vary but its function (or what it had contained) is difficult, if not impossible to prove.

These vessels, decorated with "bat" motifs, could have contained (tobacco or *cassava**) water and served a ritual purpose (e.g., cleaning *zemis**, or as a bridge between *behique** and spirits). Both fresh and salt (sea) water are associated with the ancestral world (perhaps reflecting the Realm of the Dead). Certain "bat" vessels have been found in funerary contexts as well as in relation to ancestral gifts and offerings. It has been suggested they may have contained fruit (e.g., fresh guava, papaya or even ripe hog-plums (*Spondias mombin*)).

We read: "…it [pottery adorned with "Bat"-*adornos*] would be suitable as: a funerary offering for its evocation of the dead; a part of a ritual specialist's kit used to contain shamanic potions or other infusions used to commune with the spirit realm; or a rarely used heirloom commemorating an ancestor in remembrance rituals" (Waldron 2010: 89).

**Fig. 5.11.** Three Saladoid "bat" *adornos* from Pearls, Grenada; left: width *c.*5.2 cm, middle *c.*6.2 cm and right *c.*6.9 cm. Courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; left: first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

### 5.3.4 "Bat" in Amerindian cosmologies

"Bat" is depicted either as a devastating spirit or a demon, associated with the night and with laughter in a number of narratives included in the present study. The "Bat" personage is also associated with motifs of transformation and to the souls of the deceased as well as to cultivated plants and in particular to tobacco. The allocation of "Bat" in Amerindian cosmologies is further explored below.

"Bats" take in a varied liminal position, making them a likely natural *symbol** of cultural and spiritual significance. "Bats" are for instance related to the *axis mundi*, the connection between the Sky and the Earth, as they inhabit caves and hollow trees, and frequent burial grounds. Moreover, "Bats" are associated with the night and twilight, the times they are active. Equally relevant is the fact that bats can be spotted hanging down from the roofs of houses, and as a "wild animal", thus walk around in the village and not in the forest (Forth 2009: 153).

The fact that bats are furry, winged and flying "animals" has perhaps caused them to be placed in, or between, categories comprising flying, feathered birds and furry land animals. The feeding habits of bats may well have puzzled the Amerindian observers, too. An order rarely includes carnivorous, sanguivorous, insectivorous, nectarivorous and frugivorous species. One may assume that Amerindians would have not only identified but also differentiated between these species. Even in the islands, one must have observed that, in addition to feeding on plants and insects, certain bats patrol the waters in order to catch fish (see 5.3.2).

As bats live in caves and hollow trees, they apparently travel between various cosmic layers hereby perhaps contributing to their qualification as the embodiment of ancestral spirits. Based on "Taíno" lore, we know that caves are considered a sacred place associated with the origin of humankind (Arrom & García Arévalo 1988; García Arévalo 1997; Pané 1999 [1498]: 6; Waldron 2010: 73-4). In addition to being ancestral spirits, "bats" are also presumably powerful spirit/shaman assistants, considering this same quality of being capable of transcending into different worlds.

As inhabitants of the *axis mundi*, "bats" may well also act as protectors of the various realms. For instance, in Story no. 653 (Guajiboan, Sikuani) a "Vampire bat" prevents others from entering the upper world. In Story no. 53 (Cariban, Trio), "Bat" spirits reside in a village built beyond the location where the river enters the mountains. The entrance of this village consists of a pool which thus functions as a gateway (see Appendix D, section D1).

Various narratives contain warnings not to go out at night or else a malevolent spirit ("bat") might cause harm. Amerindians should hunt only during the daytime because "Bats" and other nocturnal creatures (including the *significant other-than-human persons**) do so at night. The "becoming prey" of nocturnal hunters must be avoided (see 3.4.2 ).

### *Devastating "bat"*

The association of a "bat" being devastating is presumably linked to the carnivorous and bloodsucking species, which are primarily native to the South American mainland. When migrating from the mainland to the islands, the peoples of the Ceramic Age took their traditions with them. These bat species were/are present in Trinidad and Tobago, and perhaps in Cuba, too. The "bat" as a malevolent bloodsucker, kidnapper and/or killer may have persisted a certain period of time, perhaps fuelled by the presence of fish-eating bats in these islands.

A 19th-century Guyanese Arawak belief considers observing bat droppings on your path as an evil omen (Waldron 2010: 323). Although in the 706 narratives, motifs of "bat" as evil omens have not been identified, the majority of encounters with "bat"/"bat"-spirits involve ill-fated events such as abduction or death. Therefore, coming across a "bat" can be indeed quite ominous (see 5.3.1 under the heading *Devastating "Bat"*). Especially the sounds "Nocturnal birds" and "Bats" repeatedly produce serve as a catalyser in the stories as unfortunate events unfold after the protagonist hears these sounds (e.g., death, disease, danger).

Thanks to "Taíno" myths and historical observations supported by information which the Island Carib of Dominica present, we know that the connotations as to "bats" did transmute through time into a more profound association not only with the Afterlife and ancestral spirits but also with fertility and/or cultivated plants and tobacco (Boomert 2000; García Arévalo 1997; Waldron 2010). As associations with tobacco, cultivated plants, spirits, death, and the deceased are also present in the mainland lore, I consider this to be a more gradual transformation and not an abrupt break in tradition and conceptualisation, but a significant transmutation nonetheless.

### *"Bat" as an ancestor spirit*

One "Taíno" myth does <u>not</u> explicitly mention "bats", but it has been argued that in fact the term *opías** (meaning souls) could be translated as "bats" (García Arévalo 1988: 51). Apparently a description of the fruit-eating bat (*Artibeus jamaicensis*), we read: "They say that during the day they hide away, and at night they go out to walk about, and they eat a certain

fruit that is called guayaba, which has the flavour of [quince]…" (Pané 1999 [1498]: 18). The *"*Taíno*"* peoples believe that the souls of the dead could take an "animal" or human form and go out at night. In this "Taíno" myth, the *opías** transform into "bats", after crossing the darkening waters in order to enter the world of the living (García 1997: 112; Pané 1999 [1498]: 18; Waldron 2010: 73-4).

Interestingly, "bats" and *opías** both feed on fruits during the nocturnal hours. They are therefore considered mythically and visually synonymous (García 1997: 115; Waldron 2010: 75). It has been stated that: "We can assume that the feeding habits of endemic fruit bats such as Antillean and Jamaican fruit bats (*Brachyphylla cavernarum* and *Artibeus jamaicensis*, respectively) were the inspiration for the dietary preference of the opía in the legend" (García 1997: 115).

Ethnographical accounts from the mainland could indeed shed light on the related association between ancestors, "bats" and tobacco. It is suggested that "bats" and tobacco are intertwined because tobacco plants grow well on abandoned house sites and burial grounds frequented by bats (Wilbert 1987: 151). In Guyana, the Carib and Arawak believe that the tobacco plant was once obtained from ancestral graves (Wilbert 1987: 121). However, as it is not (often) explicitly mentioned in the narratives, this "bat"-tobacco(-spirit) association could also have been transmitted implicitly not only *because* it was common knowledge but also simply because tobacco and "bats" are interrelated in the ancestral/spiritual realm.

Another reference to "bat"-spirits includes a description of an Island Carib (Arawak) belief that: (a) "bats", referred to as *boulliri,* which flutter around their homes at night, are spirits (*zemi*/*zemeens**), (b) they protect people, and (c) those who kill these spirits will fall ill (de la Borde 1992: 147).

The numerous anthropomorphised "bat" *adornos* yet further indicate a link between "bats", humans and the spiritual world (Waldron 2010: 73-8, 78-80). Their anthropomorphised depiction underlines this tripartite entanglement.

### 5.3.5 Concluding remarks

Various species of insectivorous and fish-eating bats populate the mainland of South America as well as the Caribbean islands. The sanguivorous (bloodsucking) and carnivorous bats are dominantly absent in the islands.

The majority of Caribbean bat species feed on pollen, nectar and fruit hereby playing an important role in local ecologies, when pollinating flowers or dispersing seeds and fruits. This fact may well have contributed to obtaining more positive connotations as their bloodsucking (life-taking, predatory) "cousin" was absent. Bats often inhabit and take refuge in caves and/or natural hollows. These gateways probably link "bats" to being guardians of as well as travellers to other realms. Frequently spotted on and near burial sites, the "bat" as an embodiment of

souls and/or as spirits presumably further trigger their profound connotations and status in Amerindian cosmologies.

Several behavioural and physical traits support these connotations. The most prominent is: as it sleeps upside down and is active at night, a "bat" is considered an inverted mirror of a human being. Other noteworthy qualities are: its furry but winged appearance and the remarkable sounds it produces when chattering in flight. Its cackle when hanging is in certain tales possibly reflected in the laughing motifs. All these qualities result in "bats" becoming anti-birds inhabitants of a reversed (upside-down) world.

In various narratives which refer to "Bats" and "Nocturnal birds", the "Owl" and "Nightjar" are related as partners in crime. "Owl" and "Bat" appear at night in order to scare humans by means of ominous screeches. The "Owl" is, however, often portrayed as being more successful, when warning "Bat" not to go out on its own. As discussed in 5.3.1, "Nightjar" takes in a lower hierarchical position officiating as a Minister, whereas "Bat" serves as President. This difference between "Owl" and "Nightjar" could result from the fact (certain) owls prey on bats, whereas nightjars do not.

As described in 5.3.4, the "Bat" takes in a liminal position both physically and behaviourally rendering it a likely natural *symbol** of cultural as well as spiritual significance. With the migration to new habitats, however, as Amerindians moved from the mainland to the islands, the "Bat's" connotations transformed, too. This phenomenon is probably the outcome of the disappearance of bloodsucking and carnivorous bat species across the insular Caribbean. The "Bat" was thus deprived of its most negative association: being a bloodsucking killer. It therefore apparently now acquired a more positive conceptualisation. Nevertheless, it remained entangled with spirits and death, indeed less like a killer, but more as the embodiment of souls and of ancestry.

In the mainland narratives, a more positive association of the "Bat" with the origin of tobacco and cultivated plants is seldom encountered. It is presumed that, within the island context and its dominance of fruit-eating and pollinating species, the above mentioned association became further entangled with a "bat's" attributes pertaining to associations regarding the "bat", hereby contributing to its conceptualisation as a tutelary spirit, and not a malevolent nocturnal spirit. This observation presents us with a perfect example of an "animal" as an expression of culture which: (a) is always contextualised within a broad context, and (b) encompasses natural, cultural as well as cosmological qualities. If any of these contexts transform, this may well impact the ascribed attributes, qualities and associations concerning the "animal", too. For an in-depth discussion on this subject, see 8.3.

"Bat" *adornos* are yet further indications of the conceptualisation of the "bat". Often anthropomorphized, they ostensibly depict the metamorphosis of humans/shamans (human

souls) into “bats”. “Bat” imagery is a cross-Caribbean phenomenon encountered as *adornos* on pottery as well as on pendants. “Bat” iconography occurs also along the Lower Orinoco River up to the Leeward Islands, and dates from the Early to the Late Saladoid. It is also identified, even as being most common, in the “Taíno” iconography originating from the Greater Antilles (Oudhuis 2008; Wauben 2018).

Although “bat” imagery appears in many forms and styles, the head and wings are among the overall identifiable features. “Bat” heads are usually round, with a turned-up nose and a slit snout. Its ears and wings are often depicted, now and again in a very stylised fashion.

## 5.4 “Jaguar”

The “Jaguar” (*Panthera onca*), the most common “animal” protagonist encountered in the 706 stories, is of course included in the present research. As the largest land predators native to the South American mainland, jaguars have repeatedly been identified as the most powerful agent active in the Amerindian cosmovision. Considering the Caribbean Islands, Trinidad is the only home to a native feline species: the ocelot (*Panthera pardalis*). This relatively small wild cat is larger than most dogs. Inspired by the absence of the jaguar in these islands, discussions have risen on which “animal” (or “animals”) has (or have) substituted this major mainland *symbol** within the island context.

How “jaguars” behave in nature is discussed below, based on their presence in the archaeological record and on their status within Amerindian cosmologies. Their roles and any ascribed attributes if identified in the analysed narratives are dealt with below, too.

### 5.4.1 “Jaguar” in the narratives

> … Sun left his wife and she swore to find him. Her unborn gave her directions. But a Wasp stung her and as she tried to hit it, she hit herself. The unborn Twin thought she hit them on purpose and wouldn’t give her directions any longer. She got lost and found the house of Toad (or Rain Frog). Toad took care of her and the unborn. Jaguar, son of Toad killed the woman, but her sons lived and were raised by Toad. One of the sons killed Jaguar and resurrected his mother from the bones. The children saw Toad making fire without wood spitting it out and licking it up and saw how she used what flowed out of a spot in her neck (milky substance) to make starch and they killed her: they burned her. One of the sons swallowed hot coals. Crane taught them how to make fire. [Story no. 1096 (Macushi, Cariban); abridged]

This study includes 127 “Jaguar” narratives, thereby creating the largest category. The “Jaguar” is thus the most documented actor (see Appendix D, section E). Of these 127 narratives, as many as 83 (63 percent) originate from the core area. “Jaguar” narratives are encountered in thirteen language families (see Fig. 5.12). Compared with the overall linguistic

distribution, these narratives reveal a significant variation as to their distribution pattern.[111] They are overrepresented when considering the Warao and Tupian narratives and occur less frequently in Guajiboan and Arawakan tales.

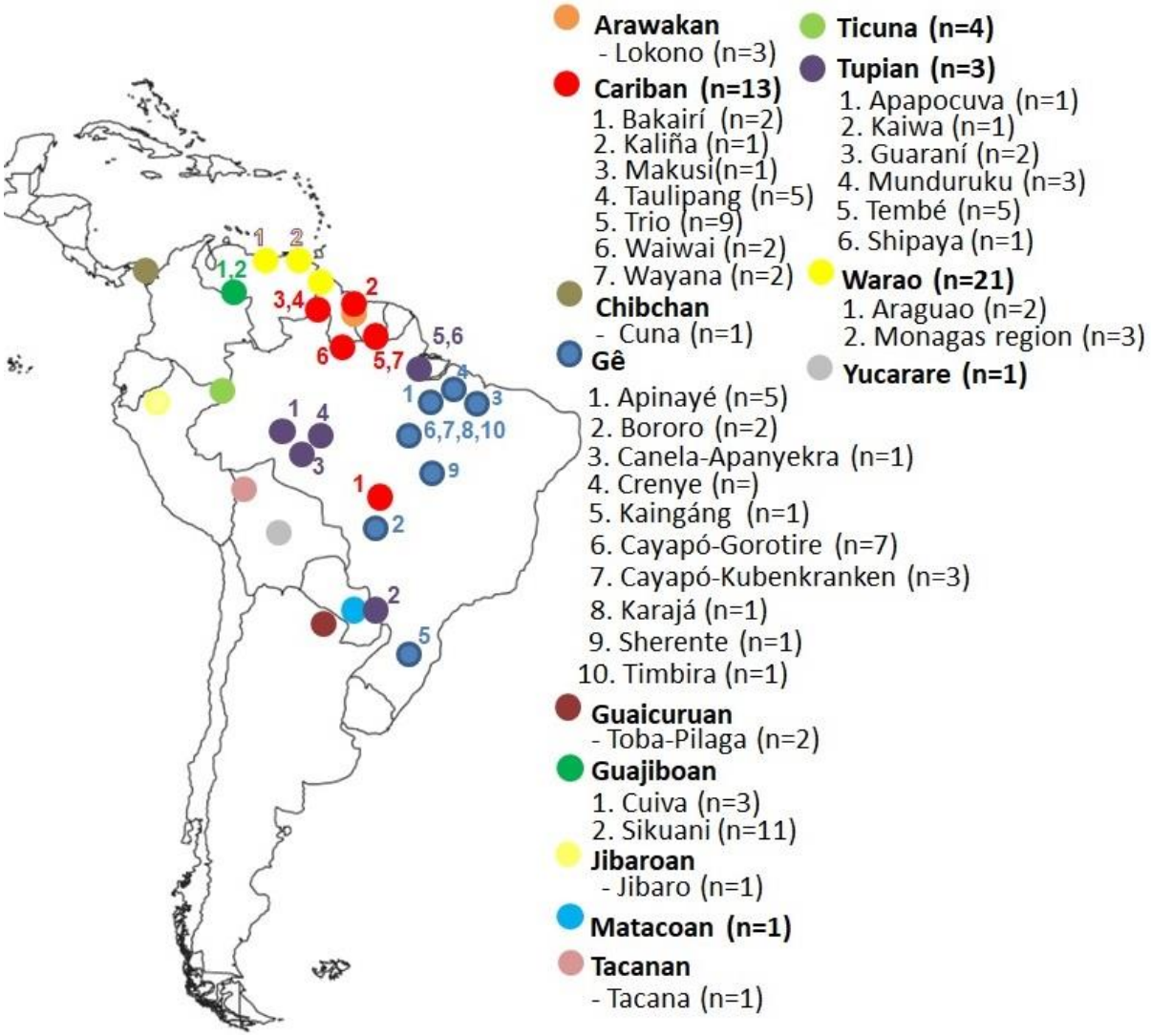



**Fig. 5.12.** Plot of "Jaguar" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

The narrative functions follow the general pattern.[112] The most dominant elements hereby are: the function validating the world, followed by encoding social behaviour and informing. The narratives tend to explain why things are as they are and deal with certain aspects of morality. They also provide further practical information on how to hunt and which food is (in)appropriate (see Appendix C, Table C-6 for a list of all narrative functions of the "Jaguar" narratives).

[111] $\chi^2(7) = 19.87$; $\rho = 0.0059$ (significant). See Appendix D, section *E. General remarks* for a more detailed discussion.

[112] $\chi^2(4) = 2.99$; $\rho = 0.56$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section *E. General remarks*.

In general, the "Jaguar" is portrayed as a potentially dangerous, powerful "animal", an excellent hunter (and thus a food provider), but also as a (culture) giver, protector and rescuer. "Jaguars" frequent the realm of the forest (i.e., a land setting) and can take on a human form by removing their "clothes". However, (malevolent) spirits, demons, as well as shamans, can also transform into a "Jaguar", instilling it with ambiguous qualities.

### *Actors, events and settings ("fabula")*

The "Jaguar" is ascribed various roles which differ significantly from the general pattern.[113] "Jaguar" is more likely to be an opponent and subject/actor and less likely to be a helper and slightly less likely to be an object/goal. In its role as an object/goal, "Jaguar" is not only often the object of desire as a spouse, but also sought after in an act of vengeance which frequently leads to its death. "Jaguar" is also the object of trickery and deception. In addition, the role of sender is often ascribed to "Jaguar", for instance when it gives information or presents goods resulting in further events. As an opponent, "Jaguar" is either a dangerous killer or an abductor of humans. However, it is also ascribed the role of helper hereby protecting, rescuing and providing shelter as well as goods.

In addition, a shaman or spirit is explicitly stated to be able to transform into "Jaguar", or to look like a "Jaguar" (n=10; Cariban, Guajiboan, Ticuna, Warao). It is explicitly described as a transformed shaman (see Story nos. 55, 330, 616, 618; Trio (Cariban), Ticuna, 2x Cuiva (Guajiboan)). In Story no. 55 (Trio, Cariban), the family of a murdered woman calls upon the shaman for help, referring to him as a "Jaguar" man. In Story no. 616 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), a shaman and his wife came across a "Caiman" during a march. The shaman who wishes to kill the "Caiman", prepares himself with *yopo** and then transforms into a "Jaguar". The "Jaguar"-personage displays shamanic qualities (see Story nos. 16, 81, 89, 583, 671, 672; 3x Warao; 2x Sikuani, Cuiva (Guajiboan). This is the outcome when for instance a "Jaguar" man/woman performs remarkable tasks, prepares remedies and enchants objects.

In a number of narratives, "Jaguar" is referred to as a spirit (see Story no. 707) or described as a spirit taking the form of a "Jaguar" (see Story nos. 156, 461, 472, 689, 707; Tembé (Tupian), 2x Warao, Sikuani (Guajiboan), Cariban). For instance, the sound of "Jaguar" and other nocturnal creatures is a clear proof of a malevolent spirit (see 5.4.4).

Resulting from the large quantity of data concerning "Jaguar" narratives, various recurrent motifs have been established, leading to a "Top 7" (see Appendix D, sections E. Fabula and E5a to c). Most common are motifs as to the origin of things (n=25) and "animal" traits and habits (n=85), followed by motifs as to a malevolent "Jaguar" (n=63) and the related motifs as to punishments (n=44) and tasks/quests (n=39). Motifs linked to transformations were recorded in 39 cases. Also common are motifs concerning deceptions and foolishness (n=31). In accordance with these most common motifs, the following sub-clusters were identified to

[113] $\chi^2(5) = 34.02$; $\rho = 2.4E\text{-}6$ (significant), see Appendix D section *E. Fabula*.

be analysed separately: (a) “Jaguar” and the origin of fire; n=16, (b) the devastating “Jaguar”; n=63, (c) the gullible “Jaguar”; n=31, and (d) the helpful “Jaguar”; n=25 (see Appendix D, section E1 to 4).

The dominant setting in which the “Jaguar” acts, comprises a forest (83 percent) and a night (62 percent) setting (e.g., a temporary hunting site, abandoned villages). Although the land-layer dominates as a setting, “Jaguar” is also set in the water realm (12 percent; n=9), underworld (8 percent; n=6), and the sky (3 percent; n=2). In relation to the overall common settings as established in Chapter 4, “Jaguar” is even more linked to the forest and night settings, albeit significantly less positioned in the water and especially the sky setting (see Appendix D, section E. Fabula).

Having investigated if roles and settings are interrelated, it is shown that, within a village setting significantly more records of the role of helper are present. Moreover, the role of object/goal is more frequently ascribed to “Jaguar” within a village setting (see Appendix D, section E. Fabula).

Each of the identified sub-clusters (a-d) will now shortly be addressed in order to identify patterns and significant variations among the “Jaguar” narratives. Each cluster is hereby fully analysed according to the set methodology, see Appendix D, sections E1 to E4.

### Jaguar and the origin of fire

Within the first sub-cluster “Jaguar and the origin of fire”, two major themes have been identified: (a) “Jaguar” as the Master/Owner of Fire (n=12), and (b) the Twin narratives (n=5), in which the “Jaguar’s” mother is often portrayed as a provider of fire.[114] Common motifs encountered in this sub-cluster are related to thievery and thefts (n=8). This is the outcome of others who attempt (often successfully) to steal the fire from “Jaguar”, leaving him without. This explains not only why he (now) eats his meat raw but also why motifs regarding the origin of fire and cooked meat are intertwined.

The tales featuring Twins are even more elaborate as they contain numerous other motifs in addition to those dealing with the origin of fire (see Story nos. 2, 99, 148, 498, 1096; Wayana, Macushi, Bakairí (Cariban), 2x Warao). These narratives inform on the birth and lives of the culture Twin heroes in which “Jaguar’s” mother is often the helpful protector and provider of fire, whereas “Jaguar” kills and devours the mother of the Twins. They, in turn, avenge their mother’s death by killing “Jaguar” and its mother. Fire is a result of this act of revenge.

[114] All narratives featuring “Jaguar” as an owner of fire are numbered: 191-4, 218-9, 221, 226, 236, 246, 691, and 707; Gê (2x Apinayé; Cayapó-Gorotire; 2x Cayapó-Kubenkranken; Timbira; Bororo; Opayé; Sherente), Chibchan (Cuna): Cariban; Tupian (Apapocuva/Kaiwa)). Narratives associated with Twin myths are numbered: 2, 148, 498, 1096 (2x Wayana; Macushi; Bakairí (Cariban); Warao). See Appendix D, section E1 for an integral discussion on this sub-cluster.

### Devastating "Jaguar"

The second sub-cluster consists of 63 narratives which include motifs concerning a devastating "Jaguar". They have not been further categorised and are thus treated as a whole (see Appendix D, section E2). A number of these stories lack a "Jaguar"-personage but include references to the "Jaguar" as a (potential) threat. For instance, merely the sound of its roar terrifies humans. Or, "Jaguar" is the suspect when an Amerindian/protagonist goes missing (see Story nos. 44, 63, 101, 111, 154, 156; 2x Trio (Cariban), 2x Cariban, 2x Tembé (Tupian)). In the majority of cases (n=21), however, "Jaguar" is portrayed as a man-killer who will devour you (often in response to an ignored warning or a breached taboo). In Story nos. 110, 331 and 504 (2x Warao, Ticuna), "Jaguar" carries out abductions. Therefore its role here is that of an avenger and restorer of order. Motifs concerning breached taboos and punishments are indeed very common in this sub-cluster.

Again, the most dominant setting in this sub-cluster is forest (86 percent; n=54). Nine records of a village context were encountered. However, in seven cases, both a forest, and a village setting, are documented. In two narratives only a village setting occurs (see Story nos. 351, 643; Cariban, Guajiboan (Sikuani)). In story no. 351 a young boy was told by his mother to visit his uncle "Jaguar". Having met Jaguar's/uncle's daughter, she hides him from her father. In Story no. 643, "Jaguar" visits a woman who suffers from a terrible itch, and lives together with her grandson. He cures the woman, but the following day "Jaguar" goes hunting and kills this grandson.

### Gullible "Jaguar"

The third sub-cluster contains cases dealing with the gullible "Jaguar". They have been further categorised into: (a) "Jaguar" who loses his eye(s); n=7, (b) "Jaguar" bodily parts wanted as tool, toy or instrument; n=9, (c) "Jaguar" lured into entering a contest; n=13, and (d) other narratives with a gullible "Jaguar"; n=6.[115] The binding factor here is: "Jaguar" either portrayed as a trickster and/or tricked himself when meeting its adversary in the form of a "harmless" counterpart e.g., "Tortoise", "Turtle", "Anteater" or "Deer" whereby its prey is more clever. Motifs related to friendship and betrayal are common elements of these tales.

### Helpful "Jaguar"

The fourth and last sub-cluster consists of narratives about a helpful "Jaguar" (n=25).[116] Here "Jaguar" is often portrayed as an excellent spouse, who provides food as well as protection. "Jaguar" is also the protector and rescuer of the protagonist.

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[115] Their number is too large to list all. The language families mentioned in this sub-cluster are: Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Tupian, and Warao (see Appendix D, sections E3a to d, which also provides specific languages).

[116] Their number is too large to list all. The language families mentioned in this sub-cluster are: Arawakan, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Jivaroan, Ticuna Tupian, Warao, and Yuracare (see Appendix D, sections E4 and E5b).

The setting of this particular sub-cluster reveals discrepancies when looking into the overall settings concerning cases which feature “Jaguar”. Of the 22 records, 32 percent (also) include a village setting (compared to 17 percent village settings for all “Jaguar” cases). In five narratives, “Jaguar” is staged in a forest as well as in a village setting (see Story nos. 89, 298, 352, 504, 672; various). Studying settings in relation to the ascribed role(s), it becomes clear that “Jaguar” is often an object/goal within a village setting (n=5), as is explained by the Amerindian protagonist marrying (and having offspring with) “Jaguar”. In Story no. 643 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), “Jaguar” acts as an opponent and a helper. It enters a round house in which a woman suffering from itches hides her grandchild. “Jaguar” cures her ailment only to then find, kill and devour the child.

### Other motifs highlighted

The most common motifs have already been discussed above (see Jaguar and the origin of fire and Helpful/Devastating/Gullible “Jaguar”). Two further motifs: transformation and laughter are dealt with below (see Appendix D, section E. Fabula).

In 30 (24 percent) cases, the motifs on transformation are directly linked to the “Jaguar”-personage. Dominant here are the metamorphoses from man/woman to “Jaguar” (n=11), and from “Jaguar” to man (n=8). These events are often described as putting on clothes or skin (n=6; see 3.4.2). Transmuting from man/woman to “Jaguar” is by far the most common motif (see in addition Appendix D, section E5c).

For example, in Story no. 152 (Karajá, Gê), a woman is warned not to eat any “Jaguar” fat. After nevertheless having done so, she transforms into a “Jaguar”. In other instances, “acting like” a jaguar means becoming one. In Story no. 227 (Opayé, Gê), for instance, a woman wishes “Jaguar” to be her husband, who is an excellent provider of meat. After marrying “Jaguar”, she becomes an outstanding hunter herself. Having grown claws and fangs, she transmutes into a “Jaguar”. In Story no. 199 (Matacoan), a woman eats “parrots” thrown down from a tree by her husband (see Fig. 5.13). She then devours her husband and children before turning into a “Jaguar” herself. In Story no. 524 (Crenye, Gê), the culture hero, who had supernaturally grown into a large boy within 3 days, plays “Jaguar” with other children. He now transforms into a real “Jaguar” and everyone flees in terror.

**Fig. 5.13.** Devouring an uncooked parrot, a woman transforms into "Jaguar"; artist's impression of Story no. 199 (Matacoan) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

Amerindians mimic a "Jaguar's" appearance to then turn into this creature. In Story no. 330 (Ticuna), men shoot at the trunk of a *tururu* tree. After painting pieces of its bark with black spots, and wearing them, these men become "Jaguars". In Story no. 66 (Trio Cariban), two boys weave "Jaguar" motifs which come to life. In Story no. 39 (Trio Cariban), a boy weaves baskets adding "Jaguar" motifs which also come to life. In Story no. 373 (Trio), a "Frog" transforms into a "Jaguar". This tale explains not only that "Frogs" claws resemble those of "Jaguar" but also that "Frogs" catch prey in a similar way as "Jaguars" do. In Story no. 557 (Cayapó-Gorotire; Gê), men belonging to a cannibalistic tribe of frogs, re-enforced their fingers with "Jaguar"-claws.[117]

Shamans metamorphosize into "Jaguars". Shamanic rituals may be performed to a similar effect. In Story no. 443 (Warao), a man teaches his brother how to transmute into a "Jaguar" by smoking a magic cigar. In Story no. 616 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), a couple comes across a reposing "Caiman". The man wishing to kill it prepares himself by means of *yopo** and then transforms into a "Jaguar". In Story no. 687 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), a boy who feels ashamed of being in a secret incestuous relation with his mother, intoxicates himself by means of *yucuta** and *yopo*,* to then roar and become a "Jaguar".

[117] Two references occur as to frogs transmuting into jaguars. The Tupi (Tupian) believe that a tree frog can transform into a jaguar, "*yawaréte-cunawáru*" (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 215). According to a similar expression of belief encountered among the Wayana (Cariban), a grandfather Toad ("*Kunawaru*", a tree frog) can take the shape of a tiger. This toad serves to improve hunting abilities when rubbed on wounds (de Goeje 1943: 48-9).

The reverse process has also been recorded. For instance, a “Jaguar” wishes to find out how a man hunts a peccary. To do so, it then transforms into a beautiful woman (Story no. 73; Arawakan). Or, “Jaguar” disguises himself as an elderly woman in order to abduct children (Story nos. 89 and 504; Warao).

Motifs related to “laughter” have been encountered in six cases (Story nos. 1, 147, 207-8, 213, 350; 2x Cariban, Gê, Guaicuruan, 2x Tupian). As to Story nos. 207 and 350, motifs are recorded regarding the results of laughter, either positive or negative. In Story no. 207 (Toba-Pilaga, Guaicuruan), the *demiurge** tests Amerindians by tickling them. The laughers now become “animals”. Those who maintain self-control either turn into “Jaguars” or into men chasing “Jaguars”. In Story no. 350 (Cariban), a hunter ends up in “Jaguar’s” house. Here it inspects the man’s arrows and asks him questions. His answers make “Jaguar” laugh for two hours allowing the hunter to escape.

In Story no. 208 (Munduruku, Tupian), “Jaguar’s” wife warned her (“Deer”-) husband not to laugh as her parents were tickling it. In Story no. 213 (Bororo, Gê), an Amerindian marries a “Jaguar” husband and conceives. Although warned not to laugh, once provoked she smiles after which acute pains cause her demise. In two narratives, the Trickster makes fun of “Jaguar”, the object of its deception. In Story no. 1 (Munduruku, Tupian), “Tortoise” laughs, claps its hands as it allows itself to fall onto “Jaguar’s” head, crushing its skull. Later “Tortoise” again laughs as it locks up “Alligator”. In another trickster narrative (Story no. 147; Bakairí, Cariban), “Jaguar” laughs at “Anteater” for stating it will kill “Jaguar”.

### With whom is the “Jaguar” associated?

The interrelatedness between “Jaguar” and other “animals/birds” is treated as part of each sub-cluster. The present paragraph provides not only a brief summary of any recurrent or remarkable connections but also associations between the “Jaguar”-personage and others.

The most common “animals/birds” other than “Jaguar” are:

1. “Ara” and “Turtle” (in thirteen narratives). “Tortoise” is recorded in five cases.
2. “Birds” (general), “Deer”, “Tapir” and “Anaconda/Snake”, recorded in ten cases,
3. “Frog” and “Monkey”, recorded in nine cases,
4. “Ant” and ”Toad”, recorded in eight cases,
5. “Anteater” and “Alligator/Caiman”, recorded in seven cases.

#### *The “Jaguar” in relation to the “Birds” and “Parrot-like birds”*

“Birds” are portrayed as truth tellers and as helpers. More often they assist the Amerindian protagonist and not the “Jaguar”-actor. The following interrelatedness between “Jaguar” and “Birds” has been established:

- Hunting “birds/macaw” as a catalyst: various “Jaguar” narratives start with a hunt for “Birds” (or their eggs). The protagonist is abandoned and rescued by “Jaguar”.
- Stealing fire, “Birds” as an opponent and a “bird” that (tries to) steal “Jaguar’s” fire, resulting in their falling victim to its vengeance.
- “Birds” as helper, the provider of new eyes. Certain specific “birds” create a new pair of eyes for “Jaguar”, or recover the eyes it had lost.

*“Jaguar” and “Turtle/Tortoise”*

The “Turtle” and “Tortoise” are dominantly associated with “Jaguar” in the trickster tales in which “Turtle/Tortoise” misleads, and often kills, “Jaguar”. In other stories events results in “Jaguars” chasing the trickster whereby:

- Contest of endurance comprising a challenge takes place to determine who can survive the longest without any food, water and on occasion even without air.
- “Jaguar” tries to lure either a “Turtle” or “Tortoise” down from a tree. However, this reptile then deceives “Jaguar” and kills it by throwing itself, or pieces of fruit, on “Jaguar’s” head.
- “Jaguar’s” necklace which the Turtle desires is therefore challenged. A necklace consisting of jaguar teeth may be referred to here. Such adornment is not only a talisman but also a *sign** of prowess.

In a Twin narrative (Story no. 2; Wayana, Cariban), “Tortoise” is the mother of the culture hero. The Twins are born from her eggs. In this case, “Jaguar” kills “Tortoise”. In the majority of Twin narratives either “Toad” or “Frog” fulfil the role of mother of “Jaguar”, she who raises the Twins.

*“Jaguar” with “Deer”, “Tapir”, “Anteater” and “Peccary”*

The two (main) sub-clusters in which “Jaguar” is related to “Deer”, “Tapir”, “Anteater” and “Peccary” concern: (a) the origin of fire, and (b) the gullible “Jaguar” whereby:

- These “animals” as carriers of fire, visit Jaguar’s house in order to fetch or steal fire. “Tapir” takes on a special role in which “Jaguar” and the others deem him suited or strong enough to carry off the burning tree/trunk.
- “Deer” and “Tapir” are both preyed upon by “Jaguar”. In trickster narratives, “Jaguar” is often attracted by the (dead) meat of “Deer” or “Tapir”.[118]

In addition to “Deer” and “Tapir”, “Peccary” is repeatedly featured as “Jaguar” food. In Story no. 216 (Ticuna), “Peccary” is even explicitly described as the highly seasoned and very peppery food of “Jaguar”.

[118] “Jaguar” is a carnivore, whereas “Tapir” (and “Deer”) eat leaves. This aspect is also themed in Story no. 151 (Kaingáng) in which various animals are first introduced, “Jaguar” is informed to eat human beings and/or animals of the forest. “Tapir” who did not understand this assignment therefore eats leaves and fruit.

*"Jaguar" and "Anaconda/Snake"*

"Jaguar" and "Snake" either take the stage or are referred to together in ten narratives.[119] Here an aquatic context seems to be the case. "Jaguar" travels around in the land-realm, whereas "Anaconda" is the Master of the Water realm. They share a large number of their ascribed attributes and qualities here, as they are dangerous and powerful "animals", even potential man-eaters. Moreover, both "Jaguars", as well as "Anacondas", wandered around on the face of the earth long before humans did (Story no. 360; Warao).

To a certain degree "Jaguars" are also associated with bodies of water. Story no. 151 (Kaingáng, Gê) explains why "Jaguars" roam both land and water. In Story no. 550 (Apinayé, Gê), "Jaguar" is portrayed as the Master of a Lake and, in Story no. 16 (Warao), as the Owner of a Pool. In Story no. 649 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), the "Jaguar" emerges from the water, jumping out to turn into a human being.

*"Jaguar" and "Toad/Frog"*

"Jaguar" and "Toad/Frog" either interact or are interrelated, in multiple contexts as well as in combination with the following motifs:

- As a trickster whereby "Toad/Frog" deceives "Jaguar".
- Both featuring as "owners of fire" and thus related to the origin of fire.
- In Twin narratives: "Frog/Toad" as the Mother/Owner of "Jaguar", while "Jaguar" eats the culture mother and "Frog/Toad" protects the Twin heroes. "Jaguar" and "Frog/Toad" often fall victim to the Twin's vengeance.
- "Jaguar" as a hunter *pur sang*. The "Tree frog" assists protagonists in order to acquire hunting skills or free "Jaguar" of poor hunting skills.
- References to the belief that "(tree) Frogs" possess claws resembling those of "Jaguar" and can even transform into "Jaguar".

*"Monkey"*

Although nine stories feature both "Jaguar" and "Monkey", they are hardly ever interrelated within the narratological context.[120] "Monkey" appears to serve as the catalyst here. A man chasing after "Monkey" is caught and then killed by "Jaguar" (see Story no. 185; Yuracare). "Monkey" helps "Turtle" up a tree, where "Jaguar" finds it (see Story nos. 164, 398, 541; unknown, Tupian, Gê). "Monkey" himself is a trickster and deceives the gullible "Jaguar" in Story nos. 218, 541, and 550 (Gê).

[119] Story nos. 23, 44, 63, 148, 185, 334, 360, 489, 798, and 707; 5x Cariban, Tupian, 3x Warao, Yuracare.
[120] Story nos. 151, 164, 185, 218, 334, 398, 541, 550, and 562; 5x Gê, 2x Tupian, Yuracare, unknown.

*"Jaguar" and "Ant"*

"Jaguar" and "Ants" are related in eight cases.[121] In Story no. 185 (Yuracare), we read that poisonous "Ants" live on "Jaguar's" head. In Story no. 147 (Bakairí, Cariban), "Jaguar" calls upon "Ants" to help in removing the trickster from a tree. In Story nos. 154, and 301-2 (Tupian), ant hills form the gateway to the underworld and "Jaguar's" village. "Jaguars" dwell in the underworld, where they engage in a Honey Festival. The protagonist, having transformed into an "Ant", enters the underworld through a hole the size of an "Ant's" nest.

*"Jaguar" and "Caiman/alligator"*

Their interrelatedness ostensibly mirrors that of "Jaguar" and (water) "Snake", whereby the former officiates as the Master of Land and the latter as the Master of Water. Both creatures are (potentially) dangerous as well as powerful opponents and at the same time the bringers of culture.

- "Jaguar" and "Caiman" are both portrayed as rulers of bodies of water (e.g., lake, pool).
- Opponent vs. helper: the protagonist has many adventures and is opposed as well as assisted during his journey by "Jaguar" and "Caiman".
- "Caiman" is, as is "Jaguar", a victim of trickery.

*"Jaguar" and "Anteater"*

"Jaguar" and "Anteater" are mainly intertwined in trickster narratives, whereby "Anteater" entices "Jaguar" into comparing excrements in order to discern who the better huntsman is. In a large number of these cases, "Jaguar" loses one or two eyes.

### *Characterization and duration ("Story")*

Although by and large the personage "Jaguar" (and on occasion "Tiger") has not been further specified, in certain instances this has indeed occurred (see also Appendix D, section E. Story). Specific aspects recorded repetitively for the "Jaguar" are: "Black Jaguar" (n=4; Story nos. 81, 82, 110, 298: 3x Warao, Jivaroan), or the "Spotted Jaguar" (n=3; Story nos. 191, 298, 672: Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê), Jivaroan, Sikuani (Guajiboan)). Other recurrent descriptions concern an enormous/gigantic "Jaguar" (n=3; Story nos. 82, 350, 407: Warao, 2x Cariban), as well as a multi-headed "Jaguar" (n=3; Story nos. 407, 465, 486; Cariban, 2x Warao).

Having been explicated in the narratives, various physical features are therefore likely to be portrayed in other forms of display, such as iconography:

- Claws: described as curved (his "knives"), also used as a toy (e.g., Story nos. 186, 200, 368, 389, 399; Cariban, Guaicuruan, Tupian).
- Teeth: toy, talisman (e.g., Story no. 389; Cariban).
- Eyes: with which you can see at night; luminous, fiery (e.g., Story nos. 643, 645; Sikuani, Guajiboan).

[121] Story nos. 34, 147, 154, 185, 301-2, 328, and 343; 2x Cariban, Tacanan, 4x Tupian, Yuracare.

- Head: two- and three-headed “Jaguars” (e.g., Story nos. 465, 486, 504; Warao).
- Skin: spotted, striped, and referred to as “coat” (e.g., Story nos. 218, 649; Gê, Guajiboan).

In addition, “jaguar” bone serves to make flutes and a jaguar bone tip lance is applied when hunting (Story nos. 1, 164, 541; Munduruku (Tupian), unknown Amazonia, Apinayé (Gê)). Several references support the fact that jaguar teeth are valued for their protective, talismanic power. A necklace consisting of jaguar teeth adorning a hunter’s neck, or a jaguar skin covering his shoulders, is also a *sign** of strength and prowess (see 5.4.4).

Motifs regarding the “Jaguar’s” thunder-like voice have been recorded. In Story no. 81 (Warao), a “Black tiger” attacks and kills members of a hunting party. This “animal” cannot be injured by lances or arrows and, when it advances, a noise is heard similar to approaching thunder. Story no. 110 (Warao) also refers to a “Black tiger” that produces a thunder-like sound.

Other more behavioural qualities recurrently encountered in narratives are: the “Black tiger’s” strength, agility, expertise (i.e., when hunting, climbing, tracking (see Story nos. 133, 298, 351, 504; Cariban, Jivaroan, 2x Warao) and, on the other hand, stupidity. In Story no. 298 (Jivaroan), various species of felines are described in short. The strongest creatures here are the “Black tiger” and the “Yambinga” (species unknown). “Leopard” is described as being the most agile, being the only one to escape from a collapsing bridge.

As to the “Jaguar”-narratives, 129 (unique) records on duration (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*) illustrate no significant variation when compared with the set general pattern.[122] Therefore, 93 percent (n=120) fall within the short range and nine in the middle range (covering between 6-10 pages). Although the narrated time indicates a high level of variation, it is in line with 47 percent (n=61) of the records which cover a short narrated time whereas 40 percent (n=52) covers a narrated time of either months or years and 12 percent (n=16) a narrated time of weeks.

[122] Real time: $\chi^2(2) = 2.95$; $\rho = 0.23$ (not significant). Narrated time: $\chi^2(2) = 0.51$; $\rho = 0.78$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section E. Story for a more elaborate discussion.

### 5.4.2 Jaguar in nature

**Fig. 5.14.** Jaguar (*Panthera onca*); photo by C. H. Luz Nunes de Almeida (2015). Licensed CC BY 3.0, accessed by EOL.

The jaguar is the largest cat (even the largest carnivorous animal) native to Central and South America, and indeed the only living example of the genus Panthera found in the New World (see Fig. 5.14). Despite various attempts, specific subspecies have yet to be identified. Jaguars are encountered from Central America into South America.[123] They are nevertheless mentioned on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as "Near threatened" (Caso et al. 2008). Numerous studies have been conducted on their status in Honduras, Costa Rica, Amazonia as well as in other parts of South America in order to study the most appropriate manner to preserve this cat in its natural habitat (de la Torre et al. 2017; Medellín et al. 2016; Mora et al. 2016; Porfirio et al. 2016; Silveira et al. 2009; Verissimo 2012).

#### *Physical and behavioural attributes*

The jaguar, an impressive land mammal, has a robust head, powerful jaws, large fangs and claws. Its length from nose to the base of its tail varies between 1.57 and 2.41 m. It mainly feeds on mammals weighing more than 1 kg but is also known to devour smaller mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. A jaguar can even take on wild animals weighing up to 300 kg (Nowak 1999: 831; Seymour 1989: 4).

Jaguars have the largest eyes of all carnivores relative to head size. The round pupils and irises range in colour from golden to a reddish yellow, whereas young jaguar cubs have blue eyes (Seymour 1989: 4). These cats have an excellent night vision. Their eyes seem illuminous as they reflect light at night. The Waiwai (Cariban) associate jaguar eyes with light and the Shipibo (Panoan) with fire and the Sun (Roe 1995a: 176); see also 5.4.1 under the sub-heading *Characterization and duration ("Story")*.

Generally spotted in a tawny yellow hue, the colour of the fur ranges between reddish-brown and black (Seymour 1989: 2) creating a camouflage in the forest habitat, ideal for an ambush attack. With black jaguars, this colour is the result of colour morphism and is observed in *c.*6 percent of the population. The 706 studied narratives include many references to the colour, and especially to the spots. Remarkably the "Black Tiger" is referred to as the most powerful of all, perhaps because it is such a rare sight. Indigenous peoples probably consider it a

[123] According to the IUCN, jaguars currently inhabit Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela (Caso et al. 2008).

separate species (Hudson 1910: 389-91; see also 5.4.1 under the sub-heading *Characterization and duration ("Story")*).

Jaguars can emit roaring sounds in order to warn any competitors. These roars resemble a repetitive cough. They can also vocalise mews and grunts. In certain instances, the sound of the jaguar is compared to thunder, but this creature is also said to "sing" (5.4.1 under the sub-heading *Characterization and duration ("Story")*).

Jaguars prefer life in the dense rainforest, swamps and wooded regions, but also frequent open terrains, shrublands and deserts (de la Torre et al. 2017). They are strongly associated with the presence of water and are known to enjoy swimming as is also reflected in the narratological setting, which illustrates that the water realm is second to a land/forest setting (see 5.4.1).

The jaguar is the largest, solitary, opportunistic, stalk-and-ambush (land)predator positioned at the top of the food chain. It thus plays a key role in maintaining the ecosystem of its habitat, limiting the number of herbivores and thereby reducing the pressure exerted on plants (Miller et al. 2001).

### *The jaguar in relation to other species*

As mainland predators, jaguars hunt and feed on a wide variety of species. These nocturnal animals, with peak activity around dawn and dusk, may hunt during the day, too (Nowak 1999: 831). Opportunistic hunters, jaguars virtually eat everything that crosses their path, taking on any terrestrial and/or riparian vertebrate found in Central to South America, including adult caimans, large mammals (e.g., deer) and on occasion even anacondas as well as smaller prey such as birds, fish and turtles (Seymour 1989: 4; Veríssimo et al. 2016). Having dragged their catch to a secluded or protected location, they devour its skin, bones, organs, hoofs and claws but not the intestines.

**Fig. 5.15.** Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) in captivity; photograph by the author (2007).

Jaguars walk around slowly, listen, stalk and then ambush their prey. An ambush may include leaping into water or following prey up a tree. Jaguars can patiently wait for a fish to come near enough to then catch it with their claws. They have been observed when deliberately using their tails to attract fish. Although very capable of attacking humans, they rarely do so (Seymour 1989: 5). This stalk-and-ambush strategy has presumably contributed to framing a "Jaguar" as a dangerous killer because it is able to strike before its presence could be noticed.

Mankind hunts jaguars. Young jaguars are reported to be preyed upon by other jaguars, crocodilians, and large snakes. An adult jaguar is rarely the victim of any other species, but can accidentally fall victim to anacondas, venomous snakes or a herd of peccaries (Seymour 1989: 4).

Although the territories of jaguars and for instance pumas may overlap, there are not many records of any direct interaction between these two species. However, in a Story no. 298 (Jivaroan) various species of felines do interact. When mutually compared, the black "Tiger" and the "Yambinga" are described as the strongest, and "leopard" as the most agile (see 5.4.1).

### 5.4.3 The iconography of "jaguar"

Feline zoomorphic depictions are rarely encountered on Saladoid ceramics originating from the islands or from the Orinoco region of the mainland (Waldron 2010: 134). In case of the island iconography, the absence of any "natural" feline species has presumably attributed to the loss of the importance of "jaguar" in indigenous cosmologies, and in its depiction. From the Amazonian mainland, however, other ways of displaying "jaguar" have been encountered, but there are also a number of indications regarding the insular Caribbean. Therefore other ways of displaying "jaguars" as well as their portraits on ceramics are discussed here.

Although "jaguar" imagery on ceramics is indeed rare, it is not completely absent as is the case with such imagery on other materials. "Jaguar"-shaped benches have been documented for various Amerindian groups (Roe 1998; Roth 2011: 289). A feline (presumably "jaguar")-shaped bench has also been recovered from the Pitch Lake (southwest Trinidad) which resembles benches known from the mainland (see Fig. 5.16 (below); Saunders 2005: 222, 294).

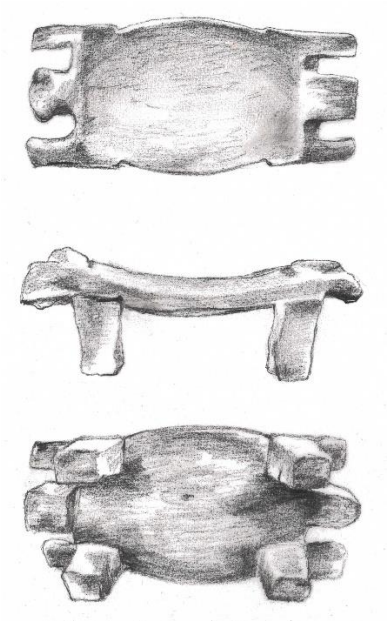


**Fig. 5.16.** Ceramic Age "feline" (jaguar?)-shaped bench made of fustic wood from Pitch Lake, Trinidad; length 59 cm; width 25.5 cm; after Ostapkowicz et al. 2017 (curated at the Peabody Museum of Natural History); drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

In addition, various historic and ethnographic sources mention that jaguar skins were worn and traded, as were jaguar claws which served as powerful talismans and as proof of (male) prowess (see 5.4.4). To my knowledge, the only recovered perforated jaguar teeth originating from the islands to date comprise the pair found at the site of Punta Candelero (Puerto Rico), one at Pearls (Grenada), and another one at the La Hueca-Sorcé site on the island of Vieques (Keegan 1996; Laffoon et al. 2014: 226, 229). The "Jaguar" motif referred to as *mado fedi* (lit.: "Jaguar face") is encountered in basketry designs among the Yekuana (Carib of Venezuela) (Guss 1989: 110-11). Basketry embellished with "jaguar" motifs are mentioned in narratives, too (see 5.4.1).

Although jaguar claws and skin are perishable, written sources inform us that both items were utilised and worn, at least on Trinidad and Tobago. The Island Carib of Dominica wore skins too (Boomert 2000; Breton et al. 1665). A number of 16th-century warrior chiefs of the Carinepagoto people (northwestern Trinidad) and allied groups were clad in jaguar skins with the "animal's" mouth placed over their heads. Male warriors of the Kaliña and Kalinago groups donned jaguar claws and ear pendants adorned with pieces of jaguar skin (Boomert 2000: 404; Roth 1924: 122-4, 574).

Along with a Saladoid associated series, pendants ("amulets") made of semi-precious materials (e.g., stone, shell, mother-of-pearl) and hardwood were recovered in the Caribbean islands, including several "jaguar" examples (Boomert 2000: 414, 431). For instance, a wooden Huecoid "jaguar" head amulet from the Morel site, Guadeloupe (Petitjean Roget 1995).

### *Feline adornos*

Feline zoomorphic imagery has rarely been identified on pottery originating from the Lower Orinoco River region (n=2) or from Trinidad and Tobago, n=3 (see Table 5.6, p. 200). As to the Orinoco area, two "feline" *adornos* of which one a ceramic claw have been encountered (see Fig. 5.17). It has been suggested that the abovementioned specimens found on Trinidad and Tobago may have been trade items hailing from the Lower Orinoco River region which date to between the 4th and 6th centuries CE (Waldron 2010: 134-5).

As so few examples of "feline" *adornos* have been recovered, any stylistic comparison between the mainland and island specimens is impossible (see Table 5.6, p. 200). Moreover, as a mainland origin of the found specimens has been suggested, it would not make any sense to stylistically compare them (Waldron 2010: 134-5).

An explanation for the rare identifications of "jaguar" *adornos* could be: the "jaguar" is depicted in a more abstract form. The Shipibo (Panoan) refer to the jaguar's spots as its specific "cross-shaped design" which they adopted to decorate pottery with. The Waiwai (Cariban) are known to paint their bodies with "jaguar" motifs (Roe 1998: 186). Numerous stories explicitly refer to the jaguar's spots (see 5.4.1 under the sub-heading *Characterization and duration ("Story")*). Perhaps the "jaguar" was portrayed by means of specific patterning,

reproducing its spots as iconic *signs** rather than physical traits.[124] Its claws and eyes are often directly characterized, too, and could also have served as iconic *signs** perhaps even in an abstract form.

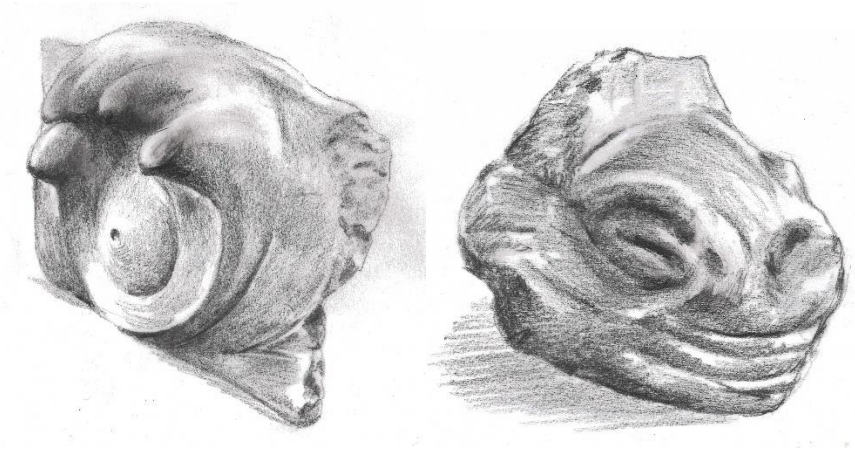


**Fig. 5.17.** Two Saladoid "feline" *adorno* fragments; a "jaguar" claw from Barrancas, Venezuela (left) and a "grimacing jaguar" from Mount Irvine, Tobago (right); adapted from (left) Waldron 2010: Fig. 217, height 15.24 cm and (right) from Waldron 2016: Fig. 4.29, right, length 4 cm; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

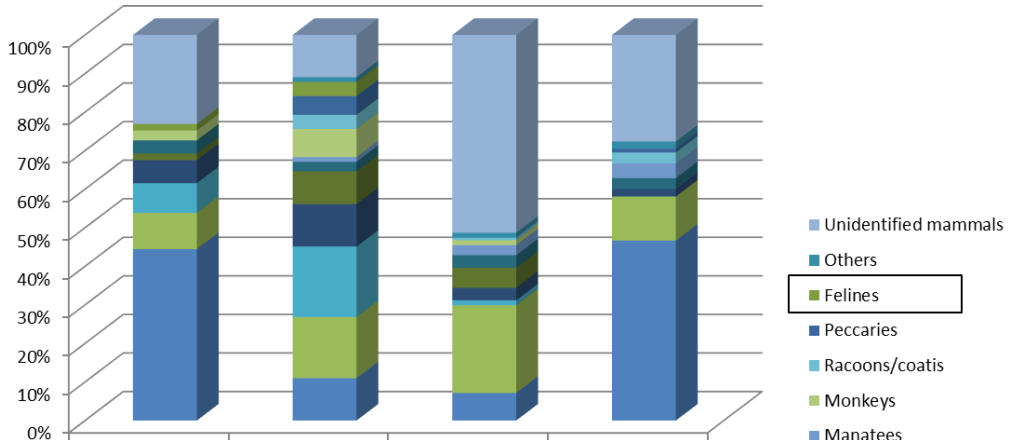
Of Interest in this respect are two spotted Saladoid *adornos* recovered from Pearls, Grenada (see Figs. 5.18 and 5.19). The former, Fig. 5.18, is anthropomorphic, the other zoomorphic which stylistically resembles identified "armadillo" *adornos.* These spots then could refer to a "jaguar"-like quality ("jaguarness"), e.g., presenting us with a Master of its Kind, and/or a "jaguar" to others.

**Fig. 5.18.** "Jaguar"-like shaman (?), spotted anthropomorphic Saladoid *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; width *c.*13.1 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

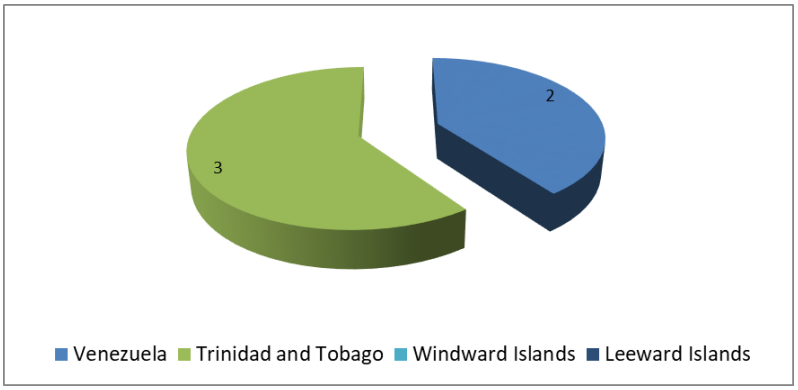
**Fig. 5.19.** "Jaguar"-like "Armadillo" (?), spotted zoomorphic Saladoid *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; width *c.* 4.3 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

[124] See 3.1.1 for more information on the various *signs** and their definitions as introduced in the present study, or the Glossary.

**Table 5.6.** Identified "feline" *adornos* and their dispersal (above); the absolute dispersal of identified "feline" *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela (below).




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified mammals | 27 | 9 | 79 | 29 |
| Others | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Felines | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Peccaries | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Racoons/coatis | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Monkeys | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Manatees | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Rodents | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Armadillos | 2 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| Opossums | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| Anteaters | 9 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| Bats | 11 | 13 | 35 | 12 |
| Dogs | 52 | 9 | 11 | 49 |




The "physical" absence of the "jaguars" in the Caribbean islands could account for a decrease, or even absence, of any "jaguar" depictions. However, many examples confirm the exchange of goods and beliefs between the mainland and these islands especially during the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE; see 1.1). The teeth of mainland jaguars encountered here are just one example. Isotopic research on the archaeological finds of jaguar, tapir and peccary teeth indicates they hail from very diverse, distinct regions (Laffoon et al. 2014). A jaguar tooth from Punta Candelero (late Ceramic Age, 600/800 CE-1492 CE, Puerto Rico), most probably stems from the Guiana Highlands, whereas the jaguar tooth from La Hueca-Sorcé

(Vieques) context may well originate from a region stretching across the Southern Lowlands of Meso-America (Belize, Guatemala) towards northern Venezuela. Albeit difficult to pinpoint exactly, it is clear that both jaguar teeth have very distinct, distant origins (Laffoon et al. 2014: 227, 229).

This isotopic research confirms that goods (and thus presumably also ideas and beliefs) were exchanged or transported over enormous distances from North, Central and South America across the Caribbean. Although "feline/jaguar" *adornos* are rare, as are other "jaguar" (related) artefacts, the jaguar teeth encountered had travelled from afar. Their presence indicates that "jaguar" as a cultural *sign** was not completely lost. Apparently, other means of depicting and/or displaying "jaguar", were preferred above ceramics.

### 5.4.4 "Jaguar" in Amerindian cosmologies

"Jaguar" travels through worldly realms, as it roams across land, water and the sky (by climbing trees). They are dominantly associated with the sky world, and therefore with elements such as the masculine principle, culture, order, the Sun, and fire (Boomert 2000; Roe 1982, 1998), all of which are also linked to the "Jaguar" protagonist in the narratives. Moreover, being the major predator of the rainforest, "Jaguar" is ranked at the top of the food chain. Its cosmological dominance apparently mirrors this "natural" authority as will be addressed in this section.

#### *The "jaguar" as a liminal being and a shamanic traverser of realms*

"Jaguars" can be considered ambiguous beings not only because they traverse the land, water and sky but also because they are most active at dusk and dawn, despite being primarily nocturnal. These spatial and temporal ambiguous qualities in combination with its predatory attributes probably fuelled the conceptualisation of the "jaguar" as a powerful shaman. In the worldview of various Amerindians, the "jaguar" has been identified as the protector of cosmological balance (i.e., "yellow jaguar"), the fierce avenger ("black jaguar"), rendering "jaguar" a giver and a taker (Roe 1982: 208-30). "Jaguars" can, therefore, be either powerful assistants or the enemies of shamans, as will be discussed below.

The Shipibo (Panoan) distinguish two "jaguars". The first one is light-skinned and has no negative connotations. Nor is there a great deal of awe (i.e*., Ino*). The second "jaguar" is gigantic and fierce; its name is only spoken in "hush tones" (i.e., *Huiso inon*: *Yanapuma* in Quechua, see Roe 1982: 213). The latter is said to kill humans, both by means of physical strength and "witchcraft".

The "jaguar" is the antithesis of kinship according to the Piro (Maipurean speakers of Peru). This is exactly the reason why it is so dangerous (Gow 2001: 106; Viveiros de Castro 2012: 38). We read: "To avoid being devoured by the "jaguar", one needs to know how to assume its point of view as the point of view of the Self. And here is the crux of the problem: how to let yourself be invested with alterity without becoming a seed of transcendence..." (Viveiros de

Castro 2012: 38). Although losing your own perspective, your own point of view, is always a risk when engaging with (= entering the perspective of) the other, which is particularly dangerous regarding the powerful "jaguar" (see also 3.4.2).

Franklin Loveland suggests another perspective when considering "jaguar" as metaphor for power, authority and social control. The "jaguar" is the source of power or omniscience of Rama *turmali* (i.e., shamans; Chibchan of Nicaragua). When in trance, the *turmali* can talk to "jaguars" and then found out about the future to then be able to exert social control (Loveland 1986: 233-4). We read: … "jaguar is a source of knowledge which legitimates the authority and social control which the *turmali* exert" (Loveland 1986: 237). In the Rama's view, the "jaguar" thus stands for social control in a political as well as a moral sense.

Throughout the Amazonian region, shamans are thought to be capable of changing into "jaguars" (Boomert 2000; Roe 1998; 1982; Roth 2011; Wilbert 1987). The shamans possess jaguar skins which they don in order to become "jaguars". Certain South American indigenous groups believe that all shamans transform into "jaguars" after death. For instance, the Roucouyennes (Wayana, Cariban) opine that a "jaguar"-shaman protects the corpse of a shaman (Roe 1982: 207; Roth 2011: 98 [79]; Wilbert 1987: 191-7).

In the course of a fruit-ripening ritual, Cubeo (Tucanoan) shamans transform, by means of hallucinogens, into "jaguars" and then, through the emanations of "Jaguar's" fertility, cause the fruit to ripen (Roe 1982: 209). The Héta (Tupian) uphold a similar association. When harvesting the "guaviroa" (palm tree) fruit, jaguar skins are utilised (Roe 1982: 209). In a Héta healing ritual, a jaguar skin plays an essential role, too, forming an essential part of several cures (e.g., in the case of abdominal pains, snake bites). In addition, (burned) jaguar skin can cool the patient (Roe 1982: 208).

Other references to shamans transforming into "jaguar" mention that the Amerindians residing on the banks of the Uaupés River (a tributary of the Rio Negro) believe that if the wife of a shaman (*piai*) bears him a child, she, in turn, may bear him a "jaguar" into which he himself may be transformed at death (Roth 2011 [1915]: 351). The spirits (*iguanchi*) of the (Jivaro) shaman can be very dangerous especially the "jaguars" and the smaller felines. Moreover, the souls of medicine men reincarnate into "jaguars" in order to kill enemies (Karsten 1935: 374).

Various accounts concern "jaguar"-shaped benches on which the shaman is seated (Roth 2011: 334 [228], 336, Fig. A). Roth (2011: 311 [273]) describes how a "jaguar"- or "crocodile"-shaped bench plays a role in an Arawak puberty rite which concludes with a feast. A middle-aged man brings out a girl from a closed room[125] to then position her on such a bench, specially

[125] The seclusion of young girls can be part of puberty rites after being isolated from water, fire, cooking and cooking apparatus. We read: "in '*old days*' of the Pomeroon Arawak, the girl would remain with

made for this occasion. The “Jaguar” tales researched in the present study include references to “jaguar”-shaped stools. In Story no. 416 (Cariban), it was explicitly stated that the narrator sat on a “jaguar”-shaped bench.

As to parallels between the shamans and “jaguars”: both stalk their prey preferably at night and both are provided with keen eyesight, night vision and the ability of foresight. They are either protector or aggressor and will defend their territorial boundaries (Boomert 2000: 452; Roe 1982: 206-8; Wilbert 1987: 195-6). Moreover, “Jaguar” is not only the manifestation in which a Master can present himself to the shaman but also the form the shaman takes in order to reveal himself to others, as he is Master of his People (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or “ownership”*).

Shamans can also call upon the “jaguar”, or a “jaguar”-spirit, in order to evoke its strength and power. A Cariban ceremonial dance has been described which aims at calling upon the “jaguar”-spirit (*kaikoetji juma*). Amerindians mimic the “jaguar” by roaring, hissing and mimicking its claws (as to catch prey). In this manner, they will become a “jaguar”, acquiring its strength and power, too. Nevertheless, as a “jaguar” could still be ambushed, you would also call upon the spirit of the “caiman”, “anaconda”, etc. (van Capelle 1926: 43-5; see also Story no. 707; Cariban).

### *“Jaguar” kanaima or avenger*

“Jaguar” has been described as (malevolent) spirit or avenger, or as Roe’s black jaguar/panther (Roe 1998, 1982). The “jaguar” as an avenger, spirit or embodiment (i.e., a *sign**) of strength is referred to as *kanaima** in the Guiana Highlands (Roe 1982: 213, 227). The term *kanaima** is presumably Akawaio, but is also familiar to other Cariban speakers (Macushi, Arekuna), Arawak (Wapishana), and Warao (Roth 2011 [1915]: 369-70). It has been suggested (Roth 2011 [1915] 369 [320]) that this term originates from a tree, the sap of which has remarkable qualities. A man, having rubbed his body with this substance, can lose his mind before transforming into a “snake” or a “jaguar”. The specific “animal” can be identified by means of the traits the *kanaima** has assumed. It is a “jaguar” if it delivers a blow in order to knock its victim to the ground. Should it wrestle and place its arms around the neck, it is an anaconda (Roth 2011 [1915]: 371).

The Kaliña (Cariban) consider the “jaguar” to be a divine avenger, a pure assassin. The “Guaranis” is the “blue tiger” (i.e., jaguar) that will devour humans. According to the Guarani-Tupia, the moon grows red (moon eclipse) whenever “tiger” pursues or feeds on it (de Goeje 1943: 41). As to Acawoio (Akawaio, Cariban) stories, a *kanaima** takes on the manifestation of a “jaguar” donning a feathered crown. The bright red spots covering its skin indicate that

her mother in a separate logie, or in a specially constructed compartment of the house” (Roth 2011: 310 [272]).

during the night it moves around in the form of a "jaguar" (Boomert 2000: 452, note 11; Brett 1880: 153-4; Roth 2011: 373).

The Warao distinguish a murderous "jaguar", too, linking it to thunder which is considered the roar of this mythical "black jaguar", referred to as "tiger" (de Goeje 1943: 41; see also 5.4.1). A "black jaguar" is extremely vindictive, but will only injure someone if it has full right to do so and is called upon to assist when all others are powerless (de Goeje 1943: 49). Thunder in relation to "jaguar" has also been recorded among Amerindian peoples, e.g., the Desana (Tucano) and Sirionó (Tupí-Guaraní; Roe 1982: 209).[126]

Not only *kanaimas** and shamans can take on the physical form of a "jaguar", (malevolent) spirits can do so, too. According to the Kaliña (Cariban), the tobacco spirit could appear as "jaguar" and also as a "bird", "dog" and "snake" (de Goeje 1943: 44). The Canelos (Quechua) regard "jaguar" as a most dangerous and formidable demon, that can take the shape of any member of the feline family (Karsten 1935: 386). The Yukpa (Cariban) believe that malevolent spirits introduced "jaguars" in order to fight people and that this is presently still the case (Wilbert 1974: 139). In addition, white people are thought to be endowed with supernatural powers and are supposed to be able to control "jaguars" and "boas" (Karsten 1935: 58-9).

"Jaguar" is thus the embodiment (natural symbol) of ultimate power and strength, in a positive as well as a lethal sense. This implies that "jaguar" is the physical manifestation in which all that (potentially) prey upon us reveals themselves to us e.g., masters, spirits, shamans. In the narratives concerning "Jaguar" and morphism, the transformation is entangled in various contexts (see 5.4.1). People, "things" and other "animals" (e.g., "Frog") transform into "jaguar" because they either behave like it (i.e., become predators) or resemble it (e.g., by being spotted and/or with claws).

### *"Becoming" through adornment*

The use of jaguar teeth, claws and skin was recognised in the tales and is also shortly discussed in 5.4.1 and 5.4.3. Ethnographical research and historic accounts inform us that jaguar skins, claws and teeth served as adornments, as will be dealt with here. This fact is of special interest considering the previous connotation that mimicking, or resembling, a jaguar implies becoming a "jaguar", which could imply that wearing body parts of jaguar functions as means to transmute into "jaguar".

A jaguar's body parts utilised as instruments or war tools have been documented for the Shipibo (Panoan), Cashinahua (Panoan), Waiwai (Cariban), and the Guiana tribes in general (Roe 1998: 175). For instance, ear adornments including jaguar teeth have been observed among Carib who reside along the Cuyuni River (Guyana). The Cubeo (Tucanoan) beautify their

[126] The Desana (Tukano) and the Sirionó (Tupí-Guaraní) associate the jaguar with rain and thunder (Roe 1982: 209).

belts with jaguar teeth. The Tucano, Carib of Guyana, Yagua (Peba-Yaguan, Peru), Shipibo and Cashinahua (both Panoan) donned them as necklaces (Roe 1998: 184).

The body parts of a jaguar could have signalled male prowess, strength, protection and was (is) applied in order to impress, or even scare off. Their use is therefore related to male-associated activities such as warfare and hunting (Breton et al. 1665: 11, 44 and 48 of 50; Du Tertre et al. 1667: 28 of 43; Roe 1998). During the 17th century, the Island Carib (Arawakan) adorned themselves with pieces of jaguar skin and placed jaguar teeth around their necks (Breton et al. 1665: 11, 44 and 48 of 50; Du Tertre et al. 1667: 28 of 43). Furthermore, the Warao necklaces consisting of jaguar, otter or alligator teeth may well have been considered to bring good luck to huntsmen (Harris 2005: 493; Roe 1998: 175, 177-8, 184). A similar practice is observed among the Wajarikoele (Cariban; see Ahlbrinck 1956: 166).

However, further associations and indications concern the reason why the body parts of a jaguar serve to decorate. Among the Arawak people, small children were adorned with a necklace which included a jaguar tooth (Ahlbrinck 1931: 188-90; Roth 2011: 280 [240]), aimed at providing them with this animal's strength. The Carib donned jaguar teeth in order not to come across such a feline (Ahlbrinck 1931: 188-90). Among Amerindians (unspecified) residing along the Uaupés River, jaguar, as well as bush-hog teeth, were thought to protect growing children against attacks by wild animals. Macushi (Cariban) women and children wore jaguar teeth as talismans (Roth 2011: 280-1 [240]).

Men probably utilise jaguar teeth not only to attract women but also to impress other males and enemies as a public display of power (Roe 1998: 175) which is also of importance to shamans when making themselves "attractive" to spirits.

Although jaguar claws are repeatedly mentioned in the 706 stories, any direct references to their application are rare. Its teeth and hide are linked to the "yellow" beneficial "jaguar", and its claws to the "black" maleficent "jaguar" (Roe 1982; Roe 1998: 185). The claws are hypothesized to be associated with poison, presumably because wounds that claws inflict may cause infections (Roe 1998: 185). Carib warriors covered in black war-paint smeared their arms as well as their clubs with a healing powder or ointment made of worms appearing from jaguar claws buried in the ground (Roth 1924: 580).

Jaguar claws hanging in a shaman's hut indicate he is able to transform into a devastating "jaguar" (Brett 1880: 154, referring to the Akawaio). Yet another reference deals with the Toba-Pilaga (Guaicuruan, Argentina) who produced dog collars made of jaguar claws (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 100). Jaguar claws found their way up to Trinidad and Tobago (Boomert 2000: 425). On a Venezuelan ceramic vessel, a jaguar claw may have been identified, too (Waldron 2010: 134; see also Fig. 5.17 (left), p. 200).

The Jivaroan tradition of creating trophies utilising not only jaguar skins, teeth and claws, but also the heads of enemies, on occasion even jaguar heads, has been reported (Karsten 1935: 298-9). Skull trophy cults are also known to exist in the Caribbean (Roe 1998: 178). In addition to skulls, bones could have also been applied. In Story no. 573 (Gê), a jaguar bone served as an arrow tip, which may refer to actual practice. Carib flutes were created from bamboo or the bones of jaguars, deer and crabs (Ahlbrinck 1956: 53).

The above illustrates that when wearing the body parts of a jaguar, men can become (like-) a "jaguar". A necklace made of jaguar teeth transmutes a hunter into a successful predator. Thanks to a jaguar's claws/teeth, men turn into fierce warriors and supreme fighters. Shamans, when wearing a jaguar skin and acting like a "jaguar", equal other (enemy) shamans, spirits or masters which in turn are "(like-) a jaguar" i.e., potentially hunt down Amerindians, causing disease or death.

### 5.4.5 Concluding remarks

This part of Chapter 5 set out to better understand how (and why) the "jaguar" was and is conceptualised, through its role in narratives, nature, iconography and indigenous cosmologies. Its importance as the dominant predator positioned at the top of the food chain is mirrored in a cosmological status as a very powerful being, as a potential helper as well as a foe. As an agent, it can cross worldly boundaries as well as "natural" ones when traversing not only the land but also the water and sky worlds while being most active at dusk and at dawn. The jaguar's methods for hunting, as a stalk-and-ambush predator, reflect its demeanour as a (potential) malevolent spirit and a *kanaima** while travelling in the forest and attacking humans. However, the fact the jaguar was never native to the Caribbean islands, probably impacted its status within the cosmologies of their Amerindian inhabitants.

"Jaguar" being the embodiment of the ultimate predator therefore also concerns the manner in which shamans, spirits, masters present themselves to others. To be "jaguar"-like is not only to be an assassin, a disrupter but also to serve as the ultimate protector (i.e., Master). For instance, a hostile shaman, or malevolent spirits, who slay Amerindians, are thus "jaguar"-like. However, a huntsman only becomes "jaguar"-like to the "animal" he is chasing. Being an excellent hunter implies being "jaguar"-like to many forms of prey. The village shaman is the protector, even the Master of his People. While consequently being a potential predator to others, he is also "jaguar"-like. A shaman transmutes into a "jaguar" through rituals, hereby acting and dressing like a "jaguar". This transformation is also potentially dangerous. The shaman must never cross any ontological boundaries or else he would truly "become" "jaguar" i.e., a danger to his own people (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or "ownership"*).

The importance of the "jaguar" is not reflected in the Saladoid ceramic archaeological record. The reason for this is the fact that the dominance of the "jaguar" within the 706 narratives

significantly surpasses its imagery on ceramics. In Waldron's comprehensive comparable research only a few feline Saladoid *adornos* have been identified in the islands. However, perhaps even more surprisingly, a small number of Saladoid "jaguar" *adornos* have also been encountered in the Venezuela.

This discrepancy as to any "jaguar" occurrences in narratives and on ceramics (even including archaeological records in general) can partly be explained by the fact that the claws and fur of the jaguar are perishable. We know from anthropological reports that hunters and shamans donned body parts as tokens of male prowess, talismanic power, protection or display of (shamanic) skills and supremacy. They are now absent from the archaeological corpus because they have not been preserved as is the case with ceramics, sea shells and numerous other sustainable materials.

However, this observation does not address the issue: why is "jaguar" not prominent when compared with the (especially mainland) Saladoid iconography, especially *adornos*. Numerous explanations could be suggested here, e.g., perhaps "jaguar" has not (yet) been identified as a result of an abstractification concerning its spots, claws, fangs or eyes. As demonstrated (see 5.4.3), "jaguar"-like qualities could for instance also be communicated by more abstract means. For, instance the two spotted *adornos* (Figs. 5.18 and 5.19, p. 200) could depict a "jaguar"-like human or "animal" (i.e., a shaman). Moreover, a spotted "animal" could refer to "jaguar"-like qualities, and be associated with a Master, or perceived as a "jaguar" by others (e.g., "otter" is a "jaguar" to fish).

Another possible explanation could be: "jaguar" is not portrayed on ceramics *because* it is displayed by other means (e.g., stories, rituals, songs, (teeth) pendants, etc.). The preferred way to depict "jaguar" as *sign** (iconic or symbolic) was perhaps as a corporal adornment consisting of raw material such as teeth, hides and claws. Corporal displays are ascribed the following functions: (a) aesthetic, (b) emulative, (c) performative, (d) protective/talismanic, and (e) demonstrative or "corroborative" (Roe 1998: 177). Moreover, historic as well as anthropological accounts report how the body parts of "jaguars" have been utilised for all these functions. Nevertheless, section 8.3 will further elaborate on potential explanations as to why certain "animals" are prominently displayed as Saladoid *adornos* whereas others are not.

### *Absence on islands*

The faunal record of the insular Caribbean being deprived of large feline species has probably impacted the status of the jaguar within the cosmologies of the Amerindian islanders. On the other hand, jaguar teeth have been recovered from various islands (Laffoon et al. 2014). Even though their numbers are low, these teeth illustrate an extensive exchange network by means of which they have travelled across a large area of land and through a long time span. Historic records support this fact by describing the usage and/or distribution of jaguar skins and claws via Trinidad up to Dominica (see 5.4.4, under the sub-heading *Becoming through adornment*).

What could have been the impact of the loss of this major land predator on the Amerindian worldview of the Amerindians living in the islands and on "jaguar" as a cultural *sign**? I do not agree with the opinion that "jaguar" as a *sign** was substituted by, for instance, "dogs" (Rodríguez 1992; Roe 1982, 1995). A similarly powerful (carnivorous, spatial and temporal liminal) terrestrial "animal" was simply not native to the Caribbean Islands. Nevertheless, the Amerindian world was and remained inhabited by humans and non-humans i.e., with *significant other-than-human-persons**. Therefore a world in which other beings caused disease and death still existed. Connotations and associations regarding parts of the "jaguar" were indeed presumably substituted. In my opinion, this is not the case with the "jaguar" as a composed *sign** (see also 8.3).

The Amerindian pantheon of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic *signs** is as yet quite sufficient to comprehend the world and to create new worlds based on those at hand, just as Amerindians have always done. Even without the powerful "jaguar", the world was (and is) a place, that requires constant negotiation as well as reciprocal relations between humans and the *significant other-than-human-persons**. These relations, interactions and negotiations would have been possible even without the "jaguar" or any other mainland predators. Its qualities are depicted as the two spotted *adornos* from Pearls (Granada) may indicate. Hereby "jaguar" itself is not displayed, but "humans" or "animals" with for instance jaguar spots linked to "jaguarness" (i.e., like-"jaguar") in order to indicate they are "jaguar" to someone (e.g., a shaman Master).

# Chapter 6. Becoming acquainted with the feathered ones

The Trio (Cariban) classify "birds" as *tëpërikenton* (roughly translated: "feathered ones"), which presents us with an example of how the indigenous classification of animal/birds *can* be based on morphological features such as feathers. This chapter is similar in layout as Chapter 5 and will begin with discussing "birds" in general, as a holistic, not a species specific-category. However, as the specific "birds" (e.g., "parrot", "vulture"[127]) are also identified in iconography and as actors in the studied narratives, too, this chapter will also focus on specific "birds".

Section 6.2 discusses specific "birds" identified in the narratives. Sections 6.3 to 6.5 focus on three clusters of bird-groups, i.e., birds of prey, scavenger birds and nocturnal birds.

## 6.1 "Birds"

All particular "birds" addressed here are dealt with similarly, thereby describing their roles and attributes as encountered in: (a) the narratives, (b) in nature, (c) in iconography, and (d) by means of their status within Amerindian cosmologies as a means to better grasp the indigenous conceptualisation of these feathered ones.

[127] The specific "birds" referred to here are: (a) parrot-like birds (e.g., macaw, parrot), (b) ducks, (c) shorebirds and waders (e.g., heron, ibis), (d) hummingbirds, and (e) woodpeckers.

### 6.1.1 “Birds” in the narratives

> In olden times there was a village near a river. When someone approached this village a Bird always warned the villagers of the stranger’s arrival. In this village lived a happy family: father, mother and two daughters. The elder daughter never left her mother’s side. One day mother fell ill and died. The daughter was inconsolable. The elder daughter saw her mother’s footstep one day and she cried. The Bird asked her what was wrong and as she told how her mother had died, the Bird told her it could help, telling the girl to make a basket. She did as told and next the Bird told her to get into the basket. Then the Bird flew off with the basket. It took the girl to heaven. There the girl met her mother, but when Tamusi saw the girl, he sent her back. [Story no. 415 (Cariban); abridged]

In total 67 specific “birds” have been documented in the narratives, including the general category “Birds”. Those 67 specific “birds” account for 490 records occurring in 303 narratives, equalling 43 percent of all narratives incorporated in this study. In 81 cases either a “Bird”-actor or a reference to “Birds” (in general) is included.

The fact that tales featuring “Birds” are very common is reflected by a wide distribution across the core area and even far beyond, comprising fifteen language families (see Fig. 6.1). The linguistic distribution of the “Bird”-narratives is in line with their overall dissemination, and express no significant variations (Appendix D, section B. General remarks).[128]

All in all, 277 narrative functions have been documented for 81 cases, displaying a discrepancy when compared with the general pattern (see Appendix C, Table C-7 for a complete list of all narrative functions of the “Bird” narratives).[129] The most common narrative function is validating the world with dominant sub-function: the origin of “animal/bird” traits and habits. Other common narrative functions are: encoding social behaviour and informing. The function identity has been recorded as relatively frequent (between 4 and 7 percent in general).

The narratives depict “Birds” as being helpful, protective, providing food, Masters of Drink or Food, or as acting as messengers for shamans and protagonists within a more mundane setting.

[128] The Chi-squared analysis serves to establish if the distribution of the “Bird”-narratives is in line with the general pattern as established in Chapter 4. The result of this analysis was: $\chi^2(7) = 7.76$; $\rho = 0.35$ (not significant).
[129] $\chi^2(4) = 9.53$; $\rho = 0.049$ (significant, critical value $\alpha$ 0.05 = 9.24).

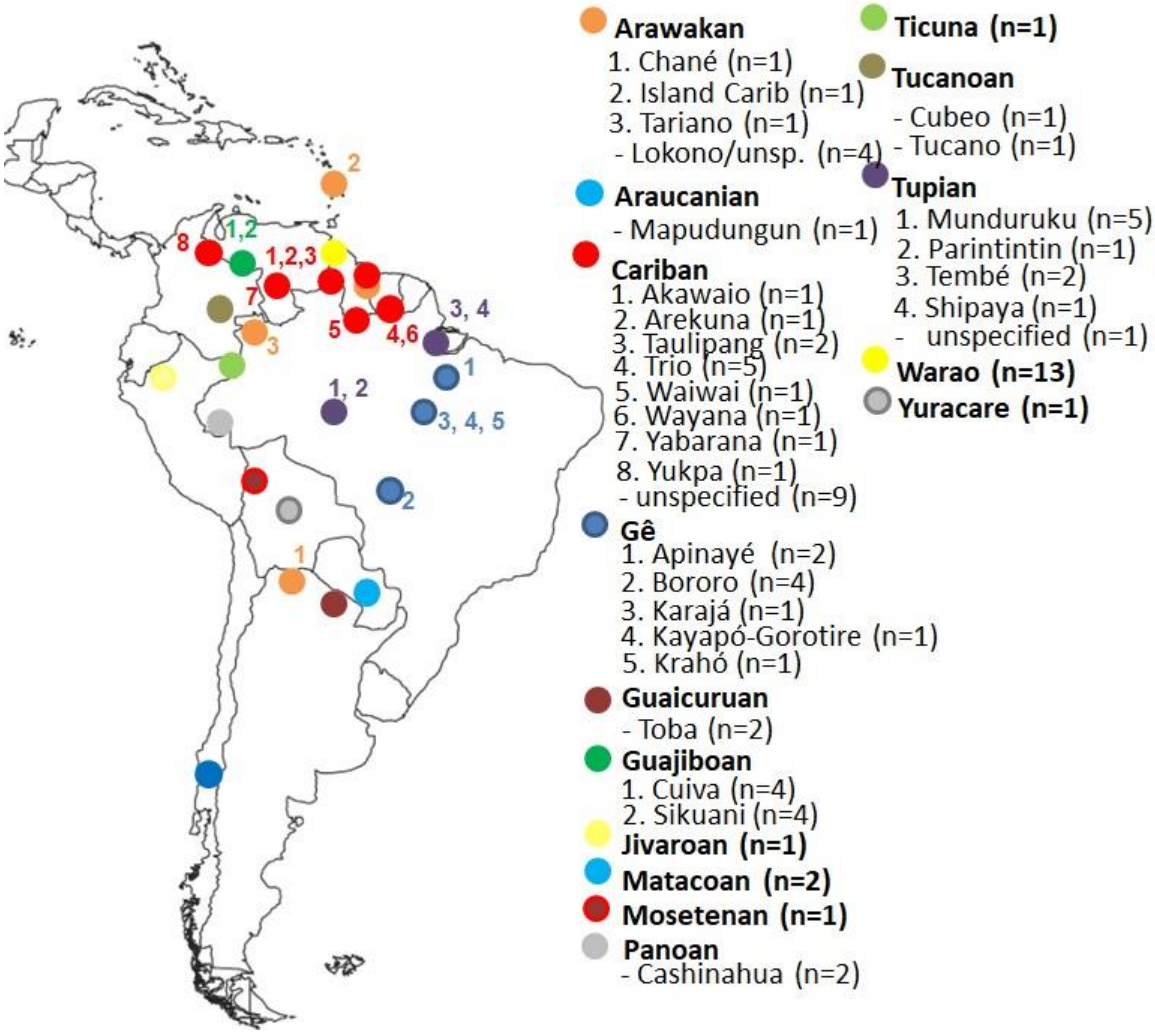



**Fig. 6.1.** Plot of "Bird" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

### *Actors, events and settings ("fabula")*

Compared to the overall distribution of Greimas's actants (see 4.2.2), we observe a significant variation as to the ascribed roles played by "Birds"[130], indicating that the members of this category are more likely to serve as helpers and receivers. "Birds" are less likely to act as opponents and subjects.

In six cases, "Birds" are the embodiments of spirits or souls (Story nos. 21, 248, 452, 477, 629, 711; 2x Cariban, 2x Warao, Gê, Guajiboan), for instance, as auxiliary spirits through which shamans communicate, the actual souls of deceased Amerindians, or as (malevolent) spirits. Hunted "Birds" or those already caught as game have been recorded on six occasions (Story nos. 157, 196, 309, 348, 360, 591; 2x Tupian, Guaicuruan, Cariban, Warao, Guajiboan). However, in other cases, the event of "hunting birds" actually leads to subsequent actions,

[130] $\chi^2(5) = 21.83$; $\rho = 0.00056$ (significant). See Appendix D, section *B. Fabula* for a more elaborate description.

e.g., a hunter had set off to catch birds and lost his way, or met a "Jaguar" (Story nos. 192-4, 476, see Appendix D, sections B. Fabula and B6a). No "Birds" (in general) at all are kept as pets. This is presumably the result of the fact that the "Birds" kept as pets in the narratives are specified (e.g., parrot) (see 6.2).

The chronotope in which the "Bird"-personage is staged, is either in a forest (land) or a sky world. As to "Aquatic birds" in particular a water setting has (more) frequently been recorded. The spatial setting within the narratives is thus in accordance with the natural habitat. This phenomenon can also be observed within the temporal setting, for instance, when the sun sets or rises, i.e., moments when many birds are most vocal.

Zooming in, we encounter 158 motifs directly linked to the "Bird" personage. The most common motifs concern the origin, acquisition and creation of things (n=35), the helpful "Birds" (n=37), transformations (n=23), shamanism (n=21), and the devastating "Bird" (n=14), see Appendix D, section B. Fabula.

The origin motifs encompass motifs concerning: (a) the discovery of the land-layer (See Story nos. 475-6, 484; Warao), and (b) the event leading to the differentiation of "animals/birds" and the origin of people (Story nos. 99, 170, 185; Warao, Chané (Arawakan), Yuracare). In total 23, "Bird"-narratives can be considered "origin stories" (see Appendix D, B. Fabula).

The following main clusters of narratives have been identified and then further analysed resulting in: (a) helpful "Birds", in which they act either as messengers, advisors and speakers of the truth or as providers of goods, and (b) origin of "Bird" colouration (see Appendix D, section B1 to 2).

### Helpful "Birds"

Within this sub-cluster (n=30), three main themes were identified in which the "Bird" is: (a) a messenger, advisor and speaker of truth (n=10), (b) a provider of goods (n=8), and (c) a helper with task (n=8).[131] The most common motifs include: tasks/quests (n=17), origin of things and/or characteristics (n=17), culture hero(es) (n=12), transformations (n=11), and family affairs (n=9).

"Birds" can be helpful to the protagonist, or to others, in various ways, e.g., by carrying an Amerindian to the upper world (Story no. 415; Cariban), or by providing wings enabling the protagonist to fly there by himself (Story no. 182; Chimane, Mosetenan). In addition, "Birds" provide mankind with various gifts, for instance, tobacco and wine/*cassiri** (Story nos. 121, 247, 336; Arawakan, Gê, Ticuna). The "Bird"-actors often hold a large drinking vessel, which

[131] Their number is too large to list them all (see Appendix D, section B1). The language families mentioned in the sub-cluster "Helpful birds" are: Arawakan, Araucanian, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Mosetenan, Ticuna, Tucanoan, and Tupian.

could refer to the fact that these “Birds” officiate as Master (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or “ownership*”).

“Birds” also advise or direct with regard to journeys, provide shelter, deliver warnings, and teach mankind arts and crafts (Story nos. 2, 170, 182, 185, 336, 448; Wayana (Cariban), Chané (Arawakan), Mosetenan, Yuracare, Ticuna, Warao). Nevertheless, the most common motif comprises “Birds as messengers” (see Fig. 6.2, Story nos. 2, 102, 132, 198, 408, 415, 448; Cariban (Wayana, Taulipang, 2x Carib), Bororo (Gê), Warao).

**Fig. 6.2 .**“Woodpecker” protecting a fish trap; artist’s impression of Story no. 78 (Arawakan) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

Recurrent tasks involving “Birds” consist of, for instance, carving a vagina into a wooden statue of a maiden/women (Story nos. 99, 324, 386; Warao, Cubeo (Tucanoan), Warao/Cariban), or spying (Story no. 198; Bororo, Gê) and killing or scaring off a dangerous “Snake” (Story nos. 185, 497; Yuracare, Warao). Other more specific tasks include emptying a well with an open basket, regrowing trees after a global fire, moving the sky upwards in mythic times or catching the Sun who had escaped (Story nos. 158, 280, 348, 463; Tembé (Tupian), Matacoan, Yabarana (Cariban), Warao). “Birds” are also often associated with a “quest” undertaken by the

protagonist, e.g., a search for a home or a wife (Story nos. 170, 366; Chané (Arawakan), Ticuna), for the end of the world or for other worlds (Story nos. 102, 182; Cariban, Mosetenan).

The third most common motifs in this sub-cluster addresses the origin of a constellation (or a star) (Story nos. 2, 102, 132; Cariban (Wayana, Taulipang)), and the origin of the night (Story nos. 158, 348; Tembé (Tupian), Yabarana (Cariban)). Other motifs concern the origin of mankind, men or the distribution/spreading of communities (Story nos. 99, 170, 185; Warao, Chané (Arawakan), Yuracare), the origin of tobacco (*kumi*) (Story nos. 417, 133), maize (Story no. 133), rivers/creeks (Story nos. 182, 121), or fire (Story nos. 2, 170; Wayana, Cariban). Motifs relating to "animal/bird" traits and habits deal with smells and cries (Story nos. 2, 121, 280, 336).

Noteworthy as to the present category, even when considering "Bird"-narratives in general, are the numerous motifs which concern "family ties". These recurring motifs apparently place the "Bird"-personage (literally) within a family context. For instance, they describe receiving help from a grandmother (Story no. 2; Wayana (Cariban)), a husband and wife (Story nos. 132, 133, 185, 198; 2x Taulipang (Cariban), Yuracare, Bororo (Gê) and a mother and son (Story no. 2; Wayana (Cariban)) or siblings (Story nos. 132-3, 185; 2x Taulipang (Cariban), Yuracare), or a disapproving mother-in-law (Story no. 336; Ticuna). Slightly related motifs tell of how culture heroes are born, raised or nursed and of their adventures (Story nos. 2, 182, 185, 336; Wayana (Cariban), Mosetenan, Yuracare, Ticuna). These cases also inform as to the deeds of culture heroes e.g., ascending to Heaven (Story nos. 102, 132; Cariban (1x Taulipang)), slaying the "Snake" son of his sister (Story no. 448; Warao) or to the lonesome culture hero (Story no. 185; Yuracare). It may be added here that "Birds" often assist a culture hero who may also be referred to as a *demiurge**, an artisan-like figure responsible for the fashioning and maintenance of the physical universe.

The setting of these narratives featuring "Helpful Birds", in space and time, is in line with the placement of "Bird"-narratives in general. However, the duration aspect is not in agreement. These tales by and large cover a long narrated time i.e., 72 percent (n=18) span either months or years whereas "Birds" in general amounts to 48 percent. Only six cases go on for less than one day or a few days of narrated time.[132] Real time shows no inconsistency whatsoever.

### Origin of "Bird" colouration

The second cluster concerns the origin of the "Bird" colouration and comprises fourteen narratives.[133] The motifs are fairly similar to the first cluster (Helpful "Birds"). This sub-cluster

[132] $\chi^2(1) = 5.77$; $\rho = 0.016$ (significant). See Appendix D, section *B. Story*.

[133] Story nos. 29, 80, 131, 193, 257, 260-3, 480, 496, 596, 597, and 691 (Trio (Cariban); unknown, Arekuna (Cariban); 2x Apinayé (Gê); Aré (unknown); Matacoan; Shipaya (Tupian-extinct); Guarani (Tupian); Munduruku (Tupian); 2x Warao; 2x Cuiva (Guajiboan)). See Appendix D, section B2.

deals less with “family ties” and culture heroes, but more with motifs related to punishments (n=6).

The motif “origin of the colour of a bird” has been recorded in twelve cases (Story nos. 29, 80, 131, 193, 257, 260-3, 480, 496, 691). A more detailed motif has also been recorded e.g., the origin of the colour of “Woodpecker” (Story nos. 260, 496; Matacoan, Warao), or as to why a “Vulture” is black (Story nos. 260, 480, 596-7; Matacoan, Warao, 2x Cuiva (Guajiboan)). With regard to other (physical) animal traits and habits: Story no. 480 (Warao) informs us why a “Bird” has a short tail. More generalised motifs pertaining to the origin and nature of a “Bird’s” beak, or claws (Story nos. 29, 260, 263, 480; Trio (Cariban), Matacoan, Munduruku (Tupian), Warao) also occur as they describe the creation of “animals/birds” themselves (“Vultures”) by means of transformation (Story nos. 596-7; Cuiva, Guajiboan).

Other motifs partly explain the origin of “animals/birds” or their traits and habits. For instance, when the manifestation of a “Bird” is the result of marking or painting (Story nos. 262-3; Parintintin, Munduruku (Tupian)). Or, when the “Bird” receives his characteristics as a reward (Story nos. 80, 131; unknown, Arekuna (Cariban).

(Menstrual) blood being a single recurrent cause of the colouration of “Birds” is encountered in the narratives. “Birds” are either spattered by this fluid or bathe in a pool of blood. This combination of motifs is also widely spread and recorded for narratives stemming from various language sources such as Trio (Cariban), Warao, Aré, Matacoan and several Tupian versions of a certain narrative. The only other recurrent cause of the “Bird” colouration concerns the scales of the “Snake/Water boa”. Occurring in two cases, merely one of the language sources is known: Arekuna, Cariban. How “Birds” kill the “Snake” to next divide its skin/scales, hereby acquiring their colours is described here.

Generally speaking, the chronotope (i.e., how configurations of time and space are portrayed in language and discourse) mirrors in general that of the “Bird”- narratives, the duration of which in this cluster reveals a discrepancy. Real time is in line whereas the narrated time is considerably shorter. The reason for this is: only 27 percent (n=4) of the records span a narrated time continuing for either months or years (compared to 48 percent in general). The shorter narrated time indicates not only that the narratives unfold around a specific event in time (i.e., the origin of “animal/bird” traits and habits, e.g., the colouration of “Birds”), but also that they deal less with an (epic) adventure of heroes.

### Remaining motifs

The common motifs yet to be addressed are: shamanism (n=21), transformation and “Birds” as tokens of water, and devastating “Bird” (n=14).

The motifs concerning shamanism involve “magic” acts, or magic objects/results, brought about for instance by way of: (a) intoxication or bathing (Story nos. 162, 261, 299;

Arawakan/Tucanoan, Tupian, Jivaroan), (b) motifs on magic objects e.g., magic (menstrual) blood (Story nos. 257, 260-3, 480, 496; unknown, Matacoan, 3x Tupian, 2x Warao), darkness, fire, song (Story nos. 47, 280, 348; 2x Cariban, Matacoan), (c) motifs concerning tasks/activities performed by applying magic e.g., producing a storm/wind, rain showers, causing the sky to rise/descend, or a pond to fall dry (Story nos. 133, 158, 170, 247-8; Cariban, Tupian, Arawakan, 2x Gê).

Story no. 711 (Trio, Cariban) states explicitly that spirits have transformed into "Birds" and that shamans communicate through these "Birds". Similarly, in Story no. 477 (Warao), a "great white Bird" (the soul) appears to inform the Amerindians it was going to meet with companions and that all Amerindians would follow. In an abandoned village, one other day, the Amerindians meet souls crying as they felt hungry and thirsty. From then on they provide food and water for the souls. A link between "Birds" water and excessive thirst is found on more occasions. Protagonists transmute into "Birds" in search of water (Story nos. 152, 545; Gê). In Story no. 247, ill-treated men transform into "Birds". They inform their brother that if he ever was thirsty, he should imitate their call "toka, toka ka", and rain would fall (see Appendix D, sections B6b and 5.3.4 for other references to "Birds" as tokens of rain). In Story nos. 9, 146 152, 190, 511, 545 and 571 (Arawakan, 5x Gê, Tupian; see Appendix D, section B6b), "Birds" are the result of transformation.

Motifs linked to malevolent, or devastating, "Birds" contrast motifs regarding helpful "Birds". The former report on abduction (Story no. 623; Sikuani, Guajiboan), mutilation (Story nos. 299, 364; Jivaroan, Cariban; whereby in Story no. 364, "Ants" mutilate the "Bird"), rape (Story nos. 386, 480; Cariban, Warao) and treacherous "animals/birds" (Story nos. 21, 157; Cariban, Tupian). In certain cases, "Birds" are described as ogres or cannibalistic demons (Story nos. 308, 608-9, 629; Guaicuruan, 3x Guajiboan), see Appendix D, sections B. Fabula and B6c.

### With whom is the "Bird"-personage associated?

"Snake" (n=14), "Scavenger birds/Vulture" (n=11), "Jaguar" (n=9), "Woodpecker" (n=9), and "Monkey" (n=9) frequently co-occur with the "Bird"-personage. The latter is ostensibly by far the most associated with the Amerindian protagonists, who call for the "Bird's" help. In his role as an assistant, the "Bird" often betrays, or tells on other "animals", thus opposing these personages.

In the cluster dealing with the origin of the "Bird's" colouration, the "Bird"-personage does interact with other "animals/birds". Within the same tales, multiple "animals/birds" (e.g., "Woodpecker", "Vulture") also obtain their coloured plumage (see 6.1.1 under the sub-heading *The origin of the "Bird" colouration*). A clear association with "Snake" can be encountered within this context. For, once killed, the skin of this reptile is divided amongst all "birds" providing them with their colouration and/or other features.

In Stories nos. 80 and 131 (unknown, Arekuna (Cariban)), the “Snake” is killed by “Birds”, resulting in their colouration. Story 80 (source unknown) tells of a beautiful scaled “Water boa”, which all “Birds” and Amerindians fear. Having decided to kill it, whoever succeeded in doing so could keep its skin. All “Birds” that assisted in killing this “Water boa” are allowed to keep a piece. This is how they obtained their beautiful feathers. The lengthy Story no. 131 (Arekuna, Cariban) ends when a boy who poisons the water whenever he bathes, kills all the fish. He had not wished to bathe, but his father forced him to do so. After the boy was killed, his father ordered his revenge and asked several “Birds”, two of whom were able to kill the murderous “Snake” to bring it on dry land. Assisted by all the “Birds”, the father flayed the “Snake” to next share the pieces of skin between them. That is how they acquired special features such as their flute (i.e., beak). Even the land “animals” received something. When the boy’s grandmother walked through the forest holding his corpse, fish poison grew wherever the boy’s blood drops fell to the ground. This story combines the motifs of “Snake”, blood, “Birds”, “animal/bird” traits and fish poison.

Although not part of the present sub-cluster, three more cases link “Birds” to “Snakes”, while presumably also referring to this theme of colouration. In Story no. 385 (Waiwai, Cariban), the members of a community received various gifts from the “Anaconda”-people who taught the Amerindians how to apply feathers for decorative purposes. In Story no. 162 (Arawak), a “Snake” killed an “Agami heron” (*Agamia agami*), the mother of a culture hero. He had “snake”-shaped stars on his forehead and later turned into the Pino, the constellation of the Big Serpent. Story no. 120 (Arawak) simply refers to an event when the “Birds” killed the “Great serpent”. This tale mentions that the murderous “Owl” finds a package, after which the events unfold. On the other hand, Story no. 299 (Jivaroan) not only describes the time when all “Animals”, “Birds” and “Fish” resembled humans but also how these three cooperate in order to kill a “Great serpent” because it had slain many humans. Together they managed to cut off its head and flay it. Apparently, the motif regarding “Birds” killing the “(Great) serpent” and then sharing pieces of its body is familiar to peoples with various linguistic affiliations such as Cariban, Arawak and Jivaroan.

### *Characterization and duration (“story”)*

The “Bird”-personage is delineated by means of behavioural and/or physical attributes in a dominantly indirect as well as a more analogic, or direct, manner. Overall the colour of the “Bird” (e.g., feathers, head) is sketched, as are the shape and strength of its beak and claws (if present). For instance, in Story no. 9 (Island Carib of Dominica, Arawakan), a man transforms into a yellow-beaked, clawed “Bird”. In Story No. 336 (Ticuna), the “ugly feet” of a “Bird”-woman (avian species unknown) are explicitly described. These physical features (i.e., colours, beak, claws, feet) could, therefore, be iconic *signs** for “Birds”, for both “Birds” in general as well as for specific “birds”.

Behavioural traits encountered in the narratives, for instance, concern the way the “Bird” flies, or the sound (song vs. cries) it produces. The “Hummingbird” which owns tobacco or the

"Woodpecker" which cuts through rocks with its beak and collects honey may be viewed as characteristic qualities of a specific "birds" (see 6.2).

Altogether there are 75 records on duration of which 87 percent (n=66) fall within the short range, whereas overall 94 percent of the narratives are short. Considering the narrated time, this assessment is in line with the general distribution while displaying no significant variation.[134] However, 48 percent (n=36) comes with a narrated time of either months or years, being in general only 42 percent (see Chapter 4). Ten stories span a narrated time of weeks (see 4.3.2). Therefore the real time, as well as the narrated time, are somewhat elongated, indicating that these cases have a slightly more epic character.

### 6.1.2 Birds in nature

Feathers, a toothless beak, light bones, and egg laying, for example, characterize winged vertebrates. Their highest degree of diversity is encountered in tropical regions, housing an estimated 33 percent of all avian species known to man. The Amazon has a unique, multi-layered ecosystem in which a large number of birds inhabit trees measuring up to 200 ft high as well as the dark forest floor.

#### *Behavioural attributes*

Birds are by and large diurnal. Certain species of nocturnal birds are also active at twilight. Waders are now and again ambivalent, feeding both at night and day, as they follow the tides (Robert et al. 1989). This aspect of bird behaviour is embedded in their symbolism, which is also reflected by means of a separate cluster for nocturnal birds (see 6.5). Especially their vocality is related to specific temporal domains. The fact birds signal the arrival of the night or the day results in a recurrent theme in the narratives.

**Fig. 6.3.** Two feeding red-legged honeycreepers (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*); Alphen a/d Rijn 2017; photograph by the author.

Birds populate a wide variety of habitats. Their food requirements which are often directly related to the specific ecosystem leads to a wide range of preferences, hereby establishing insectivorous, frugivorous, nectarivorous, saprophagous (i.e., feeding on decaying matter) and carnivorous species. Nectar-feeding birds play a part in fertilising when dispersing seeds (see Fig. 6.3). The feeding preferences of birds are intermingled with their *symbolism**. Especially the carnivorous and the saprophagous species take on a specific role within the narratives, reflecting the fact that these two species have been conceptualised in a different manner. They are therefore discussed separately (see 6.3 and 6.4).

[134] The narrated time compared to general pattern as set in Chapter 4 results in: $\chi^2(2) = 1.09$; $\rho = 0.58$ (not significant). Unfortunately, the "real time" could not be compared with the Chi-squared test because of the low number of records. See Appendix D, section *B. General remarks*.

Corvids and Ara macaws are among the most intelligent birds in the kingdom Animalia. Certain birds create and apply tools in order to execute specific tasks, such as gathering food. Numerous species are very social, communicate with visual signs, calls and songs. They may even breed and/or hunt cooperatively. The majority of species are socially monogamous, either merely during a breeding season or for years, but rarely for life. Most birds build nests in which they lay and incubate their eggs. Nests can be either highly complex or consist of a relatively simple platform made from leaves and wood or make use of natural cavities. The above traits are reflected in the narratives (see 6.1.1).

### *The human interaction with birds*

It is perhaps because of the fact birds are omnipresent and highly visible that mankind has ostensibly always utilised them. Many species have become of economic importance, some even domesticated. Birds are sought after as a source of eggs, meat and feathers. Their excrement (*guano*) can serve as a fertiliser.[135] Certain species are kept as pets for their aesthetic looks, songs, eggs, and for falconry or to carry messages (see Fig. 6.4). If inhabiting forest canopies and high trees, they are able to spot predators from afar and then give alarm calls or cause a massive fly-out.

**Fig. 6.4.** Four sun parakeets (*Aratinga solstitialis*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn 2017; photograph courtesy of T. Blom.

Ahlbrinck describes how ara and hornbill species are caught in close proximity of the ripe fruit they feed on. The Amerindians (i.e., Wama and Wajarikoele, Cariban of Suriname) build a small hut, applying *koemboe* leaves, within close proximity to fruit trees, from which they hunted these birds (Ahlbrinck 1956). Amerindians also entrap birds by means of strings (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entry "vallen", meaning "traps"). Johannis Sneebeling who visited Suriname in the 1700s reports that all kinds of birds serve as commodities when trading (Sneebeling in Kloos 1973). Needless to say, birds can also be considered a source of meat.

The renowned English writer, poet, soldier and explorer Sir Walter Raleigh (*c*.1554-1618) describes flocks of macaws, parrots, marudis and powis that surpass all description during the season in which the fruit of the manicole palm (*Euterpe oleracea*) is ripe. He further states that the blue and yellow macaws (*Macrocercus ararauna*) are most numerous and make an excellent soup (which tastes like hare meat). The powis (*Crax alector*) is as large as a turkey and has a more "gamier" flavour. The marudi bird (*Penelope marail,* marail guan) can be

[135] For an explicit reference to the fertile quality of bird excrement, see Story no. 190 (Bororo, Gê). Here a "Bird" boy drops his excrement which then germinates to grow into a huge tree, the Jatoba (*Hymenea courbaril*).

compared to a pheasant (Schomburgk 1970 [1848]: 54-5, note 2). The meat of the toucan (aka "pepper eater", *Ramphastidae* sp.) is sought after, too (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entry "toekan").

Father Raymond Breton presents an account dating back to the 17th century. It describes how the Island Carib prepared the birds for consumption: "They cook the birds whole, after having burned the feathers, on small sticks arranged a little above the fire. Once cooked, they wrap them in leaves and smoke them. When they are ready to eat them, they hollow them out and boil them in manioc juice with pimento, and they prepare other things in this manner" (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 11 and 12 of 29).

Ahlbrinck reports that birds bred by Amerindians are never eaten, as they are considered part of the family. He mentions, for instance, the pigeon, parakeet, "banaanbek" (*Cassicus* sp.), pauwies (*Crax alector*). As chicks, they are kept under a basket, before being released (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entry "kweken", meaning "to breed"). In the 706 narratives introduced in the present dissertation, we come across references to people and/or "animals" concealed under baskets or placed in pots/jars, perhaps pertaining to a practice of keeping the newly born protected in order to facilitate further breeding.

Birds play prominent roles in religion and mythology across the globe. They often serve as messengers for deities and priests and as travellers through and between worlds. Birds are embedded in numerous national emblems (Ingersoll 1923). Therefore it is no surprise that birds have featured in rock art since prehistoric times as well as decorative motifs on ceramics and other cultural goods and valuables. Often these avian images can be identified as depicting a specific species.

### *The mainland vs. island species*

The Lesser and Greater Antilles were (and still are) populated by mainland species, some of which are seasonal visitors. Other species have become colonists or have even been isolated long enough to become genetically differentiated (Ricklefs & Bermingham 2008).

Not all avian species have reached the islands. For instance, it has been noted that species of the interior, especially woodpeckers and suboscine passerines, are poor colonists. Most species after arriving at the Caribbean islands flock during a part of the annual cycle. They inhabit the open country and move between islands (Ricklefs & Bermingham 2008: 2396).

Herbert A. Raffaele et al. *A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies* (Princeton U.P., 1998) present 564 bird species in order to divide them into the following categories:

1. sea birds,
2. herons and other long-legged waders,
3. marsh birds and waterfowl,
4. hawks, owls and nightjars,

5. gamebirds and pigeons, parrots and cuckoos, swifts, hummingbirds, trogons, todies, kingfishers, and woodpeckers,
6. flycatchers,
7. crows, swallows, gnatcatchers, thrushes, thrashers, and mockingbirds,
8. vireos and warblers,
9. euphonias, honeycreepers, tanagers, orioles, and blackbirds,
10. finch-like birds.

Needless to say, a separate discussion of all the abovementioned species is not required here. Therefore the remaining part of this chapter will focus only on species relevant to this research (see 5.1.2 and 6.2). By and large, these avian species are in line with those identified in zoomorphic iconography. Two dominant avian species (i.e., the pelican and frigate bird) have not been identified in the narratological contents of the present study. These two water/sea birds are abundantly present in the Caribbean islands, both in the local ecology as well as on Saladoid *adornos* (Waldron 2010: 186-99). As the majority of the narratives hail from the South American mainland and its interior, pelicans and frigate birds do not occur as actors.

### 6.1.3 Iconography of "birds"

"Birds" play a prominent role within the archaeological records as iconographical features. They are encountered on wooden and wicker items, petroglyphs, ceramics, precious stones and shells. Ethnographic/anthropological studies show that in addition to bird feathers, bones and claws also served as bodily adornments or during ceremonial displays.[136] Indeed even a toucan's beak may have been utilised as a children's toy (Ahlbrinck 1931, see the entry under "toekan", see Fig. 6.5). The iconographical significance of specific "birds" is discussed in 6.2-6.5. In this paragraph, the focus lies on any (unidentified) bird iconography decorating Saladoid ceramics.

**Fig. 6.5.** Giant toucan (*Ramphastos toco*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017) photograph courtesy of T. Blom.

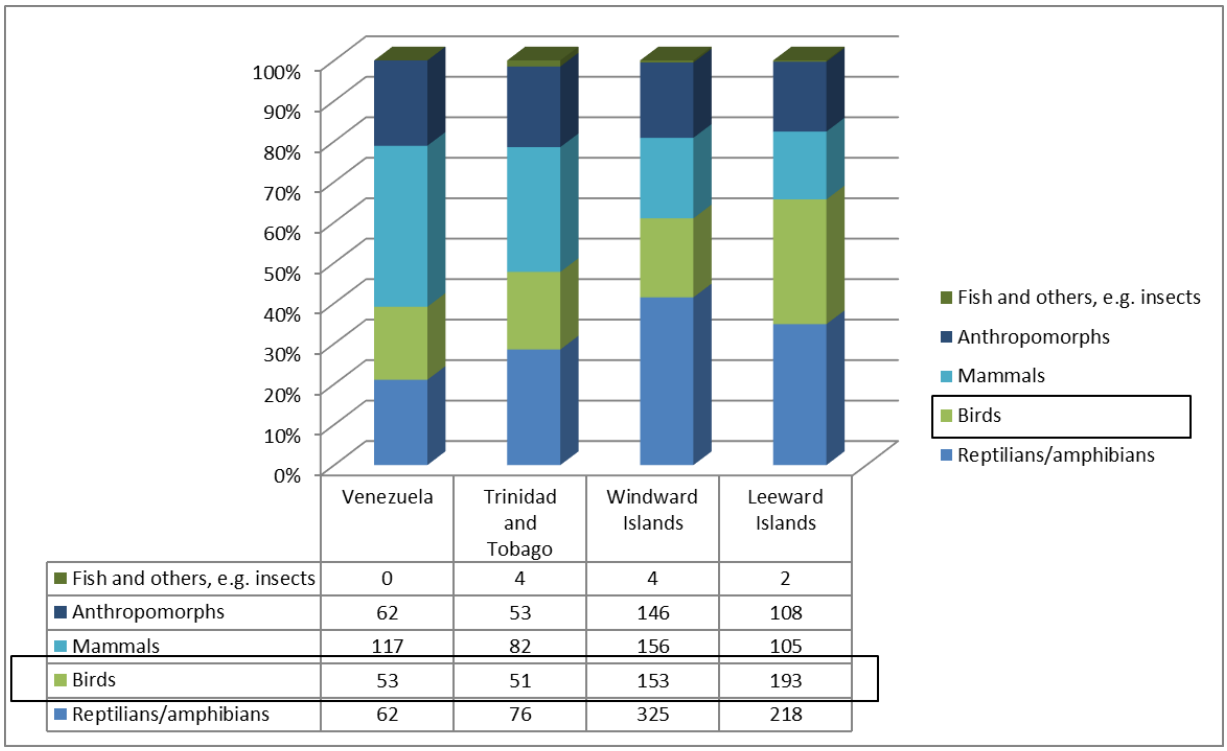
When identifying zoomorphic iconography, the possibility of abstract ways to portray "birds" could well be an aspect of the means of depicting. It has been observed that, as adornments, "birds" are often only partially portrayed by means of their tails and footprints (Ahlbrinck 1931: 280). Even characteristic flight patterns could have inspired zoomorphic motifs.

[136] Accounts on the usage of bird feathers are numerous. A very early description stems from Father Raymond Breton (1609-1679) who spent many years with the Island Carib on Guadeloupe and Dominica. He describes feathers serving as body adornments especially when the Amerindians attend festivities: "… sometimes they wear at their neck the wings of various birds which they let dangle over their shoulders and on their stomach" (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 11 of 29).

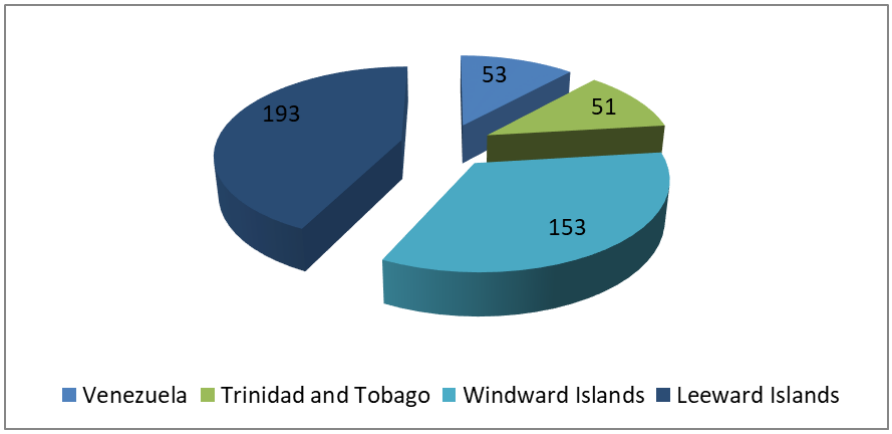
### *Saladoid "bird" adornos*

Waldron has identified avian images throughout the Lesser Antilles and the Lower Orinoco, stating that certain *adornos* which appear "bird"-like could also be turtles, lizards or other reptiles (Waldron 2010: 150). All in all, however, the avian *adornos* are common (see Table 6.1 (above), and 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*).

**Table 6.1.** Identified "bird" *adornos* relative to class and their dispersal (above); the absolute dispersal of identified "bird" *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela (below).[137]




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fish and others, e.g. insects | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Anthropomorphs | 62 | 53 | 146 | 108 |
| Mammals | 117 | 82 | 156 | 105 |
| Birds | 53 | 51 | 153 | 193 |
| Reptilians/amphibians | 62 | 76 | 325 | 218 |




As Table 6.1 (below) illustrates, most "bird" *adornos* have been identified in the Leeward and Windward Islands. Table 6.1 (above) indicates that "bird" *adornos* are relatively most

[137] The numbers mentioned in Table 6.1 are based on Waldron's (2010) Charts 1 and 2 which display Species/Class motif Incidences in the Sample Collections of the Saladoid-Era Ceramics, see Waldron 2010: 319-20.

dominant in the Leeward Islands, constituting 30 percent of all identified *adornos* (compared to less than 20 percent elsewhere).

The clay material itself may have limited potters when portraying certain "birds". Depicting long legs and needle-like beaks is not preferred (Waldron 2010: 151). We read, "Elongated bird features were sometimes abbreviated, beaks remained closed, and attenuated features were often incised rather than modelled" (Waldron 2010: 151).[138] Nonetheless, examples of *adornos* include lengthy, pointed bills delicately rendered and looped into a strap handle by the potter (Waldron 2010: 151).

It has been concluded that these delicate appendages push the ceramics beyond functionality into the realm of the aesthetic and symbolic, on occasion risking structural integrity in favour of its symbolism (Waldron 2010: 151).

The most identifiable feature of the "bird" *adornos* is its beak and, if present, its wings (see Figs. 6.6-6.7). The specific traits of a species are displayed, too, such the neck wattle on the "vulture" *adornos* or the typical feather peck positioned on top of the beak (e.g., a crest). Even tail wings can be an identifiable feature. For a discussion on the characteristic identifiers of all specific "birds", see 6.2-5

**Fig. 6.6.** Saladoid "bird"-shaped (nightjar?) *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; height *c.*6.6 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

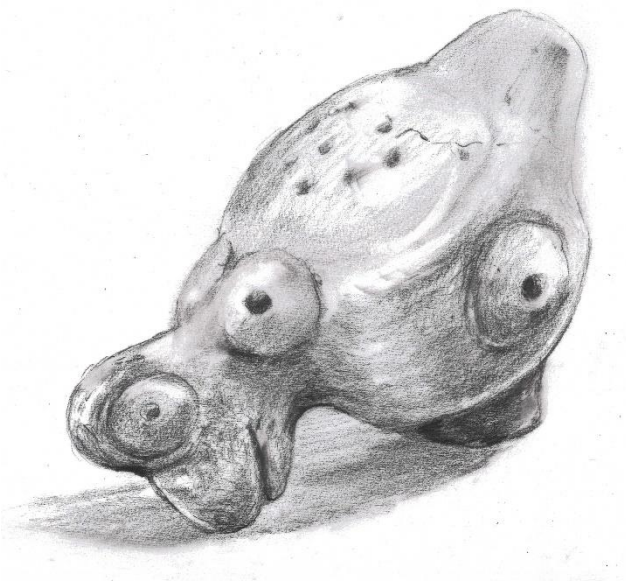


**Fig. 6.7.** Saladoid "pecking bird" bottle stopper from Mayaro, Trinidad; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.58, length *c.*8 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

[138] The interested reader is also referred to Waldron's (2010) Illustrations, for photographs of several "bird" *adornos,* see Waldron 2010: 451-3, Figs. 5.58 to 5.64.

### 6.1.4 “Birds” in Amerindian cosmologies

The abundant, never-ending, omnipresent chattering or screaming of flying birds is incorporated in folklore, arts, songs, and symbolism across the globe. Filling up the celestial world, in the shape of flying and feathered “animals”, birds are natural symbols capable of transgressing all spatial and temporal boundaries. Certain species lay their eggs inside holes in the ground which could relate them to the realm of the underworld. In addition, various avian species also represent all temporal realms, as they can be witnessed and heard during the day time, at twilight as well as during the night. Therefore, their presence in Amerindian folklore and iconography comes as no surprise. The question now rises: why are certain avian species more frequently depicted than others?

A number of avian species are presumably more related to Amerindian cosmologies than others. Aquatic birds are associated with water, the seemingly always flying hummingbird is linked with the celestial world as chicken-like birds are to the realm of land and village life. Because (almost) all “birds” have the ability to fly, they are by nature boundary crossers.

As described in Chapter 2, a number of avian species are associated with separate cosmological realms. The sky world is connected to the fauna encountered in the middle and upper canopy as well as with the rapidly flying, brightly coloured birds. On the other hand, the underworld is linked to reluctant flyers and birds with dull or black plumages (see 2.3.1; Boomert 2000: 446-7; Roe 1982).

“Birds” are thought to have travelled the Earth even before “animals” and humans did (van Capelle 1926: 17). This idea is not only embedded in their worldviews but has also been identified as a common theme in the studied “Bird”-narratives (see 6.1.1). A number of these stories relate how humans arrived from the upper world and that they discovered this region through hunting “birds”.

#### *Roles of “birds” in ceremonies*

Bird feathers serve to decorate human bodies and, as part of adornments, fulfil a task in rituals, as has been recorded during ethnographical research carried out among various Amerindian peoples, across the Americas. In the narratives, for instance, both the Sun and Moon are often described by means of their headdresses with colourful bird feathers. An “Acawoios” (Cariban, Akawaio/Kapon) tale informs us that *kanaimas** appear in the form of a “jaguar” to place poison in the bodies of enemies. This “jaguar” has donned a feathered crown. Bright red spots cover its skin (Brett 1980: 131-4).

“Birds” are also encountered in funeral practices. Schomburgk, when dealing with Sir Walter Raleigh’s travels, mentions a rite, in the course of which the skull of a deceased *cacique** is covered with feathers of all colours. This rite concerned a secondary funeral practice as there was no longer any flesh attached to the bones. Schomburgk interprets this event as a Warao

tradition. In his view, "The custom of bewailing the dead with great lamentation is more followed among the Waraus than other tribes" (Schomburgk 1848: 52, note 1).

Johannes Sneebeling (*c.*1755 CE) reports that a deceased (presumably Paragoto) *cacique** was painted red. His relatives had covered his entire body with the feathers of the flamingo, red ibis, ara and parrot. Next, they placed the corpse back into a hammock to then bury it (Sneebeling in Kloos 1973: 3).

In addition to funeral rites, the use of feathers has been described in various ceremonies and other *rites de passage*. Ahlbrinck (1956: 46) explicitly mentions that Carib apply feathers of *Ara* species and of the *koejake* (hornbills, Bucerotidae) as a means of adornment during the festivities in the course of which wasp-sting rituals take place. The *Ara's* tail feathers adorn the headdress. The colourful hornbill feathers embellish the head band (*puimali*) and beautify arrows (Ahlbrinck 1956: 46). The powis (*Pauwies, Crax* sp.) is not only shot for its head feathers but also for its meat (Ahlbrinck 1931: 524, see under the entry "pauwies").

Amerindians[139] utilise feathers, for example, during ceremonial dances, victory celebrations, and when a woman gives birth to twins (Kloos 1973: note 27, relating to Sneebeling's travels). They now use red paint in order to adorn themselves with "bird" feathers, which stuck to their bodies by means of this paint. Shells and small bells, probably the seeds of the *Kalawai* tree, are also applied. Their headgear consists of coloured feathers, now and again including the wings of beetles, which glisten like gold or silver.

The puberty rites of the Arawakan and Warao Amerindians are concluded with a festive ceremony. A Warao girl is adorned with beads and white feathers of the curassow (*Crax* sp.) and of the egret (*Egretta* or *Ardea* sp.) which are fastened to her (shaved) head, arms and legs by means of a small quantity of adhesive (Roth 2011: 312 [273]). We read that, in the upper Amazon, women attach a superstitious value to the skin and the feathers of a little grey bird they call *papá-uira* (language unspecified). They believe these relics will attract lovers and suitors (Bates 2013 [1863]: 335; see also Roth 2011: 279). Bates (2013 [1863]: 336) adds that hunters sell these birds to women for high prices. However, when a "noted woodman" provides H.W. Bates with three different species of birds on three separate occasions he "… gave up the story as a piece of humbug".

### *Hunted versus tabooed food*

Numerous references as to food taboos relate to (specific) "birds". Ahlbrinck (see the entry under "banaanbek") in his 1931 encyclopaedia describes that the Carib do not consume the

[139] Although Sneebeling does not mention the linguistic affiliation of the described Amerindians, P. Kloos (1973) considers it to be a description of Amerindians with a Cariban affiliation, based on ethnographical evidence.

banaanbek (*Cassicus* sp.) as it is thought to cause a disease, referred to as "boschjwas". Eating a *kowfoetoeboi*, the smooth-billed ani (*Crotophaga ani*), will bring bad luck, too.

Various expressions of beliefs involve the warning not to hunt or kill certain "birds". It has been stated that the Yukpa (Cariban) believe that if too many "animals" are shot but not eaten, the "Lord of Birds" will devour the hunter (Wilbert 1974: 142). This observation is a likely reference to the "bird" as the Master of all Game "animals", which therefore not only protects these "(game) animals/birds", but also contains them (see 3.4.2, under the sub-heading *Mastery or "ownership"*).

Cashinahua-speakers (Panoan, western Brazil) believe that the "Ovenbird", *Rufous hornero* (*Furnarius* sp.) taught them how to build houses and produce pottery. It is therefore forbidden to kill this "bird" (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 55). "Birds" are also repeatedly related to the origin of, for example, fire, housebuilding, agriculture, expressions of culture, and shamanic paraphernalia (see 6.1.1).

### *References to "birds" as omens*

Whenever the reddish, "longtailed pikan"[140] makes a sound that resembles its name, this indicates the hunt will not yield much. However, if the "pikan" produces a "si … si ... si" sound, it is considered a good sign (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entry "pika"). If the "pikan" produces two tones hastily such as "fio … fio … fio", then no fish will be caught. However, if this "bird" creates a low, stretched sound the fisherman will have success (Ahlbrinck 1931: 398; see under the entry "voorteken", meaning "omen"). A similar view held by the Amerindians residing in the Pomeroon area (Arawakan) has been reported. When the *karrasuri* (probably a small kingfisher, *Alcedinidae* sp.) produces a kind of laugh, the huntsman will surely kill an animal, but if it was to cry "shirai", his efforts will be in vain (Roth 2011: 262-3 [223]).

If the "protector of the tinamou" (Dutch: "anamoe"; *Tinamidae* sp.) creates a tumult in your ears, when hunting, you would use a tinamou feather in order to clear your ears. If a "tinamou" in flight was to drop to the ground, then someone will die (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entries "anamoe" and "voorteken"). The Wayana (Cariban) do not kill a "snipe", *waikiki*, because it would then visit God after which the Amerindian perpetrator would have to die (Ahlbrinck 1956: 46).

Cariban Amerindians leave the eggs of certain "birds" untouched in order to avoid any bad luck. For instance, if you remove the egg of a little "black bird" (*konopo yuman,* an unknown

[140] The two birds carrying the same Sranan name "pikan" both have a (brown-)reddish colour and long tails. Either the Little Cuckoo (*Coccycua minuta*) or the Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana)* are referred to here. The term "pikan" resembles the sound this bird species produces, see Ribot 1995 and www.Surinamebirds.nl.

species that only lays a single egg), then the rains will flood you (Ahlbrinck 1931: 226). Especially "shorebirds and waders" are often related to rain, storms and floodings (see 6.2.3).

As to the various food taboos regarding the consumption of birds, or specific parts of their bodies , it has been recorded that whenever a boy shoots a ground dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) he is allowed to eat it in its entirety, excluding the outermost tips of the "bird's" wings because they enable it to fly everywhere. If the boy did eat the wings, he himself would soon "spread his wings", leave his house in order to set off to faraway places in search of girls (Ahlbrinck 1956: 15-6, a reference to the Kaliña, Cariban). Married men are permitted to eat wing tips (Ahlbrinck 1931: 144). Passerine birds (Dutch: korenvogel, *Icteridae* sp.) are not consumed. The meat of the Ponpon (*Icteridea* sp.) is not appreciated as food (Ahlbrinck 1931).

In Cayenne, the capital of French Guiana, the Roucouyenne (Cayenne Carib) hang the breast bones of several avian species in their houses in order to prevent hunting dogs from eating them and subsequently from never being able to catch this prey again (Roth 2011: 292 [251]). A similar belief as to keep their dogs out of harm's way has been recorded (Karsten 1935: 165): whenever a certain fowl (referred to as "*monëtete*" by the Canela (Gê) and as "*ayáchu*" by the Jivaro) is consumed, they ensure their dogs do not eat its bones. In their view, the dogs would otherwise falter and no longer be able to track this bird. The Canelos-Quichua, an indigenous people from Ecuador, hold the same superstition with regard to the great green macaw (*Ara ambiguus*).

A description of the Runa (Quichua, Ecuador) best conceptualises these food habits, or taboos, associated with specific body parts of "animals/birds". The soul, the hypostasized intersubjective capacity of all beings, is located in these parts of the body (Kohn 2007: 8). Consuming them could either lead to a hyper-awareness in relation to the "animals/birds" or to the loss of this awareness. This intersubjective capacity is necessary for one's Self to relate to another. Without any awareness, a Self becomes "cosmologically autistic" (Kohn 2007: 12).

Other "birds" are viewed as (ill) omens although unrelated to any hunting success or failure. For instance, Cariban Amerindians consider the unspecified "kwatta" pigeon dangerous because, armed with sticks, it attacks them during their sleep (Penard & Penard 1907-08: 123). Sneebeling describes (Kloos 1973: 48) a belief that if any evil should befall Amerindians (unspecified here), they blame the devil (naming various birds). It has been added to this comment that whenever Carib adults hear certain "birds" during the night, they call out to their children: "Sjuwisjuwi is crying, come home, the Yoloko will come to get you". During the 17th century, similar beliefs were observed among the Island Carib: "When lizards, animals, or birds accidentally perch on their houses or nearby, as if they were tame, they do not dare to touch them. They say that these are birds which belong to the gods of the *boyes*, and if the Carib killed these animals the gods would kill them in turn" (Breton et al, 1665: 7 of 50).

The cries uttered by a parrot (*kuri kuri*) herald rain (Roth 2011: 251 [213], 255 [217], 357 [303]; van Capelle 1926: 406).[141] As to various Guyana districts (see note 141), other avian species can also predict rain e.g., the *karrasuri,* a small kingfisher (Alcedinidae) and the *fika-wanna,* a small, red-legged, long-tailed "bird" (Roth 2011: 253 [217], presumably Arawakan). The Arawak residing along the Pomeroon and Moruca Rivers believe that wet weather is approaching whenever large numbers of swallows are observed, or when toucans (*Ramphastidae* sp.) yelp loudly (Roth 2011: 253-4 [217]). The Island Carib believed that all the stars in the sky once resembled Amerindians. When an Amerindian named Savacou transforms into a large "bird", he officiates as the captain of storm and thunders, causing heavy rainfall. Savacou is now a star (de la Borde 1886: 229).

Various references to "birds" that herald an abundance of sunshine, as with the *warri-kuma* and the *dara* (bell-bird, *Chasmarphynchus* sp.) (Roth 2011: 254 [217]). The latter is also called "klokkenvogel" (*Procnias nudicollis,* the bare-throated bellbird) that sings beautifully at night. Its vocalisation is thought to predict much sunlight (van Capelle 1926: 396-416, referring to unspecified Amerindians of Guyana). It is stated that the Kaliña (Cariban) held the view the ruddy ground-dove (*Columbina talpacoti*; Dutch: steenduif) causes the Sun to shine during rain showers (Ahlbrinck 1931, see entry under "duif", meaning "pigeon"). When it rains women hence invite this "bird" to come and scratch the ground. While baking bread they call upon a dove to stop the rain. You should never remove dove chicks from their nests or breed this "bird". If you do, bad luck will befall you (Ahlbrinck 1931).

Ahlbrinck (1931, see entry under "boschhaan") describes that, according to the Kaliña (Cariban), the "boschhaan" (forest rooster, unspecified species) not only betrays everyone present but also heralds the birth of a child. Roth (2011: 262 [223]) also mentions various "bird"-tokens encountered amidst the Arawak of the Pomeroon district (Guyana). Whenever the sound of "*beletika*-bird" (*Monasa atra*, black nunbird) is heard someone is about to be married. The *warracabba,* the grey-winged trumpeter (*Psophia crepitans*), notifies the arrival of strangers.[142]

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[141] In his *Mythen en Sagen uit West-Indië* (1926) Van Capelle does not indicate to which Amerindian ethnic group this phenomenon is linked, but he does identify the species: *Herpetotheres cachinnans*, the laughing falcon. In Roth (2011) we come across multiple references to the *kurri-kurri,* mostly unspecific as to which Amerindians are concerned. Roth does, however, refer to various districts in Guyana where Amerindians reside near the Kamwatta Creek, the Moruca River District and the Cuyuni River. Only on p. 368 (note 6) does Roth explicitly mention the Arawak (Lokono) of the Pomeroon District (Guyana). In an Arawak tale, he identifies the *kurri-kurri* as the *Harpiprion cayennensis,* the river ibis). It may be added here that the Amerindians of the Cuyuni District (Guyana) refer to the bare-faced (*Ibis infuscatus*) as the *kurri-kurri* (Roth 2011: 254).

[142] The trumpeter produces a strange low humming (Dutch: "brommend") sound, see van Capelle 1926: 396-416.

To conclude, “birds”, or their feathers, now and again play a role in healing rituals. The Carib, for instance, boil the feathers of the “banaanbek” (*Cassicus* sp.) in order to cure heart diseases (Ahlbrinck 1931: see the entry under “banaanbek”). See also 6.1.4 under the sub-heading *Roles of “birds” in ceremonies*.

#### *“Bird” as a spirit*

The Otomac Amerindians (Venezuela) believe that the spirit/soul of the deceased encounters a “big bird, called Tigtitig, which seizes upon and swallows them unless they valorously fight it” (Roth 2011: 100-1 [82]). Malevolent spirits resemble or take the physical form of “birds”. The Carib of the Pomeroon district (Guyana) account for three malevolent spirits which are responsible for disease, ill-luck and calamities. They are inhabitants of the Land of Clouds and the Land of Water. The spirit Kwamaraka resides just below the clouds and resembles a gualding bird (*Pilerodius* sp.). The Tokoroi-mo is similar to the “*doraquarra”*, a wood quail (*Odontophorus* sp.; Roth 2011: 361-2 [309]).

The *guanchi* spirits of the Jivaroan speakers take on many forms, a number of these spirits are zoomorphic, e.g., when resembling “birds”. On the other hand, “bird”-demons also come in various shapes and sizes: “parrot”, “pelican”, ”toucan”, ”macaw” (Karsten 1935: 373, 377). Jivaroan speakers also fear the ”umbrella bird” (*Cephalopterus ornatus*) as it is one of the bearers of the magic arrow (Karsten 1935: 378).

Even here it is apparent that a majority of associations concern specific “birds” hereby perhaps dominatingly implying that “birds” are likely messengers and tokens. This phenomenon is in part the result of the fact that “birds” cross boundaries. Their vocal cords can signal imminent danger and the approaching day or night. Moreover, serving as messengers, “birds” can deliver good and bad news.

To better understand their respective positions within the Amerindian cosmologies thus contributing to an improved conceptualisation, the specific “birds” are discussed in 6.2-6.5.

### 6.1.5 Concluding remarks

The tropical lowlands of South America and the Caribbean islands are home to a wide variety of avian species which occupy all layers of a multi-layered tropical ecosystem, i.e., from high up in the canopy to the dark forest floor. Across the globe and throughout time, “birds” are ostensibly incorporated in lore, arts, songs, and iconography, hereby establishing not only a reflection of their imminent presence in nature during the day, at twilight and the nocturnal hours. In addition, as a result of their flying capabilities, “birds” are the visible traversers of not only natural but also of cosmological boundaries. Their vocality signals warnings of impending danger or the presence of for instance water or fruit. From a cosmological perspective, “birds” can bring or foretell any news arriving from other worlds and any coming events (i.e., day, night, seasonality, danger).

The prominence of “birds” in “nature” is equalled by their eminence in iconography. Avian iconography is not bound by time nor by materialisation. Abundantly encountered in anthropo-historical accounts we may indeed assume that the feathers, bones, claws, and beaks of birds played a role in worldly as well as in ceremonial life.

When considering avian species, “birds” are not linked to a certain cosmic layer. The brightly coloured, fast-flying species are more probably tied to the celestial realm, whereas nocturnal “birds” with a dark plumage tend to be related to the underworld. In addition, various aquatic species and ground-dwelling species occupy the middle layer of the cosmos. Their place within Amerindian worldviews could be of relevance as to how “birds” were and are now conceptualised. Hence several specific avian species will be further dealt with (see 6.2-6.5). However, such a large variety of avian species with diverse (spatial, cosmological) connotations makes conceptualising “Birds in general” even more difficult. The reason for this is: an all-inclusive category does not distinguish between ground-dwellers, inhabitants of leaf canopies, or even diurnal and nocturnal species.

In a number of cases, “birds” are depicted as being helpful, protective, suppliers of goods or as acting as messengers. Whenever a physical description is provided, it refers to a bird’s colouration and the strong or weak points of its beak and claws. The helpful “bird” is also identified and discussed as a separate cluster, as are the narratives on the origin of avian colouration (see 6.1.1).

Although these more “general” motifs are indeed linked to the “bird’s” contextualisation, qualities related to specific “birds” are apparently of greater relevance in order to comprehend the indigenous “bird” conceptualisation. These specific qualities are often rooted in the “natural” behaviour of birds (see 6.1.1). For instance, a species that builds elaborated nests is then associated with house building or even culture in general. A species that vocalises in certain ways or at fixed time(s) is contextualised accordingly, e.g., as signalling the start of a season, relating them directly to that time of the year.

Various birds are hunted for their meat and eggs. In certain narratives they are characterized as the embodiment (i.e., the Master/Owner) of all game “animals”, or as the Master of Food which not only protects game “animals” but also portrays (and contains) all of them. For a detailed description of the concept of mastery, see 3.4.2. Indeed Amerindians who embraced “birds” as Masters were presumably entangled in a reciprocal relation, and a continual negotiation with this Master of Game/Food (see also 2.3.2 under the sub-heading *Taboos*).

In sum, “birds” are generally considered to be assistants, messengers and traversers of boundaries. Various tales describe “birds” that bring gifts from other worlds and that they can help shamans whenever he travels to other worlds. Their “boundary-crossing” quality also contributed to the conception of “birds” as the embodiments of souls and spirits. Important

messengers to shamans, too, they deliver news from other worlds as well as information on future events, e.g., any approaching dangers, the night or the rainy/dry seasons. Various species are also hunted in order to provide food, eggs or feathers or to be kept as pets. Certain Amerindians conceptualise "birds" as the Master of all Game.

Avian imagery has been identified on a wide variety of materials, e.g., as a very prominent zoomorphic feature embellishing Saladoid pottery, both in the mainland and even more dominantly in island assemblages. The most identifiable feature of avian iconography comprises the beak and, if present, the wings. The shape and position of the beak enable identification of specific species. The function of pottery with "bird" *adornos,* or its contents, is probably intertwined with the manner in which the depicted species is conceptualised. In my view, the utilisation of this particular form of pottery is to be expected in both a regular and a ceremonial setting, because of: (a) the huge quantity of recovered "bird" *adornos,* and (b) their ascribed attributes and qualities, which are linked to food, game "animals", seasonality and the likely conceptualisation as an assistant, messenger and protector. I presume that by and large the "bird"-related iconography actually displays a specific (combination of) species, which we have yet to identify.

## 6.2 Specific "birds"

A number of specific "birds", even though frequently documented in the narratives, are not dealt with as distinct clusters, but are nonetheless discussed in the general section on "Bird" narratives (see Appendix D, section B. Fabula and B. Story). They are addressed separately because of their remarkable attributes and roles. Here, in 6.2, all these "birds" are reviewed in order to better understand their contextualisation and conceptualisation as expressed by Amerindians. Reasoning from their position and role played within the narratives, nature, their presence in iconography and their place within Amerindian cosmologies, parrot-like birds (Psittacidae), ducks, shorebirds and waders, hummingbirds and woodpeckers, are addressed here.

### 6.2.1 "Parrot-like birds" (Psittacidae)

#### *"Parrot-like birds" in the narratives*

The "birds" identified are: the "Parakeet", "Parrot" and "Macaw". This study includes 45 narratives, which all in all contain 49 records on "Parrot-like birds". These tales are widely distributed and encountered in most large language families. However, in this study, there are no Arawakan cases featuring with "Parrot-like birds", but most large language families do occur: Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Tupian, and Warao narratives of which 60 percent originate from the core area.[143] The narrative functions match those of "Birds" in general.

[143] Narratives including a parrot-like actor are numbered: 4, 16, 18-9, 29, 61, 67, 130, 145, 148-9, 152, 189, 191-4, 199-200, 205-6, 226, 301-2, 304, 318, 336, 358, 403, 445, 464, 474, 479, 480, 493, 498, 515, 561, 591, 635, 651, 655, 684, 691, 710. See Appendix D, section B, Table B3, which presents linguistic information.

### Actors, events and setting

The “Parrot-like birds” are depicted as helpful “birds” and rarely as enemies. They were also sought after, as the ascribed role of object/goal seems to be related to the fact that “Parrot-like”-actors are kept as pets. They were therefore caught, which the additional references and statements from early travellers underline (see 6.2.1, under the heading *“Parrot-like birds” in Amerindian cosmologies*).

”Parrot-like”-personages are set in a village (mundane) context, mainly as pets, or as game. Two records specify the spatial setting as to the moriche grove scenery. The most common motifs are similar to those encountered in the “Bird”-narratives. The “Top 5” comprises: (a) the origin of things, and “animal/bird” traits and habits; n=17, (b) the helpful “Bird”; n=16, (c) tasks/”quests”; n=16 (d) transformation; n=9; and (e) pet; n=8 (See Appendix D, section B. Fabula).

A recurrent theme within the group of “Origin” motifs concerns the origin of fire. Various “animals/birds” including “Parrots” attempt (or manage) to steal it (see Story nos. 493, 498, 651; 2x Warao, Sikuani (Guajiboan)). Other cases relate these “birds” to (the origin of) food, drink and seeds such as *yopo** beans (Story no. 655; Sikuani, Guajiboan), maize beer, and fish (Story no. 336; Ticuna), or how to extract *yuruma** (Story no. 464; Warao). In Story no. 403 (Cariban), an excellent hunter met a young Amerindian hunter, who turned out to be the “King of all Parrots” (named Krewoko i.e., parrot). Next, when the Amerindian’s protagonist wished to shoot “Parrots”, Krewoko hit him. This is the reason why nowadays Amerindians hunt parrots as a reprisal. Several Cariban stories describe how a (pet) “Parrot”-wife secretly prepares dinner (see Story nos. 19, 358, 710). In the Kaliña version (Story no. 710) Amerindians are the offspring of a “Parrot”-female (with Amerindian male).

We also read that either a “Parrot-like bird” throws fruit down from a tree, or that Amerindians do so (Story nos. 205-6, 318, 793; Warao, Toba-Pilaga (Guaicuruan), Matacoan, Krahô (Gê)). In two cases, “Macaw/Parrots” are hunted to then be thrown down from the tree (see Story nos. 199, 200; Matacoan, Toba-Pilaga (Guaicuruan)). In a cluster of narratives the protagonist(s), while hunting “Macaws”, encounter(s) a “Jaguar”, after which the events unfold. In several instances, the “Jaguar” saves and adopts the protagonist, provides him with food and gifts, and teaches him arts and crafts e.g., hunting, making fire. In other cases, this “Jaguar” leads to the discovery of important goods and knowledge (e.g., the Honey festival; see Story nos. 191-4, 226, 691, 301-2: 5x Gê, 2x Tupian).

Various “Bird” characteristics are explained, too, whereby references to their plumage and talkative nature prevail. In Story no. 29 (Trio, Cariban), their feathers are coloured by means of the blood of the “Itana” (osprey, *Pandion haliaetu*). Feathers are applied in order to mark a road (Story no. 635; Sikuani, Guajiboan), to adorn the (Sun’s) crown/cap (Story nos. 130, 148, 684; Arekuna, Bakairí (Cariban), Sikuani (Guajiboan)), and to make clothes (Story no. 591;

Cuiva, Guajiboan). Their interrelatedness to speech is very explicit in Story no. 479 (Warao). It is explained here that after God had created Amerindians they are able to only comprehend the "Parrot-language", whereas the Creole peoples understand all birds. Story no. 445 (Warao) reports the reason why "Parrots" and the Warao are no longer friends: "Parrots" had insulted the Warao, after which these "birds" were banished to the forest and are now hunted. Story no. 206 (Matacoan) mentions that humans had in the distant past not been able to speak. "Parrots" could but became numb because their tongues (now black) had been hit with seeds. Other references hereto concern their screams/shrieks (see Story no. 474; Warao), or simply that the "Parrot" reports an escape, or keeps watch thus informing the protagonists of what he had witnessed (Story nos. 16, 145, 149, 152; Warao, Munduruku (Tupian), Karajá (Gê)). In Story no. 681 (Wayana, Cariban), either hearing or seeing the "Blue-and-yellow macaw" (*Ara ararauna*) and the "Scarlet macaw" (*Ara macao*) heralds the presence of the water monster named Tulupere, who attacks the Wayana people.[144]

### With whom are "Parrot-like birds" associated?

Looking into any other "animal/bird"-personages with which "Parrot-like birds" are associated, we most frequently come across the "Jaguar" (n=10) and other "Birds" (e.g., "Scavengers", "Birds of prey", "Birds" in general). However, "Parrot-like birds" also co-occur in four narratives concerning the "Caiman/Alligator", "Shorebirds and waders", "Frog", and "Toad".

The "Jaguar" and "Macaw" are interlinked in the narratological context, for they are located around the same tree (Story nos. 301-2; Tembé, Tupian) which both appreciate, considering that the "Jaguar" collects its "honey" here and the "Macaw" its seeds. This "honey" could then refer to these "Macaws", or to the Amerindians who hunted them! The reason for this assumption is: within this context, "Jaguar" and the Amerindian hunter act as predators of these "Birds" (i.e., their "jaguar"). Moreover, both adopt an ambush technique whereby jaguars are stalk-and-ambush predators and Amerindians shoot birds from an ambush (hut) built high in a tree (see 6.1.4 and 5.4.2).

"Parrot-like birds" fulfil a catalysing task: the events unfold during a hunt. When searching for "Macaw" eggs, the protagonist meets (or is "rescued" by) the "Jaguar" and then taken to Jaguar's village (Story nos. 192-3, 200, 226, 691; Gê (Sherente, Cayapó-Kubenkranken, 2x Apinayé) and Story no. 200 (Toba-Pilaga, Guaicuruan).

No clear association has been established either between the "Parrot-like birds" and "Caiman/ Alligator" or with "Frog", and "Toad". As a helper, the "Parrot-like"-actor either comes across

[144] Renzo Duin (2009, 2011) describes the importance of this creature in Wayana (Cariban) narratives, which embodies interrelationships. Its patterned reptile skin was divided between the Wayana and Apalai peoples. Killing Tulupere is a metaphor for bridging the old frontier between groups (Duin 2011: 446).

other “animals/birds”, which also act as assistants or oppose the protagonist, hereby apparently establishing that no significant relationship exists between them.

In Story no. 336 (Ticuna), “Frog” and “Macaw”, among others, are both potential wives for a great hunter, but his mother insults them. After “Frog” had fallen pregnant, the hunter takes her home with him as his wife. He brings black beetles for her, but his mother thinks he has eaten them. Having changed these insects into peppercorns, she presents them to her daughter-in-law who then leaves. A “Macaw”-woman accused of being lazy takes leave, but teaches the man a fishing technique: utilising splinters of a tree (*a: ru-pana*, species unknown) to throw into the water.

A “Toad” is depicted as the Master of Fire which “Parrot” attempts to steal, whereby it burns its beak (Story nos. 439, 498; Warao). In Story no. 29 (Trio Cariban), “Frog” is the Master of Drinks who provides everybody at a party with beverages. Here “Macaw” colours itself with the blood of the “Itana” (osprey, *Pandion haliaetu*).

“Heron” and “Parrot” are both helpers. The latter hides the entrance of the hole in which the protagonist is hiding or informs/warns the protagonist. “Heron” conceals the protagonist in its beak (see Story nos. 152, 561; Gê: Cayapó-Gorotire, Karajá).

### *Parrot-like birds in nature*

Parrots, macaws, parakeets and *Ara* species are recurrently documented in the narratives. For analytic as well as comparability purposes all have been integrated into a single category: “Parrot-like birds” (see Fig. 6.8 and 6.9). Although the Ara, a neotropical genus of macaws, no longer populate the Caribbean islands, various species of parakeet and parrot still do. It has been reported that at least fifteen parrot species have only recently become extinct in these isles (Raffaele et al. 1998: 9; Williams & Steadman 2001).

**Fig. 6.8.** Red-fronted macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017); photograph by the author.

The precise history and natural distribution of macaws (*Ara* sp.) across the Caribbean remains uncertain. The presence of, for instance, any bone material could have indeed been the result of prehistoric inter-island trade (see also 1.1). Only two species of *Ara macau* are presumed autochthonous i.e., the Cuban red macaw (*Ara tricolor*) and the Lesser Antillean macaw or Guadeloupe macaw (*Ara guadeloupensis*). Archaeological remains of the latter which originate from Puerto Rico confirms its presence in the insular Caribbean (Olson & Maíz López: 2008).

### The behavioural and physical qualities

The majority of these birds are bright-coloured, the minority being multi-coloured. However, in the Caribbean islands, they are most often green. Their physical traits include a strong curved bill, strong legs and clawed feet, enabling them to climb and swing (see Fig. 6.9). Most species of macaw are capable of utilising their feet to manipulate food and other objects, in a manner very similar to how humans use their hands. The head of these birds is relatively large. The eyes are positioned high and laterally in the skull.

The birds feed on seeds, fruit and nuts. They nest inside tree holes to lay and hatch their eggs. Most pairs are monogamous and form strong bonds. Their nesting site is their territory.

Parrot-like birds are short-range forest fliers. Various species have evolved separately and are thus either mainly island specific or their range is limited to a small number of Caribbean islands, which by and large are home to parakeet and/or parrot species.

**Fig. 6.9.** Green-thighed parrot/White-bellied caique (*Pionites leucogaster*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017); photograph by the author.

In their publication entitled *Wildlife of the Caribbean,* Raffaele and Wiley (2014: 136-43) list the following species:

- Monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*).
- Hispaniolan parakeet (*Aratinga chloroptera*).
- Olive-throated parakeet *(Aratinga nana)*.
- Green-rumped parrot (*Forpus passerinus*).
- Yellow-billed parrot (*Amazona collaria*).
- Black-billed parrot (*Amazona agilis*).
- Rose-throated parrot/Cuban parrot (*Amazona leucocephala*).
- Hispaniolan parrot (*Amazona ventralis*).
- Puerto Rican parrot (*Amazona vittata*).

- Red-necked parrot (*Amazona arausiaca*).
- Saint Lucia parrot (*Amazona versicolor*).
- Saint Vincent parrot (*Amazona guildinglii*).
- Imperial parrot (*Amazona imperialis*).

### Mankind and parrots

Humans have shown interest in parrots since early times. Certain species were presumably not only brought to the islands by the Amerindians but have also been introduced in more recent times. Several 17th-century records indicate that Island Carib brought along parrots, for instance, to trade with (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 24 of 29).

Classified as the most intelligent species of birds, parrots can imitate human voices. Island Carib even taught their pet parrots "to speak and whistle" (Breton et al. 1665: 31 of 50). This feat in combination with a colourful plumage enhanced their popularity as pets. Since early times their feathers have been applied to beautify headgear and body adornments (see also 6.2.1 under the sub-heading *"Parrot-like birds" in the narratives*).

It is, therefore, no surprise that parrots and macaws were important trade items during pre-Columbian times (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]; Breton 1665; Wilson 1990). For instance, the Warao are known to have visited Trinidad in order to trade parrots for quartz crystals and other goods (Boomert 2000: 446). Valued for the splendour of their feathers, birds were hunted with arrows designed to stun rather than to inflict any wounds (Saunders 2005: 31).

### *The iconography of the "parrot-like birds"*

Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* play a central role in the present study, which leans heavily and thankfully on the comparative research Waldron executed in 2010 and 2016. As discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.1.2), parrot Saladoid *adornos* have been identified on both Venezuelan and the Caribbean Island assemblages. Prior to dealing with this aspect of the "parrot-like bird" iconography, I must first mention other "art" forms in which the "parrot" is encountered.

References to a crown of macaw feathers worn by the Sun or the Moon (see 6.2.1 under the sub-heading *"Parrot-like birds" in the narratives*) occur. Their application by Amerindian peoples is also reported in anthropological as well as historic accounts. For instance, Cariban Amerindians attached the (tail) feathers of *Ara* species to ceremonial headdresses. These feathers also serve as hair pieces (Ahlbrinck 1931, 1956, see under the entry "Ara"; García Arévalo 1992: 41).

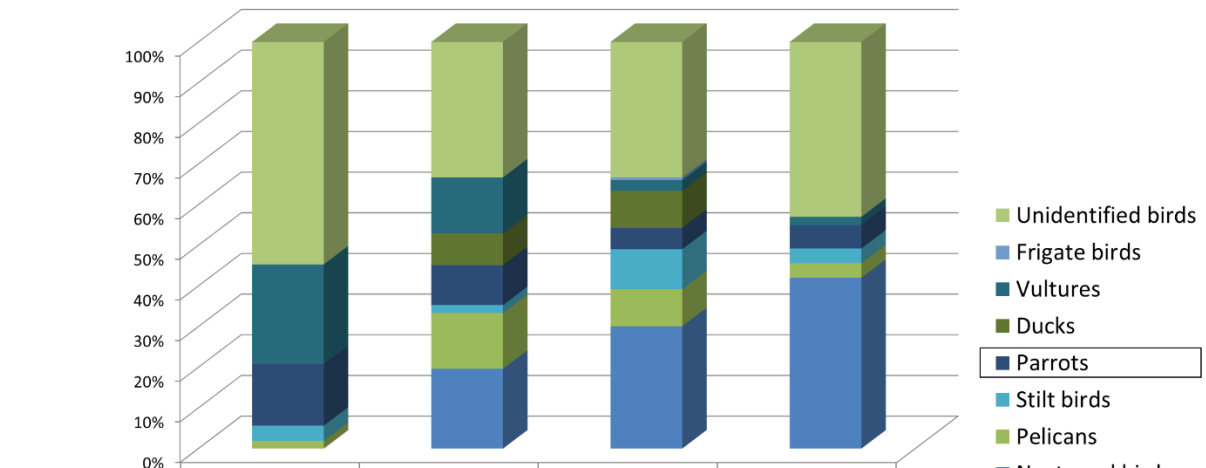
"Parrot-like birds" are portrayed, too. Records mention benches resembling "macaws" and depicting e.g., the "king vulture" and the "jaguar". "Macaw"-shaped benches have been observed among the Kaliña (Cariban), Arawakan and Warao peoples (de Goeje 1943: 71; Roth 2011: 334 [288]).

Numerous "bird"-shaped pieces of jewellery and stone pendants have been identified as "parrots" or "macaws" (Boomert: 2000; Cody 1991: 217; Saunders 2005: 31-2). These pendants could also portray a ''king vulture'', as this "bird" has a very distinctive beak which could easily be mistaken for a "parrot's" beak (Waldron 2010: 229). In addition, "parrot-like birds" may be depicted in a more abstract form. A malevolent spirit, or demonical "bird" in the shape of a "great green macaw" (Jivaroan: *pugi*), is depicted by means of the spirit's eye because the power of demonical "birds" is concentrated in its eyes (Karsten 1935: 490).

### "Parrot-like" *adornos*

Waldron (2010) states that "Parrot-like birds" (Psittacidae) are encountered on the Venezuelan as well as on island Saladoid ceramics (see 2.1.2). Parrot *adornos* have been identified throughout the Lesser Antilles (see Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2.** Identified "parrot-like bird" *adornos* and their dispersal (above); the absolute dispersal of identified "parrot" *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela (below).




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified birds | 29 | 17 | 51 | 83 |
| Frigate birds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vultures | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Ducks | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| Parrots | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| Stilt birds | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| Pelicans | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Nocturnal birds | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |

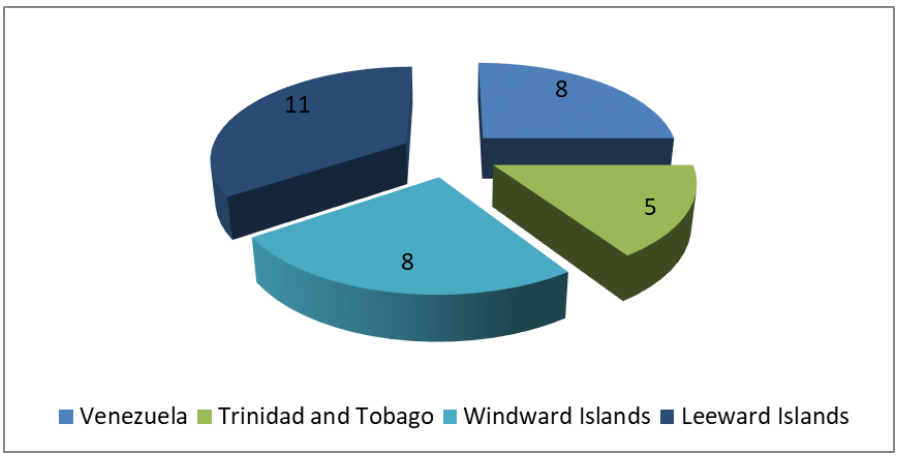


Table 6.2 (below) indicates that "parrot" Saladoid *adornos* were mainly identified in the Leeward Islands. By and large, they are equally distributed across the insular Caribbean and Venezuela. However, Table 6.2 (above) suggests that "parrot" *adornos* are relatively more dominant on Trinidad and Tobago and especially in Venezuela because 15 percent of the "bird" *adornos* from Venezuela is identified as "parrot-like" compared to 5.6 percent of the Leeward "bird" *adornos*).

"Parrot-like" *adornos* can be deeply incised and on occasion polychromed (see Figs. 6.10-6.11; Waldron 2010: 449-51). Certain species of birds may be depicted by means of their traits, which are indeed obvious "… in the relative thickness or curl of a ceramic beak, the placement of eyes, or the shape of a head" (Waldron 2010: 229).

It has been suggested that the red-painted psittacid *adornos* may have been linked to the manner in which the potters portray a particular species of birds, perhaps the macaw (Waldron 2010: 449). The reason for this is: strikingly, many *adornos* are painted red (Waldron 2010: 229).

The position of these *adornos* varies. They appear as a rim or a wall *adorno,* necks and bodies extended, facing either outward or downward. Finial-like nubbins positioned on the sides and the tops of vessels have also been identified (Waldron 2010: 229).

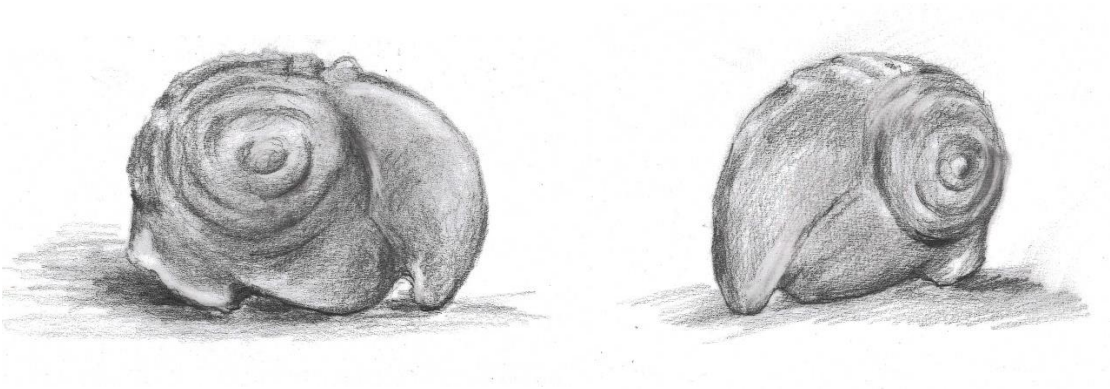


**Fig. 6.10.** Saladoid "macaw" *adorno* from Golden Grove, Trinidad; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.49, length *c.*4.7 cm; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

**Fig. 6.11.** Saladoid "parrot" *adorno* from Canaan, Tobago; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.50, length *c.*5 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

### *"Parrot-like birds" in Amerindian cosmologies*

In Amerindian cosmologies, the sky world is associated with fast-flying, brightly coloured "birds" (see 2.3.1). Macaws and parrots frequent the highest tree tops, and perhaps thus take centre stage in this indigenous perception of the sky world. Their close association with a celestial realm would also have been related to the Sun, which is specifically considered a male symbol. In various cases, this link is ostensibly conceptualised by means of a description comprising the Sun donned a crown made of Ara feathers (see 6.2.1 under the sub-heading *"Parrot-like birds" the narratives*). Aras also bear fertility connotations resulting from this relation with the Sun.

The role which feathers play during ceremonies has been addressed (see above). Various sources explicitly refer to the adding, on special occasions, of Ara (tail) feathers to headdresses and being utilised as hair pieces (Ahlbrinck 1931, 1956: "Ara"; Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 12 of 29; García Arévalo 1992: 41), or even to adorn a pierced nose (Du Tertre et al. 1667: 28 of 43).

As powerful celestial symbols and assistants in general, "parrot-like birds" probably serve the shamans, too. Cariban, Arawakan and Warao "macaw"-shaped benches reinforce this assumption. These "birds" are considered assistants of shamans (de Goeje 1943: 71; Roth 2011: 334 [288]).

Perhaps the best-documented case concerns the Bororo (Bororoan) people of Brazil. Their relation with these "birds" is researched in order to reveal to which degree humans, the "macaw" and the ancestral spirit world are intertwined (Crocker 1985).

Numerous references describe macaws and parrots being bred and well taken care of. Nevertheless, they are also hunted and shot, perhaps for their meat or feathers (Rivière 2006: 69; Schomburgk 1848). The Island Carib attached parrot feathers to arrows (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 26 of 29).

As to restrictions with regard to eating "parrot-like birds", we read that the father of a newborn should not eat any "parrot" meat, because then his child would have small round eyes (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 16 and 22 of 29).[145] It is not only mentioned that consuming any species of *Ara* is forbidden for *piais**, but also that hunting dogs should not feed on this "bird" (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entry "Ara"). The Canelos-Quechua speakers of Ecuador keep the breast bones of the "great green macaw" (locally referred to as *guacamayo*) far from their dogs. For in the case they did eat this "bird", they would never successfully hunt a "macaw" again (Karsten 1935: 165). Beaks of the scarlet macaw (*Ara canga*) are thrown into the river so that dogs cannot eat them (Roth 2011: 298 [251]).

[145] This taboo on consuming "parrot" meat should be placed within a wider context. During the first five days after the birth of a child, the father is not allowed to eat or drink at all. Many restrictions continue for several months, of which this is but one (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 16 of 29).

“Parrot-like birds” are also described as the pet of a (water) spirit. The Taulipang (a Cariban group residing in Venezuela) believe their water spirit keeps a “white-tailed macaw” as a pet (de Goeje 1943: 21). The Bororo (Gê) refer to various species of “macaws”, “parrots” and other forest “birds” as “white-feathered”. This description can perhaps best be understood as being associated with “luminosity” or “brightness” upon which the *symbolic** category “white” is constructed (Crocker 1985: 23).

In sum, “parrot-like birds” are framed in the celestial realm, which in turn is linked to overall positive connotations such as fertility and power. These “birds” are further presumably considered to serve as (a shaman’s) assistants, play roles within ceremonial contexts and apparently seem to have interconnected and/or bridged various cosmic layers (see 2.3). On the other hand, while kept as pets and traded because of their multi-coloured feathers, they were also part of everyday life.

### *Concluding remarks*

Forty-eight stories feature either a “Macaw”, “Ara”, “Parrot” or “Parakeet” actor or a reference to such a “parrot-like bird”. Although the South American mainland is home to a wider variety of these species, including macaws, several such species populate Caribbean islands. The archaeological record confirms that “parrot-like” *adornos* are encountered both within Saladoid Venezuelan and the Caribbean island contexts. It may, therefore, be presumed that these “birds” were also present in the narratological contents of the insular Ceramic Age peoples and expressed by means of similar motifs or themes.

The narratives contain numerous references to the feathers of these “birds”, often directly related to the Sun donning a crown adorned with vibrant Ara feathers. Based on ethnohistoric as well as on ethnographic accounts we may conclude that their feathers did indeed beautify headgear.

The cosmological relevance of these “birds” is intermingled with the qualities of the Sun as well as of the celestial world. The Sun is the prime deity, a male creator and thus a powerful life-giving, fertilising agent. These colourful “birds” are contextualised within this cosmic setting. Moreover, they are associated with mainly positive assets: acting as helpful “birds” and as the allies of shamans, who while seated on a “macaw/parrot”-shaped bench, is invoked and implied in rituals, for instance, as an assistant when the shaman travels to an “other world”.

These “birds” were presumably held as pets and may also have been hunted for their feathers, eggs or young. The taboo regarding the consuming of “bird” meat by dogs and their owners may well have persisted in different times and places.

Saladoid “parrot-like” *adornos* have been identified on Venezuela and on all the isles of the Lesser Antilles. However, they are relatively more dominant among the “bird” *adornos*

encountered in Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago. As an iconographical feature, these "birds" are best identified by means of their beak, which could be mistaken for a vulture's beak. The way they have been characterized in the narratives bears no further indication as to how they are physically depicted.

The "parrot-like" pendants not only probably reflect the positive qualities of these "birds", but also form a means to keep them as very close assistants. Their recurrent presence on examples of Saladoid pottery in the form of *adornos* should also be conceptualised within the context of the Sun's life-giving and fertilising qualities associated with, for instance, seeds, water or food.

### 6.2.2 "Ducks"

#### *"Ducks" in the narratives*

This study includes fourteen "Duck"-narratives, documented in six language families and in two unknown languages. Numbering six cases, the Sikuani (Guajiboan) language is perhaps overrepresented.[146] Their narrative functions are less informative and (relatively) high on ensuring knowledge and identity.

"Ducks" are again portrayed as helpful "Birds", though staged in a water setting. Few records on ascribed roles have been identified. In four instances, "Duck" is an actor/subject. In six cases, it acts as a helper and is ascribed the role of opponent in only two narratives. When featuring "Ducks" are often linked to culture heroes and *demiurges**. The "Duck" is thus less framed in a mundane, but more in a shamanic setting, i.e., associated with the origin of the world or things the world contains. "Ducks" only play minor roles within the stories.

Only 44 records concern motifs which are directly linked to the "Duck"-actor. The following main sets of motifs have been established: (a) the helpful "Duck", and (b) Boats/canoes. Acting as assistants, "Ducks" can carry people across bodies of water (see Story nos. 148, 673; Bakairí (Cariban), Sikuani (Guajiboan), teach arts and crafts (Story no. 16; Warao), or cure ill Amerindians (Story no. 689; Sikuani).

Significant motifs involve "boats", for instance: (a) the origin of the canoe (Story no. 16; Warao), (b) how ducks teach mankind how to use a canoe (Story no. 648, Sikuani), (c) an escape from a deluge in a canoe (Story no. 150; Aré, unknown), (d) a "Duck" as the Master of Canoe (Story no. 16; Warao), and (e) the transformation of a canoe into a "Duck" (Story no. 334; Tupian).

[146] Languages encountered in the "Duck" narratives are: 2x Cariban (Bakairí, not specific); Gê (Kaingáng), 6x Guajiboan (Sikuani), Matacoan, Tupian (Tupi), Warao, 2x unknown (stemming from Aré, and Rio Negro). See Appendix D, section B, see Table B3.

No cases have been recorded in which the "Duck" is either hunted, kept as a pet or consumed. Only in Story no. 322 (Matacoan) does the Moon chase a "Duck". After figuring out this "bird's" way of doing things, Moon defeats it. A specific hunting technique is described here: diving into a lagoon with a net.

### With whom are "Ducks" associated?

"Ducks" are not specifically linked to other "birds", contrary to the majority of "birds" studied here. We encounter "Ducks" together with "Snake" in five, and with "Jaguar", "Vulture" and "Monkey" in four cases. In addition, Fox (n=3) may be interrelated to "Duck" as a personage (see Appendix D, section B. Fabula). Regarding a statement on the "mother of Ducks" (*Tomaliwa*) being related to "Tapir" (Wilbert & Simoneau 1992: 320, note 6 on the Cuiva), the present study does not include any scenes in which these two "animals/birds" co-occur.

The water context seems to link "Ducks" to most other "animal"-actors. For instance, events unfold around a huge flood whereby "Duck" assists the protagonists, from which subsequently various "animals" (e.g., "Jaguar") originate (Story no. 151; Kaingáng, Gê). Other tales are staged near a river or other body of water. For instance, the "Snake" as Master of Water and "Duck" as the one who carries off the bad water (Story no. 148; Bakairí, Cariban). Or, in the same tale, "Snake" opposes the protagonist, whereas "Duck" comes to his help (Story no. 689; Sikuani, Guajiboan). They do, however, not directly interact nor are they staged in close mutual association.

With the exception as to narratives featuring "Vulture" and "Ducks", in two cases "Duck" acts as a helper of "King vulture". In yet another instance "Duck" is married to "King Vulture's" daughter, which ends in "Duck" murdering his parents-in-law (Story nos. 140, 648; Rio Negro (unknown), Sikuani (Guajiboan)).

### *Ducks in nature*

Various species of ducks are (or were) encountered in the South American mainland and in the Caribbean archipelago, i.e., the masked duck (*Nomonyx dominicus*), the black-bellied whistling duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, aka the black-bellied tree duck), the West Indian whistling duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*), and the fulvous whistling duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) (Raffaele 2014: 116-8). Listed as the most common duck species native to the Caribbean islands include the white-cheeked pintail (*Anas bahamensis*), the blue-winged teal (*Spatula discors*) and the ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*).[147] Other species common to both the Lesser and Greater Antilles, and the mainland are: the masked duck (*Nomonyx dominicus*), *the* black-bellied whistling duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*, aka the black-bellied tree duck), the West Indian whistling duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*) and the fulvous whistling duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*).

[147] Other common species are the blue-winged teal (*Anas discors*), the northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), and the American wigeon (*Anas americana*), see Raffaele 2014: 116-8.

### Physical and behavioural qualities of duck

Ducks are characterized by a broad elongated body, with a relatively long neck and a broad bill. Green, blue, and brown are their common colours, with legswhich are generally speaking (light) blue or brown. Their scaled legs are strong and well-developed and positioned far to the rear. The ruddy duck can run across a body of water in order to take flight (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 118).

**Fig. 6.12.** West Indian whistling duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*); original photograph by D. Daniels (2009) Licensed CC BY-SA 3.0, accessed by EOL.

Certain duck species are permanent residents, while others are non-breeding migrants and visit the Caribbean islands between October and April/May (i.e., the dry season). The non-migratory West Indian whistling duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*) is considered to be site-faithful but will wander off in search of water and a suitable habitat during periodic droughts (Butchart & Symes 2016c; see Fig. 6.12).

Duck species by and large inhabit either shallow freshwater or the brackish wetlands covered in tall grass. A number of ducks are diurnally and others nocturnally active. The Fulvous whistling duck forages mainly during the first two hours after sunrise and the last two hours before sunset. The West Indian whistling duck is also crepuscular (i.e., primarily active at dusk and dawn) or nocturnal.

Ducks are predominantly vegetarian, feeding on aquatic plants, seeds, fruits, bulbs, and leaf shoots. They may also feed on aquatic insects, fish, small amphibians, worms, and small molluscs. Ducks often roost and fly in flocks. The more sedentary species uphold pair-bonds for a number of years and build nests on the water, in trees or on the ground. The parents of certain species share brooding their young.

### Relationship to other animals/birds

Ducklings form easy prey to predatory birds, large fish, crocodilians, and fish-eating birds such as herons. Brooding females in nests can be a relatively easy meal for owls, hawks, mammals or reptiles.

It stands to reason that ducks were hunted for their eggs, feathers and meat. Schomburgk notes that *vicissi*, the white-faced tree duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*), named after its whistling sound “vicissi”, was easily tamed and raised by the Amerindians he met (Rivière 2006: 59-60, on Schomburgk’s travels). Being a commodity, these tree ducks are traded with colonists. Sir Walter Raleigh also reported on this duck species, which he considered very tasty. He also observed that these vicissis and other whistling ducks were found in large numbers “during the season” to add that now and again a single huntsman returned with 50 ducks after a morning excursion (Schomburgk 1848: 54-5, note 2, on Raleigh’s travels).

### *Iconography of "duck"*

To my knowledge, no record of any "duck" iconography is present on ceramics stemming from the South American mainland. In fact, only a single tremolite "waterfowl-shaped" pendant found at Goliath Creek (Suriname) has been published (Boomert 1987: 43, Fig. 3:10). Waldron does not identify any "duck" *adornos* from the mainland either. This fact is even more remarkable as "Ducks" repeatedly feature in (mainland) narratives and have been part of the island iconography. The only historical references I have found concerning ducks link them to being either game or pet animals, as stated above.

In the narratives investigated in the present study, "Ducks" are associated with canoes and may even be depicted on this means of transport, in a naturalistic or geometrical manner. As canoes consist of perishable material, that imagery is now lost. It would be interesting to: (a) ascertain if Amerindians nowadays display any "duck iconography" on their canoes, including the production process, and (b) establish if this has ever been the case.

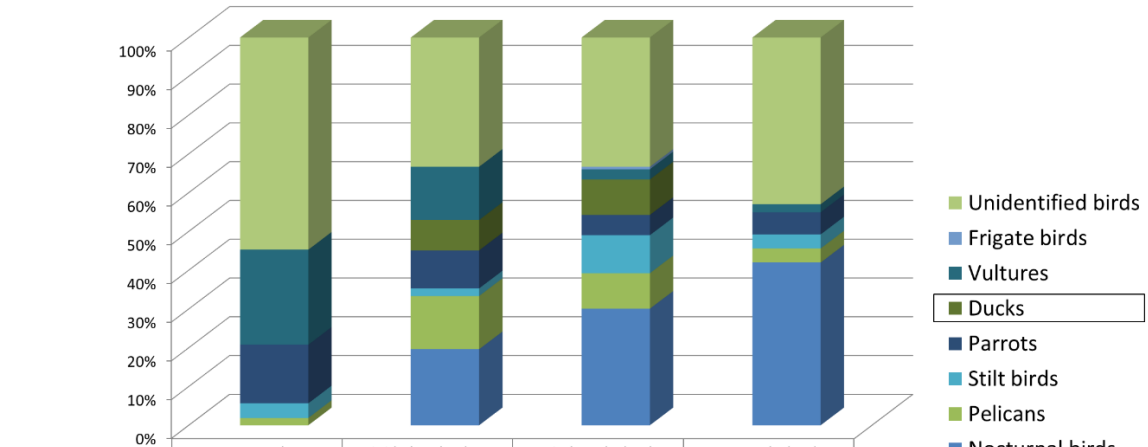
#### Saladoid "duck" *adornos*

"Duck" imagery has been identified in Saladoid ceramics as a Windward Islands' phenomenon (see Table 6.3; Waldron 2010: 319). It is hereby established that fourteen "duck" *adornos* hailed from the Windward Islands and only four from Trinidad and Tobago. Judging by the size, function and quality of the objects bearing this specific imagery, it is concluded to be of evident importance (Waldron 2010: 199-200). However, no occurrences are attributed to the Leeward Islands, or to the South American mainland.

"Ducks" not only appear as *adornos* but also as full effigies, either resembling "duck" heads or bodies (see Figs. 6.13-6.14). A "duck" is best identified by its distinctive bill and is portrayed in a highly stylised, even fanciful manner (Waldron 2010: 200, 445-6).

These *adornos* are most probably species of whistling and ruddy ducks (*Dendrocygna* species, *Oxyura jamaicensis*) as their broad bill extends around to the side of the head (Waldron 2010: 200). A nasal loop and a central crest-ridge as possible traits of the *adornos* also contribute to identifying the whistling duck. The nasal loops seem to be inspired by the duck's large nares (nostrils) and the central crest-ridge could portray the slightly prominent feathering positioned along the middle of the head of the black-billed whistling ducks (*Dendrocygna arborea*) (Waldron 2010: 200).

**Table 6.3**. Identified "duck" *adornos* and their dispersal.




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified birds | 29 | 17 | 51 | 83 |
| Frigate birds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vultures | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Ducks | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| Parrots | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| Stilt birds | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| Pelicans | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Nocturnal birds | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |

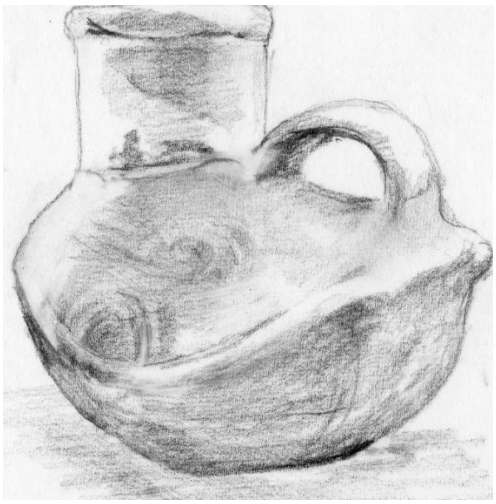


**Fig. 6.13.** Late Saladoid incised "duck"-shaped jug from Trust, Trinidad; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.39; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

**Fig. 6.14.** Saladoid "duck" *adorno* from Guadeloupe; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.36; length *c.*5.7 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep

Another tentatively identifiable feature comprises the narrow bill of the white-cheeked pintail (*Anas bahamensis*). Even *adornos* identified by Moravetz (2005) as "crested turtles" could indeed be "ruddy ducks": their crests being the duck's bill when lying on the back and viewed from the side (Waldron 2010: 201, 445). It possible that the "duck" and "turtle" motifs (and *symbolisms**) are intertwined, as *adornos* display features of a "duck" body and "turtle" legs, implying that the "duck's" body is also the "turtle's" shell (Waldron 2010: 102).

Another interesting observation pertains to certain inscribed motifs with no apparent reference to the "bird's" natural markings. These motifs, described as vaguely anthropomorphic, form a face with two eyes and the dark interior of the spout, suggesting a mouth held open as an "O" (Waldron 2010: 202). Geometric patterns which match Troumassoid (Late Ceramic Age, 600/800 CE-1492 CE) motifs, which adorn a polychrome "duckbill" censer, originating from Saint Vincent, have been described, too (Waldron 2010: 202-3).

### *"Ducks" in Amerindian cosmologies*

The observation that "ducks" apparently traverse worldly realms presumably contributes to their ascribed connotations. "Ducks" are mainly active in water, but also spend time on land and in the air. Certain species nest in tree trunks or on branches. Others nest near bodies of water or on the ground. In the analysed stories the water context dominates (see 6.2.2 under the sub-heading *"Ducks" in the narratives*).

In addition to their spatial ambiguity, "ducks" also traverse temporal boundaries. Being mainly diurnal, it is interesting to note that the mostly frequently depicted species (in this case the whistling duck) is either crepuscular or nocturnal. This "bird" flies to fresh water in order to feed at dusk to return to its roost site at dawn. It usually nests in tree hollows or on branches.

The narratives presented here, in my opinion, contain no direct or clear indication that the "duck" is directly related to shamans or to shamanic practices. However, several cases indirectly suggest they are. The most dominant motifs directly linked to "Ducks" concern the (origin of) canoes and the fact they are helpful "animals" and even cure the ill (see 6.2.2 under the sub-heading *"Ducks" in the narratives*).

As a relatively broad and stable swimming "bird", its association with boats/canoes seems reasonable. The ease with which a duck lands on water either directly when no longer airborne or by walking into the water leaving the shore and starting to swim, resembles a canoe being pushed into the water and passing by. This metaphor comparing "ducks" with canoes has been explained as a means of overcoming the wet with the dry (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 183). The concept of the "duck" with its waterproof feathers, which thus presents us with an aspect of impenetrability, has been put forward (Waldron 2010: 204-5).

The canoe and especially the building of canoes is a ritualised, shamanic-induced practice encountered among the (18$^{th}$-century, Venezuelan) Otomac Amerindians (Waldron 2010: 207, referring to others). The wood is chosen carefully, for instance, from the sacred *Ceiba* tree (silk cotton tree, Malvaceae) one of the highest species to be found in the forest. This is a shamanic tree, in which bats nestle. Even today shamans in Tucano (Colombia/Brazil) oversee the process of canoe-making. For example, they determine the exact time of the year a tree should be felled in order to auspiciously build such a means of transport (Waldron 2010: 207).

A link between shamanic practice and "ducks" has been established. In Story no. 689 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), "ducks" heal the protagonist's lost eyes. Although documented in a single case, this motif is worth mentioning as, among the Desana and other Tucanoan speakers, we come across a parallel between healing and "floating". A healing ritual in which the waterproof feathers of a "duck" are invoked in order to render the patient impermeable to any continued or future disease (Waldron 2010: 209).

The "duck" can apparently float between realms, as a canoe enables people to travel from land to water and even between sickness and health.[148] The floating qualities of ducks may interrelate them to canoes. Certain Amerindians associate this (floating) quality with healing.

### *Concluding remarks*

Fourteen "Duck" narratives have been registered in the course of the present research. Although various duck species inhabit both the South American mainland and the Caribbean Islands, "ducks" have not been identified as a feature of Venezuelan Saladoid iconography. Therefore, "Duck" iconography is a separate, and mainly Windward Island-based, phenomenon. Diving into water as well as waggling around on land, these excellent floaters can apparently bridge land and water in order to cope with wet as well as dry habitats.

As discussed in 6.2.2 under the sub-heading *"Ducks" in the narratives*, "Duck" is framed as an "aquatic bird", an assistant associated with the (origin of) canoes. "Ducks" transform into canoes, bring canoes, are compared to them and set in these tales as primarily "aquatic birds", which can easily traverse water boundaries to reach both land and sky. "Ducks" are described as assistants, teachers and even as healers.

Numerous references pertain to ducks being hunted for their eggs, feathers and meat. The seasonality tied to (migrating) ducks could have been incorporated into the way they were conceptualised. Although South American mainland lore does not indicate their relevance, this migrating quality has led to either a regional abundance or to an absence of duck species, these phenomena may have been reflected in its conceptualisation. Especially the fact that non-breeding ("duck") migrants visited the islands during the dry season could have interrelated "duck"-species with this time of year.

[148] An interesting parallel between duck and pelican "symbolism" suggests that ducks and pelicans are the masculine and feminine aspects of a contiguous "plunging/sinking" principle" (Waldron 2010: 208).

The absence of the "duck" within the mainland Saladoid imagery is remarkable. My research includes fourteen narratives featuring this "bird". As this creature is repeatedly associated with water and canoes, its imagery could be linked to these sadly impermanent items. Perhaps "ducks" were more likely to be portrayed on canoes, peddles and associated materials (see Fig. 6.15). The dependency of the Amerindians upon canoes for travelling and transport further increases with their arrival in the islands as did the importance (and frequency) of examples of "duck"-related iconography. Ethnographical research should shed more light on whether and how "ducks" are portrayed in the visual arts of the mainland. Moreover, if "ducks" are not depicted, a better understanding of the reason why this is not the case could be obtained.

**Fig. 6.15.** Canoes at Apetina, a Wayana village in Suriname; photograph by the author (2009).

### 6.2.3 "Shorebirds and waders"

***"Shorebirds and waders" in the narratives***

Particular shorebirds and waders identified as actors presented here are: "Heron", "Ibis", "Crane", "Flamingo", "Stork", "Curlew", "Lapwing" and "Bittern". The present study includes 30 cases, which when combined include 34 references to these "aquatic birds".[149] Recorded for eight language families, the stories featuring "Shorebirds and waders" are overrepresented when considering the Gê (n=8) and Guajiboan (n=11), whereby 62 percent of the narratives hail from the core area.[150] The narrative functions are in line with those of "Birds" in general.

"Shorebirds and waders" are positioned within a water or sky setting and again mainly portrayed as helpful "birds". In the narratives, a more sinister association occurs, too: these "birds" are the bringers of disease. It is also considered an ill omen to come across a large "heron-like bird" in flight (Story nos. 251, 527, 567; Gê). Other roles dominantly ascribed to these "birds" are: subject/actor and object/goal, and, to a slightly lesser degree, the roles of opponent, sender and receiver. As to "Shorebirds and waders", two records mention these "birds" are either kept as a pet or being tamed (Story nos. 251, 527; Cayapó-Gorotire, Gê). A "Crane" was hunted in Story no. 482 (Warao).

[149] All the narratives included are numbered: 79, 121, 131, 141, 150-2, 157, 185, 251, 270, 282-3, 480, 482, 527, 538, 561, 563, 567, 575, 586-8, 591, 612, 639, 646, 661, 676.

[150] All the language families recorded for "Shorebirds and waders"-narratives are: Arawakan, Cariban, Guajiboan, Gê, Jivaroan, Tupian, Yuracare and Warao. See Appendix D, section B, see Table B3.

The most recurrent motifs to be identified are: (a) the origin of things, (b) “animal/bird” traits and habits, (c) the helpful “animal/bird”, (d) tasks/”quests”, (e) family affairs, and (f) shamanism. “Shorebirds and waders” are for instance related to motifs concerning the origin of: (a) the separation of the Earth and Heaven, as the “*Ucu* stork” and the “*Tsaqui* ibis” pushed the Heaven upwards (Story no. 575; Cuiva, Guajiboan), or (b) important cultural goods, e.g., cultivated plants (Story no. 283; Arawakan), fish poison, arrows, and “Mika”, the earthenware pot (Story nos. 131, 251, 282, 586; Cariban, Gê, Jivaroan, Guajiboan). Through these motifs, these “birds” also intermingle with the shamanic realm. For instance, when serving as a shaman’s assistant, a “Heron” not only receives tobacco but also shares its knowledge on how to protect oneself (Story no. 612; Guajiboan). Or, when a deceased shaman wishes to take revenge and transforms into a “Heron”, he then intoxicates and murders many people (Story no. 639; Guajiboan).

Three motifs linked to (or explaining) the physical or behavioural qualities of these “birds” reveal they are not good hunters/fishers (Story nos. 587-8, 661; Guajiboan). The quality of their beaks is described as: strong (Story no. 567; Gê). Moreover, it can serve to hide people in (Story nos. 152, 157, 561, 563; 3x Gê, Tupian). Several qualities have negative connotations. For instance, the “Bird” is a bringer of disease (Story nos. 251, 527, 567; Gê). Observing a large “Heron-like bird” in flight is considered a bad omen (Story no. 527; Gê). However, in Story no. 567 (Gê), a “Heron” being called upon to cure a sick man, removes an ant from the man’s ear with its strong beak.

“Shorebirds and waders” are also “containers” of water or blood (see Story nos. 270, 480, 629, 676; Sikuani (Guajiboan), Warao, unknown). Both “Shorebirds” and "Waders” also apply their beaks in order to contain/hide the protagonist and fish. In Story no. 676 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), a “Lapwing”-wife wishes to spend the rainy season hanging inside a pot. “Lapwings” (Vanellinae, crested plover) only come out to eat fish during the summer. In Story no. 270 (unknown, Amazonia), an “Egret”-woman without a vagina gives birth to “Fish”. References to these “Birds” as containers of fish, blood, water could pertain to these “Birds” as Masters (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or “ownership”*).

Interestingly, whenever such a container breaks, either a disaster often follows or else less malicious but nonetheless culturally important events. Story no. 283 (Arawakan) describes a pot filled with boiled garbage standing in the light of the Sun. A multitude of “Storks” had collected this garbage. Once this decaying matter was cooked they fed on it. One day, after their leader had broken this vessel, the Earth was immediately flooded, burning all trees and rivers. In Story no. 121 (Arawakan), “Birds” create a pot containing *cassiri**. When children threw it to the ground, the *cassiri** took the form of rivers and creeks. Sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) crept out of the ground as toads do. Peppers turned into “Scarlet ibises” and “Flamingos”. Cotton transformed into “White herons”, silk grass into “Blue herons” and “Rays” (Batoidea) and “Devil fish” (*Mobula mobular*) into ponds and pools. Story no. 282

(Jivaroan) is another example of a broken container which leads to the origin of culturally important goods. In it "Heron" steals two eggs (gifted by the Sun and the Moon) one of which fell and broke into pieces whereas the other hatched to become "Mika", the earthenware pot.

Various motifs not only pertain to tasks or "quests", but also to escapes, for instance, by hiding the protagonist from pursuers (e.g., in trees, mountains, a "bird's" beak). These motifs are also repeatedly related to floods (see Story nos. 150-1, 283; Aré (unknown), Gê, Arawakan) or to other water-related dangers such as drowning or tipping canoes (Story no. 152; Gê). For example, an "Ibis" acquires land to even create a mountain, enabling the protagonist to escape from the flood (see Story nos. 150-1; Aré, Gê).

Motifs may concern family affairs, including references to husbands and wives, brothers and sisters (see Story nos. 150, 185, 226, 282, 567, 587-8; Aré (unknown), Yuracare, 2x Gê, Jivaroan, 2x Guajiboan), mothers/fathers and sons (see Story nos. 131, 152, 157, 270; Cariban, Gê, Tupian, unknown), marriages and incest.

### With whom are "Shorebirds and waders" associated?

These "aquatic birds" co-occur with "Birds" in general (n=9), "Parrot-like birds" (n=5), "Jaguar" (n=6), "Caiman/Alligator" (n=6), "Snake" (n=5) and "Fish" (n=4). They are apparently directly related by their natural habitat. For instance, fish are a natural food source of these "birds", whereas "Caiman/Alligator", "Jaguar" and "Snake" are their natural predators (see Appendix D, section B. Fabula). "Caiman" often opposes (i.e., chases after) the protagonist and "Heron" acts as a helper when hiding the protagonist in its beak (Story nos. 157, 651; Tupian, Gê). In Story no. 185 (Yuracare), "Stork" is called upon to kill a malevolent "Snake".

### "Fish/Eel" and "Shorebirds"

Notably, these "birds" are interrelated to fishes in the studied narratives. The fact that these "birds" are excellent fishers has already been addressed by means of a common motif. Story no. 563 (Apinayé, Gê) includes an explicit reference pertaining that "Heron" hides a man in "a basket full of fish" ("Heron's" basket is its beak, see 3.4.2). Similar references are found in Story nos. 152 (Gê) and 157 (Tupian). In the latter narrative, a "Heron" hides the protagonist in its beak filled with four fishes. In Story no. 152 (Gê) malevolent "Fish"-men, having devoured all the males, search for their wives. One woman escapes when a "Heron" conceals her and her child inside its beak.

In Story no. 661 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), "Heron" tries to catch a big fish with a man in its stomach, but fails. This case also explains that "Fishes" originate from bones of eels. A more direct link with the origin of "Fish" is presented in Story no. 270 (linguistic source unknown) which describes how an "Egret"-woman exploded and thus gave birth to "Fish". In Story no. 121 (Arawakan), boiling a pot filled with *cassiri** leads to the origin of various particular "Shorebirds" and/or "Waders". During that same event "Rays" and "Devil fish" (aka giant manta rays) transmute into ponds and pools.

### *Shorebirds and waders in nature*

Shorebirds and waders are connected by the fact that they inhabit either wetlands or coastal environments, the space between water and land (see Figs. 6.16-6.17). As a highly conspicuous category, any statements on their behavioural and physical characteristics have been generalised but nonetheless presented in a more specific manner when considered relevant.

In 6.2.3 under the sub-heading *"Shorebirds and waders" in the narratives*, all the tales which include the actors or references to either particular shorebirds and/or waders are introduced. The pelican, omnipresent in nature as well as in iconography, has not been recorded in the narratives which originate largely from inland regions of South America. This bird therefore is not further dealt with here.[151]

**Fig. 6.16.** Black-necked stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017); photograph by the author.

**Fig. 6.17.** Greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017); photograph by the author.

[151] Specific birds within these groups recorded in the narratives are: flamingo, heron (aka egret and bittern), ibis, crane, curlew, and lapwing. For a discussion on pelican "symbolism" and iconography, see Waldron 2010, 189-99.

### Physical and behavioural qualities

These aquatic birds are medium- to large-sized, with long legs and necks. In general, their bills are long and harpoon-like. The colouration varies. Flamingos are white to bright pink (see Fig. 6.17). Egrets can be white, brown/black, greygreenish-yellowblue-gray and even red (see Fig. 6.16). In flight, they hold their necks in an S-shape (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 106-12).

Flamingos produce goose-like honks and yellow-crowned night-herons a distinctive "quark" (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 106). Green herons unleash a piercing "skow" when flushed, but when undisturbed a softer series of "kek", "kak" or "que" is heard (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 112). As for many other (particular) birds, the cries of certain waders and shorebirds are considered an omen, especially linked to rainfall (see below under the sub-heading *"Shorebirds and waders" in Amerindian cosmologies*).

Aquatic birds populate a broad habitat dominated by shallow bodies of water including marshes, lagoons, mangroves, and swamps. They can be spotted in fresh, brackish, even salt water. In general standing motionless in the water, they patiently wait for fish, crabs and the like to come within the range of their sharp bills.

A number of species can be encountered only at certain times of the year. Both the black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and the great egret (*Ardea alba*) visit the Lesser Antilles between September/October and April (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 110, 112), during the dry season. Certain species breed all year round, others only during the rainy season.

Although most heron species are diurnal, several are nocturnal. The yellow-crowned night-heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) and the black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) are primarily nocturnal. These herons can either occasionally, locally or rarely, be spotted in the Greater Antilles, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, and the northern parts of the Lesser Antilles. The yellow-crowned heron is especially equipped for feeding on hard-shelled crustaceans, such as crabs (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 112).

**Fig. 6.18.** Tricoloured heron (*Egretta tricolor*); original photograph by J. A. Robles Martinez (2015). Licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, accessed by EOL.

Shorebirds and waders mainly live in large flocks. However, the green heron (*Butorides virescens*) is a solitary species. The little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*) and the tricoloured heron (*Egretta tricolor*, see Fig. 6.18) build colonies of nests in trees. Other waders build nests in vegetation (e.g., reed) near bodies of water (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 108).

A hunting strategy of these species involves standing in large flocks while waiting motionlessly for prey. Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) feed holding their

heads in an upside-down position. Their characteristic bills serve to strain organisms and algae. Reddish egrets (*Egretta rufescens*) are remarkably active when searching for prey, giving the impression they dance, simultaneously running, hopping and spreading their wings (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 106, 108).

### Shorebirds and waders in relation to other animals/birds

Shorebirds and waders are adapted to aquatic life and extract their food from the water. They eat small fish, frogs, aquatic insects, and in certain cases even hard-shelled crustaceans such as crabs. They are prey for other predatory birds, large snakes, crocodilians, and mammals.

Humans have probably hunted shorebirds and waders. It has been recorded that great blue herons (*Ardea herodias*) often repose in bushy parts of the forest where it is not easy to escape from hunters. Hunters often surprise these large birds here (Wilbert & Simoneau 1991: 116, note 30).

## *The iconography of "shorebirds and waders"*

Imagery of "shorebirds and waders" has been identified in Venezuela as well as in the Caribbean islands. However, in addition to the zoomorphic iconography encountered on ceramics, this imagery is apparently limited. We do know of pendants in the form of "frigate birds" (Boomert 2000: 414). I myself have not come across any references pertaining to "shorebird" pendants. A number of accounts indicate that several "shorebirds" either played a role in the ceremonial life of various Amerindian peoples or were displayed by other means than ceramics (see 6.2.3 under the sub-heading *"Shorebirds and waders" in Amerindian cosmologies*). These sources include references to: (a) the depiction and/or utilisation of bird bones, (b) the ceremonial plumage, (c) the wooden effigies encountered during (Arawakan) funeral rituals, and (d) dances named after shorebirds and waders. See also Fig. 6.19 (on p. 257) for an example of a "Taíno" *cohoba** stand depicting a "pelican" positioned on the back of a turtle.

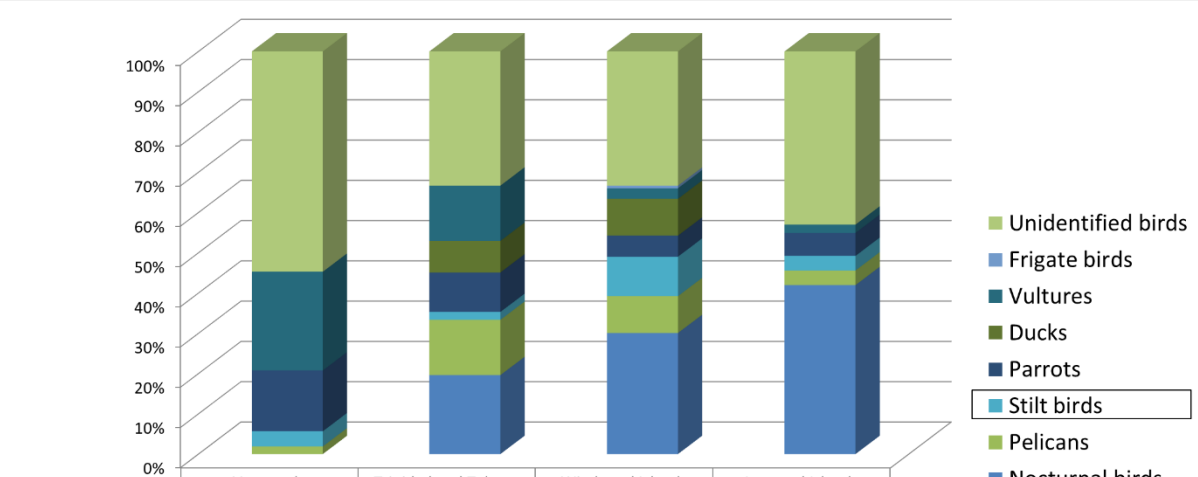
### Depictions on Saladoid ceramics

Waldron (2010, 2016) identified "shorebirds and waders" within both the mainland and island iconographies. However, the majority of the "Shorebird and waders" (which Waldron refers to as Stilt birds) originate from the Windward Islands (n=15), seconded by the Leeward Islands (n=7; see Table 6.4, below). These "aquatic birds" are relatively most frequently encountered in the Windward Islands (7.5 percent, see Table 6.4, above), whereas in the Leeward Islands they number between 2 and 4 percent of the identified avian *adornos.*

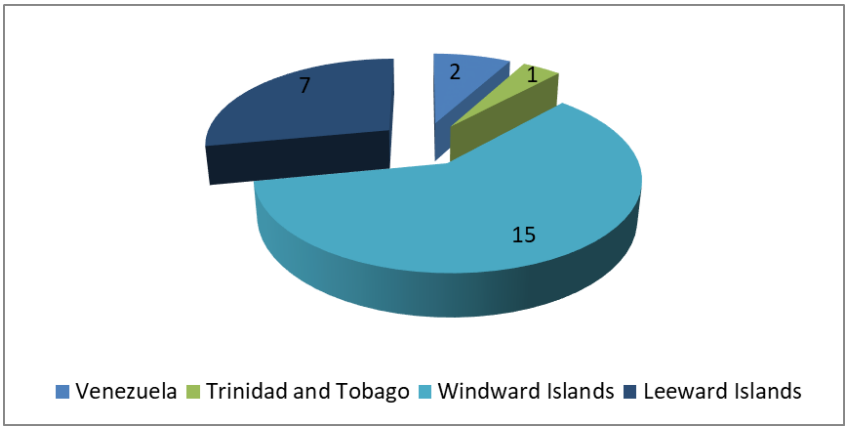
Certain identified "pelican" imagery may actually concern the "stilt bird": "… the deliberate narrowing and curving of beaks in many *adornos* is not likely to be a mere stylization of the straight, large beaks of pelicans [sic]" (Waldron 2010: 211). Various "aquatic birds" share key features (e.g., long bills and legs, flexible necks). If they had been stylised, it would be difficult to separate them.

The specific “birds” presumably depicted are: “heron”, “ibis”, “egret”, and “pelican”. They can only be partially categorised separately (Waldron 2010: 188). “Pelicans” can be identified by means of their large, broad, fairly straight and incised bills. “Stilt birds” have long, narrow and curved beaks (see Figs. 6.19-6.20; Waldron 2010: 188, 447). When identified in this manner, “stilt birds” either equal or outnumber “pelicans” on certain islands of the Lesser Antilles. On the other hand, stilt birds are almost absent from the Greater Antilles where ceramics portraying pelicans outnumber them (Waldron 2010: 189).

**Table 6.4.** Identified “stilt bird” *adornos* and their dispersal (above); the absolute dispersal of identified “stilt bird’’ *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela (below).




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified birds | 29 | 17 | 51 | 83 |
| Frigate birds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vultures | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Ducks | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| Parrots | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| Stilt birds | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| Pelicans | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Nocturnal birds | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |




“Heron” iconography can be distinguished from “ibises” by means of their narrow, less curved beaks. A “… Saladoid tendency to create a planar or linear separation between beak and head” has been observed (Waldron 2010: 211-2). In addition, these “stilt bird” *adornos* have a linear, usually straight, incision running along the length of the beak.

**Fig. 6.19.** A "Taíno" *cohoba* stand: "pelican" on a "turtle" from Hispaniola (1189-1274 CE); after Ostapkowicz et al. 2013: Fig. 5; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep; not to scale.

**Fig. 6.20.** Two Saladoid "bird" *adornos* from Saint Vincent; left a "pelican" and right a "stilt bird"; adapted from Waldron 2016: left Fig. 6.28, height *c.*9.25 cm and right Fig. 6.45, diameter 17.7 cm; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

Although "stilt birds" have been identified in the mainland material, they are apparently of very little significance: only two specimens, of which one could also be considered a "vulture", are identified (Waldron 2010: 212). The increased numbers in the island assemblages could indicate that the importance of these "aquatic birds" increased for the Islanders compared to their mainland cousins.

Narratives have served to explain remarkable iconographical findings (Waldron 2010: 218-9). For instance, a white-on-red pot from Guadeloupe possibly combines the identifiable S-shape of a "heron" with an underdeveloped little "bird" peeking upwards and placed at the rear end of this vessel. It may refer to the "journey across the water" narrative, suggesting the crudely executed little "bird" portrays a "hummingbird" (Waldron 2010: 218-9, 447).

An *adorno* from Tobago, including a "shorebird" iconography, suggests shamanic attributes or traditions. This particular item consists of an anthropomorphic head with two protuberances (Waldron 2010: 224, 448). Based on its heart-shaped face, it is described as an "owl-man". A subtle "stilt bird" emblem extends down the middle of his face. This object is embellished with a second, clearly modelled "stilt bird" perched on top of the head and could either represent a shaman or a storm-related deity (Waldron 2010: 224, note 146).

### *"Shorebirds and waders" in Amerindian cosmologies*

Shorebirds and waders inhabit the space positioned between land and water. As with certain duck species, a number of species are crepuscular or nocturnal. These ambiguous qualities presumably contribute to the importance of these "birds" in indigenous cosmologies. Ostensibly intertwined with the natural forces comprising rain, storm, thunder, lightning and floods, "birds" could also have been of relevance to the ceremonies held amidst a number of Amerindian indigenous groups.

It has been reported that certain "shorebirds and waders" are not only considered "rainbirds" but also that their cries and/or appearances are a clear *sign** of rain. Roth (2011: 254 [217]) informs us that, along the Cuyuni River (in the Moruca River district) and the Kamwatta Creek (Guyana, people unspecified) the evening cries which a kurri-kurri (*Ibis infuscatus,* the bare-faced ibis) produces is a sure *sign** that rain will fall during the night. The Arawak residing on the banks of the Pomeroon River (Guyana) also refer to the kurri-kurri as a rainbird, in this case probably referring to the Ibis *Harpiprion cayennensis* (see 6.1.4, note 141 on p. 230 and Roth 2011: 368, note 6). An Island Carib belief has been mentioned pertaining to the great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) being considered the hurricane spirit (Waldron 2010: 213).[152]

[152] For a detailed discussion on stilt birds being storm birds, see Waldron 2010: 213-6. The "Stellar Stilt Bird" is often considered part of constellations such as the Lion and the Ursa Major (Waldron 2010: 222-4). The white crane has also been identified as part of the Southern Cross constellation spirit (Roth 2011: 242-3 [206]). As no references to any constellations occur in the 706 narratives investigated here they will not be further discussed. This association may also be more related to the physical quality

As referred to above, ethnographical and ethnohistoric records indicate that these "birds" were displayed by various means such as now obsolete flagellation dances (*makuari*) performed at (Arawak and Warao) funerals in the course of which wooden effigies portraying humans as well as "animals" (mainly a "white crane" and the "wood stork" (*Mycteria americana*)) were featured to be interred afterwards (Boomert 2000: 397). Pertaining to this form of flagellation, it is named after the *morakúyuha* (i.e., the Jabiru stork, *Jabiru mycteria*). This Arawakan term is transformed into *macquarrie* or *makuari,* and is perhaps of Tupian origin (Roth 2011: 94).[153]

Shamanic paraphernalia are made to resemble "shorebirds". The hollow leg bones of egrets serve as snorting tubes among the Yekuana (Cariban indigenous to southern Venezuela and northern Brazil) as well as other tropical lowland peoples. Images of these "birds" are associated with and inspired by the ritual use of mind-expanding substances (Waldron 2010: 220). Now and again, heron feathers play a part in ceremonies, too. For instance, among the Arawak and Warao, a puberty rite concludes with a ceremony in the course of which a Warao girl is adorned with beads and white egret feathers glued with gum to her (shaved) head, arms and legs (Roth 2011: 312 [273]).

In addition to applying leg bones as shamanic paraphernalia, Island Carib men carved whistles from the leg bones of pelicans for children to play with (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 24 of 29). Children raise and keep pelicans as pets: "They let him fly out to sea after having painted his feathers red. This bird, when grown up, came back unfailingly each night to its accustomed place" (Breton et al. 1665: 25 of 50).

In certain cases "shorebirds and waders" are interrelated with fish poison. A specific fishing technique includes the use of a toxic substance in order to immobilise fish in small ponds or in restrained bodies of water. The great blue heron (*tsaké*; *Ardea herodias*) and the capped heron (*wanéboco*; *Pilherodius pileatus*) have been linked to two Amerindian fishing techniques (Wilbert & Simoneau 1991: 116, note 30). The *tsaké* catches fish in a way that resembles how the Amerindian go about when utilising poison (Wilbert & Simoneau 1991: 116). The heron hereby places its bill in the water and moves its head from side to side, thus fishing as Amerindians do when applying poison. On the other hand, the capped heron strikes the water thereby piercing fish.

Of interest in this perspective is: whenever the Island Carib were hungry and the sea was too rough to catch any fish, they said, "Let's go to poison the river" (Breton et al. 1665: 32 of 50).

being a long-legged bird, because both the powis and other curassows are often linked to the same constellations.

[153] The term "*mora-koyaha*" (lit.: "Spirit of Mora") refers to the jaburi stork (*Jabiru mycteria*), see Patte 2011: 167.

This remark shows that this method was presumably still applied during the 17th century, especially if storms raged.

### Curing, causing diseases and intoxication

As bridge builders as well as traversers of land and water, "shorebirds and waders" probably intermingled with shamans and their practices. In certain narratives, shamans request these "birds" to contribute to acquiring cultural, shamanic tools as well as to the aforementioned (shamanic) paraphernalia (e.g., snorting tubes, tobacco) which portray these "birds".

Although these "birds" often help shamans, no shamanic powers or qualities are ascribed to them. In particular they are apparently the preferred assistants whenever the tasks pertaining to bodies of water such as: (a) building a bridge across the water by collecting earth or dirt, (b) assisting in order to escape from danger while in or when crossing the water, and (c) acquiring goods (e.g., tobacco) which involves flying to an island and thus with water below them. In addition, the association of birds with fish poisoning could also have linked them to intoxicating agents and/or the causers of diseases.

## *Concluding remarks*

Species of shorebirds and waders populate both the mainland of South America and the Caribbean islands. Although their behaviour and physical appearances differ, they share numerous qualities as inhabitants of the space positioned between land and either salty, fresh or brackish bodies of water. Evolved to catch fish easily, with long legs and curved bills, they stand motionless awaiting their prey.

The majority of these species appear in large flocks, whereas a small number is solitary. They can be present all year round. Serving as natural markers of the dry (or wet) season, they migrate to breed in the Caribbean Islands at certain times. A relatively easy prey, shorebirds and waders are frequently caught and consumed.

### Containing water vs. natural disasters

Several narratives analysed in the present study describe these "birds" as holding "something" in their beaks, e.g., water, fish and even the Amerindian protagonist in order to protect him against any imminent dangers. This "containing" motif is especially interesting (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or "ownership*"), because a master is envisioned as the container and protector of that which, or whom, they own. Being excellent fishers, the Amerindians may well have spotted these "birds" with (numerous) fish held between their bills. As they literally stored these fish, they were subsequently conceptualised as their master. In the tales, their beaks are also associated with a place of refuge where the protagonist is concealed. This could pertain to the protective nature of this "bird" considering everything it can store inside its mouth.

These “birds”, too, are especially linked to the (potential) destructive forces of nature, e.g., storm and thunder. For further ethnographic accounts of motifs relating to rain or storm, see 6.2.3 under the heading *“Shorebirds and waders” in Amerindian cosmologies*. Their migration and breeding apparently mark the Antillean climatic conditions. Their distinct sounds have presumably been associated with (the announcement of) natural forces. Perhaps contributing to this connection is the fact that these “birds” seem to benefit from floodings and storms, as they can feast on trapped fish afterwards.

New life blossoms in the wake of the rainy season and the subsequent floods. Massive destructive forces of nature thus also lead to the source of life, in the broadest sense. It is ostensibly not only reflected in narratives in which “animals” and humans originate but also in cultural goods. The “origin” motifs are on occasion the outcome of the aforementioned disasters. In other cases, however, these “birds” are also dispatched in order to acquire specific goods, although not always successful in their ascribed tasks (see 6.2.3 under the sub-heading *“Shorebirds and waders” in the narratives*).

The two motifs pertaining to: (a) the “bird’s” fishing techniques which resemble the Amerindian fish poisoning technique, or harpooning, and (b) the seasonal behaviour of certain birds are perhaps relevant to their ascribed qualities and attributes. As the abovementioned poisoning procedure essentially comprises the immobilizing of fish forcing them to gasp for air on the water surface, any associations regarding intoxicating and disease (i.e., shamanic attributes) could pertain to these “birds”.

Bird’s bills are a recurrent motif in folklore. As physical traits, they contribute to identifying the (dominantly Island) iconography of the “Stilt birds”, even to a species’ level. Their long, narrow and curved bill contrasts the larger, broad, fairly straight and incised “pelican’s” bill. Their lengthy necks which form an S-shape in flight are reflected in the iconography, too.

Waldron’s research demonstrates that “Stilt birds” are not as prominently depicted as *adornos* in the Venezuelan mainland as they are in the Caribbean islands. However, the discussed issues (see 6.2.3 under the sub-heading *“Shorebirds and waders” in Amerindian cosmologies*) pertaining to ethnographic references concerning ceremonies and “stilt bird” bones utilised in (shamanic) ritual as well as their abundance in the narratives suggests otherwise. Other modes of display are apparently preferred, such as the use of their bones or portraying them in rituals and ceremonies, hereby inducing the spirits of natural forces. Another probable context for their display is linked to fishing, e.g., containers holding fish poison, or harpoons and fishing spears.

On the Caribbean islands, the Amerindian dependence on the natural phenomena associated with these “birds” has probably increased. The hurricane season and flooding impacts the Amerindians in the islands even further. Increasingly dependent on fishing for their income

and food, they now maintain broad networks of exchange which implied venturing across vast bodies of (sea) water (see 1.1). This factor could have not only contributed to an increase as to the significance of these "birds", but also account for a more abundant variety of ways of depicting them as the Master of Fish and Fish poison, as well as portraying them in relation to rain, storms and hurricanes.

### 6.2.4 "Hummingbirds"

#### *"Hummingbirds" in the narratives*

The "Hummingbird"-narratives (n=27) are distributed across seven language families. Covering a broad geographical region, as much as 71 percent of these stories originate from the core area.[154] For "Birds" in general the dominating narrative function is encoding social behaviour. However, a common sub-category for these narratives comprises ceremonies/ traditions.

"Hummingbirds" are described as fast, small, brave, and as the most intelligent of all "birds". These qualities lead to their being respected. Hence this "bird" is assigned various tasks, whereby it manages to acquire tobacco or fire where all others fail and wins contests. Thus the notion is fed that "Hummingbirds" are always busy. The small number of white feathers under its wings are considered a sign of its craftsmanship as a weaver or tailor.

Encountered in both a forest and village (land) setting, the "Hummingbird" is mainly portrayed as an assistant, often of shamans. Moreover, it helps the protagonist with specific tasks or "quests" and is a provider of goods. This specific "bird" also takes on the function of catalyst, any information or goods they deliver lead to the subsequent action.

The "Hummingbird" is a helpful messenger and advisor (Story nos. 565, 619, 650; Gê, 2x Guajiboan). It also acts as a healer/curer (Story nos. 565-6, 697; 2x Gê, Arawakan) and as a guard, and leads a lost man back to his home (Story nos. 29, 74, 79; Cariban, Arawakan, Warao). In Story no. 650 (Sikuani, Guajiboan) "Hummingbird" shows humankind the position in which to have natural births, informing women to wait for the placenta to appear, so that men no longer have to cut open their wives. This "bird" not only provides shamans with tobacco and shamanic paraphernalia but also provides instructions on how to apply these items (Story nos. 79, 189, 402, 657; Warao, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan). The "Hummingbird" is also associated with the origin of tobacco, perhaps even conceptualised as the Master of Tobacco (Story nos. 79, 402, 657; Warao, Cariban, Guajiboan).

[154] All narratives included in this study are numbered 12, 29, 74, 78-9, 83, 98, 112, 141, 187, 189, 296, 304-5, 348, 402, 413, 437, 497, 565-7, 619, 650, 657, 661, 697. The language families encountered are: Arawakan, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Jivaroan, Tupian, Warao, and one unknown (Rio Negro area). See Appendix D, section B, see Table B3.

Studying the motifs pertaining to any tasks assigned/related to "Hummingbirds", we come across this "bird" stealing, for example, fire or tobacco (Story nos. 112, 296, 304, 348; Warao, Jivaroan, Gê, Cariban). Story no. 697 (Arawakan) describes how a man had to consume "Hummingbird" soup in order to cure his inability to hunt in a satisfactory manner.

"Animal" traits and habits explicit as motifs include the fact "Hummingbirds" are considered clever (Story nos. 79, 296, 402; Warao, Jivaroan, Cariban) as well as courageous and hardworking (Story nos. 29, 189, 304; Cariban, 2x Gê). Story no. 567 (Gê) contains a reference to its weak beak, which is too soft to extract the ant from the sick man's ear. However, in Story nos. 565 and 566 (Gê), the "Hummingbird" successfully removes the "Ant" to cure the man. On the other hand, its more negative qualities are stressed, e.g., when bullying (hereby continuing to ask for the head of an Amerindian) and lying (Story nos. 12, 413; Arawakan, Cariban). It selfishly proves unprepared to share its water in Story no. 305 (Gê).

### With whom is the "Hummingbird" associated?

In general, the "Hummingbird" co-occurs with the "Birds of prey", "Birds" in general, "Scavenger birds", "Ants" (n=7), and "Monkeys" (n=5). "Ants" and "Scavenger birds" share an association with shamanic practices.

#### *"Ant" and the "Hummingbird"*

The "Ant" and the "Hummingbird" are ascribed the same role: helping the protagonist by performing tasks. Another recurrent motif is: the "Ant" causes diseases after which "Hummingbirds" act as healers/curers when removing the "Ant" as in Story nos. 565-7 (Gê). In Story no. 78 (Arawakan), this "bird" simply fulfils the same role, i.e., helper. Moreover, both assist the protagonists in order to perform a (different) task. In Story no. 83 (Cariban), an Amerindian lies down to sleep underneath a nest housing "Wood ants" (termites?). As a result of their impatience, while building it, they fall to the ground as does their nest. Having not yet fallen asleep, the man is able to escape. These "Wood ants" then try to find the Amerindian, while a "Hummingbird" keeps chirping: "Give me the head". Next, the annoyed "Wood Ants" answer this "bird" thus: "What's the use of asking for the head if we don't even have the body?"

#### *"Birds of prey" and the "Hummingbird"*

Although eight tales feature "Hummingbirds" and "Birds of prey" they are not often interrelated within the narratological context. Story no. 413 (Cariban), in which all "birds" once formed one large family, describes how "Birds of prey" become estranged after "Hummingbird" gossips with "Eagle" (*Harpia harpyja*)*;* named Gonini. "Hummingbird told the latter that Kujakin (another "bird") told him Gonini was very cruel and greedy. In anger, Gonini sweeps "Hummingbird" off its feet and repeatedly hits Kujakin on its beak (which swells up and has been large ever since). In Story no. 619 (Sikuani, Guajiboan) both "Hummingbird" and "Hawk" are asked for help, but both do not succeed in their attempt. While in Story no. 98 (Warao) a man tries to scare off a "Snake" by telling him "Hummingbirds" are coming, but only

when “Snake” spotted a “Chicken Hawk” it got scared and let the man go. In Story no. 661 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), “Hummingbird” opposes his brother-in-law, the creator, named Purna/ Purnamininái, after which the latter’s son is swallowed by a “Fish”. Next, a “River hawk”, an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) named Kuyáwitsi, catches that fish after which Purna resuscitates his son.

#### *“Scavenger birds” and the “Hummingbird”*

These “birds” are intertwined within the shamanic realm (Story nos. 189, 348, 565-7; Cariban, 4x Gê). In the latter three (Gê) cases, the “Hummingbird” removes an “Ant” from an ill man’s ear. In Story nos. 566 and 567, a “Hummingbird” does the same on request of a “Buzzard”. In Story no. 565, after removing the “Ant”, “Scavenger birds” are called upon to then transport the ill man to the sky world.

### ***Hummingbirds in nature***

Hummingbird species are widely distributed throughout mainland South America and across the insular Caribbean but may vary from isle to isle. The Antillean crested hummingbird (*Orthorhyncus cristatus*), the Antillean mango (*Anthracothorax dominicus*) and the green-throated carib (*Eulampis holosericeus*) are indigenous to the Greater and the Lesser Antilles.[155]

#### Physical and behavioural attributes

Hummingbirds are among the smallest birds, with species measuring between 5 and 13 cm. The tiniest species (l. *c.*5.5 cm) present in the Caribbean is the bee hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*). It is only encountered in Cuba. The 6 cm long vervain hummingbird (*Mellisuga minima*) is native to Hispaniola and Jamaica (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 158; West & Butler 2010: 16).

Hummingbirds often have vibrant hues and are further characterized by a lengthy and decurved bill, which is perfectly suited to suckle nectar from flowers by means of their tongues. Their varied colouration is best observed whenever sunlight bounces off their plumage, resulting in a metallic sheen. A lack of light causes certain hummingbirds to look blackish.

[155] In H. Raffaele et al. 1998 we read that the hummingbird species most common to the West Indies are: the Jamaican mango (*Anthracothorax mango*), the Antillean mango (*Anthracothorax dominicus*), the green mango (*Anthracothorax virdis*), the green-throated carib (*Eulampis holosericeus*), the purple-throated carib (*Eulampis jugularis*), *the* rufous-breasted hermit (*Glaucis hirsutus*), the Bahama woodstar (*Calliphlox evelynae*), the Cuban emerald (*Chlorostilbon ricordii*), the Hispaniolan emerald (*Chlorostilbon swainsonii*), the Puerto Rican emerald (*Chlorostilbon maugaeus*), the Antillean crested hummingbird (*Orthorhyncus cristatus*), the blue-headed hummingbird (*Cyanophaia bicolor*), the red-billed streamertail (*Trochilus polytmus*), the vervain hummingbird (*Mellisuga minima*), and the bee hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*). For the hummingbird species listed per island (group), see West & Butler 2010: 6-7.

Their name refers to the "humming" sound created by their wings, which rotate at high frequencies still audible to the human ear. A prominent feature of the hummingbird comprises it hovering in mid-air (near flowers) while its wings rotate approx. 50 times or more per second. In the narratives, the "Hummingbird" is repeatedly characterized by its small size and rapid movements ("always busy"). Among Cariban Amerindians, the term "hummingbird" can also apply to a one-pointed arrow (Ahlbrinck 1931: see the entry under "Kolibrie", meaning "hummingbird"). The fact an arrow flies fast and horizontally explains this. The flying position of a hummingbird above one and the same spot is called "dancing" (Ahlbrinck 1931: see the entry under "Kolibrie").

Hummingbirds are solitary and neither migrate nor live in flocks. For reproductive purposes, the male leaves the female immediately after mating. He plays no further role in the upbringing of their young. Most hummingbird species across the globe migrate and are capable of flying long distances. In the tropics, however, they have lost the need to migrate because of the mild winters which facilitate a year-round home for the local hummingbirds (West & Butler 2010: 87, 92, 94).

Consuming mainly nectar, hummingbirds are true lovers of honey, sugar and pollen. They require these rich foodstuffs as the result of a high diurnal calorie output. Their remarkably high metabolic rate permits a great output (Sutty 1993: 60). Feeding off nectar and pollen, hummingbirds function as important pollinators. Species of hummingbirds and the plants they eat have hence become co-evolved. This pollinating quality could have inspired motifs on the origin of (cultivated) plants and tobacco, in which these "birds" are depicted as bringers of seeds (see 6.2.4 under the sub-heading *"Hummingbird" in the narratives*).

Hummingbird females build small nests consisting of for example plant fibres and spider silk. These nests are difficult to find because these materials serve as a camouflage. Nests can be hidden under leaves and are often positioned high above the human eye level. They are also known to nest in tobacco plants. Hummingbirds generally lay and hatch two eggs (West & Butler 2010: 77, 82).

#### Hummingbirds in relation to other animals/birds

Various predatory mammals, birds, lizards and snakes hunt after hummingbirds and/or their eggs, despite their diminutive size. Small hummingbirds may be taken for insects and preyed upon by creatures (e.g., frogs, bats) that normally do not prefer birds. Hawks and certain larger members of the flycatcher family can even catch hummingbirds in flight (West & Butler 2010: 97-8).

In addition to nectar, hummingbirds feed on small arthropods such as spiders and insects (West & Butler 2010: 21). They utilise spider webs in order to strengthen their nests enabling an expansion in size of their nests as their young grow up (West & Butler 2010: 82).

Island Carib children once trapped and killed hummingbirds in order to trade them with the French for hooks and pins (Breton et al. 1665: 24 of 50). Having applied bird lime on a very pliable rod, a youngster holds it near the flowers these birds feed on to then strike them with this small rod, causing the birds to remain stuck. Next, they grab them, tear off the glued feathers, wrap them in leaves and dry them above a fire.

### *The iconography of "hummingbird"*

"Hummingbirds" are not identified as a Saladoid zoomorphic iconographic feature on ceramics or on other items. Very few references concern the use or depiction/display of these "birds" with regard to other forms of visual or ceremonial arts. However, the lengthy Tucano dance staff with a rattle portraying the three layers of the universe is decorated with feathers of the hummingbird (Roe 1982: 137).

A category of "Songbirds and Other Avifauna" has been mentioned (Waldron 2010: 236-8). This class of "birds" shares many traits suggesting they may depict songbirds, some even in flight. However, these "birds" pertain to a sheer number of species. The majority of the "songbirds" and/or "forest birds" *adornos* peer up towards the viewer as they "… protrude off the sides and rims of pots" (Waldron 2010: 237).

Two possible "hummingbird" *adornos* have been identified. The first could depict a "hummingbird" sucking nectar from a flower (Waldron 2010: 238 (note 174), 453) and the second an anthropomorphic *adorno* with the alter ego of an avian which may portray a "hummingbird" inserting tobacco into the nose of a shaman (Waldron 2010: 453, Fig. 5.64).

In sum, many avian *adornos* can be identified by means of distinctive bills, on occasion by the shape of their bodies and wings. A solid identification is difficult, if not impossible. In addition, certain species may also have been either displayed in two dimensions, as part of geometrical patterns or highly abstract. A "hummingbird" may well be portrayed, for instance by its flight/movement, but simply remain unidentified.

### *"Hummingbird" in Amerindian cosmologies*

As discussed in 2.3.1, the "hummingbird" is probably associated with the sky world, as a fast-flying, always "busy" creature whose plumage reflects (sun)light in a multi-coloured expression of life, hereby relating it to the Sun's qualities. As a sky and solar symbol, this bird presumably has a positive, dominantly male connotation. The sky is also the residence of the deceased and ancestors.

In several instances the "Hummingbird" acts as an important assistant to the shaman, providing him with his most important tools and paraphernalia. Especially tobacco and "Hummingbirds" are intertwined (see 6.2.4 under the sub-heading *"Hummingbirds" in narratives*). Behavioural attributes, e.g., their nesting in tobacco plants may have inspired this

association. The fact that the Arawak and Warao call the hummingbird the "doctor's bird" underlines the close link between shamanism and tobacco (Roth 2011: 369 [350]).

In an Island Carib narrative, the Moon impregnates a girl. A "Hummingbird" carries her newborn son named Hiàli to his father after which this "bird" obtains a beautiful crest on its head. Its feathers become multi-coloured. Hiàli later lays the first foundations of the Carib nation (Breton et al. 1665: 7 of 50). This tale not only once again depicts the "Hummingbird" as the preferred helper, but also relates this "bird" to the celestial realm and to the culture hero (a shaman?) of the Island Carib. As women don combs in the front section of their hair in order to create elegant crests, they are compared to "hummingbirds" during feasts (Breton et al. 1665: 45 of 50).

A shot hummingbird plays a role in an Arawakan puberty rite (Roth 2011: 311 [273]). At the conclusion of this ceremony, the young female is removed from the closed room followed by a festivity. Her brother or father has killed a hummingbird of which, once dried, a small cut is placed on a slice of *cassava** and presented to all in attendance. This act reflects the notion that, as the girl grows older, she will obtain her share of any good things other people may possess. In Story no. 697 (Arawakan) which Sjaak Ebecilio kindly told me (Matta, Suriname 2009, see 3.3 under the sub-heading *Shared stories* and Appendix A), a man is cured of his inability to hunt successfully after eating a hummingbird. His wife orders him to shoot this "bird" to add to a soup, which he then has to feed on for eight days (see Appendix A, no. 3).

Another recurrent motif or theme in the narratives pertains to the "Hummingbird's" habitual manner of motion which is characterized as rapid, delicate and always busy. These specific qualities may well be linked to the ability to hunt successfully and to work hard.

In addition, the indigenous people of Trinidad conceived the "hummingbird" as the embodiment of souls (Boomert 2000: 445). Father Bertrand Cothonay documented this belief in 1893.[156] He was informed that the Pitch Lake (a natural asphalt deposit at La Brea, southwest Trinidad) served as the entrance to the Land of the Dead and that the souls of deceased "virtuous" Amerindians occasionally take the shape of a "hummingbird" in order to visit their descendants (Boomert 2000: 445). In a Campa-Nomatsiguenga (Arawakan, Peru) expression of belief, "hummingbirds" and other "birds" assist those souls who fail to find the celestial paradise when ascending to their ancestors (Roe 1982: 256).

This belief that "hummingbirds" embody souls, or assist souls, is in line with their aforementioned celestial associations. However, this link to spirits or ancestors is not a dominant feature in the studied narratives. The only exception is when "Hummingbird"

[156] Boomert (2000: 445) refers to Father Bertrand Cothonay "*Trinidad, journal d'un missionnaire dominicain*", 1893.

acquires the large dance rattle, which he had to retrieve from "the nests of the souls" (see Story no. 189; Bororo, Gê).

As a celestial *symbol**, "hummingbirds" would also have embodied life and fertility (hereby expressing an association of the celestial realm with the Sun). As already discussed (see 6.2.4 under the heading *Hummingbird in nature*), hummingbirds are important pollinators and contribute to the fertilisation of various plants. This "natural quality" intertwines these birds with life itself and with plants and seeds (agriculture?) in particular. This link could have been reflected in the encountered motifs concerning the origin of childbirth and the dispersal of seeds (see 6.2.4 under the sub-heading *"Hummingbird" in the narratives*).

### *Concluding remarks*

Hummingbird species can be spotted hovering and heard humming both in the South American mainland as well as across the Caribbean isles. Fast-flying and colourful, "hummingbirds" were presumably conceived as true signs of the Sun. Their colouration may even stem from the Sun. As their plumage reflects most effectively in sunlight. The fact, they are pollinating birds which feed on nectar and honey further reinforces their association with life and fertility, and even their status as the embodiments of souls.

In general, "hummingbirds" are framed within a positive, shamanic setting. They act as important assistants to the shaman, supplying him with the majority of his treasured tools and paraphernalia, which are most strongly related to (the origin of) tobacco. Moreover, "hummingbirds" may well be linked to fertilising qualities as well as to childbirth and seeds (agriculture).

Contextualising the "hummingbird" as a positive and powerful assistant of the shaman, or it being intermingled with fertility, life and even the souls of deceased ancestors is not reflected in any archaeological records. "Hummingbird" imagery has not been identified as a common motif on any materials encountered in the Caribbean islands or the South American mainland. Perhaps only its feathers and/or bones have been utilised, which being perishable material would have been lost. However, this does not account for the small number of anthropological descriptions of their usage.

Are and have "hummingbirds" been portrayed, but simply not identified? Their mobility is the most remarkable feature, which is perhaps displayed as a geometrical pattern. Their ascribed attributes and qualities are ostensibly intertwined with shamanic practices. Within this context, their presence could be expected, as in *rites de passage*. "Hummingbirds" are associated with preferred qualities such as working hard, which in turn are linked to hunting skills in certain narratives and business. Only a few references to such ceremonies (whereby this bird's feathers decorate a staff and are utilised in puberty rites) occur. This observation does not tally with the abundance in which they are recorded in narratives. Moreover, it does not justify the way they are contextualised.

### 6.2.5 “Woodpeckers”

***“Woodpeckers” in the narratives***

“Woodpecker”-narratives (n=31) are also widely distributed. A small majority (56 percent) originates from the core area. Encountered in eight language families,[157] their narrative function is in line with “Birds” in general, with the one exception being that identity is overrepresented. The most common subdivisions hereof are “origin of tribes” and “origin of mankind”.

The spatial setting in which “Woodpeckers” act comprises both a forest and village (land) setting. Portrayed as a helper and hardly ever as an opponent, the “Woodpecker” is often ascribed the role of object, an item much sought after. It is not hunted or killed but desired as a potential spouse. Motifs related to marital topics are indeed common.

Other common motifs concern specific “animal/bird” traits and habits. Physical attributes stressed pertaining to the “Woodpecker” are: its short tail, the colour of its feathers and crest. Remarks on its beak relate it to an axe. This “bird” is described as the Master of Tools. Behavioural qualities include the way “Woodpeckers” fly: without resting in flight and never moving in a straight line.

As an assistant, hereby establishing the first and foremost motif, “Woodpecker” helps the *demiurge** by either creating humans or by pecking a vagina into a wooden maiden (see Story nos. 7, 420, 480, 1096; Arawakan, 2x Cariban, Warao). Story no. 7 (Arawakan, Taíno) describes a time when men were without women. While the men were bathing, human-like creatures fell some trees. They were neither men nor women and had no male or female genitalia. As the men finally get hold of them, they call out for “Woodpecker” who was called *Inriri*. Having bound their hands and feet, they then tie “Woodpecker” to their bodies. “Woodpecker” picks and burrows holes down from where women’s genitalia are normally located. This how Amerindians say they were provided with women.

In addition, “Woodpecker” acts as a provider of food (Story no. 306; Gê), a rescuer, a guard or as a messenger (see Story nos. 50, 69, 78, 245, 256, 422, 437; 4x Cariban, Arawakan, 2x Gê). In a Tacanan myth, a “Woodpecker” taps with its beak on a woman’s earthenware pot in order to indicate the correct direction to her husband, who had lost his way (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 372). “Woodpeckers” are also repeatedly associated with the shamanic realm. Story nos. 306 and 314 (Gê, Matacoan) explicitly describe a “Woodpecker” either as a transformed shaman or report it possesses shamanic powers/abilities (see Story nos. 496, 311-2; Warao, 2x

[157] These narratives are numbered: 7, 50, 67, 69, 78, 157, 160, 245, 256, 260, 263, 306, 311-5, 420, 422, 463-4, 480, 496, 511, 584, 623-4, 651-3, 1096. The language families encountered are: Arawakan, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Guaicuruan, Matacoan, Tupian, and Warao. See Appendix D, section B.

Guaicuruan) when for instance searching for (and finding) his wife by means of a magic arrow (Story nos. 311, 312; Guaicuruan).

Various motifs concern the origin of people and fire (Story nos. 256, 420, 496, 511, 584, 651-2, 1096; 2x Cariban, Warao, 2x Gê, 3x Guajiboan). Story no. 652 states explicitly that "Woodpecker" is the sole Master/Owner of Fire, whereas in Story nos. 256 and 511 (Guajiboan, Gê) this "bird" presents the Sun with a crown made of (its?) feathers that glow like fire. It warns the Sun not to allow the crown to touch the ground. However, when it did touch the ground, as a result of the Moon's jealousy, a fire raged all over the world. The motif pertaining to the acquisition of honey (Story nos. 311, 313-5, 511: 3x Matacoan, Gê) recurs, too. Here the "Woodpecker" is described as a renowned honey collector and therefore a much sought-after husband.

"Woodpeckers" are repeatedly assigned the task to either create a vagina by pecking their beaks into a maiden made of wood or to deflower a girl (Story nos. 7, 480, 1096; Arawakan, Warao, Cariban). They can also be commanded to fell a tree or to cultivate a field (Story nos. 160, 463, 511; Tupian, Warao, Gê). Tasks associated with "quests" for missing persons and vengeance are also encountered (see Story nos. 311-5; 2x Guaicuruan, 3x Matacoan).

### With whom is "Woodpecker" associated?

The "Woodpecker" is related to other "birds" ("Birds" in general, "Vulture" and "Parrot-like birds"), but also co-occurs with "Alligator/caiman" in nine cases as well as in six "Ant" narratives. The relatedness with "Vultures" and "Ants" is the outcome of its associations with shamanic practices.

#### *"Ant", "Vulture" and "Woodpecker"*

In Story nos. 77 (Arawakan) and 463 (Warao), the "Vulture" challenges the protagonist and is opposed by the "Ants".

"Woodpecker" directly requests the "Ants" for help in Story nos. 312 (Guaicuruan) and in nos. 313-5 (Matacoan). In most other narratives, the protagonist is either an Amerindian (shaman), culture hero or the *demiurge** i.e., the one who asks "Woodpecker" for assistance (see Story nos. 34, 77, 202, 463, 654).

#### *"Alligator/caiman" and "Woodpecker"*

The "Caiman" and "Woodpecker" co-occur (see Story nos. 78, 314-5, 422) as does the "Alligator" (see Story nos. 69, 157, 245, 653 1096 (see also Appendix D, section B. Fabula).

On occasion, "Caiman" and "Woodpecker" both act as a helper of the protagonist (Story nos. 157, 245, 422; Cariban, Tupian, Gê), but do not directly interact, because they aided in separate events. In Story no. 78 (Arawakan), "Woodpecker" is placed on guard in order to spy on the "Caiman" thief, but with no success. The Sun interconnects the "Alligator/Caiman" and

“Woodpecker”. When the Sun’s daughter wishes to marry “Woodpecker”, the Sun requests his (potential) son-in-law to catch a “Caiman-like” creature (Story nos. 314-5; Matacoan). In Story no. 1096 (Macushi, Cariban), “Caiman” creates the Sun’s (wooden) wife and “Woodpecker” creates her vagina.

### *Woodpeckers in nature*

Species of woodpeckers are autochthonous to the Caribbean, the majority of which are island specific. Only the West Indian woodpecker (*Melanerpes superciliaris*) occurs in a broader spectrum, including the Bahamas, Cuba, Turks and Caicos, and the Cayman Islands. Within the Greater Antilles, islands are home to their own endemic species: the Puerto Rican woodpecker (*Melanerpes portoricensis*), the Jamaican woodpecker (*Melanerpes radiolatus*), the Hispaniolan woodpecker (*Melanerpes striatus*), and the Cuban green woodpecker (*Xiphidiopicus percussus*). Considering the Lesser Antilles, only Guadeloupe houses its own species: the Guadeloupe woodpecker (*Melanerpes herminieri*).

#### Physical and behavioural qualities

We read in *On the Origin of Species*, “… the structure [...] of the woodpecker, with its feet, tail, beak, and tongue, so admirably adapted to catch insects under the bark of trees” (Darwin 1968 [1859]: 66-7). This adequately describes this bird’s main physical features, also referred to as a “striking instance of adaptation” (Darwin 1968 [1859]: 215).

Woodpeckers have strong bills for drilling and drumming in order to impress potential mates and to signal any danger (see also 6.2.5 under the sub-heading *“Woodpecker” in the narratives*). They can extract insects from deep within a tree hollow with their long sticky tongues.

We read: “The Guadeloupe woodpecker does not spear grubs with its tongue but hooks them with the tongue’s horny tip, which is barbed and coated with saliva” (Villard & Cuisin 2004: 513). Its preference for larvae could have contributed to this bird being described as an excellent honey collector as well as a favoured husband in the narratives presented here.

**Fig. 6.21.** West Indian woodpecker (*Melanerpes superciliaris*); photograph by D. Sherony (2006). Licensed CC BY-SA 2.0, accessed by EOL.

Other physical features of woodpeckers are its four-toed feet, suited to firmly grasp limbs or tree trunks and which these birds can utilise to vertically climb up trees. Hereby the stiff tail, feet and toes work together in order to maintain an upright, vertical position (Bock 2015: 38-9).

Woodpeckers often have quite brightly coloured feathers the exact hue of which is determined by the species. Their plumage is mainly green, brown, white, often with red feathers positioned on the head and in the crest (see Fig. 6.21).

Woodpeckers are diurnal and are indigenous to forests, woodlands, mountains and mangroves. Here they forage either in pairs or on their own in search of anthropods and spiders by pecking on trees. They also feed on fruit and tree sap. In general, they behave aggressively towards other birds.

The majority of woodpecker species remain monogamous during a single breeding season. As to the West Indian woodpecker (*Melanerpes superciliaris*), classical polyandry has been reported in the Bahamas, where individual males breed solitarily and the female divides her attention among two males. One and the same colour-banded female has been observed at three nests in the company of two males (Willimont et al. 1991).

An unusual trait of the Hispaniolan woodpecker (*Melanerpes striatus*) comprises a tendency to form noisy, social groups as they nest in colonies housing up to a dozen pairs in a single tree (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 166). The Puerto Rican woodpecker (*Melanerpes portoricensis*) forms small groups consisting of between two and five birds (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 164).

Woodpeckers nest either in cavities created by drilling into and then removing wood from a (dead) tree or in a termitarium (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 166). This behavioural trait comprising the carving of wood probably inspired their ascribed role: "carver" of the wooden maiden hereby creating a vagina for the first (wooden) young woman (see 6.2.5 under the sub-heading *"Woodpecker" in the narratives*).

#### Woodpeckers in relation to other avian species

Both omnivorous and opportunistic, the woodpecker's dietary is highly flexible. It includes ants, bird eggs, lizards, nestlings and insects. The insects fed on are extracted from within (rotten) tree trunks and consist of ants, termites, beetles, spiders and caterpillars.

Woodpeckers share their natural predators with other birds. Mammals, snakes and large predatory birds prey upon woodpeckers and their eggs.

### *Iconography of "woodpeckers"*

As with "hummingbirds", the "woodpecker" iconography has not (often) been identified. This is an especially surprising fact because numerous species have a distinct crest that could provide an easily identifiable feature. A possible explanation for any absence of a means of identification may well be the application of its shiny plumage, which serves as (bodily) adornments and/or in rituals.

The only possible identification of "woodpecker" iconography, to my knowledge, comprises: (a) the presumably "woodpecker-headed" petroglyph discovered at a Troumassoid (?) site located on the Carbet River in Basse-Terre (Guadeloupe), and (b) a Saladoid *adorno* in the form of a "woodpecker's" head (Petitjean Roget 2008: 12-7, 2015: 235, 299). The identifiable feature on the *adorno* is indeed the woodpecker's crest.

Very few references pertain to the use or display of these "birds" in other forms of the visual, performative or ceremonial arts. However, as woodpecker feathers adorn the Sun's crown, utilising its plumage (that shines like fire) in order to beautify headdresses seems probable. The Yekuana (Carib of Venezuela) depict the "woodpecker" as a theme in their basketry patterns. "Woodpecker" is considered the "double" of Wanadi, an important culture hero. This design is called *Wanadi motai* (lit.: "Wanadi's shoulders") and features the white chevron found on the back of the crimson-crested woodpecker (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) (Guss 1989: 117-8). The Yekuana also utilise woodpecker feathers which are considered powerful in order to embellish shamanic paraphernalia.

### *"Woodpeckers" in Amerindian cosmologies*

"Woodpeckers" are, as with all brightly coloured and fast-flying birds, linked to the celestial realm. Hence they share the majority of their interconnections with the "hummingbird", including the dominantly positive and male associations. Indeed a tree bark/trunk-pecker, the "woodpecker", may also have been linked to the world tree (*axis mundi*) which, according to Amerindian's conceptualisation, connects cosmic layers.

The male traits of the woodpeckers are very explicit in the tales presented in this study. Their long, curved beaks are often portrayed as phallic symbols, with which this small bird penetrates the "Wooden Bride" in order to create a vagina (Roe 1982: 157-9, 254; see also 6.2.5 under the sub-heading *"Woodpecker" in narrative*). In addition, the "Woodpecker" is portrayed as the preferred husband, being an excellent provider of food, in particular, honey. Throughout the Amazon region, "woodpeckers" have been identified as a powerful *sign** of potency and of generative authority (Guss 1989: 118).

Views on the "woodpecker", or rather its beak, being a phallic *symbol*,* have been thoroughly studied and analysed (Lévi-Strauss 1973, 1983; Roe 1982: 141-59). In several cases, an axe (also a powerful male symbol) serves to describe the beak of a "woodpecker", which can even be the result of a transformed axe. The "Wooden Bride" has to be made suitable by means of a number of succeeding steps. First, a strong phallic *symbol** creates a vagina. Next, extremely ferocious predatory piranhas, as well as other fish species and anacondas located inside her vagina, need to be removed in order to allow sexual intercourse (Roe 1982: 159). This connotation regarding the "perforator" of feminized wood probably originates from the woodpecker's pecking activities. In Amerindian worldview, the world tree is associated with feminine qualities (Roe 1982: 254).

As suggested above, connotations pertaining to "woodpeckers" could be intertwined with trees in general and the World Tree in particular. This phenomenon may also have contributed to their association with the origin of fire. For, according to several Amerindian stories, the origin of fire is the result of the primal flame setting all trees alight. The "Woodpecker" not only acts as the thief of this primal fire (although it often does not succeed in doing so) but also provides the Sun with (its?) feathers that glow like fire (see 6.2.5 under the heading *"Woodpeckers" in the narratives*). As a celestial symbol, its glistening plumage may have reinforced this association with both fire and the Sun.

"Woodpeckers" being interconnected with the Sun can be encountered among various Cariban peoples. For instance, the Kaliña refer to the red-crowned woodpecker (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) as Veta, the Sun. The Yekuana (Cariban) associate Wanadi, the son of the Sun, with "woodpecker", his "double" (Guss 1989: 118).

Another dominantly male link in the narratives concerns the "woodpecker" being an excellent provider of food. In several instances, a woman prefers a woodpecker as a husband because it would present her with "good" food, often honey. Feeding on bees, and especially their larvae may have resulted in this specific association since it even leads Amerindians to discover honey.[158] Of relevance within this context of a "woodpecker" acting as an excellent husband, is the observation that long ago the members of the Arawak and Macushi (Cariban) communities had to prove their expertise by shooting a woodpecker from its nest/tree (Roth 2011: 314-5). How a young man displays his skills to his potential father-in-law in order to be allowed to marry the woman of his desire has been extensively been described by Roth.

In addition to associations with fire and providing food, "woodpeckers" could have been conceived as "cosmological" guards and messengers. This link is also the outcome of their pecking and carving activities, which is accompanied by sounds that travel large distances, in combination with their link to the World Tree that connects all the cosmic layers. Therefore, the "woodpecker" when serving as guardian (or cosmological messenger) is not only able to act or react, on events pertaining to these layers. Nevertheless, it can communicate with for example shamans by means of its characteristic pecking action. An anthropological account describing the Héta (Tupian), inhabitants of Brazil, supports the fact the "woodpecker" assists shamans when they utilise this "bird" during a healing ritual, passing it in its entirety across a patient's body in order to free him or her from fever (Roe 1982: 258; see also 2.3.1, under the sub-heading *"World-making"* how a Piaroa shaman (*ruwang*) cures the ill).

As stated above, the Yekuana (Cariban, Venezuela) view the "woodpecker" as a "double" of the culture hero Wanadi (Guss 1989: 117-8). In lore, Wanadi takes on the shape of a

[158] As is supported by the fact that in Story no. 313 (Matacanoan) the Sun's daughter, who adores honey and larvae, resolves to only marry an expert in obtaining honey, which is very difficult to extract from hollow trees.

“woodpecker”. The “Wanadi bird”, the crimson-crested woodpecker (*Campephilus melanoleucos*), is the physical *symbol** of Wanadi on Earth. Its feathers which have magical powers serve to beautify shamanic paraphernalia. Wanadi, and thus “woodpecker”, are indeed a prototype for all shamans (Guss 1989: 118).

#### *Concluding remarks*

“Woodpeckers” have noteworthy physical and behavioural traits: colourful crests, remarkable beaks (applied when pecking bark or wood), short tails and a straight flight. These are repeatedly and explicitly described in the narratives presented in this study.

Based on their colour and penetrating beaks, “woodpeckers” are associated with the celestial, dominantly male, realm. The pecking and nesting in tree hollows may well link it to the world tree. Their shamanic qualities and ascribed roles as a helper of shamans are probably directly related to these (positive) connotations. This “bird” may well assist shamans as a guardian of the world tree/protector of the cosmic gateways, and a natural messenger.

The male qualities are depicted by means of “phallic” beaks, also referred to as “axes”, with which they literally penetrate the “Wooden Bride”. The “Woodpecker” is portrayed as a preferred husband, who can hunt well in order to provide his wife with excellent food (mainly honey).

Capable of extracting bees and honey with their tongues from tree hollows, certain woodpecker species presumably led people to where honey is located. In addition, their pecking sound travels over large distances, which could have fuelled the association with being messengers.

However, Waldron did not identify “woodpeckers” as an iconographical motif pertaining to either mainland or island ceramics. To my knowledge, Petitjean Roget mentions the only two positive identifications (i.e., a petroglyph and an *adorno*). Has this “bird” simply not yet been identified? Its body is perhaps not on display whereby its pecking activities or its flight indeed are? Or, is this motif considered less suitable for ceramic iconography and expressed in other forms of art or ritual? For instance, does this “bird’s” body or plumage serve to adorn shaman-affiliated paraphernalia? Were they utilised in shamanic (e.g., curing) rituals as observed with the healing ceremonies of the Héta (Tupian)?

## 6.3 “Birds of prey”

### 6.3.1 “Birds of prey” in the narratives

The cluster entitled “Bird of prey” dealt with in this study includes 54 narratives (7.6 percent), which cover a wide variety of language families (n=8; see Fig. 6.22). A small majority of these stories (54 percent) stem from the core area. “Birds of prey” stories feature the (Caracara) Falcon (n=17), Eagle (n=17) and Hawk (n=19) and/or references to “birds of prey/predatory

birds". The abovementioned 54 cases include 57 references to such "birds", some of which even contain multiple "Birds of prey" actors (e.g., "Hawk" and "Eagle", see Story no. 577 (Cuiva, Guajiboan).

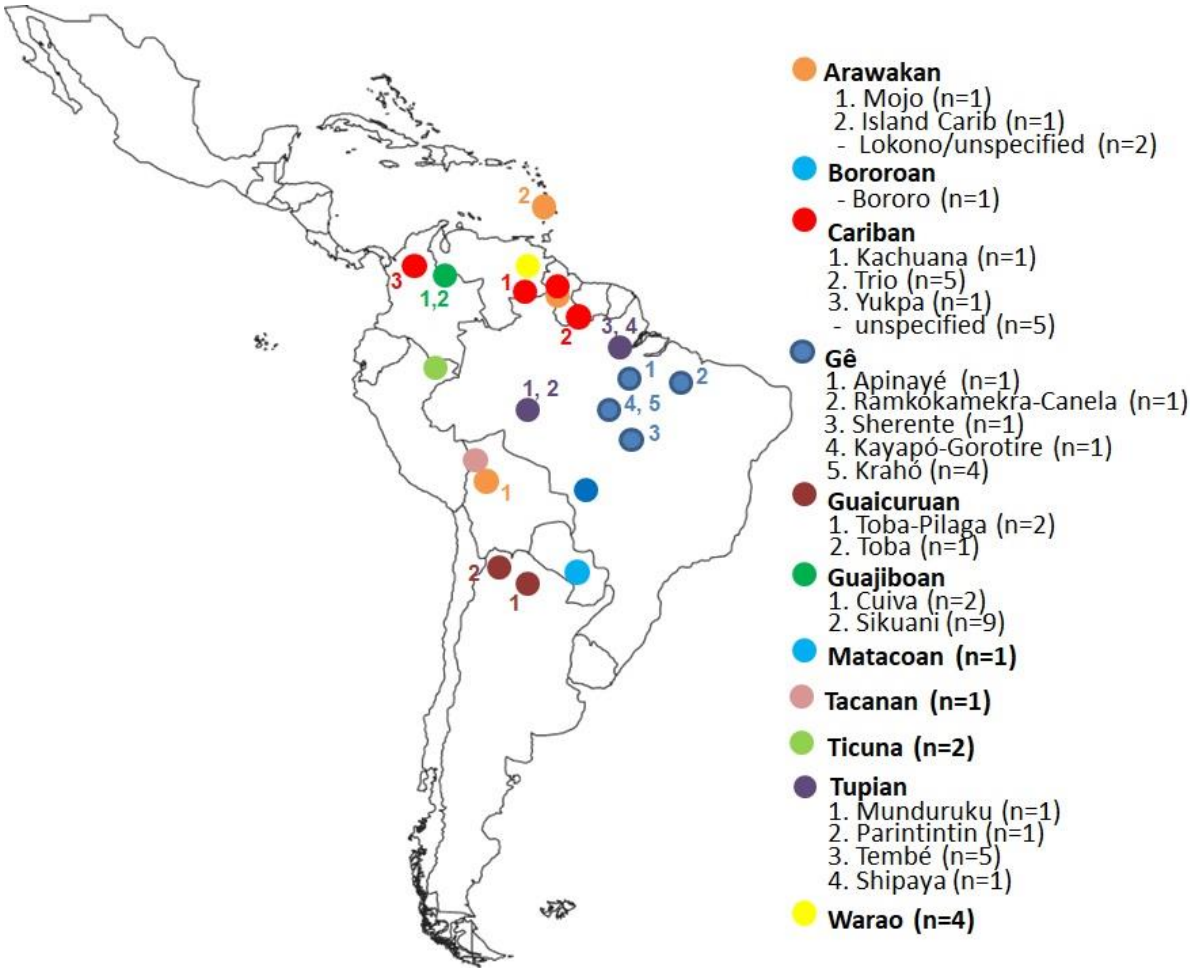



**Fig. 6.22.** Plot of "Birds of prey" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

Several themes have been identified within the category "Birds of prey"-narratives (see Appendix D, section B3 for further details). The most prominent (n=10) herein comprise the theme of "Bird of prey" as aggressor (e.g., a malevolent spirit) that terrorises, abducts and/or kills people (Story nos. 250, 262-3, 401, 497, 571-3, 619-20; Cariban; Krahô, Apinayé, Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê); Parintintin, Munduruku (Tupian); Sikuani (Guajiboan) Warao). However, in other cases, the "Bird of prey" acts as an assistant, often in a minor role e.g., keeping watch, hiding or retrieving someone in need, or performing a specific task (Story nos. 124, 160, 200, 205-6, 258, 328, 577, 622, 661; Arawakan, Kachuana (Cariban), Tacanan, Cuiva & Sikuani (Guajiboan), Tembé (Tupian), Toba-Pilaga (Guaicuruan), Matacoan).

In other instances (n=6), the "Bird of prey" is an object in itself, for example, if the protagonist is searching for its eggs or its young in order to keep them as pets, or when a "Bird of prey" is seduced (Story nos. 67, 161, 224, 262; Trio (Cariban), Ticuna, Tembé (Tupian), Shipaya (Tupian-

extinct), Guarani (Tupian)). “Birds of prey” are repeatedly (n=8) the outcome of a transformation (Story nos. 156, 245, 285, 342, 619-20, 655-6; Bororoan, Sherente (Gê), Sikuani (Guajiboan), Tembé (Tupian)).

When studying the “Birds of prey”, their roles are significantly congruent with those ascribed to “Birds” in general. Especially the role of opponent is more frequently assigned to “Birds of prey”. The fact that they are not ascribed the role of receiver and considering that the category “Birds” in general amounts to 6 percent presents us with a further discrepancy.[159]

A number of recurrent motifs have been identified for this cluster, of which the most frequent are entitled: (a) origin of things and/or characteristics; n=20, (b) helpful “animal/bird”; n=14, (c) tasks/quests; n=13, (d) shamanism; n=11, and (e) devastating “animal/bird”; n=10 (see Appendix D, B3. Fabula). Especially shamanism and the “Birds of prey” are intertwined in the analysed narratives. Body parts of a shaman transform into two “Eagles” (Story no. 620; Sikuani, Guajiboan). Spirits or, for instance, “evil”-killing skulls turn into “Falcon-like” beings (Story nos. 156, 342; Tembé, Tupian). In addition, they act as a shaman’s assistant performing certain tasks and/or display shaman-like skills (e.g., heal, sing magic songs, cause rainfall and/or invisibility by means of sorcery). Story no. 567; Gê, Krahô) describes how a sick man’s vision improves after “Buzzards” and “Hawks” take him to the sky world.

Overall these “birds” are placed in a sky world setting, where they are portrayed as dangerous, devastating man-eaters (see Fig. 6.23). Their physical attributes are explicitly stated to be: large claws (i.e., “like tree trunks”), beaks (resembling a tapir snout), “extremely large” eyes (which when closed are invisible to their prey) and feathers (resembling *babana* leaves; *Musa* sp., Banana Tree). It may be added here these “birds” also have repeatedly been described as “big”, “giant” and even as large as a Douglas DC-3 (see Appendix D, B3. Story).

### *With whom are they related in the stories*

The “Top 5” animals/birds with whom “Birds of prey” co-occur within the narratives comprise “Scavenger birds”, “Ants”, “Hummingbird”, “Parrot-like birds”, “Jaguar”, and “Snake” (see Appendix D, section B3. Fabula for an in-depth discussion of this subject).

The link between these other “animal/bird” actors and “Birds of prey” is apparently their entanglement with shamanic practices. In the sky world, “Birds of prey” and “Ants” share the role of being assistants of a shaman. In its association with *yopo*, “*Parrot” provides a “Bird of prey” with seeds. The intertwining with “Snakes” is set in the sky world, too, where a shaman either asks “Birds of prey” for help in order to lure out and/or kill his opponent “Snake”, his father-in-law. Or, a shaman evokes the “birds” to scare off “Snakes”.

[159] The Chi-squared test has been applied in order to compare the ascribed roles of birds in general to those ascribed to “Birds of prey”. $\chi^2(5) = 11.94$; $\rho = 0.04$, significant. Especially the expected values of opponent and receiver were divergent. See Appendix D, *B3. Fabula.*

The mutual relationship between “Birds of prey” and “Scavenger birds” is more orientated towards natural behaviour. “Birds of prey”, as natural predators and killers, “call” the “Scavenger birds” in who then devour the cadaver, perhaps a daily event in an Amerindian’s life.

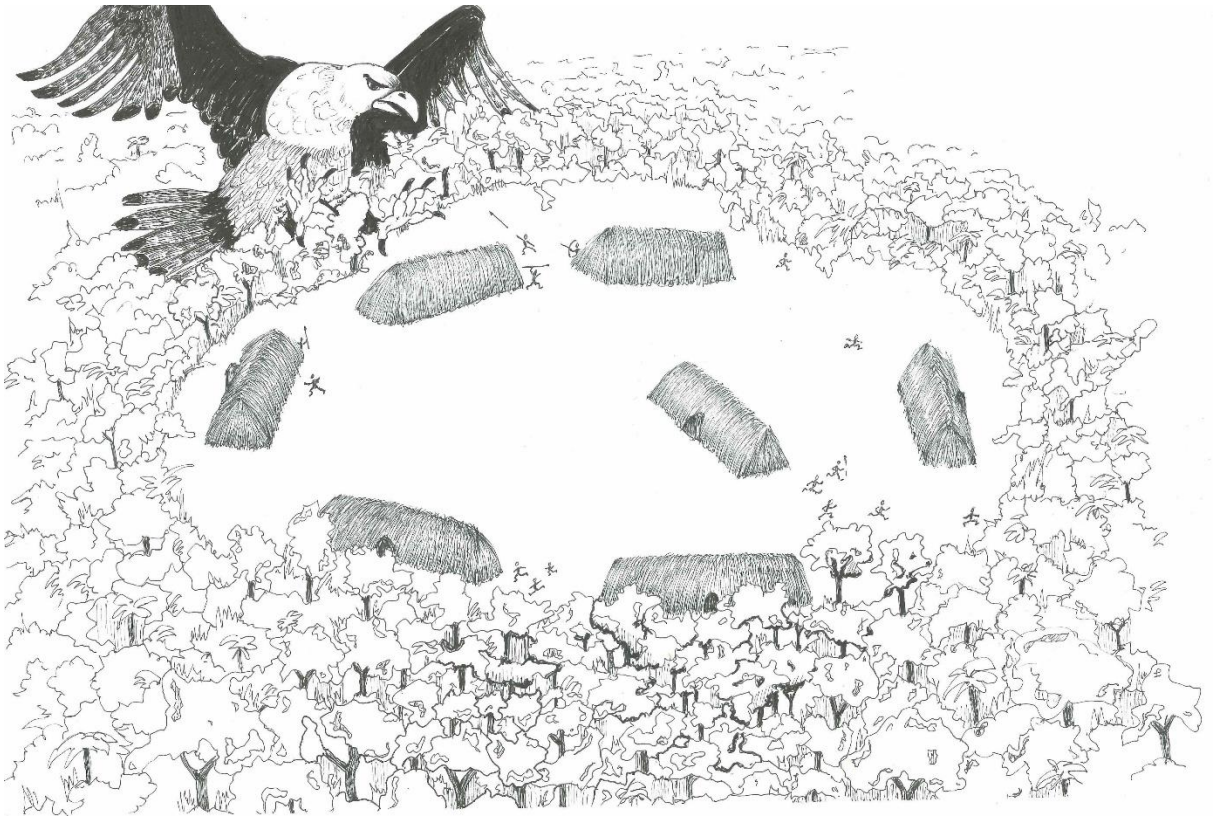


**Fig. 6.23.** “Bird of prey” attacks a village; artist’s impression of Story no. 571 (Krahô, Gê) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

### 6.3.2 Birds of prey in nature

Large predatory birds have impressed humans across the globe. Little wonder these raptors feature in narratives encountered in the South American mainland, indigenous to eagles, hawks and falcons. Larger birds of prey are absent in the Caribbean islands, but smaller species are widespread. Certain mainland avian species will be elaborated on as they have presumably inspired local folklore. Several species autochthonous to the insular Caribbean and the South American mainland will be dealt with, too.

Numerous “Birds of prey” encountered in the narratives are identified: falcons (*Falconidae* sp.) including the laughing falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*), the northern crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*), the southern crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*), the black caracara (*Daptrius ater*), the red-throated caracara (*Ibycter americanus*), and the yellow-headed caracara (*Milvago chimachima*). Eagle species identified are: the crested eagle (*Morphnus guianensis*), the black hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*), various other hawk-eagles (*Spizaetus*

sp.), and the harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*). Other birds of prey are hawks belonging to the genus *Buteo*.

**Fig. 6.24.** Harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*); photograph by S. Buckel (2016). Licensed CC BY-NC 4.0, accessed by EOL.

The largest of these predatory birds is the harpy eagle with a length of between 86 and 107 cm (see Fig. 6.24). Its wingspan measures between 176 and 224 cm. As to the much smaller but nevertheless impressive falcons, the northern crested caracara measures between 49 and 58 cm, and its wingspan is between 107 and 130 cm (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001: 80, 82; Hilty & Brown 1986: 114-6). In several cases, these birds are indeed characterized by their impressive measurements (see "Birds of prey" in the narratives).

Although the largest birds of prey are not native to the Antilles, those impressive in size (e.g., hawks, ospreys, kites) are spotted in the skies, for example, the aforementioned northern crested caracara is encountered even in Cuba. The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is the largest bird of prey to be found in the Caribbean Islands. It has a length of between 50 and 66 cm. Its wingspan measures between 127 and 174 cm (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001:82, 90; Hilty & Brown 1986: 99).

Smaller birds of prey autochthonous to these isles are, for instance, the snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) which mainly feeds on freshwater snails. The broad-winged hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) is a migrant from North America. Indigenous to the Caribbean Islands, species such as the red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) does not at all populate South America, whereas a small falcon, the American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), does (Hilty & Brown 1986: 93-4, 106-7; Kaufman 1996: 118, 129, 133; Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 82, 126-8).

### *Physical and behavioural qualities*

Colouration is species dependent. Birds of prey mainly display dark, brown, black, and greyish hues, and have hooked, thick bills and large claws. The wing feathers of certain species are tipped with white. The southern crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*) has a half bare face. In the stories analysed in the present research, especially the beaks and talons are explicitly described as characteristic (see 6.3.1).

Birds of prey are often sit-and-wait predators. In a strategic position, flying high above the canopy, perching or watching and, having spotted a prey, they will dive to seize it. Hawks, for instance, can often be observed soaring at great heights on thermals around noon. This hovering carried out either when on the lookout for prey or for their next victim to "abduct", has inspired Amerindian lore in which these "birds" are depicted as abductors of children (see 6.3.4). It has been noted that, according to the Makusi (Macushi), the "tops of Roraima and Kukenam", table-top mountains located in Guyana's Highland Range, are continually circled

by “white eagles”, which act as perpetual watchmen and are indeed conceived as such (Roth 2011: 210).

The mainland *Caracara* species are highly opportunistic and capable of catching live prey. These falcons also feed on carcasses, steal food from other birds and raid bird nests. The southern crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*) dominates the black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) and turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) when devouring carcasses, the caracara even snatches them from his rivals.

By and large, birds of prey nest either in large open structures placed on top of (palm) trees or in natural cavities. As a last resort, they may build nests on the ground utilising grass and pieces of wood (Kaufman 1996: 114).

#### *Birds of prey species in relation to other fauna*

In general, birds of prey feed on (young) birds as well as on small to medium-sized mammals, amphibians, reptiles (snake, turtle, lizard), fish, crabs, insects and their larvae, earthworms, and shellfish. Able to take on relatively large prey, eagles not only feed on rodents, opossums and monkeys but also on smaller raptorial birds, e.g., falcons (Kaufman 1996: 114).

The red-throated caracara (*Ibycter americanus*) forms an exception because it mainly feeds on the larvae of bees and wasps (Hilty & Brown 1986: 114). Caracaras will steal food from vultures, hawks, pelicans, ibises, and spoonbills. Moving low above the ground, even when in flight, they often reach carcasses before vultures do.

Only a small number of medium- to large-sized mammals inhabit the Caribbean islands. Therefore, predatory birds feed mainly on amphibians, reptiles, other birds, and mammals such as small rodents. The largest bird of prey spotted here, the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), mainly catches fish. These birds have generally speaking adapted to less mammal-orientated, more marine/aquatic diets, including fish and (freshwater) snails.

The largest bird of prey, the harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*), is almost positioned at the very top of the food chain and is only hunted by ocelots, jaguars and humans.

### 6.3.3 The iconography of “birds of prey”

In the present research, birds of prey have been separated from scavenger birds. According to Western taxonomy, however, all these species are considered raptorial. When studying the iconography, “hawks”, “eagles” and “falcons” are ostensibly not dominantly depicted if compared with the “vultures”.

The absence of any identifiable “hawks”, “eagles” and “falcons” is noteworthy. Even if considering the South American mainland, the identified zoomorphic iconography mainly portrays “vultures”, and no (other) “birds of prey”. When discussing this phenomenon, it was

observed that although predatory birds have distinctive features, which facilitate an identification even if highly stylised, they are not identified in the Antillean Saladoid imagery (Waldron 2010: 183).

The two possible exceptions to the above assessment are: (a) an *adorno* from Barrancas del Orinoco in Venezuela (see Fig. 6.25) which probably depicts a harpy eagle, and (b) a raptor (?) from Guadeloupe (see 6.4.3). However, any imagery pertaining to "birds of prey" (e.g., an "eagle") could just as well portray a "vulture" (Boomert 2000: 405).

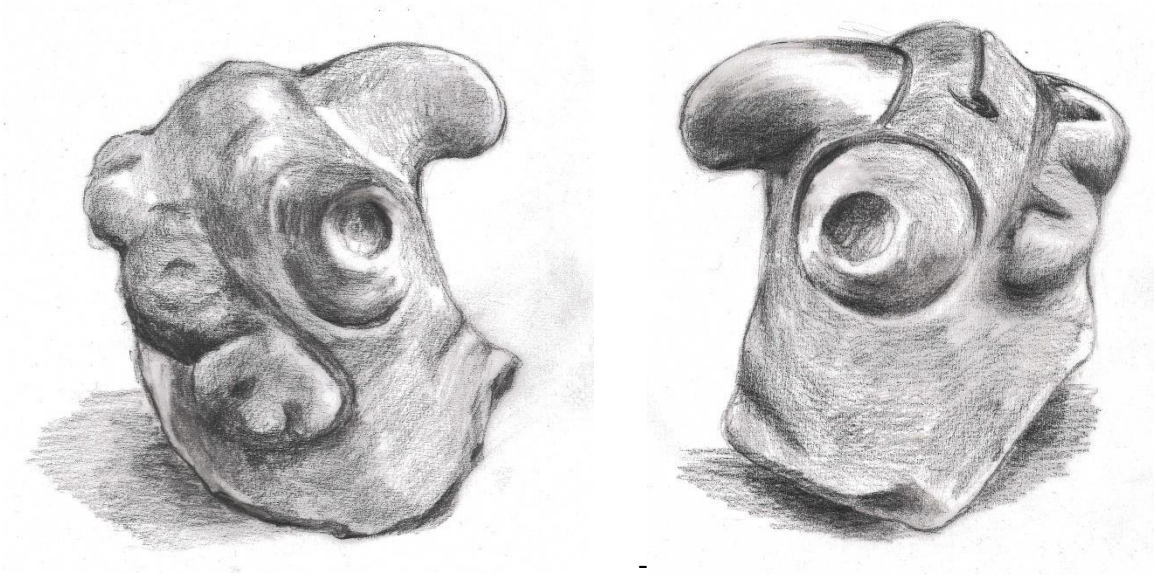


**Fig. 6.25.** Saladoid "harpy eagle" *adorno* from Barrancas, Venezuela; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.10, width *c.*5 cm; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

### *Other materials or ways of display*

The present study makes only two references to wooden depictions of "birds of prey". Roth refers to Jules Crévaux (1847-1882), the renowned 19th-century medical doctor and explorer of the Amazon who mentions "a bench with rough carvings representing a bird of prey" (Roth 2011: 72 [50]) encountered among the Carijonas (Cariban) residing on the banks of the upper Yapura River. A Palikur (Arawak) shaman who while in trance is seated on a wooden bench, embellished with the sculptured head of the swallow-tailed kite, has also been reported (Boomert 2001: 126).

Another interesting remark concerns "rude imitations of birds". Made of cotton thread, corn-cobs and sticks, these items are suspended high up under the roofs of houses, in the positions birds occupy when flying. These "birds" were identified as "swallow-tailed hawks", "herons" and "muscovy ducks" (*Cairina moschata*). These objects were very marked features of all the houses of the Carib, who inhabited the districts located on both sides of the Cotinga River in Guyana (Roth 2011: 72 [49]).

The present-day shamanic paraphernalia originating from the tropical lowlands comprise snuff trays, snorting tubes and the aforementioned benches depicting "harpy eagles", the

bones of which are occasionally made into snorting tubes. Stylistically related, wooden ceremonial objects dated to between the 17th and 18th century include shaman's staffs, trumpets and snuff trays. An axe handle with "alter ego" depictions of "harpy eagles" surmounting "jaguars" have also been referred to (Boomert 2001: 125).

In addition, *kalikuli* (aka *carucuru*, *caracoli*) have been encountered. These thinly hammered plates are made of a gold/copper alloy (called *guanín*), several of them are shaped in order to resemble "eagles", "birds of prey", "vultures" or "crescents". They adorned the ears, noses and chests of the chiefs of the Arawak, the "Carinepagoto" (Cariban, Trinidad), the Kaliña (Cariban), the "Chaima" (Cariban) and the "Kalinago" (Island Carib), as well as the "Taíno" peoples (Boomert 2000: 405).

References mention that (parts of) these predatory "birds" play a role in shamanic rituals carried out among mainland ethnic groups and on Dominica (see 6.3.4). This assumption could indicate that these "birds", although not visible in iconography, were still relevant to the Amerindians inhabiting the insular Caribbean region.

### 6.3.4 "Birds of prey" in Amerindian cosmologies

As the main predators of the sky, these "birds" are cosmologically linked to the celestial world, which is in turn associated with the Sun, the daytime and the upper regions of the sky world. These "birds" have male connotations, although with less positive associations as is generally the case if concerning links to the sky realm. These powerful "birds" are not only more interconnected to male prowess, power and excellent hunting skills, but also to death and rain, as will be discussed below.

#### *Signs of shamanism: dangerous kidnapper vs. healer and assistant*

"Birds of prey" are described as one of three major actors of the Amerindian cosmos. Here the "jaguar" controls the land, the "anaconda" (and "caiman") reigns over the water and the "birds of prey" rule over the sky world (Roe 1982). The fact they are positioned at the top (i.e., officiate as the main predator) of their own respective realm apparently connects them. However, "birds of prey" can also transgress into the other cosmic layers, which relates them to the realm of shamans and transforms them into powerful shamans, too. Embodying the qualities of life and death, they can serve as the shaman's most powerful assistant as well as his most challenging opponent.

It has been noted that, among the Kachuyana (Trio, Cariban of Brazil), the "harpy eagle" is conceived as the most powerful sorcerer of the other world. Members of the aforementioned indigenous groups depend on these "birds" for any success when hunting (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 274). The Warao conceive the "kite's" hunting behaviour as an exemplary trait of a persistent archer (Wilbert 1985). As to a comparable belief among the Island Carib: a 17th-century boy must consume parts of the heart of the American kestrel (*Falco sparerius*) in order to act courageously. The skull of a live American kestrel is smashed on the boy's head who then dons

dried pieces of the bird's heart. Its talons embellishes his necklace (Boomert 2001: 126; Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 22 of 29).

"Birds of prey" (identified as the "harpy eagle" and the "swallow-tailed kite") are not only believed to embody (one of) the shaman's souls but also to become his alter ego (Boomert 2001: 124-6). "Birds of prey" were presumably considered powerful heavenly tutelary spirits which continually accompany and protect the shaman who, during a séance, is able to induce them to descend to him if their help is required (Boomert 2001: 124-6; de Goeje 1943: 8-13, 53; Roe 1982: 257-9).

Although they are capable of acting as forceful assistants, they can also be powerful opponents as a wide variety of instances illustrate (see 6.3.1; see also Roe 1982: 70-1, 87, 316 on Shipibo (Panoan) and Campa (Arawakan) tales of Peru). Various scholars record the abduction by a "bird of prey" (often an eagle or hawk). For instance, the "harpy eagle" (referred to as *kwano* by the Kaliña (Cariban) and as *hawbalieli* by the Lokono (Arawakan)) is thought to abduct children after seizing them by the neck (Penard & Penard 1907-08: 123). A large "hawk" (which the Campa Arawak call *pakítsa*) resides on a mountain ridge along the Ene River (Peru) preyed on Amerindians known as Campas, who passed by. However, the Campas are finally able to kill this "bird" (Weiss 1975: 409). It is mentioned that the Jivaro (Jivaroan) regard certain "birds of prey" (e.g., the harpy eagle (*unta pinchu*), hawk (*punchu*)) as malevolent demons and/or demonical beings (Karsten 1935: 377). However, shamans can also apply this predatory trait of these "birds" by transforming into a "harpy eagle" in order to murder humans (Boomert 2001: 125).

The outstanding vision of these "birds of prey" not only enables them to spot small prey from great heights but also contributes to their role as helpers and guardians. This capacity would allow them to serve as excellent extensions of, and as assistants to, the shaman when searching for someone, or something, or when merely overseeing the status of the various realms. This remarkable vision could easily also have been conceived as extending to other forms of perception, such as foresight and visionary dreams, all ascribed qualities of shamans. It is therefore perhaps remarkable to observe that their visual acuity is not (often) made explicit in the tales, although it does probably add to their *symbolic** value and importance. It may be added here that Kobeua Amerindians (Cubeo, Tukanoan) steal the eyes of a "falcon" in order to improve their own eyes (Roth 2011: 280-1 [240]).

A number of accounts support the usage of "birds of prey" in healing rituals. Hawks are kept among the Héta (Tupian from Brazil). If someone had fallen ill with fever, several hawks were repeatedly placed above the body (Roe 1982: 258). Held by the feet, the movement of a "hawk's" wings create a cool air current. Other cases report that the wing of a "harpy eagle" is moved around above the body (Roe 1982: 258). Shamans belonging to an indigenous group named Kashuyéna (aka Kachuana Trio/Cariban of Brazil) who reside along the upper

Nhamundá River currently still carry staffs embellished with depictions of the "harpy eagle", during healing rituals which involve drug-induced, ecstatic-visionary dreams (Boomert 2001: 125).

### *Sought after pets, feathers or claws*

This utilisation of birds, for instance, as part of a cure implies access, and thus either being hunted or kept. The narratives dealt with in the present investigation contain references to the fact that "birds of prey'" eggs or the birds themselves are much sought after in order to keep them as pets (see 6.3.1). In addition to being applied during healing rituals, feathers also serve to embellish. The harpy eagle is kept as a pet because of its beautiful plumage (van Capelle 1926: 396-416).

In several parts of the South American lowlands, notably along the upper Xingú and upper Uapés Rivers, "harpy eagles" are kept in cages. Their feathers serve as *signs** of authority and heavenly approbation as well as parts of headdresses and to fledge arrow shafts (Boomert 2001: 125).

The Island Carib have kept "birds of prey" pets ever since the 17th century. Children and young men raise a "bird" called *keyéye* (species unknown) to then smash it to death on the child's head (Breton et al. 1665: 25 of 50). Young men as part of their maturity *rites de passage* would rear "birds of prey" (referred to as Mansfénix), perhaps referring to the merlin (*Falco columbarius*): "Then, everybody being assembled, the father of the young man takes the "bird" and kills it on the head of his son, and having crushed and ground the body of the "bird", puts it into water" (Breton et al. 1929 [1609]: 22 of 29). Next, the father rubs and bathes the boy with this water. The raptor's heart and claws are then placed around the youngster's neck. Now and again the boy/young men must eat the "bird's" heart, prepared with red chilli pepper (*pimento*).

Elders and married men take "birds of prey" with them to a feast called *elétoüac*. Fully-grown raptors are removed from their nests and reared especially for this occasion (Breton et al. 1665: 12 of 50). The jaguar skin and hawk claws observed when attending such festivities communicate courage and valour: "The skin of the jaguar has short, red hair. All the Carib who have been to South America have such a skin. When they come to their feasts each carries his own in ostentation trailing it ten or twelve feet behind him, with the claws of the Mansfénix hawk arranged on two sticks across their backs" (Breton et al. 1665: 11, 48 of 50).

Men almost always wear pieces of jaguar skin and the claws of raptors or other items around the neck. They include "necklaces made of small, long calabashes as big as the finger, and filled with Mansfénix [hawk] meat". These items not only serve to improve their courage but also to protect them against any danger, or even against "magic spells" (Breton et al. 1665: 48 of 50).

In sum, the main predators of the sky world, the "birds of prey", are both respected and feared. Hence they have presumably become *signs** of male prowess and are related to shamanic practices as is reflected in various narratives.

### *Tokens of rain and death*

Certain species of birds of prey are considered either omens or foretellers of future events. For instance, whenever a laughing falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) sings in the early morning it is thought to herald rain (van Capelle 1926: 396-416, see Fig. 6.26).[160] Residents of the Upper Mazaroni District (Guyana) report that large eagles, and a *camudi* (i.e., a caiman), can even cause rain to fall (Roth 2011: 214 [175]). The Pomeroon Arawak shake their pepper trees, whenever they hear a *kukui* (a hawk, resembling a carrion crow), a vocalisation indicating dry weather. If these trees are shaken, they will bear more peppers (Roth 2011: 253-4 [217]).

More menacingly, a raptor is considered a *sign** of death within a family. On the Pomeroon River (Guyana), for example, the so-called *baridi* ("hawk", species unspecified) are regarded as omens linked to a funeral as these "birds" often fly in large numbers, one behind the other (Roth 2011: 262). Along the lower Amazon River, the "black eagle" (*Milvago nudicollis*) warns of the death of a household member. This "bird" perches on treetops in the neighbourhood of the huts in which Amerindians live (Roth 2011: 262). Although not specifically pertaining to "birds of prey", Island Carib share a similar belief. We read: "When lizards, animals, or birds accidentally perch on their houses or nearby, as if they were tame, they do not dare to touch them. They say that these are birds which belong to the gods of the *boyes*, and if the Carib killed these animals the gods would kill them in turn" (Breton et al. 1665: 7 of 50). It may be added here that the term "*boyes*" refers to shamans active in the Lesser Antilles.

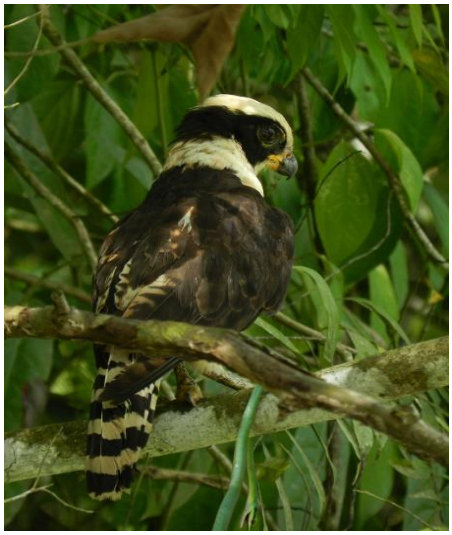


**Fig. 6.26.** Laughing falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*); photo-graph by R. Aguila (2014). Licensed CC BY-NC SA 2.0, accessed by EOL.

[160] Capelle (1926) identifies this falcon as the '*Kuri-kuri'*, but does not specify which peoples apply this term. Roth identifies the *'Kurri-kurri'* as the bare-faced ibis (*Ibis infuscatus*), Roth 2011: 253-4 (see also 6.2.3). Needless to say, it is presumed that multiple avian species are considered to act as the herald of rain.

### 6.3.5 Concluding remarks

Although various raptor species are native to the Carribean, the largest, and therefore perhaps the most impressive, are not residents of this part of the world. Indigenous raptor species must nevertheless have impressed Amerindians whenever they spotted large, dark-plumaged, sharp-sighted birds, hovering high in the sky in search of living prey (e.g., mammals, amphibians, fish), even grasping birds in mid-air.

”Raptors” are, as with most birds, linked to the sky world and associated with male qualities such as prowess and hunting skills. However, they are apparently less interconnected with the positive qualities ascribed to the far more colourful birds. ”Raptors” are nonetheless the likely rulers of their realm and probably also envisioned as powerful agents capable of transcending into other realms as well. In the stories, these “birds” are powerful shamans and/or the assistants of shamans. In iconography, this phenomenon is reflected as well, for instance, when appearing on shamanic paraphernalia and depictions as the shamans’ “alter egos”.

In the stories presented here, raptors are ascribed various roles: (a) as very dangerous opponents that intimidate villagers and abduct children, and (b) as healers of diseases hereby linking them to both death and life. The excellent vision of raptors may have induced the notion they are capable of predicting future events. It is suggested they could have been considered messengers that herald rain, too.

In addition to being associated with shamanic practices, “raptors” are also related to hunting skills. As the supreme hunters of the sky world, they signify male prowess. Their behaviour is exemplary for the persistent archer, who himself is a sit-and-wait huntsman.

Although “birds of prey” feature in the archaeological records, they are rarely identified as a zoomorphic iconographical element on Saladoid ceramics, manufactured in the South American mainland and across the insular Caribbean. They are, however, depicted on items made of wood, such as sacred seats, benches, and as crude imitations of “birds”. In addition, contemporary shamanic paraphernalia originating from tropical lowlands are adorned with “harpy eagles”. References including 17$^{th}$-century examples mention that bones, feathers, and even entire “birds” form part of (ritual) ceremonies and shamanic practices. This avian material is generally speaking perishable and therefore does not occur in the archaeological record. However, one could wonder if this absence or low number of “birds of prey” as *adornos* could be (partly) explained by the preference of utilising and depicting them by other means (see also 8.3).

## 6.4 “Scavenger birds”

### 6.4.1 “Scavenger birds” in the narratives

The present study includes 70 “Scavenger bird”-narratives, which were analysed as a separate cluster (see Appendix D, section B4). The “birds” combined in this cluster are “Buzzards”, “Condors” and (mainly) “Vultures” (see also 6.4.2 for a further discussion on the species).

“Scavenger bird”-narratives have been documented for eleven language families (see Fig. 6.27). The majority of these stories (65 percent) hail from the core area. The fact these stories are very common is the outcome of their being familiar to various groups within one and the same language family. For instance, narratives with a Cariban designation circulate amidst the speakers of the languages named Yabarana, Yukpa, Wayana, Waiwai, Trio, Taulipang, Arekuna, and even among the Bakairí (from Central/Southern Brazil). “Scavenger bird” tales are also encountered in Peru, Brazil and Bolivia, thus far beyond the core area as defined in the present study (see 1.2.1).

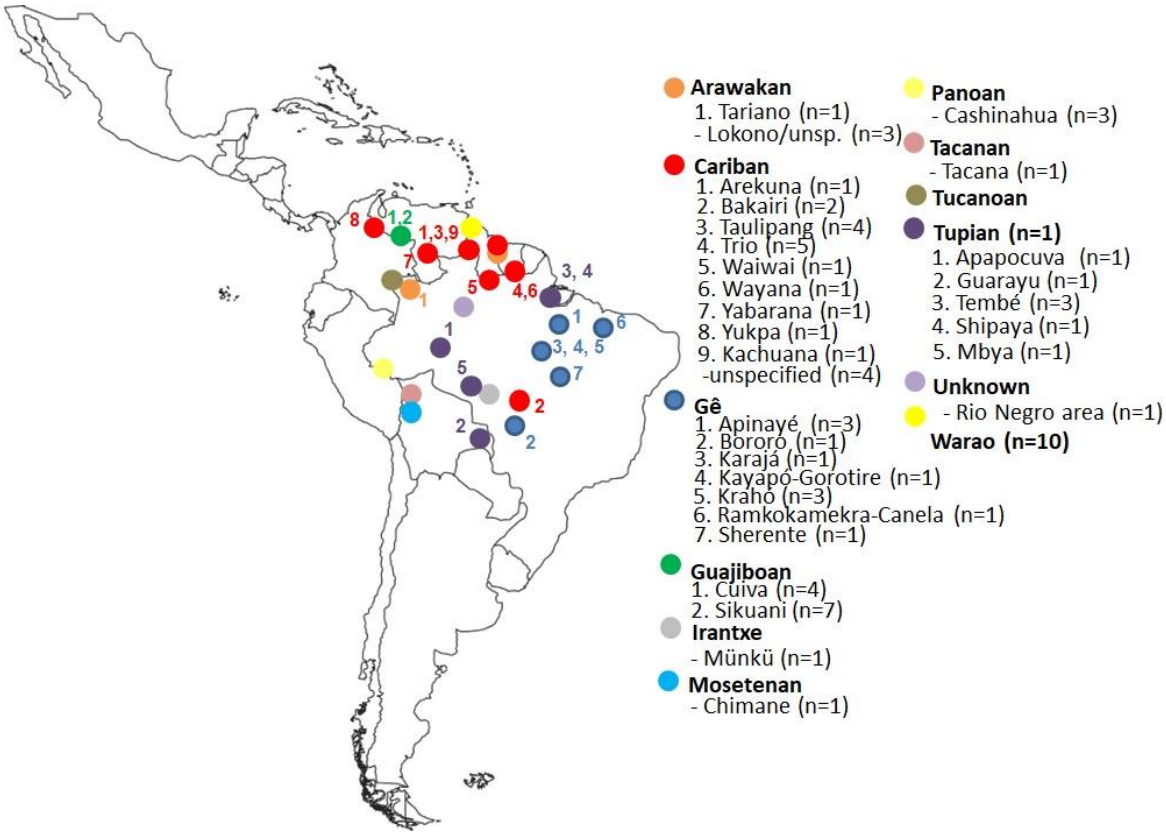



**Fig. 6.27.** Plot of “Scavenger birds” narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

Although these narratives are not further divided into sub-clusters, two major themes (both set in the sky world and closely related to shamanic practices) have been identified on the basis of their motifs and narrative structure: (a) the “Vulture” is an object of desire: mainly portrayed as a beautiful woman with a difficult father-in-law (Story nos. 3, 77, 85, 130, 133, 160, 678, 696; Wayana (Cariban), 2x Arawakan, Warao, Arekuna (Cariban), Taulipang

(Cariban), Tembé (Tupian), Sikuani (Guajiboan)), and (b) the "Scavenger bird" being a healer of diseases, an improver of eyesight and as a Master of Death, Life and Immortality (Story nos. 3, 128, 135, 178, 414, 564-7; Carib, Wayana, 2x Taulipang (Cariban), Cashinahua (Panoan), Apinayé, Ramkokamekra-Canela, Krahô (Gê)).

Noteworthy is the significant variation of duration. Both the real time and the narrated time (see 4.3.2) have been elongated.[161] A significantly larger number of narratives fall within the middle and large range i.e., numbering six or more pages (13 percent compared to 8 percent in general). Moreover, the narrated time is significantly longer: 65 percent (n=42) continues for either months or years. When considering "Birds" in general, the narrated time of months or years amounts to 48 percent and overall to only 43 percent. The elongated real and narrated time indicate that the "Scavenger bird"-narratives are of a more "epic" nature, with a storyline that includes multiple events (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading *Narratological data*).

### *Marriage to "Vulture" as beautiful women*

The first and foremost role ascribed to these "birds" is: object/goal. The present study includes eight descriptions of "Vultures" as beautiful women (Story nos. 3, 77, 85, 130, 133, 160, 678, 969; 3x Cariban, 2x Arawakan, Warao, Tupian, Guajiboan). Pertaining here are motifs concerning marriages between "Vultures" and Amerindian protagonists (Story nos. 3, 77, 85, 130, 133, 463, 487, 708; 3x Cariban, Arawakan, 3x Warao). In several of these stories the Amerindian, who wishes to marry (or marries) the "Vulture"-woman visits the sky world. In this particular setting, he is confronted with impossible and/or difficult tasks to be carried out in order to deliver proof of his worthiness (as a shaman) standing before his "King vulture"-father-in-law (Story nos. 77, 133, 160, 463, 487, 696; 2x Arawakan, Cariban, Tupian, 2x Warao).

### *The (shamanic) helper*

The second most common role to be fulfilled by "Scavenger birds" is to serve as an assistant. "Scavenger bird"-actors do so in a variety of ways, for instance, as a teacher of crafts, healer, advisor, rescuer or messenger. "Scavenger birds" repeatedly fly the (Amerindian) protagonist to either the upper world or to safety. Motifs in which "Scavenger birds" feature as helpful "birds" have been recorded in 38 cases and in various languages (e.g., Cariban, Arawakan, Gê, Irantxe, Guajiboan, see Appendix D, section B4. Fabula)

The Amerindian protagonist is often explicitly described either as a shaman or as an apprentice to ritual practices. The "Vulture", too, performs shamanic acts (n=17). Recurrent in this context are "Scavenger birds" as healers when creating new eyes from resin (Story nos. 128, 135; Taulipang, Cariban), healing a wasp's sting (Story no. 178; Cashinahua, Panoan), owning a ring that can bring back life (Story no. 414; Cariban), healing sores and removing a

[161] Real time: $\chi^2(2) = 21.81$; $\rho < 0.01$ (significant); narrated time: $\chi^2(2) = 12.27$; $\rho = 0.02$ (significant). See Appendix D, *B4. Story-layer*.

disease-causing ant (maggot?) from an ear (Story nos. 564, 566-7; Gê (Apinayé, Ramkokamekra-Canela, Krahô)). In Story no. 565, (Apinayé, Gê), a sick man is taken to the sky world in order to recover. Interestingly here is the fact that disease, or death, is the result of people either not answering or not listening to "(King) vulture". For instance, in Story no. 58 (Trio, Cariban) the child of "King vulture" warns the Trio not to respond to sickness. It also told them that when people die they would return as babies and they only needed to keep these babies clean. As the Trio did not listen, people still die. In Story no. 232 (Karajá, Gê), "King vulture" explains how elderly men can rejuvenate themselves. However, because "King vulture" is flying too high they cannot hear its words, whereas trees and certain animals could (see Appendix D, section B4. Fabula).

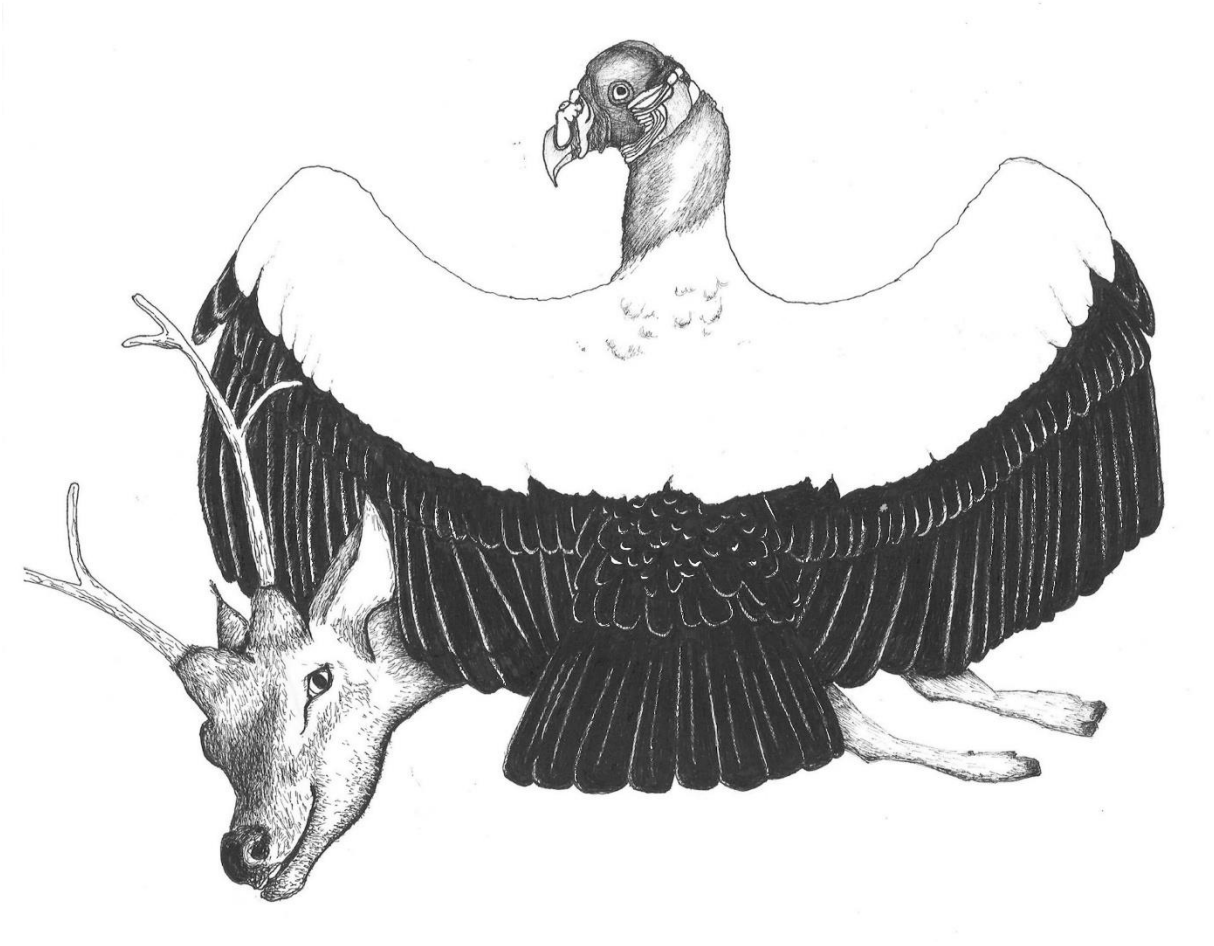


**Fig. 6.28.** Shaman transformed into a dead deer in order to attract and ambush "Vultures"; artist's impression of Story no. 696 (Arawakan) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

In addition to their role as healers, "Scavenger birds" dress up the (Amerindian) protagonist, paint his body with *roucou* (Story no. 564; Apinayé, Gê) and teach him how to enjoy tobacco, or *yopo** (Story nos. 303, 690: Münkü (Irantxe), Sikuani (Guajiboan)). In Story no. 690 (Sikuani) we read that *yopo** grows from chests of these "birds".

Other common Cariban, Tupian and Gê motifs comprise the origin of fire, the Sun and the Moon. "Scavenger birds" are mentioned as being either the sole Owner of Fire (see Story nos.

159, 220, 222-5; Tupian) or as being associated with the Sun (Story nos. 116, 130, 148, 160, 223, 232, 348; 4x Cariban, Tupian, Gê).

The helpful "Scavenger bird" is generally speaking described as a carrion-eater and thus odorous. Noteworthy, too, are the motifs involving either faecal droppings or nasal mucus (see Appendix D, section B4. Fabula). Nasal mucus of "King Vulture" serves as a rope (Story no. 258; Kachuana, Cariban). Or, in Story no. 182 (Chimane, Mosetenan) "King vulture" uses nasal mucus of the creator called Dohit to climb down. The excrement of a "Scavenger bird" is dropped onto an Amerindian's head (Story no. 131; Arekuna, Cariban). Moreover, in Story no. 241 (Tacanan) a "Vulture" both drops his excrement onto a woman's head and later spits at her, giving her a yellow colour.

Twenty-eight explicit references concern the raw, reeking carrion on which a "Vulture" feeds. The emphasized physical features and attributes include its nose/beak. Because of this "bird's" obtuse beak, it cannot rip apart any meat and must depend on "King vulture" in order to help it (Story nos. 77, 148; Arawakan, Bakairí (Cariban)). Its colour is often directly characterized (Story nos. 596-7; Cuiva, Guajiboan). Story nos. 134, 459, 463, 487 (Taulipang (Cariban), 3x Warao) refer to a "Two-headed vulture". They include (see also 6.4.1 under the sub-heading *Marriage to beautiful women*) references to these "birds" as beautiful women.

### *In relation to other "animals/birds"*

The most common "animals/birds" with whom "Scavenger birds" co-occur within the narratives comprises "Birds", "Birds of prey", "Parrot-like birds", and "Jaguar". Tales featuring "Lizards" and "Scavenger birds" are encountered, too (see Appendix D, section B4. Fabula).

As to cases including both "Parrot-like birds" and "Scavenger birds", no noteworthy association between these two is observed. The interrelatedness between "Scavenger birds" and "Birds of prey" may have a natural cause: "Birds of prey" kill animals which in turn attract "Scavengers". Therefore they call on each other for assistance in order to establish whether someone or something is either dead or alive. The same could apply to an explanation pertaining to the frequent interaction between "Scavenger birds" and "Lizards". The smell at least one unknown "Lizard" species creates is in fact that pungent it attracts "Scavenger birds" (see Story no. 189; Bororo, Gê).

"Scavenger birds" interact most frequently with the fauna residing in the sky world, often by means of shamanic practices. Here they come across "Birds of prey", "Snakes", "Lizards", and "Ants".

### 6.4.2 Scavenger birds in nature

In Western taxonomy, scavenger birds (i.e., birds that mainly feed on cadavers) are considered raptors. In this research, they are dealt with as a separate category because, in the narratives, they take on a different position/role and are ascribed different attributes. In my view, their distinct bald heads, how they root in large(r) groups and feed on the "dead" indeed justifies a separate group.

The mainland of South America is home to a larger variety of scavenger birds when compared with the Caribbean archipelago. The turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura,* see Fig. 6.30) is a common sight in the Greater and Lesser Antilles. The black vulture (*Catharista atratus*/*Coragyps atratus*, see Fig. 6.29) can not only be spotted on Trinidad and Tobago but also as a vagrant in the Windward Islands and the Greater Antilles (Butchart & Symes 2016b). In this section, the species native to certain islands are described along with a number of South American mainland species in order to better understand the personages of the scavenger birds and the references to these birds, as encountered in the narratives.

Black vultures are common to the southern parts of North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Turkey vultures have been spotted even further to the north and the south. King vultures (*Gypagus papa; Sarcoramphus papa*) populate Central America as well as the northern parts of South America, including Trinidad and Tobago (Butchart & Symes 2016 a and b).

In the narratives, only a small number of species have been identified. The most dominant species are: the black vulture, the turkey vulture and the king vulture. However, in several cases buzzards (genus Buteo) take on a similar role.[162] The section entitled "Birds of prey" (see 6.3) has already emphasized that falcons also feed on carrion and have even been observed when snatching cadavers from vultures.

**Fig. 6.29.** Black vulture (*Catharista astrata*), French Guiana (2009); photograph by the author.

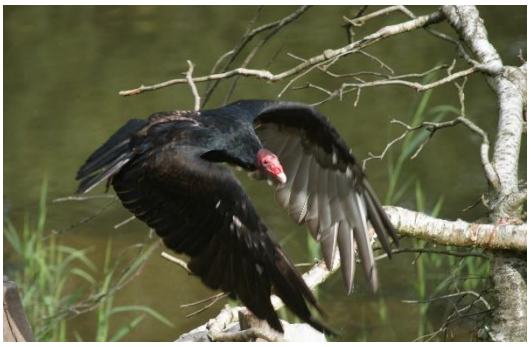


**Fig. 6.30.** Turkey vulture (*Carthartes aura*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017); photograph courtesy of T. Blom.

[162] Falcons are included in the category entitled "Birds of prey", see 6.3. Often feeding on carrion, they would also fit the category "scavenger birds". In certain cases, falcons are indeed analogous in role to the vultures.

### *Physical and behavioural attributes*

The black vulture and the turkey vulture are coloured dark-black (see Figs. 6.29-6.30). Their wingspan measures between *c.*1.5 and 1.8 m. The king vulture is predominantly white with a wingspan of up to 2 m. The former two have hooked beaks, characteristic bald, featherless, wrinkled necks and greying-black heads (black vultures) or red heads (turkey vultures). King vultures have head skins in shades of red, a vivid orange hue on the neck and yellow colouration on the throat (see Fig. 6.31; Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001: 86, 88; Hilty & Brown 1986: 87-8). The wattle (described as a nose adornment in the narratives) is unique to the king vulture (see 6.4.1). Turkey vultures have distinct nostrils, which are not divided by a septum, allowing you to see through the beak from the side. Wattles and nostrils are identifiable features in the iconography (see 6.4.3).

The black vulture has a white patch on the lower side of the edge of its wings, which is visible in flight. While soaring, the turkey vulture holds its wings in a shallow V-shape (see Fig. 6.30). When airborne its feathers feature silvery remiges to form a grey tail (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001: 86-7). In Story no. 67 (Trio, Cariban), the flight of a vulture is compared to the movements of an unstable canoe. It would be interesting to conduct further research into more abstract renditions inspired by observing this bird when airborne.

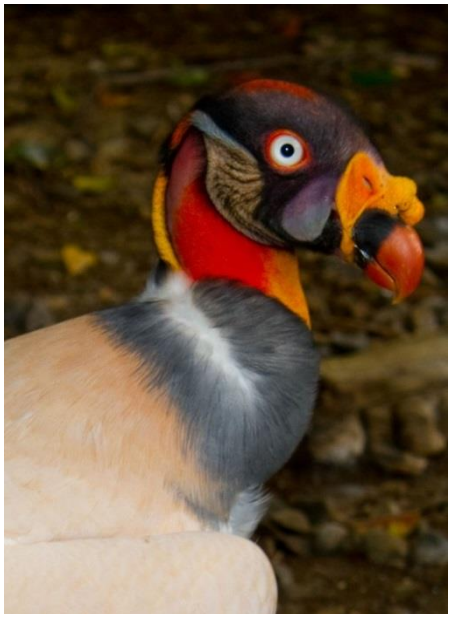


**Fig. 6.31.** King vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*); photograph by B. Gratwicke (2010). Licensed CC BY 2.0, accessed by EOL.

All vultures often defecate on their legs to lower their body temperature. They can also be spotted in a spread-wing stance in order to warm and dry their feathers (Kaufman 1996: 110). The black vulture is known to regurgitate when approached or disturbed (Coleman & Fraser 1986: 600). These two forms of behaviour may have inspired the identified motifs concerning the spitting and dropping of excrement onto humans (see 6.4.1). The droppings of scavenger birds can damage trees and plants, even pollute drinking water.[163] This fact could have resulted in these birds being associated with decay and death.

A scavenger bird has an excellent vision. Turkey vultures have evolved a very fine sense of smell with which they track down carrion. They find carrion first to then attract other scavenger birds, who notice how turkey vultures gather around it (Kaufman 1996: 111-2).

[163] The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) provides further information published in Augustus 2016 through a factsheet entitled "Managing Vulture Damage". See https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage.

Vultures, best spotted soaring and circling high up in the air, inhabit relatively open areas. The females lay their eggs in caves, in hollow trees or even on bare ground. They roost on dead, leafless trees or on other high structures, often in groups consisting of black as well as turkey vultures. Black vultures also forage in groups. The turkey vulture is more likely to do so on its own and, although slightly larger, can be easily driven away from carrion by black vultures. The king vulture generally lives and forages either alone or in small groups (Hilty & Brown 1986: 87-8). This foraging in groups, not solitary, is also portrayed in stories, as discussed in 6.4.1.

#### *Scavenger birds in relation to animals/birds*

The turkey vulture often arrives first at a carcass thanks to its keen sense of smell to then attract for instance black and king vultures which then often chase off the turkey vulture. Because its beak is not suited to tear open the skin of larger animals, the turkey vulture is "assisted" by black and king vultures. Each species apparently devours its own preferred part of a carcass. The king vulture opts for the skin and harder tissue parts, and the turkey vulture for the softer tissues (Del Hoyo et al. 1994). This division of labour between the various vulture species and the hierarchy in which it unfolds is a recurrently encountered theme in the narratives (see 6.4.1).

Although vultures mainly feed on carrion, they also eat decaying plant material, fruits and eggs. Vultures can thus be found also at locations where humans either discard food or clean their prey and fish. On occasion, black vultures kill new-born mammals, even small cattle, while swarming around the victim which, after its eyes, nose and tongue have been removed, goes into a shock (Milleson, Shwiff & Avery 2006).

Black vulture and turkey vultures have few natural predators. Nonetheless, mongooses, foxes, opossums, and domestic dogs have been known to attack the adults, eggs and nestlings of vultures. Large predatory birds, such as eagles, can prey upon these vultures, too. When roosting in larger groups any predation on them seems rare (Coleman & Fraser 1986). The natural predators of the king vulture are restricted to, for example, snakes searching for eggs or nestlings. Only large predators (e.g., jaguar) might kill an adult king vulture if caught unaware while devouring a carcass.

### 6.4.3 The iconography of "scavenger birds" and "birds of prey"

In contrast to the scarcity of iconographical records on "birds of prey", there is an abundance in "vulture" imagery familiar to the mainland as well as the islands. "Vulture" imagery is quite common as identified in the form of stone, wooden and shell pendants originating from the Orinoco Valley. Such pendants have also been encountered on Trinidad, Grenada (Pearls), Vieques, and Puerto Rico (Sorcé, Punta Candalero, Tecla), too (Boomert 2000: 405, 408-9, 414-5, 440; Boomert 2001: 137; Cody 1991: 205-7).

Prestige objects such as pendants often include a “king vulture” carrying “animals” (possibly a turtle) in its claws. They are thought to form shamanic insignia reflecting the still-current belief that this “bird” is instrumental in assisting the shaman’s soul to reach the celestial world (Boomert 2000: 415; Boomert 2001: 136-7). These pendants are considered to be associated with the Cedrosan and predominantly the Huecan subseries of the Saladoid ceramic series (for a description of the various ceramic (sub)series see 2.1). Their distribution covers a wide range of the insular Caribbean area. Moreover, their appearance is evidently both culturally and chronologically highly circumscribed: specimens have been recovered at Pearls, Grenada, and Tecla, Puerto Rico (Boomert 2001: 136).

Other shamanic paraphernalia display the head(s) of the “king vulture”. For instance, two heads facing in opposite directions are depicted on staffs utilised by the Kashuyána (Kachuana, Trio/Cariban speakers from Brazil) during a healing ritual (Boomert 2001: 130). Moreover, a single find comprising an “alter ego” head lug, added to a “Kondurí” complex modelled-incised pottery from São Lourenco (Brazil) has been described. The head of a “king vulture” surrounds its anthropomorphic face (Boomert 2001: 134). Highly stylised “alter ego” figures consisting of “king vultures” are dated to the latter part of the Barrancoid sequence (see 2.1).

Another category of pre-Columbian artefacts originating from the Caribbean islands with examples of “scavenger bird” imagery contains a series of stone axe blades from the Lesser Antilles. We read they “clearly display bifurcated, sculptured butts, decorated with double, juxtaposed heads of raptorial birds, which look into opposite directions” (Boomert 2001: 138). They have been identified as “king vultures” because of the wattle-like protuberances on their beaks (Boomert 2000: 468-9, 485; Boomert 2001: 137-8).

According to the Kaliña (Cariban), “vulture”-shaped benches are spirits that serve as the assistants of shamans (Ahlbrinck 1931: 78, 79; de Goeje 1943: 71). These wooden items carved to resemble the “bicephalous” (two-headed) “king vulture” were created by the Emerillon (Tupian) and Wapishana (Arawakan) in the Guiana Highlands and the Trumai (Isolate) in Central Brazil (Boomert 2001: 130).

As stated in 6.3.3, distinguished Trinidadian chiefs donned *kalikuli* (aka “carucuru’” or “caracole”) i.e., thinly hammered plates of gold/copper alloy (*guanín),* several in the form of “eagles”, resembling either “birds of prey” or “vultures” as well as “crescents” serving as ear, nose and chest adornments (Boomert 2000: 405).

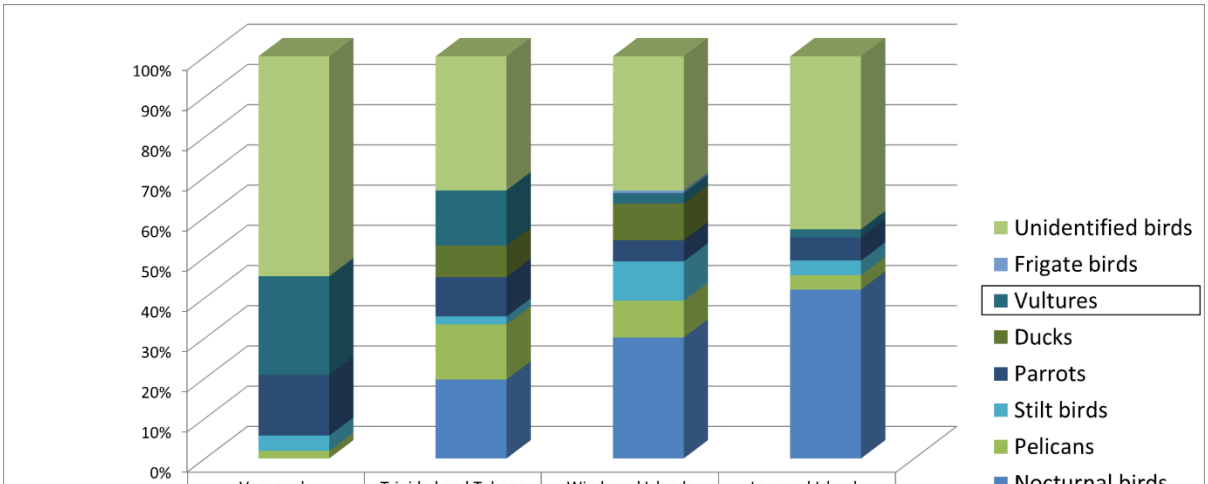
### *“Vulture” adornos*

Waldron (2010, 2016) has identified “vulture” iconography on the ceramics of Venezuela as well as Caribbean islands, although the frequency of occurrence drops significantly in the Islands (see Table 6.5a). The Saladoid imagery is confined to the Lower Orinoco River and the southernmost islands. Table 6.5b illustrates that the majority of identified “vulture” *adornos* hail from Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago. In Venezuela they are the most identified “bird”

*adorno* and on Trinidad and Tobago they are second after nocturnal birds. In the Windward and Leeward Islands, only resp. 2.6 percent and 2.1 percent of the identified "bird" *adornos* are identified as a "vulture", compared to 24.5 percent of the Venezuelan *adornos*. The "vulture" iconography is a temporary feature of Late Saladoid, exhibiting strong interaction with the Barrancoid sequence of the Lower Orinoco River (Waldron 2010: 173).

Attention to speciation thereby identifying, by and large, the "turkey vultures" has been observed (Waldron 2010: 170). Identifiable features are its prominent nostrils and the wrinkled curuncúlae atop the beaks of Huecan specimens (see Figs. 6.31 and 6.32, p. 296); Waldron 2010: 170).[164] Other elements are less clear and, based on facial characteristics, could also be mistaken for parrots.

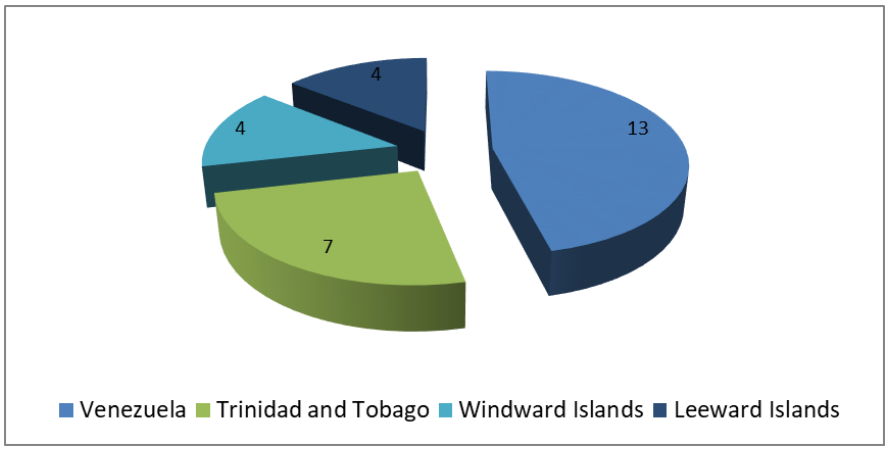
**Table 6.5a.** Identified "vulture" *adornos* and their dispersal.




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified birds | 29 | 17 | 51 | 83 |
| Frigate birds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vultures | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Ducks | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| Parrots | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| Stilt birds | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| Pelicans | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Nocturnal birds | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |

[164] As stated in a biological description, king vultures have a characteristic wattle (caruncle, snood) whereas turkey vultures have "see-through" open nostrils, see 6.4.2.

**Table 6.5b.** The absolute dispersal of identified "vulture" *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela.




The earliest Amazon representations (dating to the first centuries CE) comprise simple, modelled-incised *adornos* in the shape of stylised "king vultures", attached to medium-sized effigy vessels linked to the Itacoatiaria complex of the Rio Negro-Amazon confluence (Boomert 2001: 133). A ceramic style of late-prehistoric Santarém presents us with several "king vulture"-shaped *adornos* with perforated carbuncles on top of the "bird's" head which may have served to insert feathers (Boomert 2001: 133).

**Fig. 6.32.** Saladoid "vulture" (?) *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; height *c*.7.2 cm; width 4.9 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

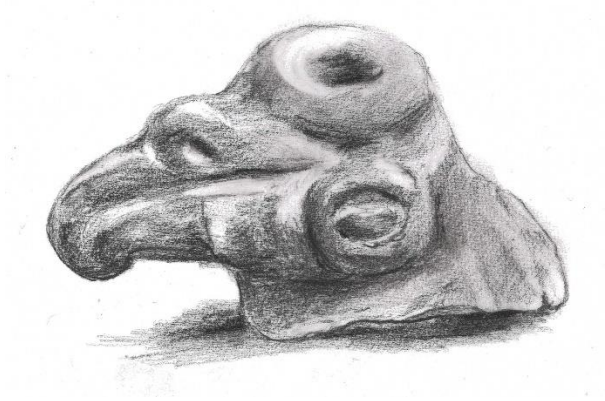


**Fig. 6.33.** Saladoid "vulture" *adorno* from Saladero, Venezuela; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 6.18, length *c.*7 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

The (Huecan) specimens of the "turkey vulture" imagery originating from Vieques and Puerto Rico are highly anomalous, because "these birds are not endemic to Puerto Rico" (Waldron 2010: 271). This remark could be doubted as the turkey vulture has been spotted in southwestern Puerto Rico (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 126). Moreover, it is listed as being native to Puerto Rico on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species under the entry "Cathartes aura" (Butchart & Symes 2016a).

The position of the "vulture" *adornos* on vessels varies, but do fall within the range of Barrancoid-inflected stylistic schemes (Waldron 2010: 271). On occasion, these *adornos* are exceedingly large, measuring far beyond between 5 and 8 cm as is the case with average *adornos*. A Late Saladoid (*c.*400-600/800 CE) tendency has been observed wherein the heads of "owls", "vultures" and "parrots" with large powerful beaks form the spout of a bottle (Waldron 2010: 172).[165]

"Vulture" depictions on both Saladoid and Barrancoid ceramics often include decorative motifs and secondary figures. For instance, "vultures" that either emerge from the head of an anthropomorph (see Waldron 2010: 405, Fig. 2.20) or appear in combination with other "birds", often disguised as parts of their beak (Waldron 2010: 173).

As to a possible function for "vulture" ceramics, we read: "Most likely, ceramics bearing the likeness of vultures contained medicinal substances, liquid and solid, cooked on fire (given the vulture's solar association) and used for either cures or protection against sorcery. The apotropaic use of vulture imagery might relate to foreign threats, casting the vultures as sentries, seeing in every direction, guarding against these external forces" (Waldron 2010: 181-2).

[165] In the present research only the highlights pertaining to *adornos* have been discussed in order to illustrate the identifying (generalized) features of each zoomorph (Waldron 2010, 2016).

### 6.4.4 “Scavenger birds” in Amerindian cosmologies

These “birds” are also associated with the celestial realm, related to the Sun (life) and linked to the origin of fire which enables the transformation of raw, odorous meat into cooked meat.[166] In Western taxonomy, these “birds” are considered predators. It is therefore perhaps no surprise that “scavenger birds” largely mirror “birds of prey” as powerful rulers of the sky world, albeit with one significant difference: scavenger birds eat carrion and hardly ever kill their own prey. This fact probably contributes to their becoming even more entangled with death, but less to any ferocious predatory behaviour as observed with their bird of prey “cousins”.

As explained above (see 6.4.1 and 6.4.2), the carrion-eating “scavenger bird” and its malodour are recurrent themes in lore rendering it a *sign** of death and decay. The Carib even describe “king vultures” as “smelly/stinking” (see Ahlbrinck 1931 under the entry “Stinkvogels”, lit.: “Smelling birds”). Whenever the “vulture” either drops its excrements or creates creepers with its nasal mucus, it acts as an intermediary between two worlds: sky and land, life and death. We read that “vulture” stands for “death” according to the Kaliña (Cariban) and that the Taulipang (Cariban) associate this “scavenger bird” to growing old and ugliness (de Goeje 1943: 53).

#### *Hierarchy among “birds”*

The benevolent “giant eagle” (aka “harpy eagle”), can be observed in the “Eastern Sky”. Devouring live prey, as Amerindians do, it is considered “hot” and “cultural” according to structuralistic principles. By contrast, the maleficent “ancient eagle”, the “vulture”, feeds on carrion (referred to as “cold” and “anticultural food”) and frequents the “Western Sky”. It has been concluded that “Rather than have the harpy eagle play the double role of good and bad figure [...], most people divide the nature of the eagle into two contrasting eagles” (Roe 1982: 259-60).

On the other hand, the stories analysed in this study, depict “birds of prey” more as maleficent agents, although they do indeed act as powerful shamans and their assistants (see sections 6.3.1 and 6.4.1). “Vultures” possess more ascribed qualities serving as the benefactor, being associated not only with the origin of things but also with fire and the Sun. A “Vulture” is often depicted as a helpful “bird” closely linked to shamanic practices.

A differentiation, or hierarchy, ostensibly exists when comparing the various species of scavengers. All “scavenger birds” rule the sky world. However, “vultures”, in particular, the “king vultures”, are considered to govern all scavengers. This motif is not only identified in the stories but is also subscribed by means of anthropological accounts. This belief of a ruling

[166] For an in-depth structuralistic analysis of this transformation of raw into cooked meat and of the transformation of the non-cultural into the cultural, see C. Lévi-Strauss (1973, 1983, 1990 [1971], 1990 [1968]) and P. Roe (1982). See also sections 2.2 and 2.3.1 for a discussion on their works.

“vulture” is encountered in the region of Pomeroon-Supenaam (northern Guyana) as well as among Creoles and English-speaking Amerindians (Roth 2011: 195, note 24, 391).

Indications illustrate that the sky world consists of numerous specific layers with which “birds” are associated. The uppermost layer is related to the Sun and to lightning, and is home to the “birds of prey” (e.g., “eagle”). The “scavenger birds” inhabit the sky at the cloud level (Roe 1982: 131, 260; Wilbert & Simoneau 1970: 352, note 22) and thus rule over a specific (lower) layer of the sky world.

The lower level of the sky world in which “vultures” dwell is the place criminals go to (Roe 1982: 260). According to Waldron (2010: 176, 181), “vultures” are described as “punishers of the unworthy”, a warning against breaking taboos “especially ones regarding illicit social contact”. During the present research, I did not identify this taboo-breaking as a key motif pertaining to “vultures”. Warnings concerning the breaking of especially social taboos are very common. In fact, encoding social behaviour is the second most common narrative function, of which showing (in)correct behaviour is by far the most dominant (see 4.1.1).

“Birds of prey” as well as “scavenger birds” reign over the sky world, albeit perhaps not over the same sub-layer. They presumably share (part of) their *symbolic** importance. Motifs comprising a huge cannibalistic “two-headed King vulture” are closely related to a similar means of feeding on as well as to a two-headed, giant “eagle” or “falcon”. These celestial “birds” intermingle (Boomert 2001: 130).

### *“Alter egos”*

A number of Tropical forest peoples consider the “king vulture” to be the shaman’s prime tutelary spirit, even his “alter ego”. Therefore the Kaliña (Cariban), indigenous to the Guianas and the Orinoco Valley, value this “bird” positively (Boomert 2001: 126). The “king vulture” being a powerful shaman, would also support a remark stating that “king vulture” takes the Kaliña (Cariban) shaman to Heaven during a tobacco-induced visionary trance (de Goeje 1943: 71). Moreover, the power of these “birds” is attributed to “young and virile boys of the King Buzzard ceremonial group” (Wilbert & Simoneau 1978: 443, note 61).

In line with its association to shamanism, “scavenger birds” are also related to (the origin of) tobacco use (see 6.4.1). It has been mentioned, that among Cariban speakers “king vultures” are viewed as a physical manifestation of a tobacco spirit, known as Tukayana (de Goeje 1943: 44; Wilbert & Simoneau 1978: 443, note 61). These spirits on occasion adopt either the shape of a huge “vulture” or of four large “king vultures” (de Goeje 1943: 44).

“Scavenger birds” are not always considered helpful or friendly spirits and shamans. As mentioned in 6.4.1, they can also cause sickness and death. The Jivaro believe that “condors” (*yápu*) and “black vultures” (*chúanga*) in reality are malevolent “bird”-demons that attack humans and their domestic animals (Karsten 1935: 377). The Trio (Cariban) are familiar with

malevolent bush spirits, named Akalamano, which take the shape of carrion "vultures" (*Sarcoramphus* sp.) and with another bush spirit called Soni, which is described as a kind of "falcon" or "vulture" (Roth 2011: 119).

### 6.4.5 Concluding remarks

The mainland of South America is home to numerous species of vultures, whereas only the turkey vulture can be spotted within a wider range including the Lesser and Greater Antilles. Especially the absence in the Caribbean islands of the more colourful king vulture is noteworthy. These taxonomical raptorial birds are discussed separately from "birds of prey". This is the outcome of their feeding habit: they seldom kill themselves but prefer dead animals.

The beak of the turkey vulture is not equipped to bite through or tear off, the skin of its prey. It, therefore, depends upon for example the king vulture to do so. Turkey vultures have an outstanding sense of smell. Hence they can track down cadavers rapidly and lead other scavengers to dead animals. This dependency between these species is also reflected in the narratives. Although the king vulture is, and was, almost completely absent in the insular Caribbean, this type of behaviour may well have influenced other avian species including vultures and perhaps even other scavengers such as smaller raptors or falcons.

Turkey vultures must have impressed the indigenous peoples. Especially when these large black "birds" with their bald red heads are spotted hovering and circling high in the sky, or when feeding on dead animals during the day. Their roosting behaviour in the course of which they disperse their "smell" by piling excrement at the foot of trees, was presumably equalling imposing. All this may well have fuelled associations with these birds serving as mediators between the spaces occupied by the living and the dead, by the sky world and by other realms. In the studied narratives, these associations are identified as the "vulture" acting as a healer and Master of Life, Death and Immortality.

Avian raptors and "scavenger birds" are Masters of the Celestial World. As stated above, these "birds" dwell in a lower level of this realm, linked to the place where criminals go to after passing away. Not the plausible signifiers of any male prowess and hunting skills, "scavenger birds" differ from "birds of prey". They may even surpass avian raptors as both shamans and as their assistants when serving as intermediaries between the sky and land, between life and death.

Various references subscribe the identified motifs pertaining to "vulture" as a healer and Master of Life, Death and Immortality (see 6.4.4). The "king vulture" is apparently a prime tutelary spirit to reside among tropical forest peoples, including the alter egos of shamans, as its imagery reflects. The "Vulture" takes the shaman to Heaven during a tobacco-induced

trance. Moreover, certain narratives explain that the origin, as well as the knowledge and skill linked to consuming tobacco, is directly related to these “birds”.

As Masters of the Sky world, these “scavenger birds” are described not only as the sole Owners of Fire but also of the ultimate fire, the Sun. Although they themselves eat their meat “raw” (i.e., cold), they are associated with the gift of fire (i.e., cultivated, cooked food).

Unlike “birds of prey”, “vultures” have been identified in Saladoid iconographic imagery, both on Venezuela and the Islands. They may well have been even more prominent in other forms of material culture, e.g., pendants made of stone, wood or shell, shamanic paraphernalia, stone axe blades and wooden benches.

In Saladoid iconography, the “turkey vulture” has been identified by means of its prominent nostrils. The wrinkled caruncula atop the beaks could be a feature of the “king vulture”. The position on the vessels of the now and again exceedingly large “vulture” *adornos* varies.

Depictions of “vultures” on both Saladoid and Barrancoid ceramics often include decorative motifs and secondary figures, for instance, when a “vulture” emerges from the head of an anthropomorph. Its presence on other materials is often linked to supplemented motifs whereby, for example, the pendants that portray “vultures” holding another “animal” (e.g., a “turtle”) in their claws or whereby the “alter ego” head lugs and “vultures” are added to the blades of stone axes. Interestingly, here the identified (mainland) pendants and axes may well be depictions of a “king vulture” which are not encountered in the islands.

As to the possible function of the ceramics embellished with “vulture” *adornos*, I tend to agree with Waldron, who holds the view that they are related to the shamanic realm of healing, safeguarding and tobacco (see 6.3.3 and 6.4.3; Waldron 2010: 181-2). Wares decorated with “vultures” could have served to prepare or contain tobacco to which substances with medicinal properties are added. In my opinion, the relatively high number of “vulture” incidences in the most southern regions (i.e., Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago) indicates they were probably (also) used in a more regular setting. The “medicinal substances” could, therefore, have included either water (e.g., to cool a fever) or medicinal herbs, plants utilised without the interference of the shaman e.g., to ease the pain. However, the decrease of identified “vulture” *adornos* in the more northern islands could either suggest a shift as to the ascribed attributes and associations, or a replacement by means of other “animals/birds” or other types of display (see 8.3.3).

## 6.5 “Nocturnal birds”

### 6.5.1 “Owls” and “Nightjars” in the narratives

As many as 40 cases feature either a “Nocturnal bird”-actor or contain a reference to “Nocturnal birds”[167], a category that includes various “Owls” and “Nightjars”. “Nightjars” are also referred to as nighthawk and on occasion as goatsucker. These tales are recorded for twelve language families (see Fig. 6.34). As much as 43 percent hails from the core area. “Nocturnal bird” narratives are also encountered far further afield in Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, and even in Argentina.

The narrative functions of the “Nocturnal bird” cases are in line with those registered for “Birds” in general but with a slight increase when considering the narrative function entitled validating the world with 46 percent against 40 percent in general. Ensuring knowledge has a relatively high score: 5 percent (compared to 3 percent in general). It may be added here that informing scores merely 15 percent (compared to 24 percent in general).

As with “Birds of prey” and “Scavenger bird”-tales, “Nocturnal bird”-cases were not further sub-divided. Two major themes are recognised, both based on motifs and on the narrative structure: (1) “Nocturnal birds” as malevolent spirits; n=7, and (2) the origin of night or nocturnal associations; n=6.[168] Although motifs pertaining to helpful "animals/birds” occur, they are overshadowed by more negative connotations.

The ascribed roles of “Nocturnal birds” deviate significantly from the roles which “Birds” in general fulfil (see 6.1.1).[169] More frequently ascribed the role of opponent, object/goal and/or of the subject/actor, the “Nocturnal birds” are far less depicted as helpers (see Appendix D, section B5. Fabula).

[167] The narratives included in this sub-cluster are numbered: 2, 17, 21, 29, 78, 120, 140, 156, 158, 217, 259, 265-7, 270-1, 273-9, 282, 285, 370, 372, 464, 491, 515, 544, 546, 571, 619, 630-2, 657, 693, 706. See Fig. 6.33 for linguistic distribution and Appendix D, section B5 for more details.

[168] Cases constituting Theme I concern Story nos. 156, 370, 571, 630-2 and 657 (Arawakan, Tupian, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Jivaroan). Theme II concerns Story nos. 21, 120, 158, 276, 571 and 706 (Cariban, Arawakan, Tupian, Zamucoan, Gê, Jivaroan). For a more detailed description of Themes I and II, see Appendix D, section *B5. Fabula*.

[169] The roles are compared to those of “Birds in general” with the Chi-squared analysis: $\chi^2(5) = 3.30$, $\rho < 0.01$ (significant).

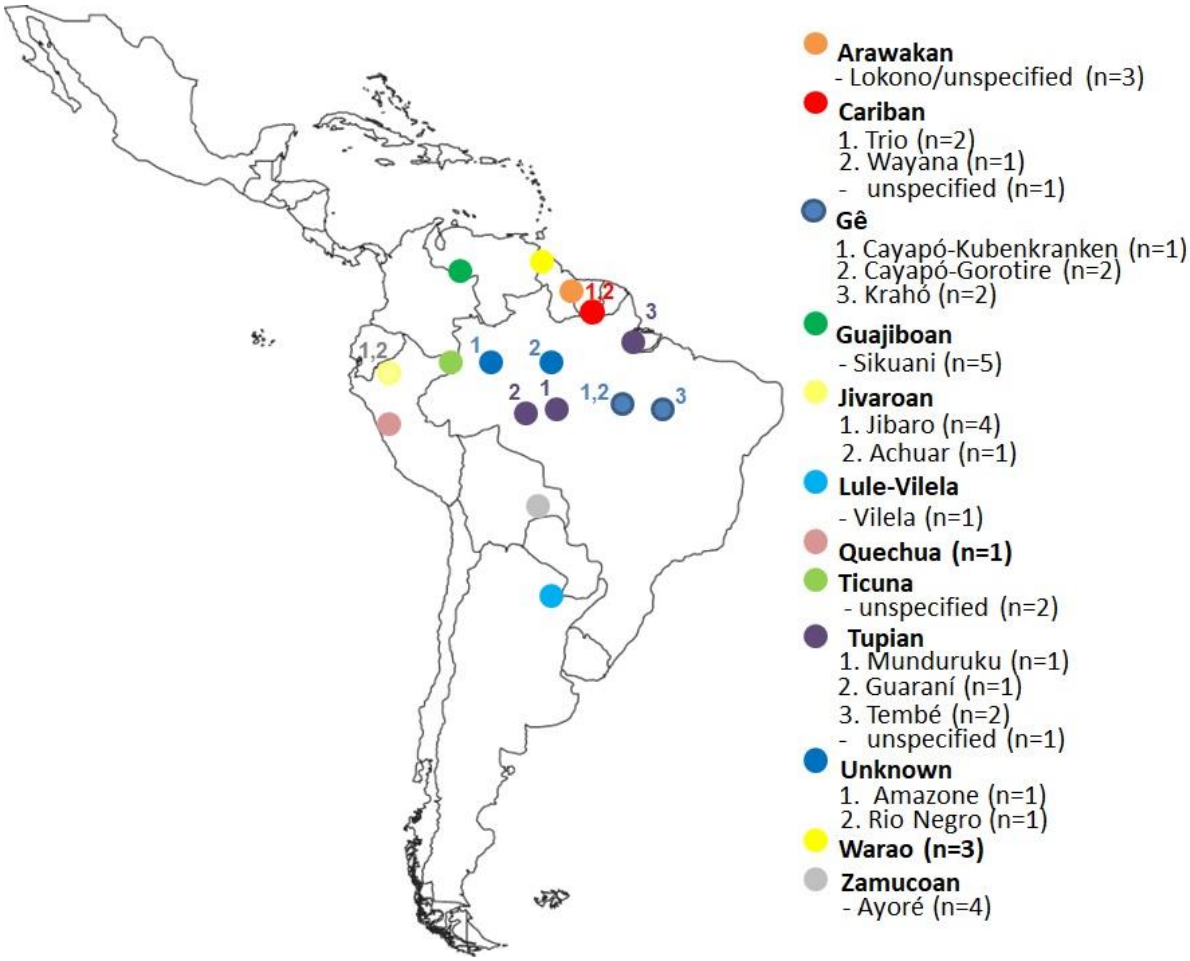



**Fig. 6.34.** Plot of "Nocturnal birds" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

### *Malevolent "Nocturnal birds"*

"Nocturnal birds" are repeatedly portrayed as (malevolent) spirits, mainly as opponents active during the night in either a land or a sky world setting. As an opponent, "Nocturnal birds" not only frighten people, they are also considered as a *sign** of impending death (Story nos. 2, 78, 372, 464; Arawakan, Cariban, 2x Warao), dine on corpses, abduct or kill (Story nos. 156, 571, 630, 632; Tupian, Gê, 2x Guajiboan), rape girls (Story no. 631; Guajiboan), take revenge for misbehaviour or cause diseases (Story nos. 277-9; Zamucoan). When visiting abandoned villages and graveyards, "Nocturnal birds" may appear in the shape of deceased humans (Story nos. 279, 370; Zamucoan, Cariban).

The malevolent "Owl" or "Nightjar" both often appear as avengers, who restore order after a taboo has been breached or a warning ignored (Story nos. 156, 631-2; see Appendix D, section B5. Fabula). In Story no. 632 (Sikuani, Guajiboan) boys mock an "Owl" by imitating its screeches. In Story no. 156 (Tupian) a hunting group ignores a warning one of its members gives concerning a stranger.

### *Night and darkness*

The segment pertaining to the narratives of Theme 2 differ highly in structure. Certain narratives tend to explain the reason why the so-called goatsuckers moan during the night or at dusk, as a lover sighs at Moon (Story nos. 265-7, 282, 706; Jivaroan, see Fig. 6.35). On the other hand, Story nos. 120 and 158 (Arawakan; Tembé (Tupian)) deal with the origin of the night, which was contained in a parcel.

In addition to the motifs regarding (the origin of) the night, their relatedness to the night-time is also revealed in the set entitled temporal context. Yet another indicator comprises the fact that a large number of these narratives feature the Moon (and the Sun) as actors.

**Fig. 6.35.** "Nightjar" moaning at the Moon; artist's impression of Story no. 706 (Jivaroan) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

### *Other common motifs*

Other common motifs comprise the origin of things and/or their characteristics (n=25). For instance, the origin of fire, disease (Story nos. 217, 276-8, 693; Ayoré (Zamucoan), Ticuna). "Animal/bird" traits and habits are explicitly mentioned, even the "birds'" vocalisations (n=12; various) are explained. These sounds are either bad omens or signs of imminent danger (Story nos. 2, 78, 464; Wayana (Cariban), Arawakan, Warao). The "Nightjar" cries: "Make some flour, make some flour", hereby providing a clear *sign** one should go to sleep (Story no. 274, Quechua).

Further behavioural features concern: (a) the way the "Nighthawks" move (Story no. 279; Ayoré, Zamucoan), and (b) an explanation of periodic behaviour whereby "Nocturnal birds" return every year (Story no. 546; Cayapó-Gorotire, Gê). The only physical feature present in motifs here is: the "Nightjar's" gaping beak (Story nos. 217, 693; Ticuna) and the description of "Owl" as an elderly man with bushy hair.

As to "Nocturnal birds", a remarkably large number of records mention either spirits that transform into such "birds" (n=7) or explicitly refer to "Owls" as in fact being spirits (Story nos. 2, 17, 156, 370, 630-2; Cariban (Trio, Wayana), Arawakan, Tupian (Tembé), Guajiboan (Sikuani)). In Story nos. 372 and 491 (Gê), a shaman transforms into a "Nocturnal bird". In Story nos. 372 and 491 (Warao), "Nocturnal birds" display shamanic properties.

### *With whom do they interact?*

"Nocturnal birds" not only co-occur in narratives featuring "Birds", "Ants", "Snake", and "Birds of prey". In four cases "Hummingbirds" and "Nocturnal birds" act together (see Appendix D, section B5. Fabula). The factor which seemingly relates "Hummingbird" to "Nocturnal birds" comprises their roles as the assistant of a (shaman) protagonist. Whenever "Hummingbirds" fail as watchmen, the "Nocturnal birds" succeed.

#### *"Ant" and "Nocturnal birds"*

In Story nos. 217 and 693 (Ticuna), the "Ant" and "Nocturnal birds" are portrayed as deliverers of goods: "Ant" gifts an elderly woman with sweet manioc and "Nightjar" is the Master and provider of Fire. In Story no. 544; Krahô Gê), a malevolent man having ignored a warning is bitten by nocturnal creatures (scorpion, big white ant, snake). Next, he screams and wails until turning into an "Owl".

#### *"Snake" and "Nocturnal birds"*

The ties that bind "Snake" and "Owl" are clearly clarified in Story no. 120 (Arawakan). For, all kinds of "birds" kill "Great Serpent". "Owl" then finds a parcel containing darkness, which "Great serpent" had with him in case of emergency. In Story no. 282 (Jivaroan), "Snake" and "Goatsucker" do not directly interact, but the latter is the paramour of "Snake's" grandmother "Moon" (see Appendix D, section B5. Fabula).

*"Birds of prey" and "Nocturnal birds"*

These "birds" are ascribed similar roles. In Story no. 156 (Tembé, Tupian), they play the part of "Falcon" and "Owl", malevolent spirits which, however, do not directly interact. In Story no. 571 (Krahô, Gê), a village is terrorised by "Hawks" and "Owls", which abduct and kill people in order to feed them to their young.

In Story no. 285 (Bororo), the Sun and the Moon wish to escape a fire, so the Sun turns into a "Falcon" and the Moon into an "Owl", hereby illustrating that "Birds of prey" are Lords of the Daytime and "Owls" mirror their roles and attributes as the Lord of the Night.

In Story no. 619 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), a "Hawk" and an "Owl" are both ascribed the role of assisting the culture hero/shaman named Purna but encountered in completely different settings. "Hawk" was trained to kill an opponent (i.e., "Snake" father-in-law). In due course, another actor named Kahuyáli (whom Purna's wives mistook for Purna) transforms into an "Owl" in order to inform others of his ordeals.

### 6.5.2 Owls and nightjars in nature

The nocturnal birds as documented in the narratives are either "Owls" or "Nightjars". Various species of both are indigenous to the Caribbean islands, albeit mainly restricted to certain islands. The following species inhabit both the insular Caribbean and the South American mainland: the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), the tropical screech owl (*Megascops choliba*) and the barn owl (*Tyto alba*) (Peeters 2007: 162-8).[170] The rufous nightjar (*Antrostomus rufus*) is only endemic to the islands of Trinidad and Tobago and Saint Lucia. The white-tailed nightjar (*Hydropsalis cayennensis*) has a wider distribution throughout the Lesser Antilles and Puerto Rico (Hilty & Brown 1986: 236-8).

The below paragraphs deal with the species native to the insular Caribbean although the South American mainland houses a higher variety of owls and nightjars. The reason for this focus is to study how "natural" behaviour and physical characteristics may have contributed to the way Amerindians have conceptualised these birds.[171] Oilbirds (*Staetornis caripensis*) are not discussed here as no references in the narratives are documented for these birds, although they are nocturnal.

Many islands house their autochthonous or endemic species, of which a majority inhabits the Greater Antilles. Certain species are more widely distributed. Mainly between May and August, the Antillean nighthawk (*Chordeiles gundlachii*) visits the Bahamas, Cuba, the Cayman

[170] For the distribution of all owl and nightjar species mentioned, see http://www.iucnredlist.org/; accessed on 4 January 2017.

[171] Based on the (mainland) narratives, neither the owl or nightjar species can be clearly identified. The choice to focus on the island species is because, to my knowledge, there is no indication that: (a) the mainland species display any specific behaviour, and (b) physical traits dominate the narratives whereas, for instance, in the case of "bat" and "vultures", specific mainland species do.

Islands, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico to breed in the Virgin Islands and Guadeloupe (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 146). According to the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species, the barn owl (*Tyto alba*, Fig. 6.36) is present in both the Lesser as well as the Greater Antilles. The burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is dispersed across the Greater Antilles, the Virgin Islands, Martinique, and Montserrat.

A number of nocturnal birds are restricted to specific islands: the tropical screech owl (*Megascops choliba*) inhabits Trinidad and Tobago. The names of the Cuban pygmy owl (*Glaucidium siju*), the Cuban screech owl (*Margarobyas lawrenchii*), the Jamaican owl (*Pseudoscops grammicus*), and the Puerto Rican screech owl (*Otus nudipes*) disclose their sole places of residence. The names given to the Saint Lucia nightjar (*Caprimulgus otiosus*), the Cuban nightjar (*Antrostomus cubanensis*), the Hispaniola nightjar (*Antrostomus ekmani*), and the Puerto Rican nightjar (*Antrostomus noctitherus*) also reveal their varied original habitats. The ashy-faced owl (*Tyto glaucops*) is autochthonous to Hispaniola.

**Fig. 6.36.** Barn owl (*Tyto alba*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn (2017); photograph by the author.

### *Physical and behavioural traits of owls*

Ten thousand years ago an owl (h. *c*.90 cm=3 ft.) was indigenous to Cuba and presumably fed on rodents as large as pigs. Fossil bones point towards it being a barn owl (Peeters 2007: 4). Although no longer reaching that height, various species of owls can still be spotted in the Caribbean islands.

The burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) measures between 19-28 cm tall. Its wingspan ranges from 51 to 61 cm. Owls, in general, are characterized by an upright, large, flat and broad head which can turn 270$^{o}$ (see Figs. 6.36 and 6.37). The heads of, for instance, the ashy-faced and barn owl are heart-shaped (see Fig. 6.36). Considering the size of the head, the eyes are large and reflect light hereby able to illuminate in the dark. The varying colouration of owls is in general brownish/greyish, with white. Their sharp talons and a sharp, relatively short, curved beak which points downwards serve to seize prey.

Owls have an excellent sense of vision, but being farsighted they need to turn their heads in order to adapt their focus. Certain species, such as the Cuban pygmy owl, have spots on their necks which mimic eyes (Raffaele & Wiley 2014: 148). Conversely, their vision is surpassed by their ability to hear. From high altitudes, owls can trace a mouse on the ground (Peeters 2007: 23).

All owls share similar hunting techniques as well as forage-habitats. Their builds are very much alike (Peeters 2007: 8). Found in grasslands, dry forests and lowland moist forests, they live in

canopies where they mainly forage. Owls generally nest in trees, occupying the abandoned nests of other birds, in crevices of rocks or inside buildings.

**Fig. 6.37.** Tropical screech owl (*Megascops choliba*); photograph by C. Lopez (2011). Licensed CC BY-NC 4.0, accessed by EOL.

Almost all species described are nocturnal hunters, but several may also hunt during twilight. Forming the exception here, the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is mainly active during the day.

An airborne owl is almost silent and invisible to its prey thanks to its plumage. This is not the case with nightjars whose flight is even explicitly described in the narratives by means of direct characterization (i.e., agitated spurts, flutter, tremble). The degree of inaudibility of an owl in flight if compared with humankind may well have contributed to their recurrent ascribed role as, and association with, spirits, as they appear and strike suddenly. Not being associated with spirits, nightjars are far less often described as spirits.

When hunting, owls first catch to then kill their prey with their sharp claws and beak after which they either swallow it in its entirety or rip it to pieces. Owls regurgitate indigestible parts of their prey to then produce pellets. Remarkably, their physical traits (claws, beak) and the fact they regurgitate are never explicated in the narratives.

It has been suggested that, because they cannot signal by means of their colouration or postures, owls have developed a rich repertoire of vocalisation to enhance social interaction. Their nocturnal hoots must have been a familiar sound and comprise a wide variety of shrieks, yelps, barks, whines, whinnies, howls, whistles, and chatters. In addition, they can scream, screech, moan, hiss, and tick (Peeters 2007: 26-7). For instance, the Puerto Rican screech owl which calls throughout the year, but characteristically at dawn, produces a loud “coo-coo”. These vocalisations are in sharp contrast to its inaudible flight. The various sounds owls create are a recurrent motif, serving as indications of the night and of imminent danger (see 6.5.1).

### *Physical and behavioural traits of nightjars*

As with owls, measurements vary among nightjar species, but the length of the relatively large rufous nightjar (*Antrostomus rufus*) can reach between 25 and 30 cm. Nightjars are well camouflaged thanks to a (moulted) dark, brown, grey, and black plumage (Rumelt 2014). They have large heads and eyes. Their bills curve only slightly downwards.

**Fig. 6.38.** Nightjar (*Caprimulgus*) opening its vulva-like beak; by M. Catesby, G. Edwards (1754); source Wikicommons (Public domain).

A nightjar's beak opens both horizontally as well as vertically, creating a wide orifice (see Fig. 6.38). This feature seems to have inspired its ascribed attribute: a vulva-like, wide beak (see 6.5.1). In addition to these more general physical characteristics, certain species can of course vary. For instance, the Puerto Rican nightjar has white spots located on the lower parts of its tail, which are visible during flight (Vilella 2010). Needless to say, these specific variations could also have inspired associations, ascribed attributes and traits.

Nightjars are either nocturnal or crepuscular. Mainly active around dusk and dawn, they feed on insects including moths. Of a presumed relevance is the following feature: owls are raptors that kill to feed on "warm meat", whereas nightjars are generally speaking insectivorous.

The Antillean nighthawk can be spotted during the night when the Moon is full. Its natural habitat covers an extensive range from dry to humid environments, from forest to dense shrubs (Rumelt 2014). The species is native to open woodland, to the edges of swamps and to dense shrub areas (Weber 2014). It builds nests either on the ground or now and again on raised locations. The Antillean nighthawk migrates after breeding, an event that could also have inspired its ascribed connotations (see 6.5.1, especially narratives on a "Nightjar" that returns every year to take revenge).

As with owls, nightjars often vocalise at dawn or dusk and on occasion whenever the Moon is full. In general, they create a percussive four-part call with a trailing note at the end. The song of the rufous nightjar is described as an energetic, rhythmic "chuck, wick-wick-WEEoo". This vocalisation is fairly consistent across the sub-species, including the nightjar (*Caprimulgus otiosus*) native to Saint Lucia (Vilella 2010). In various tales, the nightjar is observed singing, or moaning, to the Moon, its lost lover. Being especially heard during dusk and dawn, nightjars are considered natural signallers of the night (and day), a feature again often encountered in the narratives.

**Fig. 6.39.** Nightjar (*Caprimulgus*); original: plate 8 by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region. No rights reserved.

### *"Owls" and "Nightjars" in relation to animals/birds*

Owls feed on small rodents (mice, rats), amphibians (frogs, toads), insects (termites, crickets, beetles), and lizards. Certain owl species hunt on fish. The burrowing owl is partly carnivorous and partly insectivorous, the latter corresponds to the nightjars that eat beetles, moths and other insects they may catch in flight.

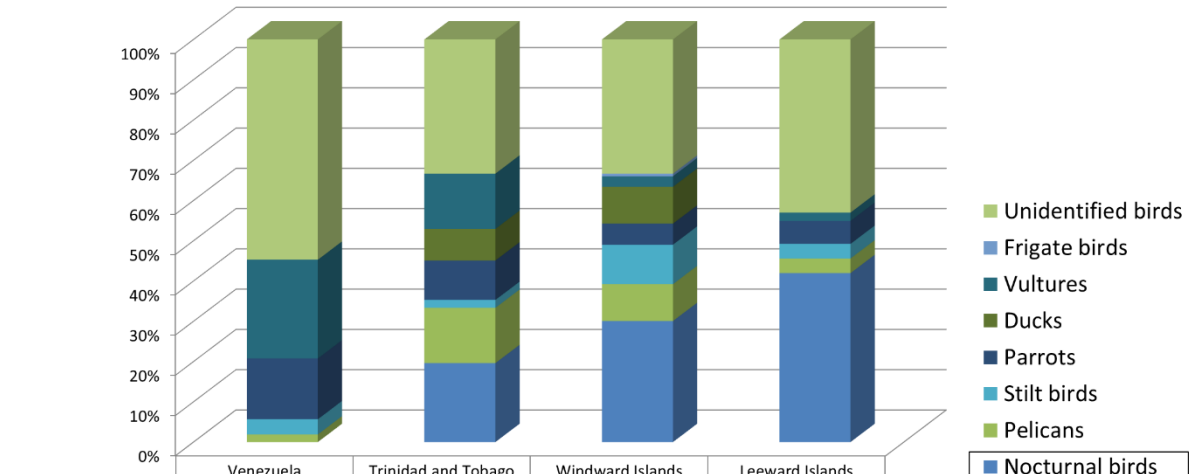
Although adult owls and nightjars do not have many natural enemies, snakes and other opportunistic predators do eat their eggs. Jaguars or predatory birds attack adult owls and nightjars. Owls hunt on predatory birds. Larger species are known to prey on smaller species of owls as well (Peeters 2007: 54-6).

### 6.5.3 The iconography of "nocturnal birds"

"Nocturnal birds" as well as the "vulture" are repeatedly the focus of research into Amerindian iconography and cosmology. "Nocturnal bird" iconography has been identified as a motif that has persisted from the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE to 400/600 CE) to the Late Ceramic Age (600/800-1492 CE). However, the "owl" is apparently mainly depicted on ceramics.

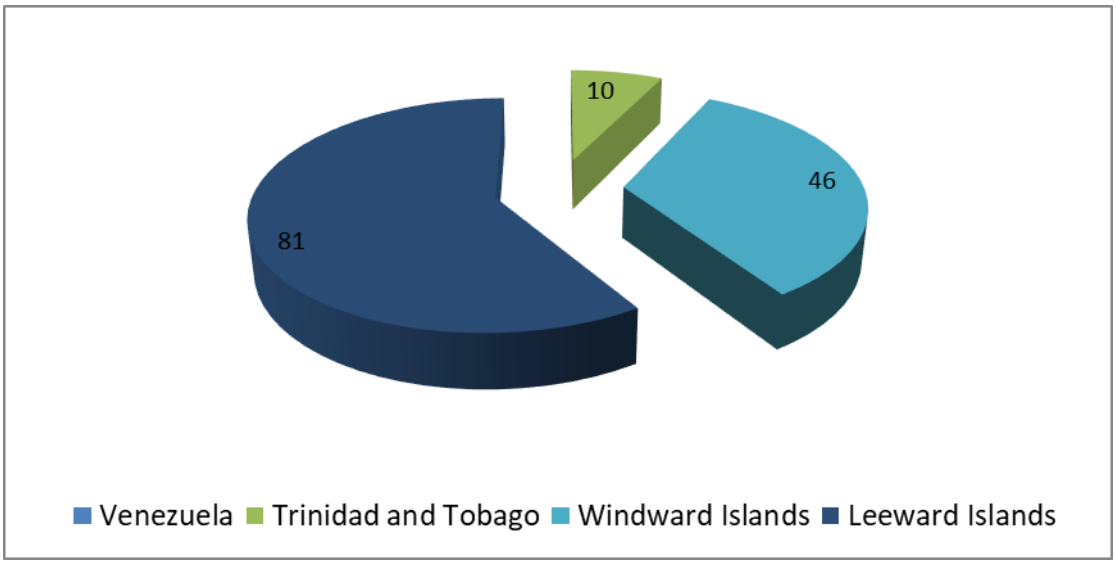
The "nocturnal birds" are by far most commonly depicted "birds" encountered on Saladoid ceramics of the Lesser Antilles (Waldron 2010: 157; see 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*). Tables 6.6a/b show that the identified "nocturnal bird" *adornos* mainly originate from the Leeward Islands, seconded by the Windward Islands where up to 42 percent of all "bird" *adornos* are portrayed as nocturnal species. However, they are also the most dominant of the identified "birds" encountered on Trinidad and Tobago (19.6 percent, see Table 6.6a). As "nocturnal birds" have been repeatedly documented in mainland narratives, one would assume them to be a prominent phenomenon in mainland imagery, too. Nevertheless, they were not identified as such among Venezuelan Saladoid *adornos* (Waldron 2010: 159-60).

**Table 6.6a.** Identified "nocturnal bird" *adornos* and their dispersal.




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified birds | 29 | 17 | 51 | 83 |
| Frigate birds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vultures | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Ducks | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| Parrots | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| Stilt birds | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| Pelicans | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Nocturnal birds | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |

**Table 6.6b.** The absolute dispersal of identified "nocturnal bird" *adornos* across the insular Caribbean and Venezuela.




The Huecan sites even surpass the Saladoid sites when considering depictions of "nocturnal birds". Impressive Saladoid "nocturnal birds" have also been found at Morel (Guadeloupe), a mainly Huecan site (Waldron 2010: 157). Here they generally speaking resemble "owls" taking the form of either *adornos* or modelled features added to vessel walls (Waldron 2010: 158).

"Owl"-like *adornos* are placed on to the rims and faces of vessels where this "bird" is portrayed in numerous manners: "the circularity of the eyes, size of the eyes in relation to the head, eyes often exaggerated further; the distinctive bifurcation of the face by a brow ridge that creates a heart-shaped design surrounding the bird's visage; the protruding, often down-curved beak, even when the potter anthropomorphised the bird with pronounced nostrils located above, below or on the beak; the protruding ear tufts of a screech owl species; and in polychrome examples, colour markings in red, black and white that emphasized the brown, black and white marking of many owls, nightjars and oilbirds" (see Figs. 6.40-6.41, and 6.42-6.44 which mark the identifiable features); Waldron 2010: 160, 333-7). We also read that, in a few cases, the "nightjar" identifiably differs even if merely by means of a smaller, narrower beak (Waldron 2010: 160).

**Fig. 6.40.** Saladoid screech "owl" *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; width *c.*9.3 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

A strong continuity as to any "nocturnal bird/owl" display has been observed throughout time. The "owl" associated with Late Ceramic Age ("Taíno") iconography can be identified also on the basis of its rounded head and slightly raised, perfectly circular eyes (Oudhuis 2008: 58-9).

Depictions of anthropomorphized “nocturnal birds” are varied. An *adorno* suggesting an individual wearing an “owl” mask is worth mentioning. A composite of human and “nocturnal bird” features is encountered in Guadeloupe (Waldron 2010*:* 161).

Historic references have been noted regarding not only masks but also other objects in shape of, for instance, “owls”. Christopher Columbus in the course of his first voyage (1492-‘93) mentions “many head-shaped masks that were very well carved”. He is not certain if they were merely objects of beauty or that they played a role in ceremonies. Andrés Bernáldez († 1513), the Spanish royal curate and historian, also refers to crowns, masks, girdles, collars as well as to a large number of woven cotton items, depicting, for example, the heads of “owls” and monkeys, several of these even carved in wood (Waldron 2010: 161-2).

**Fig. 6.41.** Two Saladoid “(barn) owl” *adornos* from Pearls, Grenada; left: width *c.*5.6 cm and right *c.*8.6 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

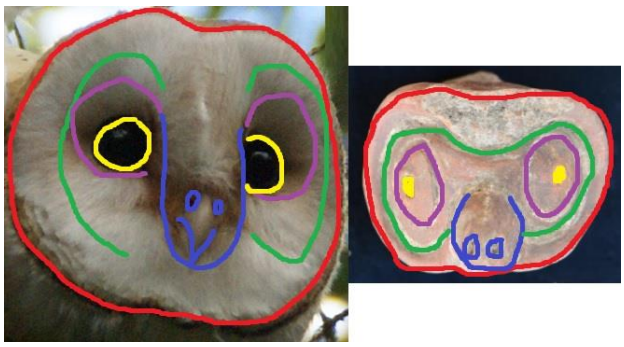


**Fig. 6.42.** Barn owl compared to “owl” *adorno* (Fig. 6.41, right); the identifiable facial features are marked.

**Fig. 6.43.** Screech owl compared to “owl” *adorno* (Fig. 6.40); the identifiable facial features are marked.

**Fig. 6.44.** "Nightjar" (?) *adorno* (Fig. 6.10) compared to the Puerto Rican nightjar; the identifiable facial and wing features are marked.

### 6.5.4 "Nocturnal birds" in Amerindian cosmologies

In general, the "Nocturnal birds" identified in the stories are the "owl" and the "nightjar". These dark plumaged nocturnal predators are linked to the cosmological layer of the underworld, a layer associated with darkness, the Moon and death (see 2.3.1).

"Owls" have a liminal quality as they resemble raptors when feeding on live prey at night (inverted time). Their cries fill the night skies, whereas birds mostly vocalise in order to mark the daytime. Various owl species roost and nest in tree hollows, caves or other natural cavities, which in Amerindian worldviews are often considered gateways between cosmic strata. Interestingly, several species of nightjar build their nests on the ground (inverted space). This fact presumably fuelled any ascribed connotations of these "birds" as being guardians of night and the gatekeepers of realms.

The night spirits and danger generally reign during the night. In several cases presented here, humans are explicitly told not to go out, and not to hunt at night. The fact that "nocturnal birds" are active at night could have turned them into agents of the underworld, thereby linking them to death, spirits and ancestors. As described (see 6.5.1), their nocturnal vocalisations are omens of danger and death.

#### *"Nocturnal birds" as spirits*

Various references mention "nocturnal birds" as being receptacles for departed souls. The Kaliña (Cariban) believe that humans have several souls, one of which is linked to the Earth. Now and again a soul appears as a "goatsucker" (de Goeje 1943: 11; Lévi-Strauss 1988: 36). The "owl" is viewed as a reincarnation of the dead, especially of deceased women (Karsten 1935: 377; Jivaroan belief).

The Taulipang (Cariban) believe that so-called "goatsuckers" are the domestic pets of the spirit of a deceased and/or water spirits because nocturnal birds are often observed in the vicinity of burial sites (de Goeje 1943: 21, 54; Lévi-Strauss 1988: 36).

The Tukuna (Ticuna, isolate) similarly believe that souls of the dead return in the shape of "goatsuckers" in order to extract the blood, flesh and bones of the living, leaving only their skins behind (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 36). The Arawak consider a "goatsucker" to be a malevolent spirit pursuing humans with its cries to then bite and kill them as well (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 36).

We read on "goatsuckers" (Amerindians unspecified): "… They are receptacles for departed souls, who come back again to Earth, unable to rest for crimes done in their days of nature, or they are expressly sent by Jumbo, or Yabahou [Ywahu], to haunt cruel and hard-hearted masters, and retaliate injuries received from them" (Roth 2011: 120 [102]).

"Nocturnal birds" in general are ostensibly associated with the spirit world as either messengers or as malevolent spirits. According to the Jivaro people, the "owl" along with other nocturnal species is a "bird"-demon (Karsten 1935: 377). "Bird"-demons (as with "nocturnal birds") are feared as bearers of the magic arrow. In addition to "owl", the *kuikui*, a small bird which moves about whistling at night, bewitches mankind. Moreover, the *uichúchu* (a small, long-tailed bird, almost green in colour) leaves its resting place positioned upon a rock at night to then approach the dwellings of humans, producing a vocalisation on which its name is based. The Jivaro say that a "nocturnal bird", when sent by a sorcerer, carries magic arrows to far away other places, introducing disease and death (Karsten 1935: 378).

The presumption that "nocturnal birds" are embodiments of souls or (malevolent) spirits may well have contributed to taboos becoming linked to these "birds". Several references to the fact that "nocturnal birds" should not be killed have been noted. Amerindians (unspecified) possess a great superstition with regard to "goatsuckers" and will not kill them at any price (Schomburgk 1843: 67).

According to Cariban belief, "nightjars" build nests on the ground. If you ever remove their eggs, ill fate will strike you (Ahlbrinck 1931; Lévi-Strauss 1988: 37). The Kaliña (Cariban) say that "goatsuckers" should never be shot (de Goeje 1943: 53-4).

On the other hand, because its bones and bodily fat embodies power, the Jivaro eat a "nocturnal bird" (*guacharo*) although it is an incarnation of the souls of the deceased. This oilbird (*Steatornis caripensis*) lives in: (a) La Cueva del Guácharo, the country's largest natural cave located near the town of Caripe (eastern Venezuela), (b) the Caya caves on the Pastaza River in the northwestern Amazon Basin (Ecuador) (Karsten 1935: 68) and (c) caves in Trinidad.

Among the "Taíno" peoples of the Greater Antilles, the "owl" is not only thought to be associated with death (in turn linked to *opias*, spirits of death) but is also intermingled with

shamanic practices. We read that "owl eyes outlined on many archaeological objects resemble the empty eye sockets on human skulls" making them *signs** of death (García Arévalo 1997: 120). These skull-like faces may pertain to a shaman in trance. Numerous examples of shamanic paraphernalia are embellished with "bat" and "owl" motifs (García Arévalo 1997: 112-23).

### *Tokens of death, disease and birth*

A "nocturnal bird" was not to be shot, at least not by certain South American indigenous peoples, not only because it presumably embodied a spirit, but also as a result of the forethought that a malicious event would take place if these "birds" were shot. The fact they are considered tokens is perhaps yet another reason for taboos being imposed on relationships with these "birds".

A belief among residents of the Takutu area (Guyana, Amerindians unspecified) implies that no "owls" and/or "goatsuckers" should be killed because they are not enemies, but tokens (Schomburgk 1843: 67). Moreover, "owls" are both tokens of death and birth to the Arawak (Roth 2011: 261-2 [223]) who also believe that a "goatsucker" perching near you is an omen of death (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 36). Moreover, whenever the *Urutaw* (an unknown owl species) makes a certain sound, it is a sure indication that someone in your direct vicinity will die. In general if an "owl" hoots, it delivers is a *sign** of death according to the Carib (Ahlbrinck 1931, see the entry under "Uilen", meaning owls; Roe 1982: 260). When it hoots "Cuta! Cuta! Cuta!" quickly during the night, it herlads a child will soon be born (Roth 2011: 262 [223]).

Feathers of a "goatsucker" serve as talismans and in rituals (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 37). Moreover, the plumage of the Amazon "goatsucker" brings success in love. The virtue of pubescent girls is protected by: (a) sweeping the area under their hammocks with goatsucker feathers, (b) stuffing a dead "bird" in their hammocks, and (c) obliging them to sit on a dead "bird" for three days (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 37, Amerindians unspecified).

The sounds these "birds" create are considered indications, too. Their calls are described as eerie and resulting in spine-chilling shivers which presumably not only fuelled the concept that these "birds" herald mishap but also contributed to being referred to as "ghost birds". The sound of the "nightjar" is reported to be a bad omen and to cause feelings of fear (van Capelle 1926: 34).

The "goatsucker" is called a "ghost bird" in the Cariban language, because it combines its horrifying, monotonous nocturnal calls with unexpectedly flying right in front of the feet of someone walking around at night (Ahlbrinck 1931, see under the entry "Boeta Boeta"). "Goatsuckers" are thought to communicate with the deceased and to deliver messages to their conjurers (Schomburgk 1943: 67). Schomburgk adds that the sounds these "birds" (referred to as *wacarai* or *sumpy*) produce during the night have contributed to the fear installed in Amerindians and Creoles.

In the narratives, a “Nightjar” is often portrayed as moaning at the Moon. The hooting of “owls” is a recurrent motif, too (see 6.5.1). It has been noted that both “nightjars” and “owls” are considered Masters of, or one of, the four deities surrounding the Moon (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 38; van Capelle 1926: 34). A Cariban belief comprises that “nightjars” (Caprimulgidae) always whine because they are in constant pain (Ahlbrinck 1931: see under the entry “Bousi Shoutoe”). Moreover, according to the Carib, the “nightjar” always vocalises “Okoyo”, lit.: “something is hurting me” (Ahlbrinck 1931: 523, see under the entry “Woka”).

Looking upon the “nightjar” as a healer of ulcers is described as a Kaliña (Cariban) belief. Among the Ayoré (Zamucoan), the “goatsucker” is the Mistress of Fevers, convulsions and other diseases (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 38, 45). Among the Arawak residing in the coastal Pomeroon region (Guyana), the calls of another small “nocturnal bird” (*karéo-obannahu*) predict that a human must be either very ill or recovering. If this “bird’s” call is heard faintly, his or her condition is deteriorating, but if distinct his or her health is improving (Roth 2011: 262 [223]).

Various kinds of “nocturnal birds” are considered to be bad omens. However, they, or their vocalisation, can also proclaim more positive events (e.g., birth, restoring health). Among the Ayoré (Zamucoan, Bolivia and Paraguay), cries of the “nightjar” are also an important aspect of a ritual cycle when reopening the world in the month of August. When people hear it, men and women separate. Offerings are now presented to the “goatsucker” in order to prevent starvation in the year to come (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 44-5). Moreover, honey is collected and then buried to pay tribute to this “bird”. The Ayoré regard the “goatsucker” to be the Mistress of Honey (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 45).

In addition to the cries of “nocturnal birds”, another characteristic has been identified: the nightjar’s extra pair of eyes. It was observed that the “goatsucker” has four, not two, eyes, probably the result of an oscillate pattern on its wings. This trait may cause it to be considered an ill omen (Roth 2011: 391 [350]). In Brazil, Paraguay and North-Western Argentina, one believes that “goatsuckers” keep their eyes open while asleep in order to follow the path of the Sun in the sky (Lévi-Strauss 1988: 34). The spots on its wing, viewed as an extra pair of (always opened) eyes, could have also inspired this assumption.

### 6.5.5 Concluding remarks

Despite the numerous nocturnal birds, the present research focuses on the owl and nightjar, as they have been repeatedly identified in the narratives and the iconography. Only a few owl species appear both in the South American mainland and in the insular Caribbean, whereas only a few species of nocturnal birds are native to all the islands.

These nocturnal black plumaged “birds” are linked to the underworld and therefore also to death, the Moon and darkness. The fact they hunt at night is an inversion of the Amerindian

hunting tradition. The inaudible flight of especially owls is very effective, rendering them untraceable to their prey, which they catch with their sharp claws and beaks.

Nocturnal birds have a broad vocal repertoire, which is audible to humans. Their calls are often indicators of the sinister (e.g., death, disease, night) and of the positive (e.g., childbirth). In general, they are especially heard at dusk and dawn, hereby signifying these events and said to be singing to the Moon. The "nightjar's" association with the Moon is even further strengthened as it is mainly active at dusk, but can also be spotted and heard during nights when the Moon is full. The fact certain species are only present during specific months may have contributed to season-related associations.

Numerous references mention that the vocalisation of "nocturnal birds" are considered eerie as well as indicators of misfortune, presumably fuelled by their link to the underworld. In the stories, this trait is portrayed whereby these "birds" are either spirits themselves or the pets of spirits. Seeing or hearing them can be signs of illness and death. Their heads with large eyes apparently contribute to an association with the deceased and with receptacles of ancestor souls. Observing these "birds", especially owls with their round or heart-shaped heads that seem to rotate 360$^{o}$ , in the vicinity of burial sites probably supports this assumption.

By and large, the "owl" iconography has been identified as a motif persistent through time. It has been recognised as the most commonly depicted among "birds" on the Saladoid ceramics of the Lesser Antilles, and also in the (later) "Taíno" iconography encountered in the Greater Antilles. Although "nocturnal bird" imagery occurs in historical settings (time) and specific locations (place) across the Antilles, it is absent on mainland ceramics.

The "owl" is most frequently encountered as modelled features (*adornos*) on the walls of vessels. In spite of a varied visualisation, they can be identified by means of their round (on occasion heart-shaped) heads, slightly raised eyes and (down-curved) beaks. Historic references reveal that "owls" can also be depicted by, for example, masks. Archaeological records pertaining to the "Taíno", which include many shamanic paraphernalia embellished with "bat" and "owl" motifs, support this observation.

### *"Nightjar" vs. the "owl"*

The category "nocturnal birds" consists of "owls" and "nightjars". Research into the ascribed roles within the narratives discloses an interesting disparity: the "Owl" is attributed with the role of opponent more often, whereas the "Nightjar" more frequently plays the part of object/goal.

Therefore, the "Owl" is most probably the malevolent spirit, who attacks humans. The "Nightjar" as an opponent "only" scares people with its cry. Or, it is described as a spirit of the night (Story no. 21, 320; Cariban). However, the "Nightjar" is also called in to assist, to protect or to request for help. As a spirit, the "Nightjar" feeds on the deceased, not on the living.

Women take on the identity of “Nightjar when they are: (a) abandoned, (b) mistreated, and/or (c) grieving for their (Moon) husband, or (d) wives disgusted by their husband leaving him to transform (Story nos. 266-7, 271-5; 2x Jivaroan; Gê, 4x Zamucoan). In one story the smashed brain of a spirit transformed into “Nightjars” (Story no. 17; Arawakan).

The “Nightjar” is portrayed as the Moon’s paramour or wife, as it continues to call out or moan (grieve) for her. These sounds also serve as a *sign** for Amerindians to go to sleep. The hoots of the “Owl” are associated with nocturnal hours, too. In sum, the “Nightjar” and “Owl” share a direct link to the night, the origin of the night, as well as to these “birds” natural behaviour (vocalisation). Additional comments subscribe that certain Amerindians see the “Owl” as the Master of the Moon. In other cases, for instance, pertaining to the Amazonian Tupian people, the “Nightjar” is not only regarded as the Moon’s paramour/wife but as a deity that surrounds the Moon.

The “Owl” and the “Nightjar” are also both linked to the spiritual. “Nightjars” are often encountered near burial grounds and thus associated with the souls of the dead. The “Owl” is portrayed as the physical manifestation of a malevolent spirit. Hearing an “Owl” is a bad omen, mocking it will result in death. Both “Owl” and “Nightjar” share at least a single narratological context. The fact they are mutual and the most frequent (“animal/bird”) co-actors is clear: “Owl” and “Nightjar” feature in eighteen narratives.

# Chapter 7. Becoming acquainted with others

All “animals” mentioned in this dissertation are either identified as prominent iconographical motifs encountered in the Saladoid series of the Caribbean and/or dealt with based on their remarkable roles or attributes featured in the studied narratives (see 5.1). This chapter discusses the “Caiman” (7.1) and “Ant” (7.2). Whereas the “caiman” iconography is recurrent, any “ant” iconography has not (yet) been identified. These insects are included as one of the “anomalies”, interesting *because* of their remarkably frequent appearance in the investigated stories. The layout follows the layout set in Chapters 5 and 6.

## 7.1 “Caiman”

In this section the “Caiman” as a *sign** undergoes a more extensive conceptualisation, starting off with its role and attributes featured in the narratives (7.1.1). Pertaining to this reptile’s “natural” qualities, a discussion of its behavioural and physical assets follows (7.1.2). Next, the focus shifts to the “caiman” imagery found in the archaeological records (7.1.3). In addition, a separate paragraph deals with the “caiman’s” position within the indigenous cosmologies (7.1.4).

### 7.1.1 “Caiman” in the narratives

> A man’s children persuade him to dance. He steps on a dry branch and falls into the river. The children row off in their canoe, leaving their father behind. An Alligator gives the man a ride on his back. But while going downstream the Alligator repeatedly breaks wind. The Amerindian tells

the Alligator its odour is pleasant so not to offend it. They pass by mangroves with hanging roots. The Amerindian climbs the mangroves. The Alligator urinates, turns around and shakes its head. The Amerindian falls over and turns into a Sloth. [Story no. 503 (Warao); abridged]

The "Caiman/Alligator" is a common personage (or motif) in narratives, of which this research includes 42 examples of which in turn as much as 60 percent stem from the core area. Covering a wide geographical area, the language families are: Arawakan, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Jivaroan, Matacoan, Panoan, Tupian, and Warao (see Fig. 7.1). The narratives recorded in the Gê and Warao languages are slightly overrepresented.

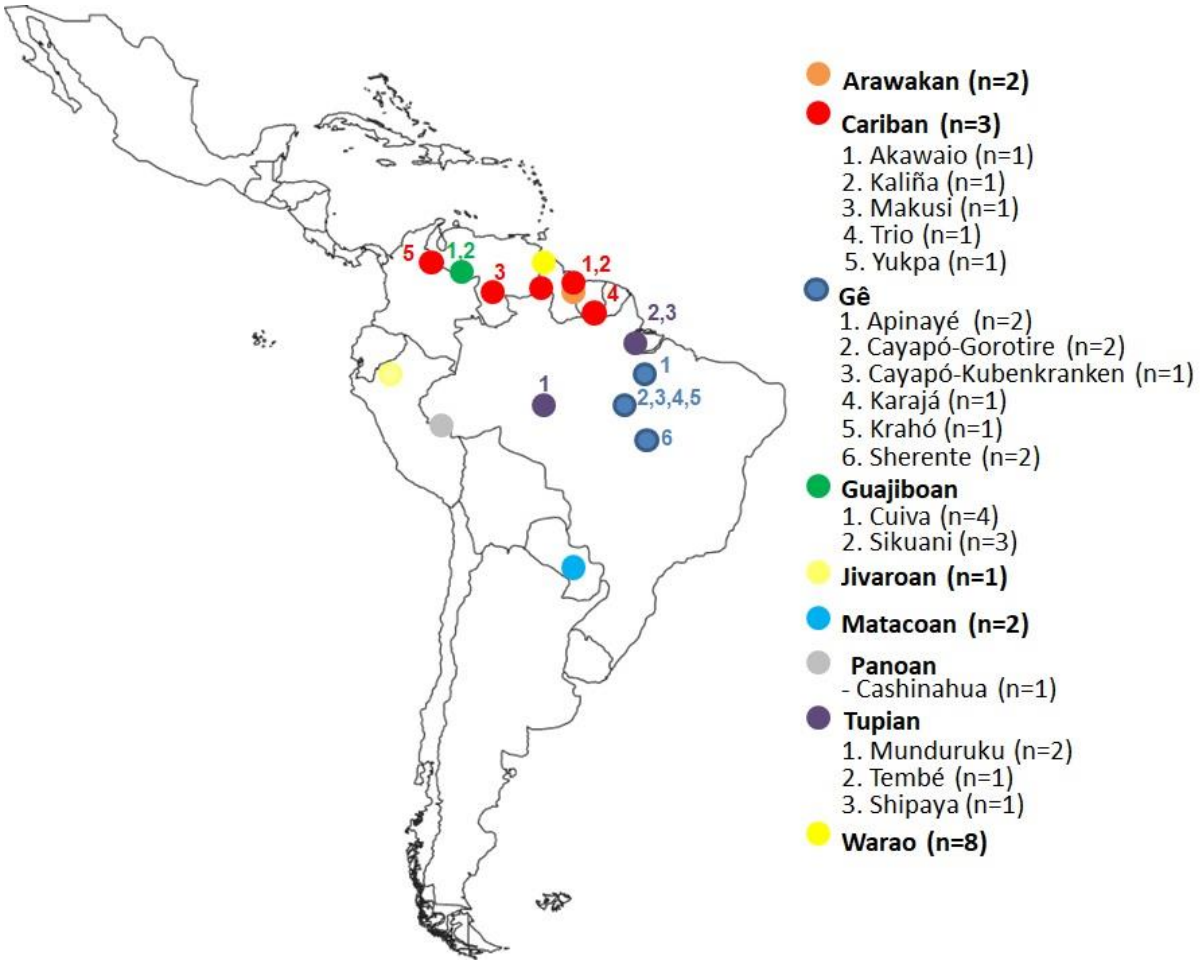



**Fig. 7.1.** Plot of "Caiman/Alligator" narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

The narrative functions for these tales reveal no significant variation as to the general pattern set in Chapter 4 (see 4.1.1).[172] Only the functions entitled ensuring knowledge and identity occur relatively more frequently among "Caiman/Alligator" narratives (6 against 3 percent in general and 7 against 4 percent resp.). The functions referred to as validating the world and encoding social behaviour are the most dominant. These narratives not only tend to explain

[172] $\chi^2(4) = 1.53$; $\rho = 0.11$ (not significant). See Appendix C, Table C-8 for a list of all narrative functions of Caiman narratives and Appendix D for a more elaborate discussion on narrative functions.

the world including all it contains but also exhibit any (in)correct forms of behaviour (according to social conventions). The tales are informative, too, for instance, regarding which food (not) to eat.

As to the similar motifs as well as the spatial and temporal settings, a very homogenous and consistent frame is by and large set throughout the narratives dealing with the "Caiman/ Alligator".

### *Actors, events and settings ("fabula")*

Within the total dataset, the two following sub-clusters were identified and then further analysed as follows: (a) the helpful or friendly "Caiman/Alligator", and (b) "Caiman/Alligator" as a result of transformation (see Appendix D, section A).[173] In addition, five cases were recognised with a "Caiman/ Alligator" paramour (Story nos. 78, 560, 615, 622, 653; Arawakan, Gê (Apinayé), Guajiboan (Cuiva, 2x Sikuani)). Although the devastating or treacherous "Caiman/Alligator" is a very common theme, too, the majority of these narratives also incorporates motifs concerning the helpful qualities and therefore are not addressed as a separate cluster.

"Caiman" is ascribed various roles. The way in which the "Caiman/Alligator" roles are divided thus reveals a significant variation.[174] "Caiman" is more frequently attributed to the roles object/goal and opponent and less to the roles of subject/actor and sender. Fulfilling its role as an object/goal, it is an object in itself for instance when linked to vengeance, or as a paramour. However, "Caiman/Alligator" is also hunted (when the Sun devours a *lewoo* (Matacoan), a caiman-like creature), killed or as an outcome of a transformation. The second most frequently ascribed role concerns that of helper, closely followed by that of opponent. Moreover, as a sender, "Caiman" introduces cultural gifts and knowledge, or gives advice resulting in subsequent actions.

The most common motifs pertain to: (a) origin (n=20), (b) helpful "animal" (n=18), (c) transformation (n=11), (d) devastating/treacherous "animal" (n=10), and (e) punishments (n=10), (see Appendix D, section A. Fabula). The helpful "Caiman/Alligator" motif is frequently encountered and often combined with motifs portraying it as a treacherous "animal" (e.g., as an unreliable friend). Serving as an (unreliable) helper, the "animal" assists the protagonist in order to cross a body of water, hereby providing means of transport. However, because the

[173] The narratives which part of the first cluster are numbered: 18, 24, 69, 152, 157, 250, 343-4, 364, 422, 503, 534, 561, 563, 1096; Cariban (Trio, Akawaio, Macushi, Yukpa), Tupian (Tembé, Shipaya, Munduruku), Gê (Karajá, Krahô, 2x Cayapó-Gorotire, Apinayé), Warao. The narratives which are part of the second cluster are numbered: 300, 335, 453, 467, 471, 489, 534, 609; Jivaroan, 4x Warao, Gê, Guajiboan.

[174] $\chi^2(5) = 12.36$; $\rho = 0.03$ (significant; $\alpha$ 0.05). A significant variation of roles in comparison with the overall distribution of ascribed roles set in chapter 4 can therefore be observed here. For more details, see Appendix D, *A. Fabula*.

protagonist insults the "Caiman/Alligator", "Caiman" tries to gobble the protagonist (Stories nos. 152, 157, 172, 344, 364, 563; Gê (Karajá), Tupian (Tembé, Munduruku), Panoan (Cashinahua), Cariban (Akawaio), Warao).

The "Caiman/Alligator" is also portrayed as powerful, a leader and a provider of culture. In Story no. 422 (Yukpa, Cariban), "Caiman" is described as a medicine man and the leader of "animals", who establishes the depth of a body of water after a flood. In Story no. 18 (Trio, Cariban), the origin of agriculture is directly linked to "Alligator". He presents his "Fish"-daughter along with all other kinds of gifts to the protagonist Perëpërëwa. She then teaches the latter for instance everything about agriculture and how to build a village. In Story no. 615 (Cuiva, Guajiboan) a "Caiman" shaman, by way of punishment, casts a spell on a woman, who then murders her husband and brother-in-law.

"Caiman" is not only associated with the first women (and men) but also with the mother of the Twin culture heroes. In Story no. 78 (Arawakan), the Sun creates humans from a "Caiman". According to this same tale, a handsome man, having killed a "Caiman" that had stolen his fish, wishes to marry "Caiman's" sister. However, her ("Caiman") father put him up for a number of difficult tasks, because his son was the "Caiman" this man had killed. A very similar event is recounted in Story no. 1096 (Macushi, Cariban) when the Sun punishes "Alligator" for stealing his fish. Begging for its life, "Alligator" offers its daughter to the Sun. Having no female offspring, "Alligator" creates a wooden daughter to present to the Sun. She gives birth to the Twin heroes. In Story no. 705 (Arawakan), the Sun punishes "Caiman" and "Otter" for destroying the fish trap and stealing the fish, see Fig. 7.2.[175]

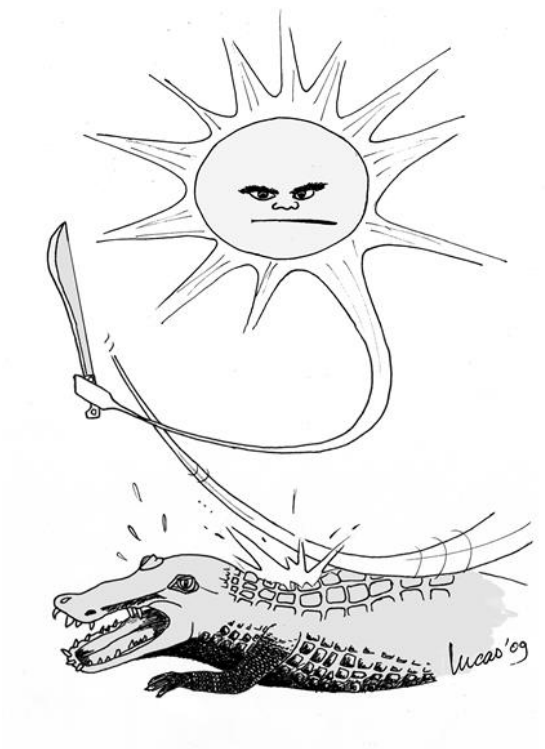



**Fig. 7.2.** Sun punishes "Caiman"; artist's impression of Story no. 705 (Arawakan) by L.J.M. Arts (2009).

[175] Interestingly, "Caiman" and "Otter" co-occur here. "Caiman" is recurrently displayed as a Master of Water, and all it contains. "Otter" is more directly linked to fish, presumably the Master of Fish who is an excellent fisherman and the one who teaches human beings to fish or provides them with fishing nets. Within this context, the "Otter" features in Story nos. 134, 148, 204, 285, 434, 455, 464, 532, 567, 594, 627, 663, 705; Arawakan; Bororoan; Cariban (Bakairí, Taulipang, Yukpa); Gê (Bororo, Krahô) Guajiboan (Cuiva, Sikuani); Warao).

In the Arawakan, Cariban, Gê and Warao narratives, “Caiman” also (indirectly) assists both shamans and spirits. In Story no. 152 (Karajá, Gê), “Caiman” helps a malevolent water spirit (in fact a transformed “Fish”) by revealing where an Amerindian protagonist was hiding after rejecting it. In Story no. 24 (Cariban), a white cannibal called “Letterhoutstomp” devours all the Amerindians who had taken refuge on an island. Having discovered their hiding place, this cannibal creates a “Caiman” to serve as a means of transport. In several other cases, “Caiman/Alligator” transmutes into a bench hereby presumably also (indirectly) referring to the fact this reptile assists shamans/spirits (see also 7.1.4). For instance, in Story no. 99 (Warao), Sun grabs an “Alligator” by the neck and transforms it into a bench as Sun goes out fishing. Numerous tales directly link “Caiman” to benches, especially in relation to marriage and welcome ceremonies. It may be added here that Story nos. 78, 91, 99, 107, 356 (Arawakan, 2x Warao, 2x Kaliña (Cariban) include references to shamanic benches.

In addition to the aforementioned transformations of “Caiman” into an object, we also come across the transmuting of “Caiman/Alligator” into a man/woman, or vice versa (Story nos. 78, 91, 99, 107, 356; Arawakan, 2x Warao, 2x Kaliña (Cariban)). Especially motifs concerning a man who turns into “Caiman/Alligator” is often related to motifs pertaining to escaping (from danger) and taking refuge (see Appendix D, section A. Fabula).

Moreover, both shamans and spirits have been known to take on this “animal’s” appearance. “Caiman/Alligator” is explicitly described as a (transformed) spirit in Story nos. 91, 489 (Cariban, Warao). Two other cases refer to a transformed shaman (Story nos. 422, 609; Yukpa (Cariban), Cuiva (Guajiboan)). The “Caiman/Alligator” is also perhaps portrayed as the Master of Water and all its living contents. In Story no. 226 (Sherente, Gê) “Alligator” is mentioned as the Owner (i.e., Master) of the “third” Creek. Motifs that not only connect “Caiman/Alligator” to “Fish”(-people) but also to associated ceremonies (Gê, Sikuani) seem to be related, too. For instance, in Story nos. 335 and 534 (Gê; Cayapó-Kubenkranken, Cayapó-Gorotire), a man transforms into a “Caiman”, enters the water realm to then learn all the names of the “Fish” as well as their songs. Or, Story no. 627 (Sikuani, Guajiboan) reports on how a man (accompanied by his son) visit the “Fish”-people, who then instruct them how to greet a dangerous “animal” (i.e., their Master?) such as “Caiman/Alligator” (see also 7.1.4).

Summing up, the most prominent frame set in the various narratives comprises a powerful, treacherous opponent, indeed a creature that may devour you. This phenomenon is often related to the prohibition of insulting it. However, “Caiman/Alligator” is also depicted as a helpful “animal” that introduces items of value and agriculture. Moreover, it is linked to the origin of time-honoured welcoming and marriage ceremonies.

The water realm (n=29) nominates a spatial setting in which “Caiman/Alligator” is framed. This “animal” is also associated with the Sun (and therefore the sky world; n=8). The Amerindian protagonist often encounters this “reptile” within a forest setting (i.e., far away from the

village) during his/her travels, and therefore most likely during the daytime (see Appendix D, section A. Fabula).

### With whom is "Caiman/Alligator" associated?

"Caiman/Alligator" features on multiple occasions together with other "animals/birds" such as "Fish", "Woodpecker", "Jaguar", "Birds", "Snake/Anaconda", and "Ants". However, they do not always directly interact with the "Caiman/Alligator", nor are they intertwined by any other means.

#### *"Fish"*

The category "Fish" stands out because as many as nine stories feature both "Caiman/ Alligator" and "Fish". Records also appear pertaining to other aquatic "animals": "Dolphin", "Eel", "Shark", and "Stingray" are both encountered on a single occasion.

Motifs and themes that apparently interconnect these actors comprise either transformation and the origin of culture, or certain ceremonies as mentioned for instance with regard to the aforementioned tuition pertaining to "Fish"-ceremonies, songs, dances and names (see Story nos. 335, 534; Gê). Learning how to greet (dangerous) "Caiman" is described in Story no. 627 (Guajiboan). "Caiman's" "Fish"-daughter teaches all kinds of knowledge (Story no. 18; Trio, Cariban). Sun when utilising "Caiman" as a bench on a fishing trip is recounted in Story no. 99 (Warao).

"Caiman", "Fish" and other aquatic creatures are also related as the result of the quality of being able to transform. The protagonist or the other actors repeatedly transmute into these aquatic "animals" whenever they enter a body of water. In this context, they may change into "Fish", "Caiman", "Dolphin" etc. (see Appendix D, sections A. Fabula and section A2).

#### *"Birds" and "Woodpecker"*

Motifs concerning a helpful "animal" not only interconnect "Caiman/Alligator" to "Birds" (in general; n=8) but also to specific "birds" such as "Woodpecker" (n=9) and "Heron" (n=6). For instance, whenever the protagonist requires any assistance, the "Caiman/Alligator" helps him to cross a river, whereas "Heron" conceals him in its bill (Story no. 157; Tembé, Tupian). Both "bird" and "caiman" are thus attributed the same role.

On the other hand, within the sky world context, "Birds" and "Woodpecker" interact with it. As actors in the tales these "birds" and "Caiman" are often associated with Sun. In Story no. 78 (Arawakan) Sun creates men and women from a "Caiman". When a man puts "Birds/Woodpecker" on guard in order to find out who is stealing his "Fish", it turns out that "Caiman/Alligator" is the culprit. In Story nos. 314-5 (Matacoan) Sun's daughter marries "Woodpecker" who is then devoured by a "Caiman-like creature" (referred to as *lewoo*), which is Sun's food and then "Woodpecker" is revived by Sun. Moreover, in Story no. 1096 (Macushi,

Cariban), “Caiman/Alligator” provides Sun with a wife made of wood. This woman (mother of Twin heroes) has no vagina which “Woodpecker” then provides her with.

*“Snake/Anaconda”*

“Snake”, as with “Caiman/Alligator”, is apparently an agent closely associated with the quality of transformation as are other “animals” e.g., “Frogs”. This quality (or motif) seems to intertwine them within the context of the narrative. Now and again this phenomenon is very explicit. For example, Story no. 489 (Warao) recounts how cannibals drown to then transform into “Water serpents” and “Caimans/Alligators”. In Story no. 300 (Jivaroan) a man ultimately transfigures into a “Giant serpent”, having prior hereto first changed into a “Frog” and then into a “Caiman/Alligator”.

Also of interest here is the fact that, in numerous cases, the “Caiman/Alligator” as well as the “Snake” transform into an object. In Story no. 99 (Warao) Sun utilises “Caiman” as a bench and “Snake” as a fish arrow when setting off on a hunting trip. In Story no. 107 (Warao) the protagonist is seated on a “Caiman/Alligator”-shaped bench in the course of a (marital) rite. Later on in this same narrative, he has to sit on a “Water snake” as part of another *rite de passage*.

Their shared *symbolism** and ascribed role(s) is also illustrated in Story no. 627 (Sikuani, Guajiboan) set in the water world. In it, the protagonist receives instructions on all kinds of ceremonies. Within this context, he is not only informed that “Water snake” and “Caiman/Alligator” are very dangerous, but also that they should be welcomed in a special manner. Yet again these actors are intertwined by the fact they are: (a) strong, powerful and potentially dangerous agents (referred to as Masters of the Water realm), (b) strongly related to their ability to transform, and (c) associated with shamanism (see also 8.3).

No clear hierarchy can be discerned between “Water snake” and “Caiman/Alligator”. The narratological context contains only one statement concerning which of the two (“Caiman” vs. “Anaconda”) is the strongest or the most dangerous. In Story no. 24 (Cariban), shamans evoke the “Snake” spirit to kill an approaching “Caiman”.

### *Characterization and duration (“story”)*

Although the category “Caiman/Alligator” is most often indirectly characterized, the use of analogy occurs repeatedly. Specific qualities are thus emphasized, both physical and behavioural, through direct characterizations and the application of analogies. These attributes are therefore presumably also present in other forms displaying the “Caiman/Alligator”. The aspects encountered in the various narratives are displayed in Table 7.1.

A statistical approach could only be conducted for the narrated time, which did indicate a significant variation in "Caiman" narratives.[176] Only ten (27 percent) of these stories span a small number of days. Six cases have a narrated time spanning weeks. All the others continue for months (n=10) or even years (n=11). This longer than average narrated time indicates that these cases are more "epic" in the sense that they come with an extensive storyline.

A statistical approach for "real time" proves unreliable due to the low number of records. However, real time apparently is in line with the general pattern. Of the 38 unique records, as much as 92 percent (n=35) can be placed within the short range, taking up between 1 and 5 pages (compared to 94 percent in general). Only one narrative falls into the middle range (6-11 pages) and two fall into the long range (11 or more pages).

**Table 7.1.** The physical and behavioural features of "Caiman" as explicated in the narratives

| Physical | Behavioural |
|---|---|
| Notched/scaled, sandy back | Powerful medicine man, leader, owns a creek, Master of Water/all that lives in water |
| Short or absent tongue | Excellent diver |
| Handsome appearance | Soft-hearted |
| Long blue loincloth, belt made of hair | Once friendly, now angry (killer): wrongly accused |
| - | Hides from a hunter in deep water |

### 7.1.2 Crocodilians in nature

The Amazonian region houses the largest variety of crocodilians on planet Earth: nine species in all, seven of which are caimans.[177] Walter Bates reports, the naturalist-*cum*-explorer (2009 [1873]: 299), during his 19th-century travels: "It is scarcely exaggerating to say that the waters of the Solimoens [the upper Amazon] are as well stocked with alligators in the dry season as a ditch in England is in summer with tadpoles." Unfortunately, our knowledge of the ecology and distribution of the caiman remains incomplete. They are not a genuine threat to mankind.

The American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) is native to Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Central America, Southern Florida, and several Caribbean islands. The males of a larger species, the Orinoco crocodile (*Crocodylus intermedius*), measure up to 6.4 m. They inhabit the Amazon Basin (Venezuela, Colombia) and are able to swim to Trinidad and Grenada utilising floodwaters and ocean currents.

[176] Compared to the pattern in general (see 4.3.2), the Chi-squared analysis reveals a significant variation: $\chi^2(2) = 4.49$; $\rho < 0.10$ (significant). For more details on the study of Duration, see Appendix D, section A. Story-layer.

[177] For a reference to the great crocodilians of the tropical basin of the Amazon and the littorals of the Caribbean Sea, see Wylie 2013: 57.

In the Amazon region, dwarf crocodile species are relatively abundant, some of which fall prey to the green anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*). The Common caiman (*Caiman crocodilus,* see Fig. 7.3) is slightly larger than the dwarf, kindred reptiles. Its common range extends from the Amazon Basin, Central America onto several Caribbean islands. The *Caiman crocodilus* is also referred to as the "spectacled caiman" because of a prominent bony ridge positioned between the eyes.

**Fig. 7.3.** Common caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*); photograph by C. Herrera (2010). Licensed CC BY-NC 4.0, accessed by EOL.

The black caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*) on the other hand with its larger eyes and narrower snout can reach a length of up to 6.1 m. This particular species is capable of challenging a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and even in rare cases humans. Its habitat stretches from Bolivia to Ecuador and from Brazil to French Guiana (Wylie 2013: 58-9).

The Greater Antilles (e.g., Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola) are the habitat of several species of crocodilians. For instance, the aforementioned American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) is native to Jamaica, Hispaniola and Cuba, whereas the common caiman (*Caiman crocodiles*) has only been introduced in Cuba and Puerto Rico during the 20$^{th}$ century (Crother 1999: 52, 62, 67, 116, 178, 328-9).

The *Crocodylus rhombifer* is a small species autochthonous to Cuba and found in the western part of the island (Crother 1999: 52). With an average length of between 2.1-2.3 m, large males can reach 3.5 m and weigh more than 215 kg. They are highly aggressive and potentially dangerous to humans. The *C. rhombifer* is now endangered but was once encountered across various islands of the Caribbean, as recovered fossils in the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas (Hastings et al. 2014; Wylie 2013: 68-9) indicate. It may be added here that crocodile remains have been recovered on Jamaica, at the "Taíno" Sweetwater site (1450 CE, Meillacoid series), which is located in the county of West-Moreland, Southwest Jamaica (Saunders 2005: 218).

Slight confusion arose among early European explorers as to whether or not crocodilians were in actual fact (or merely related to) iguanas or snakes. In 1492 CE, Christopher Columbus during his first voyage reports on crocodiles applying the term "serpents". However, in 1503 CE, when returning to Hispaniola during his fourth voyage (1501-1504), Columbus discovered that Isla Tortuga (now aka Tortuga (Island), Haiti) is completely covered with these creatures, which he initially refered to as *lagartos* (lizards/ crocodiles). *c.*1530 CE the term *lagartos* was replaced by *caymanas* (Saunders 2005: 83).

We read that the Venetian Dr. Miçer Codro (an acquaintance of the Spanish historian-*cum*-writer Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478-1557)) had journeyed to the Caribbean

islands in order to study the local great lizards, i.e., crocodiles and caimans. Moreover, at Darién located on Caribbean coast of Colombia, Martín Fernandez de Enciso (*c*.1470-1528), a very skilled Spanish navigator-*cum*-geographer, describes a personal experience in 1519 CE concerning "lizards as big as bullocks with dorsal scales so tough that ten lances bounced off them" (Saunders 2005: 83).

The Orinoco caiman (*Crocodylus intermedius*) and the common caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*) are (and were) present on several islands of the Lesser Antilles. Their frequency and/or precise number at a certain moment in time remains unclear. During the rainy season, the Orinoco caiman and the Trinidad speckled caiman (*Caiman sclerops*) washed ashore either dead or alive as far as Grenada and Barbados, carried by storms or currents (Waldron 2016: 175). An Orinoco caiman that reached Grenada has been reported (Crother 1999: 218, 328-9). The common caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*) as an occasional vagrant to the Grenadines is also mentioned (Crother 1999).

In the past crocodilians, in general, were more numerous in the mainland. Their occurrence in the islands as the result of floods and surface currents are common, too. Indigenous islanders may well have encountered these reptiles on their travels to the South (i.e., the South American mainland) or to the North (i.e., the Greater Antilles). It has been suggested that their knowledge of these "animals" could be orally transmitted. The fact is, as Waldron demonstrates, that any caiman imagery manages "to eke out" its iconographical existence across the Eastern Caribbean (Waldron 2016: 175; see also 7.1.3).

**Fig. 7.4.** Orinoco caiman (*Crocodylus intermedius*); photograph by F. Flores (2013). Licensed CC BY-SA 3.0, accessed by EOL.

### *Physical attributes*

The South American crocodilians are hardly dangerous to humankind. As a result of this, they ostensibly feature less often in the South American lore, political iconography and spiritual imagery if compared with Africa (Wylie 2013: 57). However, the exterior (physical) appearance, behaviour and predatory qualities of the caiman have and still inspire people all over the world to incorporate this reptile into their lore and imagery (Wylie 2013).

The first "physical" attribute to be observed as to a swimming crocodilian are its nostrils, with the opened nasal flaps, its slit-shaped pupils and its cat-like eyes with prominent ridges. A further characteristic comprises lengthy, gaping jaws revealing rows of between 60 and 110 interlocking teeth and scale-covered skin. Especially these characteristic scales, or notches, are described in the studied narratives (see 7.1.1).

In addition to the explicit references and explanations regarding this reptile's notches presented in the analysed narratives, we also come across various reports on alligator's tongues stating it is either short or even absent. Alligator species in fact do have protrusible tongues attached to the lower jaw. Crocodilians possess a palatal valve located at the back of their tongue, enabling them to close the opening to the throat. However, they cannot protrude their tongues which are held in place at the roof of the mouth by means of a membrane.

### *Behavioural attributes*

Certain American alligators emit "roars", or bellows, audible up to 150 m. It is reported that they react to loud sounds and/or vibrations caused by thunder. It has further been suggested that several species respond to humans who call them (Wylie 2013: 11-2). According to (recent) examples, mankind has "befriended" caimans even daring to swim with "amenable" examples (Wylie 2013: 66-7). An ethnoherpetological study illustrates how humans interact with reptiles e.g., caimans.[178] Evidently the *Paleosuchus palpebrosus,* C*aiman latirostris* and *Caiman crocodilus* have been raised as pets, usually from an early age (Alves et al. 2012: 21).

Crocodilians are of course most visible when on land. As a cold-blooded species it depends upon the Sun in order to regulate its body temperature and to search for food after sunrise. This "sunbathing", which literally activates these reptiles to become hunters presumably inspired Sun-related motifs identified in the narratives (i.e., as food and as a helper of Sun, see 7.1.1). However, they are fairly nocturnal and most active during the night.

Caimans utilise sandy riverbanks to lay their eggs. In Venezuela, thousands breed between November and February, at the height of the dry season (Sutty 1993: 63). In the Lesser Antilles, however, you were (and are) most likely to encounter crocodilians during the rainy season as they wash up on the shore (Waldron 2010: 254-5). Now, in addition to the possible presence of autochthonous species, other (some larger) species have reached the islands. This event which is linked to seasonality may have influenced the way the islanders conceptualised the "caiman''.

The final behavioural quality to be highlighted here comprises the hunting skills of the crocodilians. They are the main aquatic predators and positioned at the very top of their food chain. This fact has presumably contributed to a contextualisation within folklore as successful hunters, even Masters of the Water. Nevertheless they hardly ever attack humans. The jaguar and the crocodilian both ambush their prey. We read: "By attacking so surreptitiously, the crocodile embodies deceit" (Wylie 2013: 10).

[178] In Alves et al. 2012, no specifics on the communities studied are included. Only "local" groups from the Caatinga district of Eastern Brazil are referred to.

### *Crocodilians in relation to other animals/birds*

In addition to fishes, frogs, snakes, and birds, all crocodilians even prey upon their own species. Thanks to its size the black caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*) can successfully attack mammals (e.g., monkeys, sloths, armadillos, pacas, agoutis, coatis, capybaras). Large specimens even prey on larger animals (e.g., caimans, deer, giant otters, anacondas). River dolphins (Iniidae) are known to have scars probably inflicted by caimans. Crocodilian species do not chew but swallow their prey in its entirety after either drowning or crushing it. Larger animals that cannot be entirely swallowed are stored allowing the flesh to rot sufficiently to enable the predator to bite off pieces.

In 7.1.1 the "Caiman"-narratives are studied. Moreover, many other "animals/birds" (e.g., "fish", "aquatic animals", "birds", "snakes") with which the caiman repeatedly co-occurs have been identified. They are all "animals" active within the caiman's natural proximity, the majority of which it preys on.

"Snakes" and "Caimans" co-occur in numerous stories, too, and interestingly hunt each other. Anacondas attack (smaller) caiman species which in turn feed on (smaller) snakes. Sharing natural habitats, both reptiles thus also coexist within narratological contexts.

Notably, up to 90 percent of the offspring of crocodilian species is devoured within its first year of existence. Young caimans are an important source of protein for herons, otters, iguanas, jaguars, other caimans, and piranhas. Anacondas now and again even attack full-grown dwarf crocodilians. The jaguar may feed on adult specimens as well as on its juveniles.

Human activity has driven crocodile species to the brink of extinction. They were and are hunted for their skin, teeth and meat (Alves et al. 2012; Wylie 2013), with the exception of species with poor quality skins (Wylie 2013: 57-60). Probably Amerindians, who utilised fish traps, found these traps emptied and/or destroyed by crocodilians who had fed on the enclosed fish, thereby perhaps inspiring the preconception: the caiman/crocodile is a thief and unreliable.

## 7.1.3 The iconography of "caiman"

In addition to examples of "caiman" iconography encountered on Saladoid ceramics (generally modelled as *adornos*), "caiman" pendants are associated with the Saladoid series (*c.*800/200 BCE-400/600 CE). These adornments are made of (precious) stone or shell. Perforated caiman teeth presumably served as pendants, too (Boomert 2000: 404, 407-8, 414; Waldron 2016: 178).

On a mainland Saladoid site (located at Río Guapo on the central coast of Venezuela) a perforated "caiman" tooth was found, which may have served as a pendant. Zoomorphic-shaped "caiman" pendants (albeit in limited numbers) have also been identified. A shell

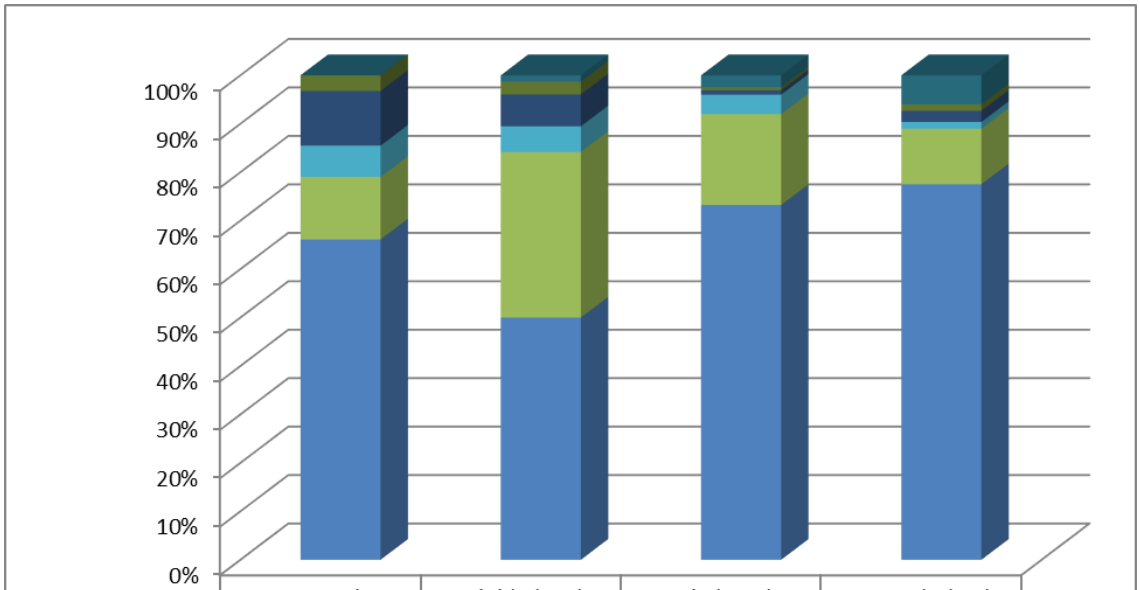
“caiman” pendant was uncovered at the Late (or Post) Cedrosan Saladoid site of Taliseronde in the isle of Marie-Galante (part of the Guadeloupe archipelago) as was a perforated “caiman” tooth pendant at Palo Seco on Trinidad (Boomert 2000: 407-8, 414; Waldron 2016: 178).

In ethnographic/anthropological studies carried out among various South American indigenous groups certain “caiman”-shaped benches have been identified (see also 7.1.4). This section focuses on the Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* portraying the “caiman”.

### *Crocodilian adornos*

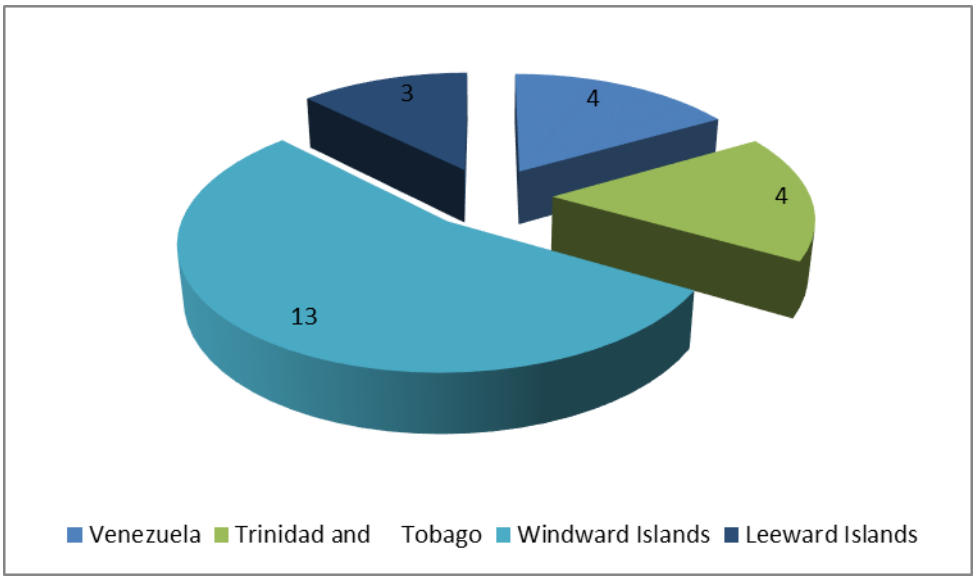
Even though “caiman”-shaped *adornos* have been identified across the core area (see Table 7.2a), by far the majority of them originate from the Windward Islands (see Table 7.2b). The “caiman”-shaped *adornos* comprise between 1.4 and 6.3 percent of the identified reptile/ amphibian-shaped *adornos.*

**Table 7.2a.** Identified “caiman” *adornos* and their dispersal.




| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified | 0 | 1 | 8 | 13 |
| Snakes | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Lizards | 7 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Caimans | 4 | 4 | 13 | 3 |
| Frogs | 8 | 26 | 61 | 25 |
| Turtles | 41 | 38 | 238 | 169 |

**Table 7.2b.** Absolute dispersal of identified "caiman" *adornos* across the insular Caribbean and Venezuela.




Various diagnostic features for the "caiman"-shaped *adornos* have been identified: a long, somewhat tabular rendition with a mouth located along its leading edge. The nose is located atop the long, flat head, whereas the eyes are positioned at the sides of the *adorno*, near where it connects to the pot (see Fig. 7.5; Waldron 2010: 249).

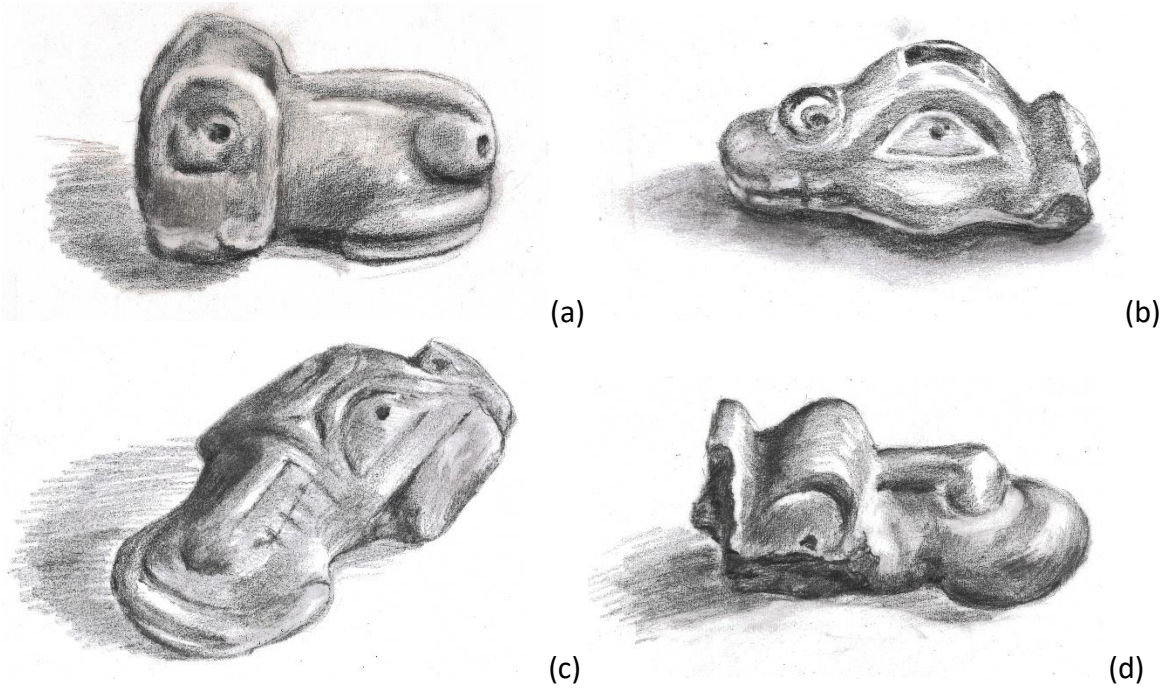



**Fig. 7.5.** Four Saladoid "caiman" *adornos;* originating from: Grenada (a); Carriacou (b); Morel, Guadeloupe (c); Saint Vincent (d); adapted from Waldron 2016: (a) Fig. 7.14, length *c.*6.5 cm; (b) Fig. 7.11, length *c.*7.5 cm; (c). Fig. 7.10, length *c.*7.5 cm and (d) Fig. 7.13, length *c.*6.5 cm); drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

Waldron also notes that the Antillean Saladoid crocodilian imagery displays more stylistic consistency when compared with the imagery from the mainland even though crocodilian species are not native to the Antillean region. Waldron has come across stylised "caimans" as far north as Montserrat and Guadeloupe. Most frequent (referred to as "anomalous") is, however, its imagery as encountered in the tiny island of Carriacou located in the Grenadines (see Fig. 7.5b). Moreover, similar "caiman" *adornos* produced on Grenada and Saint Vincent have been identified (see Figs. 7.5a and d; Waldron 2010: 457). Beyond these southern islands, the "caiman"-shaped *adornos* are almost non-existent, Guadeloupe and Montserrat being the rare exceptions (see Fig. 7.5c).

The stylistic differentiation of mainland vs. insular of the "caiman"-shaped *adornos* are explained as "… an insular convention for depicting a creature the potter seldom saw. Their mannered quality might be based on fixed descriptions (i.e., drawn, chanted or recited accounts) of the caiman" (Waldron 2010: 251; see also Fig. 7.6).

In the mainland narratives these diagnostic physical features (i.e., nostrils, eyes, specific snouts, teeth) are not directly characterized. They were deemed unnecessary because the South American peoples were quite familiar with caimans. In the Caribbean islands, however, narrators and their audiences are less familiar with the exterior of this specific creature. I would therefore agree with Waldron when he states that these specific physical attributes were presumably based on fixed descriptions, for instance, through orally transmission.

**Fig. 7.6.** Stylised Saladoid "caiman" *adorno* from Carriacou; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 7.12, length *c.*6.5 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

### 7.1.4 “Caiman” in Amerindian cosmologies

As discussed (see 2.3), the “caiman” is linked to the underworld in Amerindian cosmologies. In order to be considered as one of the two major predators of the subaquatic realm, this reptile is not only framed as the Master of the Underworld but therefore also associated with the forest and darkness as well as with chaos and promiscuity. They live in both water and on land, and although caimans depend upon the heat of the Sun, they are most active during the night. These qualities in addition to the fact they are major aquatic predators may have contributed to their importance as a cosmological *sign**. The “caiman’s” position within indigenous cosmologies could indeed contribute to our understanding of its role(s) played in narratives while enriching our comprehension of its indigenous conceptualisation. Here lies the main focus of this section.

#### *The Master of Water and everything that lives in it*

As an inhabitant of the underworld, the “caiman” is cosmologically interconnected with anacondas, piranhas and fish in general. Based on anthropological research, various Amerindian groups consider the “caiman” to be the Master/Protector of Fish and of other aquatic creatures as well as the “Mother of all Fish”. These concepts have been observed among the Kamayurá-speakers (Tupi-Guaraní of Brazil) and the ancient, now extinct Chavín civilisation (highland Peru) which created the Tello Obelisk *c.*3000 years ago. This sculpture depicts a “caiman” thought to portray the Master of Fish (Smith 1996: 81). Similar expressions of belief have also been recorded in various narratives featuring “Caiman” as teacher of “Fish” ceremonies, “Fish”-people who teach men how to greet “Caiman” and other dangerous “animals”. Of interest here: in Story no. 99 (Warao) the Sun uses “Caiman” as a bench during a fishing trip (see 7.1.1). In the tales, however, “Otter” is more directly linked to fish, being an excellent fisher and a teacher of this skill. “Caiman” is probably the Master of Water and everything that lives in it. “Otter” and “Caiman” thus partly share this connotation (see also 7.1.1).

A concept of mastery among Amerindians as proposed serves to understand the conceptualisation of “caiman” as the Master of Water (Fausto 2008; see also 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Mastery or “ownership*”). Carlos Fausto explains that the Master/Owner of a “animal” is a “magnified person”, who is involved in control and prestige as well as in the protection of and has the responsibility for the ones he is the Master of (i.e., conceptualised as an adoptee, a child or a pet).

As a Master of Animals (i.e., of everything that lives in water and or in water/rain), the “caiman” owns its environment to such a degree it not only “represents” the “animal”, it also contains them. It embodies the multiplicity of “animals”, too. We read: “the master is a plural singularity, containing other singularities within himself” (Fausto 2008: 334). As the “caiman” is a master, it appears to others (excluding the ones it owns) as a predator, implying it also appears as a predator to humans.

The “caiman” as Master of Water and even of Rain has also been recorded among various Amerindian groups. Walter Roth describes various ways with which they have either induced or discontinued rain in reference to alligators. For example, Amerindians residing in the Pomeroon River district (Guyana, Kaliña (Carib) or Lokono (Arawakan)) wash the scrapings of one of an “alligator’s” largest teeth in the water in order to conduct rain (Roth 2011: 251 [213]). A belief of an unspecified group of Amerindians living near the Moruca River (Guyana) is reported thus: when it happens to be dry and the crocodile (*kaiokochi*) “barks” in the late afternoon, rain is certain to follow (Roth 2011: 253 [217]).

A similar (Kaliña, Cariban) expression of belief comprises the “caiman”-grandfather serving as the Guardian of Heavenly Waters as well as the Master of All Aquatic Beings. The fact that this “caiman”-grandfather is also capable of causing the earth to quake has also been described (de Goeje 1943: 48-9). A conviction of the Tupi people (Brasil) that: “*Tirïtïrï maña = mère du tremblement. Nom d’un crocodile qui fait trembler la terre”* is also referred to (de Goeje 1943: 48). Natural behaviour probably supports this association, through the aforementioned ‘”barking” and its link with earthquakes because caimans apparently respond to loud noises (see also 7.1.2).

### *Caimans as shamans and as a part of shamanic practices*

In various tales dealt with in this research the “anaconda” and the “caiman” are portrayed as powerful shamanic characters, both possessing the ability to transform (see 7.1.1). A composite, aquatic monster called “Dragon” has been referred to. This creature is in fact an anaconda compounded with an alligator and a piranha. Depicting an affiliation with a primordial serpent and associated with the night as well as excessive rains, the dragon is considered to form the cradle of disease, death and purification (Boomert 2000: 447; Roe 1982: 89-90).

Ethnographical/anthropological references support describing the “caiman” as a protector and a devastating enemy. For instance, skulls of caimans are hung in Carib (Kaliña) houses in order to keep out Yurokons, primordial malevolent bush spirits (Roth 2011: 305, note 4). The Peruvian Jivaro believe that a malevolent spirit (*iguanchi*) may not only appear as a “caiman” and attack swimmers but also that it can transmute into a large “boa”, which is even more perilous and feared (Karsten 1935: 374).

Research carried out among indigenous groups in Brazil also suggests that caiman “products” serve medical purposes and form a means of protection. An ethno-herpetological study illustrates that members of various “local” groups (unspecified) residing in the Caatinga region (northeastern Brazil) interact with reptiles. Here “products of” (e.g., fat, leather) various caiman species are applied when treating for instance asthma, a sore throat, rheumatism, prostate problems, and snake bites (Alves et al. 2012: 20-1). The teeth of the C*aiman latirostris* and *Caiman crocodilus* serve as amulets as do the teeth of the dwarf caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*) in order to protect against snake bites, hernia and prostate issues.

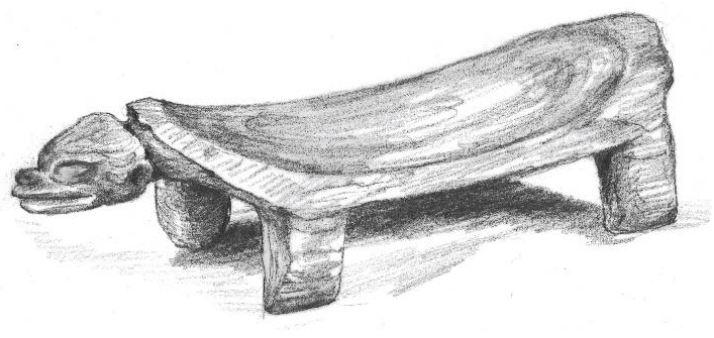


**Fig. 7.7.** Caiman "Taíno" *bench* from Haiti (1000-1500 CE); not to scale. Original curated at the Jay I. Kislak Collection, Library of Congress; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

Another link between the "caiman" and shamanism, or shamanic practices, comprise "caiman"-shaped benches (see Fig. 7.7). A number of stories feature these shamanic benches (see 7.1.1). Several references have been recorded as to the Cariban and Arawakan speakers, indicating that these animal-shaped benches signify the shaman's assistants. The entry "Watergeest" (Ahlbrinck 1931) states that Cariban Amerindians believe that a water spirit has various "animals" to her disposal. In this case, a large "caiman" serves as her couch. Moreover, according to the Kaliña (Cariban), whenever a shaman is seated on a bench, one or both ends of which are carved to resemble a "caiman's" head, he controls all the "animals" this caiman has devoured (de Goeje 1943: 48).[179] These benches are carved in order to portray a "caiman", "turtle", "macaw", "jaguar" or "king vulture", which all assist the shaman (de Goeje 1943: 71).

These benches can be linked to specific rituals and ceremonies, such as *rites de passage.* For example, an Arawakan puberty rite ends when a middle-aged man accompanies the hitherto secluded young girl from the locked room to then place her on a stool which has the shape of a "tiger" or "crocodile" (Roth 2011: 311 [273]). In Story nos. 91 and 356 (Cariban), the protagonist is seated on a "caiman", as he receives his wife, who is either the daughter of the spirits, or of the chief.

A hierarchy has been proposed as to the common, zoomorphic-shaped benches. Although they all ostensibly signify (or indeed personify) mighty spirits and shamanic helpers, some are more powerful than others. A study carried out among the Achuar community (residing at both sides of the border between Ecuador and Peru) concludes that the majority of the "animals" "… play the parts of extras" to the "anaconda" and the "jaguar", the two main icons (Descola 1966).

### *Signalling male prowess*

The "caiman" is also a signifier of male prowess when viewed as the predator *par excellence* and as either the (potentially) dangerous, powerful shaman or his assistant. In the South American mainland warriors and shamans donned "caiman" teeth to indicate male prowess (Boomert 2000: 404, see also section 7.1.3).

[179] This is in fact another reference to the "caiman/alligator" being the Master of "those who live in the water".

### 7.1.5 Concluding remarks

As the crocodilian species in Amazonia are not particularly dangerous to humans, they were presumably not categorised as a man-eater. Nevertheless, "caiman/alligator" is still conceptualised as the Master of Water, Rain and Fish (or even of "everything that lives in the water"). Perhaps "caiman" as a master is either a powerful ally or a foe of shamans to be dealt with cautiously and respectfully. This stance has resulted in do not insult the "caiman" becoming a motif. Thanks to its power, a "caiman" has the potential to create and to destroy. One can imagine that Amerindian shamans would have been in continual negotiation as well as in a reciprocal relationship with the "caiman", when conceptualised as a powerful shaman, his assistant, or as the Master of Water and everything that lives in it.

Various physical and behavioural qualities have contributed to conceptualising the "caiman". For instance, the fact they must depend upon the warmth of the Sun in order to regulate their body temperature while being mainly active at night. Within the context of the narrative, this observation is ostensibly displayed by means of the direct interaction/relationship between the Sun and the "caiman". This context links the latter to the sky realm as well as to this reptile's cosmological realm of the underworld. Other physical or behavioural qualities which minister its conceptualisation are: (a) its barking noise produced in response to the sound of thunder (conceived as the Master of Water and of Thunder), (b) its ambush strategy adopted in order to hunt prey (conceived as a treacherous opponent), and (c) the "caiman" positioned at the top of the food chain within its realm (conceived as the Master of all that lives in Water as well as a *symbol** of male prowess).

In the narratives we come across the "caiman" as a shaman and/or assistant of a shaman (even of a spirit). This reptile provides culture, is associated with the origin of culture (i.e., agriculture, building villages) and even with mankind, but is also a traitor and may steal your fish or bite you. The "caiman's" deceitful nature may have been fuelled by its hunting technique: chasing after land animals (even up a tree) after suddenly appearing from a (deep) body of water. The references, both in narratives and ethnography, concerning "caiman" benches, also illustrate the significance of the "caiman" as the (assistant of a) shaman. These "caiman" shaman benches probably pertain to *rites de passage,* i.e., liminal stages to be crossed, not only whenever young girls become women but also when women become wives.

In the archaeological record, "caiman" imagery is identified in the form of shaman benches and "caiman" teeth pendants. They are also depicted in the form of *adornos* on Saladoid ceramics within mainland and island contexts. Here a "caiman's" most identifiable iconographical features comprise its nostrils, eyes, and the characteristic snout and teeth. If depicted by means of *adornos* these lugs are table-shaped, flat-headed with a nose positioned atop. The "caiman's" mouth is located along this item's leading edge. The reptile's eyes are placed at the sides of the *adorno.*

## 7.2 “Ant”

“Ant”-narratives are incorporated as an anomaly: although encountered in numerous cases, this insect presented as an iconographical feature has not (yet) been identified. The contextualisation and conceptualisation of “Ant” are further explored below.

### 7.2.1 “Ant” in the narratives

> A Deer wounded a Jaguar which a Trio brought back to its home. The Jaguar offers his daughter to the Trio, but he wants to go home. The Jaguar gives him a number of tasks before allowing him to return home: he has to grow a field on rocks. Sloth shows the Trio how to do so by using Ants. Next, the Trio had to kill the Deer which had injured Jaguar. He kills many but not the right one. Finally, he finds the Deer, which removes his “hat” and is killed. Then the Trio wishes to leave, but without his wife. She, however, follows her husband. He murders his wife. Her father/Jaguar seeks revenge for his daughter and in the end he succeeds. That is why Trio and Jaguars hate each other. [Story no. 34 (Trio, Cariban); abridged]

“Ants” are part of this research because they have been identified as recurrent actors. The present study includes 45 narratives containing “Ant”-actors or references to them, 56 percent of which hail from the core area (see Appendix D, section F). “Ants” feature in stories of all the most prominent language families (11 in total) located inside and outside this core area (see Fig. 7.8).

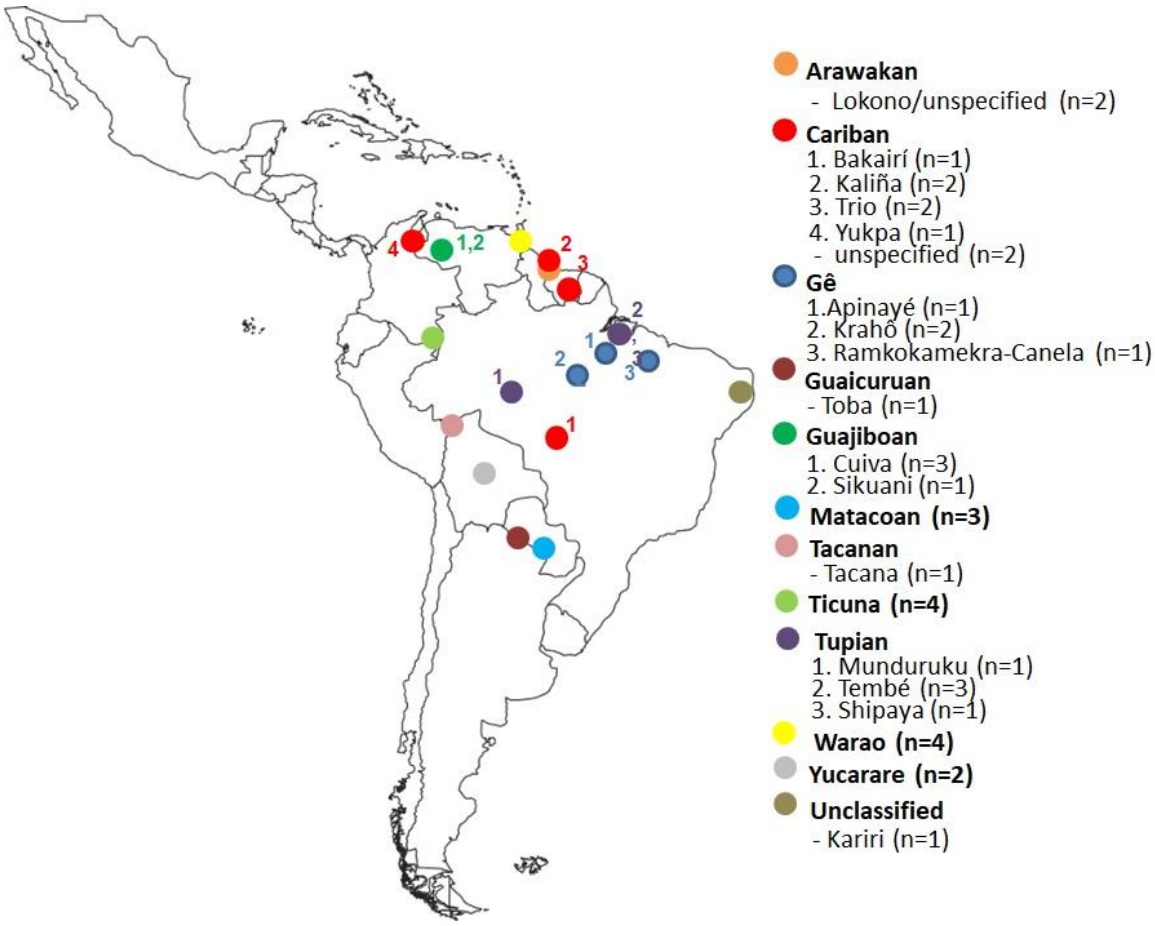



**Fig. 7.8.** Plot of “Ant” narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

The narrative function(s) of “Ant” stories reveal no noteworthy variations as to the narrative functions in general.[180] The most frequently encountered category is entitled: validating the world, followed by encoding social behaviour and informing. Only ensuring knowledge is completely absent in the corpus of “Ant”-narratives, whereby this category only takes on 3 percent in general (see Appendix C, Table C-9 for a list of all narrative functions of “Ant” narratives.

The narratological context or frame in which the “Ant” is set is very consistent and includes similar motifs as well as chronotopes of space and time. The “Ant” is framed as a helper of the protagonist (often a shaman or a culture hero) either within a forest setting, the land realm (n=4) or the underworld (n=3), but generally speaking within the sky context (n=10). “Ants” are directly characterized as being wise, hardworking and even immortal as they shed their skin. In certain cases “Ants” serve as a source of food. They describe how to cook these insects or more implicitly how to use “Ants” as bait in order to lure someone out of hiding.

### *Actors, events and settings (“fabula”)*

The following two sub-clusters are identified and then studied independently: (a) “Ant” performs a task; n=18, and (b) “Ant” as a helper and advisor; n=10 (see Appendix D, sections F1 to 2).[181] The dominant motifs support these clusters. Motif no. 1 pertains to a helpful “insect” (n=15), followed by transformation (n=11), “animal’ traits and habits” (n=11), “tasks” (n=11) and punishments (n=8), and the origin and acquisition of things (n=6).

Compared to the general pattern, the “Ant”-personage illustrates a significant variation in ascribed roles.[182] “Ant” is more often attributed the role of helper and less to most other roles. However, the roles of opponent and receiver are in line with the general distribution of roles. In Story nos. 103, 343 and 454 (2x Warao, Shipaya (Tupian-extinct), “Ants” are explicitly associated with spirits who carry a basket filled with “Ants” or who send “Ants” up a tree (Story Nos. 103, 343, 454; 2x Warao, Shipaya (Tupian-extinct)). In three cases, they are associated with shamans (see Story nos. 154, 619-20 (Tembé, Tupian), 2x Sikuani (Guajiboan)).

One case describes how “Flying ants’’ should be caught and roasted, thereby explicitly describing “Ants” as a source of food (Story no. 675; Sikuani, Guajiboan). “Ants” are portrayed as a bait in order to lure out the (“Vulture”) father-in-law (see Story nos. 619-20; Sikuani). The insects taste so good he comes forward.

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[180] $\chi^2(4) = 7.53$; $\rho = 0.11$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section F. General remarks.

[181] The narratives featuring Ant as a performer of tasks are numbered: 34, 77-8, 103, 147, 185, 202, 288, 463, 312-5, 619-20, 654, 690 and 696 (resp. Bakairí (Cariban) Trio (Cariban); 3x Arawakan; Yuracare; Kariri (unclassified); 2x Warao; Toba (Guaicuruan); 3x Matacoan; 4x Sikuani (Guajiboan), Ticuna). Narratives featuring Ant as a helper/advisor are numbered: 43, 125, 154, 217, 253, 301-2, 622, 656, 693 (Trio (Cariban), Kaliña (Cariban), 3x Tembé (Tupian), 2x Ticuna, Sikuani (Guajiboan), Munduruku (Tupian), see Appendix D, section F1.

[182] $\chi^2(5) = 20.48$; $\rho = 0.001$ (significant), see Appendix D, section *F. Fabula*.

### “Ant” performs a task

The helpful “Ants”, in sub-cluster “Ants” perform a task, while engaged with the (shaman) protagonist are often called upon to assist when performing remarkable tasks, for instance, related to “revealing” someone’s identity (Story nos. 312-5; Toba (Guaicuruan), 3x Matacoan) or to felling a tree (Story nos. 202, 288, 654; Kariri, Ticuna, Guajiboan). Other highly specific tasks comprise growing a field on rocks (Story no. 34; Trio, Cariban; see summary on p. 340). Serving as a more general helper/advisor, “Ants” act as protectors, providers of food or as advisors to the protagonist.

Repeatedly a father-in-law challenges his (to be) son-in-law, who then turns to various “animals” in order to assist him. “Ants” help the protagonist by showing how to grow a field on a rock (Story no. 34; Trio, Cariban), or how to cut down trees (Story nos. 77, 202, 654; Arawak, Kariri, Sikuani (Guajiboan)). Or, by making holes in a calabash (Story no. 77; Arawak) and by spying on, or biting to lure, the subject out of a hiding place (Story nos. 202, 463, 654; Kariri (unclassified), Warao, Sikuani (Guajiboan)).

Forest settings occur repeatedly and are often associated with the shamanic and/or the sky realm. The cosmic layer sky is encountered on five occasions. A (shaman) protagonist visits the sky world and “Ants” help him within this setting (see Story nos. 202, 463, 619, 654, 696; Kariri (unclassified), Warao, 2x Sikuani (Guajiboan), Arawakan). In Story nos. 312-5 (Guaicuruan, 3x Matacoan), the “Ants” act in “Woodpecker’s” village, thus also indicating a sky setting. However, three stories stage “Ants” in the underworld, in which they are often ascribed the role of object/goal whereby the protagonist transforms into an “Ant” in order to enter the underworld by means of the Ant’s nest (Story nos. 154, 301-2; Tembé (Tupian) This association was also noted regarding the Cuiva (Sikuani, Wilbert & Simoneau 1991: 187, note 3, see Appendix D, section F. Fabula on setting).

### “Ant” as helper and advisor

In this particular sub-cluster (see Appendix D, section F2), the “Ant”: (a) repeatedly acts a as teacher (Story nos. 43, 154, 217, 253; Trio (Cariban), Tembé (Tupian), Ticuna, Munduruku (Tupian)), (b) gives advice to humans (Story no. 253; Munduruku, Tupian), (c) provides protection (Story nos. 253, 656; Munduruku, Sikuani (Guajiboan)), and (d) delivers food (Story nos. 217, 693; Ticuna). In addition to motifs concerning “animals” which teach men, in three cases the (Amerindian) culture hero teaches or instructs others (Story nos. 154, 301-2; Tembé, Tupian).

### Other common motifs

In addition to these two sub-clusters, other common motifs have been recognised, for instance, pertaining to transformation (see Appendix D, section F. Fabula and F3b). Granting an overall dominant motif (see 4.2.1), within the corpus of “Ant” narratives, we encounter the following motifs concerning transmutations from: (a) a human to an insect; n=5, (b) an “insect” to an Amerindian; n=2, (c) an “insect” to an “animal”; n=1, (d) a human to an “Ant’s

hill"; n=1, and (e) a spirit to an "animal/insect"; n=1. In addition to this latter, in four cases, "Ants" derive and/or transform from malevolent beings, e.g., a malevolent ogre who is fed peppers, "evil" skull, or basket (Story nos. 98, 343, 454, 688; Guajiboan, Warao, Cariban, Tupian (see also Appendix D, section F3b).

Common motifs also involve punishments. The most prominent example on this subject is: the "Ant's" bite (Story nos. 103, 313-4, 544, 567; Warao, 2x Matacoan, 2x Krahô (Gê)). In Story no. 576 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), women are devoured by gigantic "Ants", because they had broken the medallions given to them earlier. In Story no. 83 (Cariban), a hunter is almost eaten by "Ants" after lying down beneath a "Wood ant's" nest. In Story no. 454 (Warao), "Ants" are the result of a punishment: a malevolent basket/skull in the end drowns and "Ants" appear from its nostrils (see Fig. 7.9).

**Fig. 7.9.** "Ants" crawling from a drowning skull; artist's impression of Story no. 454 (Warao) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).

Interestingly, seven "Ant" narratives (indirectly or directly) link the acquisition or origin of things to "Ants". Story no. 43 (Trio, Cariban) informs us on how the Trio receive spirit songs,

an explicit description is given of a ritual involving “Ants” whereby the Master of Spider Monkeys rolls over “Ants” (referred to as Sireinji) and cries out in pain. In Story nos. 217 and 693; Ticuna), the “Ant” is associated with the origin of fire and/or a cultivated plant (sweet manioc). In Story no. 576 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), the “Ant” is linked to the origin of the night. Story no. 230 (Ticuna) provides an explanation (origin) of specific “Ant” traits, i.e., how did these insects obtained immortality by means of shedding their skins.

Last but not least, the various references to sexual organs must be considered, of which the vagina is most prominent. Although the “Ants” are not in all instances directly associated with this motif, it still is remarkable that six cases (13 percent) include a direct reference to sexual organs: Story nos. 314, 565, 567, 619-20, 656 (Apinayé (Gê); Krahô (Gê), 3x Sikuani (Guajiboan)). In a majority of these tales, the genitalia are bitten, either as a means of punishment or as a way to establish the identity of an individual. In Story no. 319 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), piranhas appear from a woman’s vagina. In story no. 620 (Sikuani), in order to hide from her parents, a male paramour transforms into a tick inside her vagina (on her advice). Story no. 576 (Cuiva) as referred to above, the women break clay medallions presented to them by “Black ants’’ and “Grasshopper”, after which “Black ants” descend from the sky world in order to feed on the women, especially their vaginas.

The interconnection of “Ants” and the sky world is not only reinforced by means of the narrative setting, but also by other motifs e.g., the appearance of Sun as a personage and the association with trees which create a bridge between the land with the sky world.

### With whom are “Ants” associated?

Remarkably, in 96 percent of the “Ant”-narratives, these insects co-occur with other “animal” personages, even up to nine different “animals/birds” in a single case (see Appendix D, section F. Fabula). However, “Ants” also interact with an Amerindian protagonist (often a shaman/culture hero). In nine stories, “Ant” takes the stage with the “Jaguar”, in seven with “Hummingbird” (see 6.2.4), in six cases with “Monkey”, “Woodpecker” (see 6.2.5), “Snake”, and in five tales with “Vulture”, “Hawk”, “Paca”, “Lice”, and “Birds”.

As to all these other “animal” personages, “Ants” rarely interact directly with them. In certain narratives, “animals” oppose the “Ant” personage (or are subjected to its bite as a form of punishment). In other cases, the “animal” personage acts as a sender: requesting for “Ant’s” assistance, or when “Ant” acts as a sender advising the Amerindian protagonist to call on “Toad” for help.

#### *“Jaguar”*

In versions of the same narrative (Story nos. 154, 301-2; Tembé, Tupian), the Amerindian protagonist enters “Jaguar’s” village through an “Ant hill” while being transformed into an “Ant”. In the course of these events, he comes across the Honey festival. In other narratives, these two creatures are also interrelated. Story no. 185 (Yuracare, Isolate) explicitly states that

poisonous “Ants” live on “Jaguar’s” skin. In Story no. 147 (Bakairí, Cariban), “Jaguar” sends “Ants” up a tree to catch “Anteater”, whereby “Jaguar” is the sender and “Ant” acts as its helper. In Story no. 34 (Trio, Cariban), both oppose each other in the sense that “Jaguar” is a threat to/opponent of the protagonist, whereas “Ant” assists the protagonist.

*“Monkey”*

In Story no. 43 (Trio, Cariban), “Spider monkeys” perform a ritual in order to invoke their ancestors. This ritual includes rolling around on “Ants”. The Amerindian protagonist witnesses this event. In Story no. 253 (Munduruku, Tupian), by means of an indirect opposition, a “Capuchin monkey” kills a hunter and then attempts to deceive the deceased hunter’s wife by trying to feed her flesh from her spouse’s corpse. She is able to escape with the help of “Ants” who direct her towards “Toad”.

*“Vulture” and “Hawk/Falcon”*

In Story no. 77 (Arawakan), Story no. 463 (Warao) and Story no. 696 (Arawakan), “Vulture” acts as an opponent to (or challenger of) the protagonist. Moreover “Ants” oppose Vulture when assisting the protagonist. In those cases, a “Vulture” father-in-law asks his (to be) son-in-law to perform all kinds of impossible tasks. With the help of “Ants”, among others, the protagonist manages to succeed in doing so. In two Sikuani (Story nos. 619-20; Guajiboan) tales, the father-in-law appears in the form of a “Snake”. The protagonist with help of “Ants” lures out his father-in-law after which “Hawks” kill the “Snake” father-in-law. In Story no. 622 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), too, both “Hawk” and “Ants” are called upon to provide help within a sky world setting.

### *Characterization and duration (“Story”)*

“Ants” are characterized directly in two (14 percent), and analogously in four (29 percent) narratives (see also Appendix D, sections F. Story and F3a). Both the direct description as the analogy applied, provide us with insights as to how Amerindians perceive “Ants”. In Story no. 25, the Kaliña (Cariban) are described as once being as numerous, mighty and wise as “Ants”. In Story no. 666 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), the “Ants” are directly referred to as “hard labourers that work day and night”. It may be added here that this description is also recorded in Story nos. 77 and 125 (Arawakan, Kaliña (Cariban)).

“Ants” are ascribed more negative qualities e.g., causing diseases (Story nos. 565-7; Gê (Apinayé, Ramkokamekra-Canela, Krahô)). In Story nos. 83 and 576 (Cariban, Cuiva (Guajiboan)), “Ants” are (giant) man-eating insects. In Story no. 185 (Yuracare), “Sauba ants” (aka South American leaf-cutter ants) are poisonous. Story no. 125 (Kaliña) explicitly mentions their “disagreeable scent”.

Stories featuring “Ants” are relatively long, as their duration displays both an elongated real time as well as a lengthy narrated time. This is an outcome of their more epic character as

they concern the travels/adventures of a protagonist/shaman, who sets off to other worlds. However, “Ants” often play a minor role within a narrative.

### 7.2.2 Ant in nature

Ants are a conspicuous component of terrestrial biodiversity and number more than 12,000 species (Ward 2007: 550). In the Brazilian Amazon, the biomass of ants is approximately four times larger than that of all land vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians) combined. The ant species arose during the Cretaceous Period, more than 100 million years ago (Wilson & Hölldobler 2005).

Ants are the most species-rich of all social insects. They inhabit virtually all major terrestrial habitats. Certain species live on the ground while others invade the forest canopy, hereby displaying a remarkable range of social conduct, foraging habits and relations with other organisms. The tropical rainforest soil and ground litter from the headquarters of ant evolution, as it comprises the habitat with the highest density and species diversity of ants (Wilson & Hölldobler 2005). The Amazon region houses more than 1,000 species of which many have yet to be described. They include herbivores, as well as apex predators or scavengers. Diurnal and nocturnal, ants play significant roles in the ecological system.

For a description of ant species native to the Amazon region, see Wild 2012.[183] They include for example:

- *Paraponera clavata,* aka bullet ant (l. 20-25 mm); it has an extraordinarily painful sting (see Fig. 7.10).
- *Ectatomma tuberculatum*, this light-reddish ant (l. 10 mm) hangs on low (eye level) vegetation.
- *Odontomachus,* a species aka trap-jaw ant (l. 6-15 mm) with distinctive hammer-shaped heads.
- *Pachycondyla villosa,* aka Hormiga tigre; a large readily irritated reddish-black hunting ant with a powerful bite and golden shimmering hairs.
- *Pachycondyla apicalis* (l. 10-12 mm), a greyish-black ant with bulging eyes and a solitary hunter on the ground.
- *Camponotus,* a species aka carpenter ant; it is very common, varies in size and appearance and feeds on nectar.
- *Camponotus atriceps;* the trails of this nocturnal pale ant can be spotted at night.
- *Daceton armigerum*; this unusual, honey-coloured trap-jaw ant lives in trees; its head is heart-shaped.

**Fig. 7.10.** Bullet ant (*Paraponera clavata*); photograph by C. Lopez (2014). Licensed CC BY-NC 4.0, accessed by EOL.

[183] Various online databases may serve to identify “ant” species e.g., AntWeb (www.antweb.org), Antbase (www.antbase.org) and http://academic.evergreen.edu/projects/ants/AntsofCostaRica.html. See also Ward 2007: 559.

- *Cephalotes atratus,* aka (giant) turtle ant; this tree dweller numbers more than 100 species; its outer armour resembles a turtle's shell; it cannot sting.
- *Atta* and *Acromyrmex* species, aka leaf cutter ant; they feed on fungi and form busy highways along which these reddish long-legged insects carry pieces of freshly-cut vegetation.
- *Eciton burchellii,* aka Burchell's army ant, known for its huge predatory swarm raids, aggression, biting frequently and nomadic existence.
- *Azteca* species; this fierce ant bites if provoked; when crushed they smell like a rotten coconut. Certain species build impressive carton nests, larger than a basketball, typically hung from tree branches.

Although termites are an entirely different species, they are referred to as "white ants". It is plausible that, in the 706 studied narratives, ants and termites have been identified, or translated, incorrectly.

### *Ants in the islands*

The majority of the narratives originate from the South American mainland, as do the many ant species featured in the present publication. Various ant species are native to the entire core area of this study (i.e., the northern parts of South America as well as the insular Caribbean). The Caribbean Islands were presumably populated by means of sweepstake colonization. Located at an increasing distance from the mainland, these isles reveal a corresponding drop in the number of ant genera. The larger an island is, the greater the number of endemic species, with the exception of Trinidad. Here the ant fauna is an extension of species found in South America (Fisher 2009: 37).

For example, on Cuba and Hispaniola, endemic ants form a disproportionate part of the ant fauna. The genera *Temnothorax* constitutes 25 percent of ants on Cuba. The absence of army and driver ants may have encouraged this evolutionary profusion (Fisher 2009: 37-8). Another interesting feature of the ant fauna on this island is the fact that the (reproductive) queens have lost their wings.

The ant species native to the Bahamas include a list of West Amerindian Formicidae comprising 217 species (Wheeler 1905). Of the twelve species listed above, the majority has been identified on (at least several) islands belonging to (both) the Lesser and Greater Antilles. Leaf-cutter ants (*Attasp* sp.), carpenter ants (*Camponotus* sp.), trap-jaw ants (*Odontomachus* sp.), and fire ants (*Solenopsis* sp.) are all present in the Lesser and Greater Antilles. Bullet ants (genus *Paraponra*) have been identified in the Antilles (Wheeler, 1905: 120-35). Of the above survey, only the *Daceton armigerum* is not listed for the insular Caribbean. The *Eciton,* the *E. klugi* as well as *E. antillanum,* have been encountered on Saint Vincent and Grenada. The *Eciton burchelli* has only been recorded for Trinidad.

### *Physical and behavioural attributes*

As indicated in the above twelve short descriptions, these ants vary in length between 0.75 and 53 mm. Their colours range from pale, reddish, grey to black. On occasion, golden hairs have been noted. Their exoskeletonic morphology is very distinctive with an elbowed antenna, a segmented body and on occasion bulging eyes. The heads of certain ant species are very distinct. A number of "ants" are winged, mainly the reproductive queens and males.

Ants have various ways to defend themselves. The bite of bullet ants is very painful, but not fatal to humans. Fire ants can deliver venomous bites. Trap-jaw ants are equipped with jaws that are able to snap shut at great speed.

The lemon ant (*Myrmelachista schumanni*) disperses a citrus odour when crushed or attacked. Whenever Aztec ants bite or are crushed, their very distinctive smell has been described as resembling a "rotten coconut" or "blue cheese". This attribute could have inspired the identified motif of the "disagreeable smell" linked to the Sauba ants (see 7.2.1 under the sub-heading *Characterization and duration ("Story")*).

#### Life cycle

Metamorphoses characterize the life cycle of "ants".[184] Reproduction starts by emitting winged male and females (i.e., queens) during nuptial flights, primarily during spring and summer. The queen chooses a founding site and, having landed, breaks off her wings to then lay eggs (Tschinkel 1998: 594-5). These eggs become worm-like larvae without any eyes or legs. These larvae shed their skin many times as they increase in size to finally spin a silk-like cocoon around their bodies before pupating and metamorphosing into an adult form. The time elapsing between the beginning of metamorphosis and the emergence of a worker can span around 6 days, as is the time span between laying an egg and its hatching (Tschinkel 1998: 598). Fire ant queens can live over 7 years. The age of queens of other ant species can even reach beyond 15 years. The life span of worker ants is shorter.

#### Behaviour

Ants form colonies ranging in size from a few dozen to millions of individuals. The larger colonies consist of workers, soldiers and other specialised groups as well as a small number of fertile females (queens) and fertile males (drones). The (larger) colonies are referred to as superorganisms because ants appear to operate as a unified entity, whereby they all work as a collective while contributing to the benefit of the entire colony. Such a superorganism implies a highly developed socialisation based on the division of labour, a complex method of problem-solving and reliable means of communication (Jackson & Ratnieks 2006).

[184] The life cycles of ant species are very similar. For a detailed description of the fire ant species *Solenopsis richteri* and *S. invicta*, see Tschinkel 1998.

Ant species can become a pest to humans when damaging crops, invading buildings and stinging or biting. On the other hand, ants are valued when controlling (other) pests, or when used in cuisine, medication and ritual (see 7.2.4).

As stated above, ants exploit numerous food resources. They are either direct or indirect herbivores, predators and scavengers. Most are omnivorous generalists which can feed on, for example, larger ant species. The ants living in colonies cooperate when collecting food. Forming lengthy trails through the forest, leaf-cutters can be observed when transporting large pieces of leaves while supporting many times their own body weight.

The predatory army ants form large rows when searching for prey. They may attract birds that profit from the fact that a swarm of army ants causes insects, spiders and scorpions to flee from their hiding places, which the birds then feed on.

#### Arboreal species

A number of ant species (mainly predators and scavengers) have adopted an arboreal life and populate tree canopies. However, because of their huge numbers, there are not enough herbivorous insects to eat. Therefore, they have become "cryptic herbivores" subsisting on liquid exudates provided by hemipterous sap-feeding insects. Extra floral nectarines form a further source of nutrition for these arboreal ant species (Ward 2007).

In the rainforests of the western Amazon, the lemon ant (*Myrmelachista schumanni*) nests in the swollen, hollow stems of the *Duroia hirsuta*. These ants then destroy other plants in the direct vicinity of this tree by means of formic acid, hereby stimulating the growth of the tree they populate. Such an open spot is called a "Devil's Garden", after an Amazonian legend that mentions that a malevolent forest spirit cultivated these large communities of trees (Frederickson & Gordon 2007).

Although certain ant species are nomadic, many build complex nests, mainly subterranean or on trees, applying soil and plant matter. Aztec ants create striking carton nests, even larger than a basketball, typically hung from tree branches. Above ground, ant hills are generally unimpressive when compared with the imposing termite nests, which can develop into large, spectacular sculptures. Ant nests, or ant hills, are often referred to as gateways to the underworld (see 7.2.1).

### *Ants in relation to other animals/birds*

As much as 96 percent of the stories featuring "Ants" include other "animal"- personages, too, although they do not often interact directly. In nature, ants interact with other animals/birds, even prey on insects including other ants. In turn mammals, amphibians, small reptiles and on occasion even humans hunt down ants.

The South American poison dart frog (*Dendrobates tinctorius*) obtains its toxic skin, which contains lipophilic alkaloids, from consuming ants which take up between 50 percent and 73 percent of its diet (Caldwell 1996). These partial arboreal frogs are diurnal inhabitants native to the forests of Nicaragua, down to southern Brazil (Caldwell 1996: 76).

Birds benefit from ants. Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) and passerines (Passeriformes) follow army ants (e.g., *Eciton burchellii*) and "steal" their catch in order to find an easy meal. Mainly observed in lowland forests, this behaviour has also been recorded in subtropical forests. Between five and 24 birds (belonging to between three and fourteen species) have been witnessed at a swarm of army ants, in turn, totalling 50 species (Vallely 2001: 271, 272-3, 275).

Birds can indulge in a type of behaviour referred to as anting. They hereby rest on ant nests or pick and drop ants onto their wings and feathers, perhaps in order to remove parasites. Around 200 species of birds (worldwide) are known to ant.

"Ants" repeatedly co-occur with "Birds" and most frequently with "Woodpecker", "Hummingbird", "Vulture", and "Hawk/Falcon" (see 7.2.1). A clear relation with ant-following and anting by birds has not yet been established, nor has a direct relation between the poisonous frog and ants as encountered in the narratives been determined. Amerindians may well have noticed this behaviour of birds, or frogs, in relation to ants.

### Ants as food

Insects are considered food across the globe. We read: "A consideration of the role of insect fauna in the diet needs to be included in any evaluation of the adequacy of protein resources in Amazonia" (DeFoliart 1999: 35). Women and children spend more time than men foraging for insects. Comprising a larger portion of their diet, ants are also considered a delicacy. For instance, in Mexico, the eggs of two ant species are added to a native dish known as *escamoles* or ant larvae. In Colombia and Brazil, large-bottomed ants/leaf-cutter ants (*Atta laevigata*) are fried and consumed (DeFoliart 1999: 35, 39-40). The Sauba ant (a leaf-cutter) has a citric, lemongrass flavour.[185]

In Mexico the huge demand for *escamoles*, the immature stages of the ants (*Liometopum apiculatum* and *L. occidentale*), caused the price in 1981 to rise to 1000 pesos per kg, i.e., equalling more than $2 at the then-prevailing rate of exchange (DeFoliart 1999: 36). In Colombia, the leaf-cutter ants are also expensive. DeFoliart (1999: 39) reports one can earn, during the 3-month season, the equivalent of a year of day wages, as 1 lb of these ants sells for approx. $20.

[185] Chef Alex Atala describes the flavour and use of these (*saúva*) "ants" in Brazilian cuisine in his cookbook "D.O.M.: Rediscovering Brazilian ingredients".

### 7.2.3. The iconography of “ant”

“Ants” have not (yet) been identified as a common iconographical feature. Ant mats or gloves, however, play a role in various Amazonian rituals when young men have to prove their strength. For instance, among the Mawé (Tupian, Brazil), 12-year-old boys put their hands inside a liana glove containing bullet ants (Portuguese: *tocandira*s) known for their painful stings, for as long as 30 minutes. Youthful Amerindians able to cope with the pain can exercise future leadership positions in the tribe (Haddad jr. et al. 2005: 235). Rituals involving biting/ stinging “ants” are common throughout the Amazon (see 7.2.4).

If we assume that storytelling and other forms of art (and ritual behaviour) are the results of the same “making-special behaviour”, the “ants” would be expected to be either an iconographical feature or part other forms of display. If “Ants” were not depicted, their absence could be explained as being either: (a) considered unsuitable for practical/aesthetic/spiritual (i.e., tabooed) reasons, or (b) other means of display were preferred (e.g., ceremonial and, or performative), or (c) Ants are depicted but not (yet) identified as iconographical feature. This could be the result of: (a) abstractification (dots, perhaps referring to its larvae and thus not an adult) or patterns referring to ant trails, ant hills), or (b) “Ant” could also have been portrayed as anthropomorph (see also 2.1.2 on *Comparing motifs*).

Thus, although not every dot is an abstractification of an “ant”, dots positioned in a certain alignment could represent a moving “ant”. Or, perhaps “ants” are not visualised themselves, but it is the “ant hill” we see on pottery or other forms of visual arts. Could the fact that “ants” not only fulfilled a role in certain rituals but also figure in tales be the reason why there was no need to depict/display them by any other means? Even if indeed “ants” are not portrayed, it would be interesting to ask Amerindians why these insects are actors in narratives and a part of their ritual life, but not displayed on pottery.

### 7.2.4 “Ant” in Amerindian cosmologies

Ants are social insects which are apparently omnipresent, except perhaps in water. They display a wide variety of behaviours to inspire indigenous lore and have probably fuelled their importance pertaining to Amerindian narratives and worldviews. In this section, the “ant” in indigenous cosmologies is further explored by means of ethnographical examples and descriptions.

Ants as a holistic species take in a temporal and spatial ambiguous position. Numerous species inhabit the ground level of the forest, whereas others enter the sky world as they frequent the arboreal forest canopy. Certain species build quite impressive ant hills, hanging from tree branches or visible on the ground (see Fig. 7.11). These hills form gateways to other cosmic realms. Although most ants are diurnal, some are nocturnal. The fact that warnings exist as to taking heed of "ants" during the night may well have contributed to their ascribed connotations.

**Fig. 7.11.** Large Ant hills "tacurúes" (*Camponotus punctulatus*) in Uruguay; photograph courtesy of S. Rostain.

Several stages of metamorphosis characterize the life cycles of ants. Shedding their skins further strengthens their link to the shamanic realm. Shedding skin is an expression of eternal life. Metamorphosing occurs in the realm of shamans. For instance, predatory lemon ants that kill trees with their massive attacks underline the fact that metamorphosis is considered a very dangerous quality (see 7.2.2).

Numerous behavioural elements (e.g., strength, working hard, forming trails, sense of smell, massive numbers, metamorphosis) of various ant species were, once observed, incorporated into the studied Amerindian folklore. Several of these qualities are highly valued as it renders them excellent assistants. On the other hand, their huge numbers, painful stings and bites would also make "ants" powerful adversaries (see 7.2.1).

### *Ant in rituals which empower*

The "Ant" assists the protagonist, who visits the sky world. "Ant" nests are a means to enter the underworld. As "Ants" visit various realms, they are presumably linked to the shamanic realm. The "ant", as a traveller through and between cosmic layers, contributes to it becoming a powerful and strong agent in Amerindian worldview. This fact is supported by accounts providing details on "ants" utilised during initiation rituals performed by the Mawé (Tupian) people (see 7.2.3) and the Wayana, Kaliña (Cariban) communities as well as in ceremonies related to transferring the qualities of ants.

The Wayana and Kaliña (Cariban speakers of Suriname and French Guiana) uphold a similar practice. In the course of initiation ordeals, they also utilise ant mats made to resemble a double-headed plumed serpent (Boomert 2000: 447-8; de Goeje 1943: 24, 65). In Trinidad, the belief is held that a "two-headed snake" which is the "mother of ants" inhabits ant nests (Boomert 2000: 447-8).

The bite of an "ant" is not only applied as a cure but also a means to absorb its (positive) qualities. According to the Carib, "ant" bites help against laziness (Ahlbrinck 1931). A similar conviction concerns a Carib ritual carried out in order to assure a future spouse's strength and

willingness to work whereby a shaman (*piai*) places "ants" (ant mats) on the woman's chest and wasps on her forehead (Roth 2011: 266, 269, 306-8).

Amerindians (Wayana and Kaliña, Cariban) are stung by "ants" and "wasps" in order to absorb the instincts of these insects. The Kaliña (Cariban) utilise "Yuku ants" (de Goeje 1943: 65). An Amerindian when too lazy to lay out his own field sets off for the fields of others instead, before a medicine man transforms him into a "Sauba (leaf-cutter) ant" (de Goeje 1943: 129).

Probably related to the rituals described above, references to dogs being fed certain types of (roasted) "ants" have been encountered. Dogs consume these "ants" to ensure success when hunting. Dogs are even named after ants: "for they hunt well" (Roth 2011: 270 [232]; 304 [266]). In a Tacana narrative, the protagonist is advised, in order to improve his skills, to practice archery on top of an ant hill, when the Moon is waxing (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 349). Hunters allowed themselves to be bitten by ("Joekoe") "ants" in order to acquire strength (Ahlbrinck 1956: 270).

An "ant" ostensibly embodies strength and power. Their ability to work hard and to hunt well would render them excellent assistants. As certain species can cause diseases, whereas others contribute to either healing or strengthening the body, they are also interconnected to the shamanic realm, which could explain why so many motifs on transformation are linked to "ants".

### *Medicinal qualities*

The army ant is known to have been applied as a surgical aid. Wounds are closed with help of this ant's bite, after which its body is removed, enables its jaws to hold the skin together. The large head of the leaf cutter ant serves the same purpose (see Fig. 7.12; Wheeler 1910: 10).

Ant venom may also serve medicinal purposes. For instance, the venom of the bullet ant is neurotoxic. The venom of *Dinoponera quadriceps* has antinociceptive properties (i.e., reducing sensitivity to painful stimuli). In northeast Brazil, earache is treated with crushed ants and their stings are administered to release back pain and rheumatism (Sousa et al. 2012). Bites of the "Joekoe ant" (species unknown) are also inflicted in order to cure toothaches whereby the insect is not placed inside but outside the mouth on either the lip or the cheek (Ahlbrinck 1956: 175).

**Fig. 7.12.** Leaf cutter ants (*Atta caphalotes*); photograph by Guarwick (2013). Licensed CC BY-NC 4.0, accessed by EOL.

Although the venom has been applied as a cure, numerous records concern diseases caused by ants mainly because humans can be allergic to their bites or stings. A clinical description of the evolution of the envenoming of the sting of a false tocandira ant (*Dinoponera gigantean*)

has been described as causing "… acute and violent pain, cold sweating, nausea, a vomiting episode, malaise and left axiliary's lymphadenopathy" (Haddad jr. et al. 2005: 235).

In this case, a false tocandira ant stung a 64-year-old fisherman after which the symptoms soon developed. A disturbing amount of blood was present in his faeces. Only after eight hours did the intense pain decrease (Haddad jr. et al. 2005: 236-7). Various ant species can inflict intense pain and an allergic reaction, but none can cause this much suffering by just one sting.

### 7.2.5 Concluding remarks

In the 706 narratives, numerous recurrent motifs and sub-clusters have been identified. In the cases in which "Ant" is contextualised as an assistant, it either advises the protagonist or supports it in its "quests" by performing certain tasks. "Ants", described as strong and hardworking, are associated with: (a) the realm of the sky and of the underworld, (b) shamanism, through transformations, (c) the attribute comprising eternal life, and (d) the healer as well as the causer of diseases.

A large number of identified motifs and attributes are directly linked to the physical and behavioural qualities of ants. These insects which form a conspicuous component of terrestrial biodiversity are the most species-rich of all social insects. Living on the ground and in trees, some are herbivores, others are effective hunters. "Ants'' can and could be spotted anywhere and at any time, as they are mainly active during the day. Certain species (e.g., *Camponotus atriceps*) "light" up at night forming very distinctive trails.

The behavioural and physical features the Amerindians probably observed have contributed to the "ants" becoming a cultural *sign**. In sum, the distinctive smell of certain species, their remarkable appearance, their life cycle of metamorphoses, the forming of trails and their painful stings or bites are on occasion accompanied by a massive attack. The most dominant associations identified in the narratives are powerful, hardworking "Ants". The leaf-cutter ant and the predator ant have probably inspired these key attributes. The diligent leaf-cutters forming large trails could be admired when transporting impressive segments of leaves. Whenever swarms of predator "ants" invade spaces in a massive attack, other creatures are attracted to feed, too.

The multiple transformations to take place during their life cycle, furthermore interconnect ants with the shamanic realm and may well have fuelled motifs pertaining to immortality and transmuting. Their nests are gateways to the underworld. Flying ants (and tree-climbing ants) serve as agents as well as assistants within the sky realm. In addition, the assessment that certain ant species cause diseases, whereas others serve to cure (e.g., close wounds, or to cure for instance toothaches or earaches, or even laziness), further reinforces their association with shamanic practices.

The relevance of “ants” to indigenous worldviews is also recorded in ethnographical references, hereby illustrating how these insects are part of rituals: not only as a proof of prowess and strength but also to ensure endurance and the ability to hunt and work hard for humans and their dogs.

It has been addressed (see 7.2.3) that examples of ant iconography have not (yet) been identified. This observation is particularly remarkable because the ant does fulfil a role in ceremonial and ritual life. Resulting from an abstractification, ant motifs may simply not have been identified. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to carry out further research into when and how “ants” are included in Amerindian iconography.

# Chapter 8. Discussion: Everything has its jaguar

The present study, which sets out to enrich our current understanding of the abundant Saladoid (identified) zoomorphic *adornos,* is not merely all about an iconographical survey, but also attempts to reveal the traits of depicted "animals" by way of the roles they play in narratives. Having addressed the four central research questions, the results will now be discussed in terms of their benefit to archaeologists in general whereby the focus also lies on further research.

Section 8.1 starts out by not only looking back but also by readdressing premises that underlie this research. Next, 8.2 is dedicated to answering the four posed questions. As two of them have been discussed in previous chapters, their key elements are now provided along with references for further reading while the others, not yet discussed questions, are discussed in detail (8.3). The final section (8.4) looks forward in order to explore new avenues.

## 8.1 Looking back

To put the conclusions and subsequent discussion of the present study into perspective, certain underlying fundamental premises need to be readdressed. Shaping and limiting the presented results, they cannot remain untouched.

### 8.1.1 Meeting, or understanding whom?

This dissertation treats descriptions of an "animal", or "animal" personages, as a (pre)defined category as opposed to "other" protagonists (e.g., humans or spirits). This is a conscious choice

as this study specifically targets zoomorphic iconography, in an attempt to shed light on the reason why certain "animals" are more prominent in iconographical display than others. Although this distinction, or dichotomy, served and serves when categorising, analysing and communicating data, it is not suited for the discussion on the indigenous conceptualisation of "animal imagery". This predefined category of "animals" is not meaningful because understanding what (or rather who) an "animal" is, is, in fact, the very subject of the present inquiry.

Arguably, it would be much better to avoid the term "animal" completely, because it does not fit any discourse pertaining to indigenous perceptions. The Trio (Cariban) language, for example, indeed lacks one single term for "animal" as applied in the West. Instead, the Trio have words for tree-dwellers (differentiating between edible and inedible varieties), feathered fauna, etc. However, replacing the term "animal" (or for that matter the name given to any particular animal, e.g., "jaguar") is problematic as it would not only obscure the focus of this research, but probably also estrange the (targeted) Western audience. Therefore, inverted commas were, and are, applied in order to indicate this discrepancy regarding the conceptualisation of "animals" (see 3.6 for a more elaborate discussion on this subject). Indigenous collective knowledge feeds the native perceptions of "animal" imagery or "animal" actors. For example, any "jaguar" imagery is not conceptualised as a *sign**, or as a *symbol** for something (e.g., strength), it merely ís Jaguar, framed as a multiplicity of identities (see also 8.2.2).

The human-animal dichotomy is based on Western epistemologies, conceptualised in our Western notion of nature-culture opposition (Corbey 2005), rooted in other premises when compared with Amerindian ontologies (see Descola 1994, 1996; Descola & Pálsson 1996; Viveiros de Castro 1996, 1998, 2004, 2012). Adopting the term "animal" in the present study reflects the (Western) identification as well as a differentiation of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and anthropo-zoomorphic *adornos.* At the heart of this research lies zoomorphic iconography, hereby focusing on "animal" personages in the narratives e.g., on the "bat"-personage.

However, these contrasting ontologies are or can be, problematic.[186] Projecting our own assumptions and discourse needs to be avoided. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that as a result of this regard we tend to perceive "animals" as metaphors, analogies, or fancy replacements of a human actor (i.e., as *sign** or *symbols**). However, the narratives central to the present research provide us with a multitude of contexts in which each "animal" actor is framed and on occasion placed: (a) in a secular setting (when hunted as game, or acting as predator), (b) in a shamanic setting as an assistant, a shaman or as a Master/Owner, and (c) in a spiritual setting when serving as a spirit's pet or assistant, or as a spirit. Within all these

[186] For an elaborate discussion on perspectivism and Amerindian ontologies, see 3.4.2.

contexts, each "animal" is ascribed specific roles, associations and attributes, while relating to and communicating with other actors (human and non-human). Thus, within the narratives, the interrelatedness between actors, events and settings (spatial and temporal) were and can still be studied (see 4.2 and 4.3; Chapters 5-7 (all sections pertaining to the "animals" in the narratives), or Appendix D for a full description per story cluster).

Perhaps a unique trait of tales is each actor, or point of view, is/can be described from his or her own perspective as well as from the perspective of others, a phenomenon which could be termed "Perspectivism in action". For instance, "Jaguar", who resides in a village and drinks *cassiri** is "human" when observed from its perspective. In the same narrative, when observed from the point of view of the Amerindian (shaman) protagonist, it becomes clear that, in "Jaguar's" perspective, *cassiri** is in fact blood when viewed from the shamanic (i.e., Amerindian) perspective. The Amerindian shaman protagonist, in this case, becomes aware of the fact that the "human being" standing in front of him is in fact "Jaguar". This awareness arises *because,* being a shaman, he can change perspective and "see/perceive" the world as "Jaguar" "sees" it. He therefore identifies the *cassiri** consumed/served by "Jaguar" or the knives, or coat, with which "Jaguar" has donned itself (i.e., from a "Jaguar's" perspective) for what it pertains to in a human perspective: blood (i.e., *cassiri**), claws (i.e., knife), and its fur (i.e., coat). Moreover, it is *because* the Amerindian shaman protagonist identifies "Jaguar" by means of its attributes, that he realises that if, for instance, he should drink the "*cassiri**" presented to him, he himself would transform into a "Jaguar".[187] Drinking blood (aka Jaguar's *cassiri**) is just one example of an ontological boundary that should not be crossed.[188]

Narratives are thus a way to become acquainted with these "animals", albeit not the only way. Humans can also get to know "animals" by means of narratives based on hearsay, (shared) experiences and encounters in nature. Or, on their plates as food, through iconographical display, songs, rituals, etc. All these "encounters" contribute to, what I would like to refer to as "identities", all intricately interwoven with ascribed attributes and associations, i.e., indigenous conceptualisation. For that reason, each "animal" has been discussed based on its role in narratives, in nature, in iconography and in Amerindian cosmologies (see Chapters 5-7).

Reconstructing an "animal's" status within indigenous cosmologies, and even in iconography or any other ways of the display, involves the incorporation of historic as well as anthropological accounts. As the archaeological record merely discloses certain parts of (material) culture, it is deprived of, for instance, perishable goods. These sources thus

[187] Here "becoming" or transforming means: losing one's own (human) perspective and adopting that of the "Jaguar". The blood then becomes *cassiri* to the Amerindian shaman, implying, however, that a Jaguar's food is now his food. Having turned into a predator, the (former) human is no longer able to recognise his human next-of-kin.

[188] For an elaborate discussion on perspectivism, see 3.4.2; details as to the applied terms, e.g., interiority, physicality, and subjectivity are dealt with there, too.

supplement and contextualise all the archaeological record has to offer. The sources included in this research predominantly stem from: (a) the peoples inhabiting the South America mainland, (b) the (15th- and 16th-century) "Taíno" communities of the Greater Antilles, and (c) the 17th-century and later accounts concerning the Island Carib of the Lesser Antilles (see also 1.2.1 and 3.5.2).

Readers must keep in mind that neither the narratives nor any anthropological or historic sources are applied to suggest a direct analogy. They are a(n) (additional) means to "reconstruct" the possible identities of the "animals" discussed here in order to better understand the prominence of specific zoomorphic *adornos* and their social significance.

### 8.1.2 Understanding pottery through narratives

The propositions (re-)addressed in this section are whether, and if so how, (contemporary mainland) lore can serve to better comprehend the (ancient) mainly Island *adornos.* In this section, only the highlights are re-enacted. References for further reading are provided, too.

#### *"Making special"*

In my opinion, storytelling and iconographical display are connected, because both are examples of "making special", as defined by Ellen Dissanayake (2006, 2008; see also 3.1). As such they express, revive or channel feelings, reiterate social values and mirror social codes. In this sense, storytelling and depicting represent yet another means for mankind to comprehend and consequently control the world (see 2.3.1 and 3.2).

In the present study both the "animal" actor in the narratives and Saladoid zoomorphic imagery are considered mental objects and referred to as *signs**. This perception evokes a shared recollection of sentiments and thus a means to communicate ideas (see 3.1). This, in turn, implies that imagery: (a) was invested with indigenous knowledge, and (b) cannot be literally translated, but as cultural *signs** were understood by all sectors of that culture. In sum, within their own cultural contexts, an (animal) image has a "*meaning**", often even an agency, mobilizing similar feelings, ideas and social values.

As discussed in detail (see Chapter 3), narratives are an effective way to share knowledge in the broadest sense, because they embody encyclopaedic and symbolic knowledge while disclosing a *meaning**.[189] These forms of knowledge combined enable(d) humankind to "make sense" of the aforementioned cultural *signs** (e.g., *adornos*). Narratives then are merely one means of sharing symbolic knowledge and of conceptualising cultural *signs**, as they are framed within various narratological contexts.

[189] In 3.2 all functions of narratives are discussed, in short: (a) ensuring and transmitting knowledge, (b) informing, (c) encoding social behaviour, (d) validating the world, and (e) establishing one's group and personal identity.

This study targets narratological contexts in which (specifically) "animals" are placed. An attempt is hereby established to unravel at least part of the forms of indigenous knowledge lying at the core of the ascribed connotations and of the associations of "animals". The goal is here: to better grasp the social function of any "animal" imagery, e.g., of zoomorphic *adornos.*

### *Integrity of written sources*

Accepting that narratives and depictions are products of the same "making special"-behaviour, the following two issues remain: (a) the utilised stories are written translations, and (b) the *contemporary* tales mainly hail from the South American mainland, whereas the ancient Saladoid imagery mainly stems from the Caribbean islands.

The once dynamic, orally transmitted narratives presented in this study have been translated and written down. The three implications of this are: (a) the loss of the dynamic setting of the storytelling itself, (b) the loss of dynamics in the contents and structure of the narratives, because storytelling is, and always has been, a continual process whereby certain (foreign) motifs and personages are either embraced or dismissed, and (c) an interlingual translation, which inherently entails an interpretation, and presumably, loss of information as one language cannot replace another (see 3.5).

The quality or integrity of the written accounts is therefore intermingled with those involved in their documentation. As a countermeasure, numerous cases put forth by a variety of researchers/collectors have been included in order to inverse any potential biases caused by the individual contributors. This approach is justified considering this particular research, as its focus lies not on (individual) narratives originating from a specific Amazonian culture. Instead, it involves a broadly shared contextualisation of "animal" personages as well as their ascribed attributes and roles.

In addition, many narratives from the core area have been brought together either by anthropologists with a profound understanding of indigenous cultures and languages (e.g., Trio (Cariban), Warao) and/or collaborators with those who had obtained such knowledge. However, other sources are either less, or not at all, explicit regarding the background or qualifications of the documenter and translator(s) of the provided narratives. I was fortunate enough to have recorded thirteen tales thanks to Sjaak Ebecilio, a knowledgeable, native-speaking, Lokono (Arawakan) elder and his daughter Yvonne Ebecilio, who orally transmitted them in Dutch. As a young man, Sjaak had been trained to teach the Dutch language. For the transcripts presented here in both Dutch and English, see Appendix A (see 3.3 under the sub-heading *Shared stories* for more details on this 2009 fieldwork in Suriname).

The provenance of the majority of the narratives discussed in this research is more or less contemporary, as they were acquired during the 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ centuries. They originate from the northern mainland of South America. This core area was defined on the basis of those

South American mainland areas from which the Early Ceramic Age migrants (*c.*800/200 BCE) most probably set off for the Caribbean archipelago (see 1.1.1). However, these narratives cover an even wider geographic range, thus pertaining to a variety of language families (see 1.2.1 and 1.3). In my opinion, this scope is justified because the language families found in the core area, spreading from the coastal areas up into the Caribbean, share numerous cultural traits. This is the outcome of a shared history, inhabiting similar environments and an intensive contact upheld between these communities (see 1.1). Stories in other languages and hailing from other regions illustrate strong continuities and similarities as to their motifs, themes and other cultural qualities. This inclusiveness contributes to the main objective of this particular narratological study: to establish the stable and most prominent motifs, as well as the ascribed attributes and roles related to the "animal" personages. Various indigenous communities share motifs and/or attributes which not only surpass linguistic and geographical boundaries but also most probably persist through time.

## 8.2 Which "animals" are prominent and how are they contextualised?

This survey pursues four goals, two of which were central to previous chapters.[190] In order to avoid any repetition, at this stage, the questions focussed in these chapters are now only answered briefly. However, the two other specific research questions not directly addressed yet are: "Why are certain animals more prominent in Amerindian iconography than others?" and "How can the conceptualisation of animal imagery inform us about the socio-cultural behaviour of a society?" The latter topic did, however, serve as a *leitmotif* throughout this investigation, whereas the former can be considered the central question to this research. Both are answered by means of a discussion of the data (see in 8.3.)

### 8.2.1 Beyond identification

The first research question: "Which animals are most prominently represented on Saladoid material culture" is addressed by means of a zoomorphic, iconographical approach. Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* function as a case study, specifically *adornos* produced during the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE to 400/600 CE) in the mainland (Venezuela) and the Lesser Antilles (see Moravetz 2005; Petitjean Roget 1975, 2015; Waldron 2010, 2016).

Especially L. Waldron's broad comparative iconographical research proves useful. He identifies and compares 1,958 Saladoid *adornos* stemming from the Lesser Antilles with the known mainland Saladoid material, thereby establishing trends and shifts both in depictions and styles (Waldron 2010, 2016; see also 2.1.2 and 5.1). His study illustrates a discrepancy between island and mainland iconography in which the focus lies on the depictions of

[190] The goals or questions referred to here comprise: which animals are most prominently encountered on Saladoid ceramics from the insular Caribbean and Venezuela? Which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals in the South American oral tradition, with what or whom are they associated within the narratives, and in which context?

mammals to then shift towards a dominance of reptile/amphibian and bird motifs in the islands (see 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*).

Waldron's quantitative survey results in the identification of 1,566 zoomorphic *adornos* which are next described according to the level of class and, wherever possible, to the level of genus (even species). In Saladoid ceramics "animals" are depicted in the form of effigy vessels, incised and painted details and, most often, as *adornos* (see 2.1.2). The most common zoomorphic *adornos* are identified per class, whereby Waldron distinguishes among the different Caribbean islands. For the purpose of the present research his data have been simplified thus merely differentiating between Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward and Leeward Islands (see Table. 8.1 (p. 364); for more details see 2.1.2 and Tables 2.2-2.4, pp. 34-36).

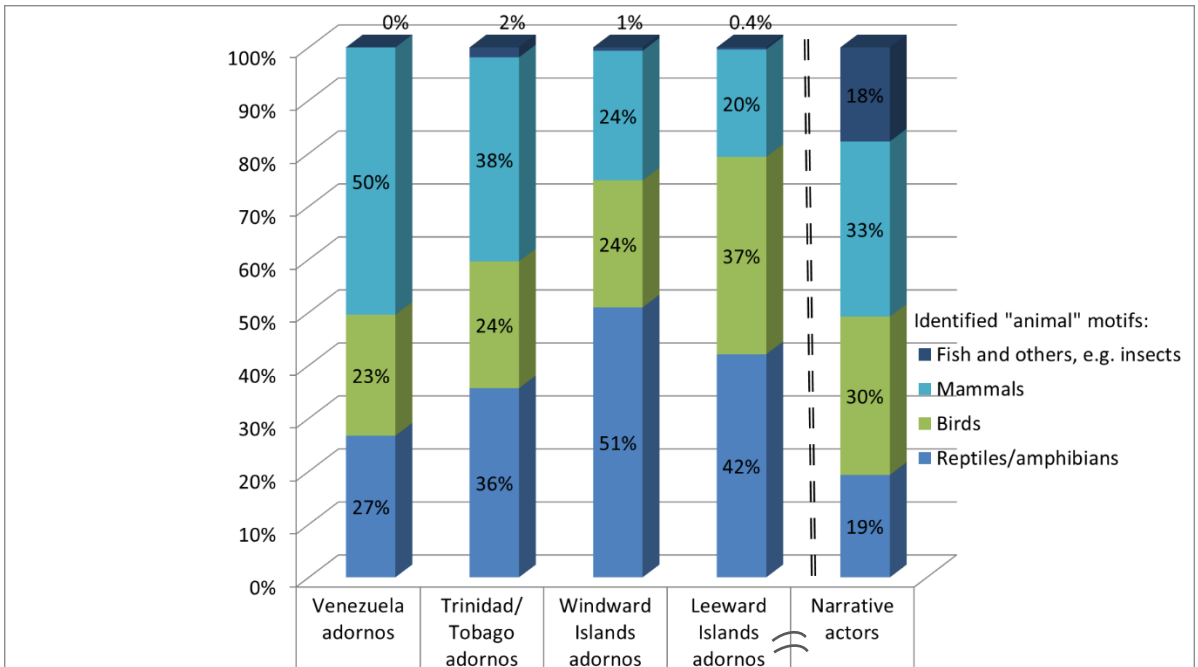
For each class, Waldron identifies the most recurrent zoomorphic representations on the level of specific "animals". Tables 8.2 to 8.4 (pp. 365-368) illustrate the incidences of all the identified "animals" per class.[191] In sum, the most prominent identified mammalian *adornos* are: "dogs", "bats", "anteaters", "opossums", and "armadillos". In the "bird"-category by far the most depicted "birds" are: the "nocturnal birds" (i.e., owl, nightjars and oilbirds), followed by "pelicans", "stilt birds", "parrots", "ducks", and "vultures". "Turtles", "frogs", and "caimans" are most prominent among the category entitled "Reptiles/Amphibians".

Waldron also applies South American and "Taíno" narratives in order to elucidate the interpretation of the (iconographic) data. The present dissertation introduces a more grounded analysis, including a high number of narratives (n=706) and a comparative narratological analysis (see 3.3). This research includes *all* cases featuring (or referring to) any "animal" (actor). This approach facilitates the quantification as well as a comparison of key "animal" actors (analogous to the comparative analysis of identified zoomorphic *adornos*). This more inclusive narratological method ensures that trends for each "animal" actor could be investigated in relation to other tales. Moreover, it demonstrates that specific motifs, associations and contexts are indeed related to specific "animals". Of equal importance is the fact that this method provides a rich, in-depth account of the roles and attributes of each "animal" whereby the multiplicity of their identities is revealed. Whereas those who utilise narratives in order to explain iconographical features often focus either on only a single or a small number of these identities to build their case (e.g., "vulture" as a shaman/healer), all ascribed associations encountered are described here. The resulting analysis provides a detailed contextualisation of "animals" based on indigenous tales, enriching our understanding of the multiplicity of "animal" identities.

[191] These figures only distinguish between island and Venezuelan assemblages. For a comparison between islands, see 2.1.2 and Tables 2.2-2.4, pages 34-36.

We have thus moved beyond Waldron's study by complementing it by means of a systematic comparative analysis of "animal" actors who play a role in the 706 Amazonian stories. How do the data Waldron acquired compare to the present data set? Relating Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* to identified "animal" actors on the level of classes (see Table 8.1) discloses that the closest correlation occurs between the narratives and the iconography of Venezuela and of Trinidad and Tobago. This outcome is to be expected considering the fact that the narratives mainly originate from the mainland. In both Venezuelan and Trinidadian iconography (two most left graphics in Table 8.1) and the mainland narratives actors (far right graphic in Table 8.1) mammals are most dominant. Birds take in the second position in narratives actors, whereas in the aforementioned iconography reptiles/amphibians are second. However, the difference with birds is small: in Venezuelan iconography reptiles/amphibians take up 27 percent, compared to 23 percent for Birds. The category entitled "other" is relatively large when considering the narratives. It is a consequence of including all narratives with "animal" actors, or references to (specific) animals. The category "other" also includes tales containing references to "animals" of other classes (e.g., a protagonist who sets off on a fishing trip (Fish, 6 percent); flies hovering around a carcass (e.g., other insects 11 percent).

**Table 8.1.** Identified and classified zoomorphic *adornos* compared to identified "animal" actors.[192]



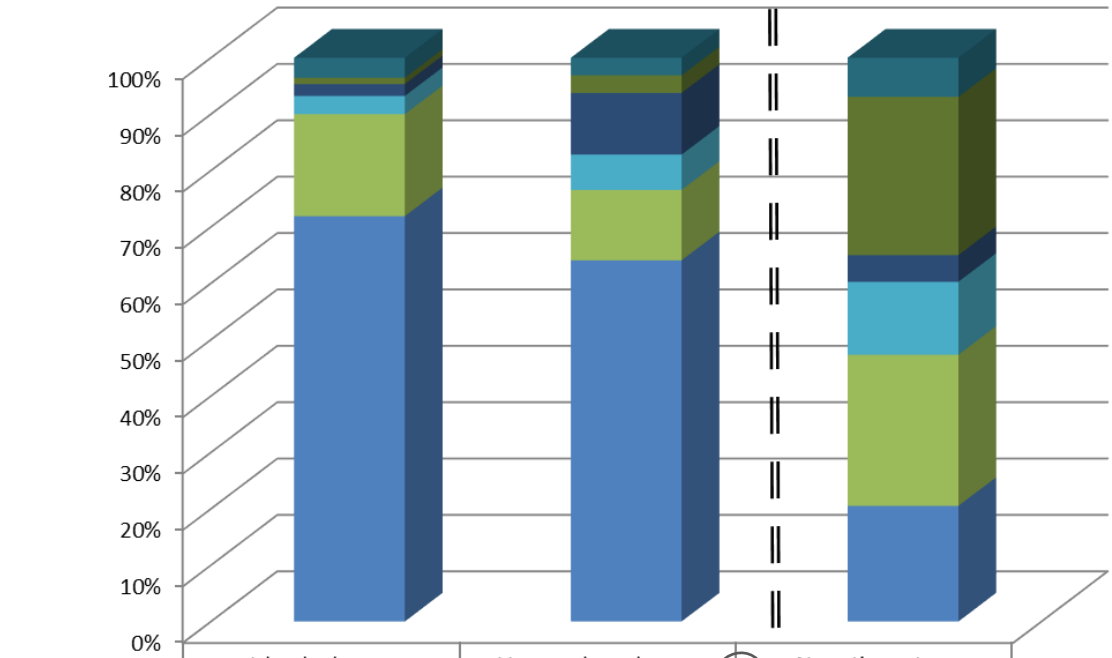

| | Venezuela adornos | Trinidad/ Tobago adornos | Windward Islands adornos | Leeward Islands adornos | Narrative actors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fish and others, e.g. insects | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 291 |
| Mammals | 117 | 82 | 156 | 105 | 542 |
| Birds | 53 | 51 | 153 | 193 | 490 |
| Reptiles/amphibians | 62 | 76 | 325 | 218 | 317 |

[192] Table 8.1 is based on Waldron's Chart 2 "Classic Motif Indices in Sample Collections of Saladoid Era Ceramics", which includes also unidentified animals/birds per class (Waldron 2010: 320). In this figure the data table displays absolute numbers, though identified anthropomorphs are not included, see 2.1.2, Table 2.1 (p. 33) which includes anthropomorphs.

### *Incongruities*

On the level of specific "animals/birds", the resemblance of identified zoomorphic motifs and "animal" personages is striking, since all but one (i.e., "pelican") are identified in the narratives. The majority of these personages are even listed in the Top 15[193] of most recurrent actors (see Tables 8.2-8.4).[194] Nevertheless, important incongruities surface when the data are compared. For each class, the main inconsistencies are shortly addressed below.

**Table 8.2.** Reptiles/Amphibians identified in Saladoid iconography and (mainland) narratives.




| | Island adornos | Venezuelan adornos | Narrative actors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified | 22 | 2 | 22 |
| Snake | 7 | 2 | 89 |
| Lizard | 13 | 7 | 15 |
| Caiman | 20 | 4 | 41 |
| Frog/toad | 112 | 8 | 85 |
| Turtle/tortoise | 445 | 41 | 65 |

Of the identified reptile and amphibian *adornos,* all "animals" also feature within the narratological context (see Table 8.2). However, the most recurrent "animal" identified in the stories (snakes) is only the fifth (n=9) of the most identified animals included in Waldron's

[193] The "Top 15" of most recorded "animals" in the narratives are: "Jaguar", "Snake/Anaconda", "Birds" (general), "Vulture", "Tapir", "Monkey", "Turtle", "Frog", "Ants", "Caiman/Alligator", "Fish" (general), "Toad", "Bat", "Deer" and "Dog" (see 4.2.2).

[194] These figures only distinguish between Island and Venezuelan assemblages. For a comparison between islands, see 2.1.2; Tables 2.3 to 2.5, pp. 34-36). The percentages for "Narratives" in the displayed graphics are somewhat deformed as 165 "animals/birds" have been identified, resulting in a huge category of "other". Therefore the data extracted from narratives could best be compared to the iconographical data according to order (e.g., for Reptiles/Amphibians: no. 1, "Snake", no. 2 "Frog", no. 3 "Turtle", etc.; see also 5.1).

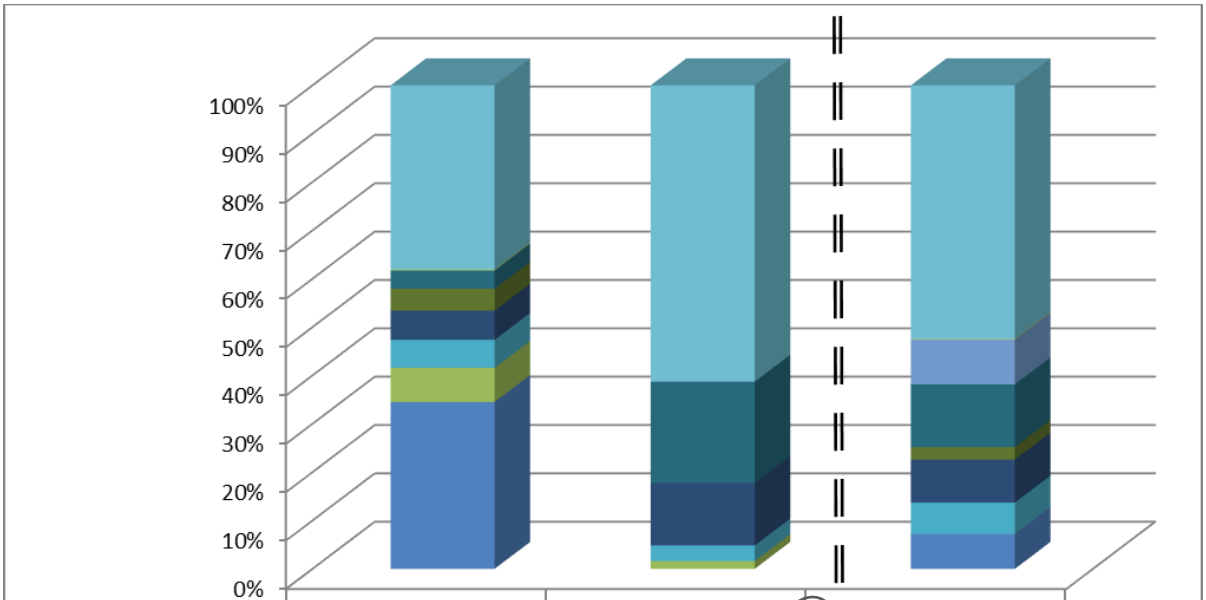
study. The "caiman" *adornos* take in the fourth position of the most identified reptile and amphibian, on both the mainland and Caribbean islands. While only four Venezuelan "caiman" *adornos* were identified, this number is low even when considering the (small) total 62 Venezuelan reptile and amphibian *adornos*.[195]

This observation of "caiman" occupying the fourth place of most identified reptile/amphibian *adornos* on ***both*** the Caribbean islands and the South American mainland seems anomalous, because caimans are hardly ever encountered in these islands, but are abundantly present in the mainland and thus prominent in folklore. I would, therefore, have expected "caiman" to play a more notable role in mainland iconography. Nevertheless, when comparing reptile/amphibian motifs in iconography and the narratives the "Top 4" (comprising "turtles", "frogs", "caimans", "lizards") are also often identified in both categories. In the mainland and the isles, when considering this particular case, the "turtles" remain the most dominant, followed by "frog" *adornos*. They are also prominent in the narratives. Apparently the main aquatic predators, "anacondas" and "caimans" are significantly outshone by their role played in Amazonian narratives when compared with their display as an *adorno.*

The most notable shifts in the mainland vs. island iconography occur among the identified "bird" *adornos* (see Table 8.3, p. 367). An increase of "aquatic birds" in the island iconography (e.g., "pelicans", "stilt birds", "ducks") is presumably the result of environmental changes. Nevertheless, "owls" and "nightjars" *adornos* were <u>not</u> identified by Waldron in Venezuelan assemblages, nor can their absence be explained by any environmental conditions. In addition, although "vulture" *adornos* were identified throughout the Lesser Antilles, they are the most dominant of the identified "bird" *adornos* in Venezuela (n=13), only to be surpassed by several native "birds" to the islands. In the island assemblages, various "aquatic birds" remarkably surpass "vulture" *adornos*.

[195] Waldron identifies 62 amphibian and reptile *adornos* hailing from Venezuela, compared to the 325 identified as being from the Windward Islands alone, see 2.1.2, Table 2.2 (p. 34) for a comparison per class.

**Table 8.3.** 'Birds" identified in Saladoid iconography and (mainland) narratives.



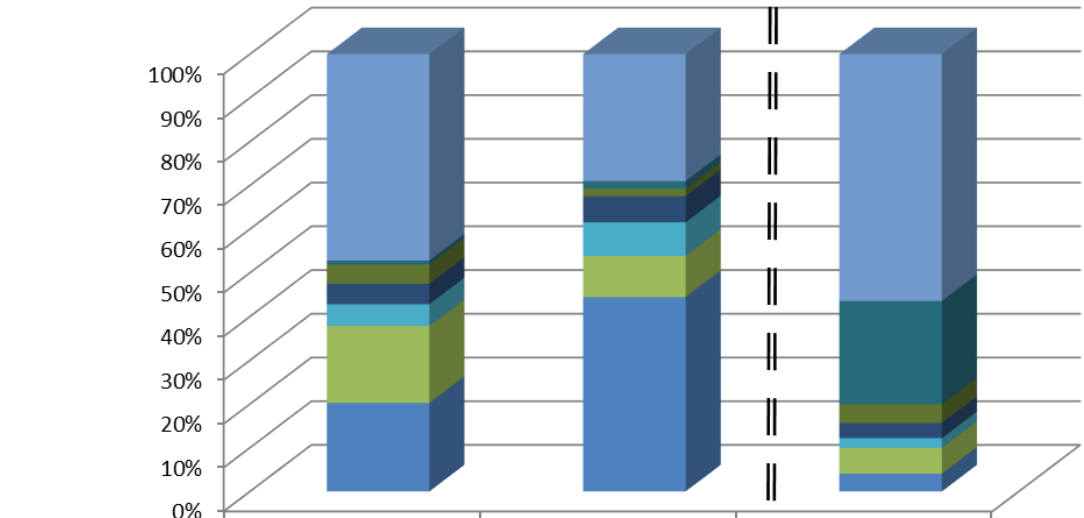

| | Island adornos | Venezuelan adornos | Narrative actors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified/other | 151 | 38 | 283 |
| Frigate bird | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Eagle/Hawk | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| Vulture | 15 | 13 | 70 |
| Duck | 18 | 0 | 14 |
| Parrot-like | 24 | 8 | 48 |
| Shorebird, wader | 23 | 2 | 35 |
| Pelican | 28 | 1 | 0 |
| Nocturnal birds | 137 | 0 | 39 |

Moreover, as with aquatic predators, the apparent absence of "birds of prey" *adornos* is noteworthy. These "birds of prey" are recognised as key actors in a number of narratives. Many such birds frequent the skies of Venezuela and of several Caribbean islands. As Waldron points out: the island species are smaller but nonetheless "... [Falconidae] ... have distinctive features that would make for identifiable *adornos* despite stylization*"* (Waldron 2010: 183).

Considering the identified mammal *adornos,* "dog" and "bat" are recognised as the two key motifs encountered in Venezuela as well as in the islands. Important differences in mammal display (see Table 8.4) have been noted. The "bat" *adorno*-related incidences increase significantly in the Caribbean islands, especially in the Windward Islands. Although "dog" *adornos* are present on each and every island they have been identified as a dominantly Leeward Island phenomenon (Waldron 2010: 120-1; see 2.1.2). Noteworthy, too, is the almost complete absence of positive "jaguar" (or feline) *adornos.* Especially considering the mainland, this is a remarkable observation, as "Jaguar" is the most common (n=127) "animal" actor in the analysed narratives. The main predator is once again not identified as a key zoomorphic *adorno.* Nevertheless, the "Top 5" of the most identified mammals to be found in

the iconographical record, which all also feature prominently in the tales are: “dogs”; n=24, “bats”; n=33; “anteaters”; n=12, “opossums”; n=19, and “armadillos”; n=23.

**Table 8.4.** Mammals identified in Saladoid iconography and (mainland) narratives.




| | Island adornos | Venezuelan adornos | Narrative actors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unidentified/other | 161 | 34 | 306 |
| Feline | 3 | 2 | 128 |
| Armadillo | 15 | 2 | 23 |
| Opossum | 16 | 7 | 19 |
| Anteater | 17 | 9 | 12 |
| Bat | 60 | 11 | 32 |
| Dog | 69 | 52 | 22 |

Finally, certain “animals”, several of which also inhabit the insular Caribbean, play leading roles in the narratives but were not identified as Saladoid iconographical motifs. Therefore, environmental conditions are apparently not a likely factor regarding the iconographical scarcity (or absence) of “Ant”, “Birds of prey”, “Woodpecker”, and “Hummingbird”. This foursome is included in the present study, as their absence/under-representation in iconography forms a point of interest. Only “Birds of prey” are (re)discussed in this section. The remaining “birds” are dealt with in 6.2 and “Ants” are discussed in 7.2.

In sum, although the iconographical and narratological data match quite well, especially the discrepancy could be of interest to our understanding why certain “animals” are more prominent than others. The low number, or even absence, of any identified “feline” (jaguar), “snake”, “birds of prey”, and “nocturnal bird” *adornos* pertaining to Saladoid mainland iconography is striking. The same applies to a number of other personages which are (as yet?) unidentified. Could they remain unidentified as a result of abstractification? Were they considered unsuitable or inappropriate for display on ceramics, for practical/aesthetic and or spiritual (i.e., tabooed) reasons? Are they perhaps depicted by other means, and if so, why? Explanations for this inconsistency as to the narratological data could be plentiful. This issue

will be further explored by answering the question: "Why are certain animals more prominent in iconography than others?" (see 8.3).

Selecting the central "animals" for the present research is based on the most recurrent iconographical zoomorphic motifs, and as well by means of the aforementioned discrepancies. This approach results in the analyses of mammals listed according to class: "Jaguar"- (n=127), "Dog"- (n=24) and "Bat"-narratives (n=33) and when considering the reptiles/amphibians only to the "Caiman/Alligator"-narratives (n=41), see also note 94 on p. 145. Narratives clustered in the avian class are: "Birds" in general (n=81; i.e., references to "bird(s)"). "Birds of prey" (n=54; e.g., eagles, hawks), "Scavenger birds" (n=70; e.g., vultures, buzzards) and "Nocturnal birds" (n=40; i.e., owls, nightjars) were also looked into. Moreover, "Ant"-narratives (n=45) are analysed as they apparently occur frequently and are ascribed very specific roles and attributes.

As to the "Birds" cluster in general, certain additional specific "birds" have been introduced. I chose to include these "birds" because: (a) they have been identified as a recurrent zoomorphic iconographical motif, or (b) they played prominent and/or remarkable roles in the tales, even though their imagery has not been identified in the iconographical record. These categories are for (a): "Parrot-like birds" (n=45; e.g., macaws, *Ara* species, parakeets), "Ducks" (n=14), "Shorebirds and waders" (n=30; e.g., herons, egrets), and for (b): "Hummingbirds" (n=27), and "Woodpeckers" (n=31). [196]

### 8.2.2 Meeting the "animals" through narratives

The second research question addressed here is: "Which attributes and roles are ascribed to specific animals in the South American oral tradition and with what or whom are they associated within the narratives, and in which context?" This issue is discussed in Chapters 5-7 (see all sections under the headings *"Animal" in the narratives*) and see Appendix D, for further elaboration on the analysis of the stories.

The methodology applied when analysing the narratives was based on the research into their structure and the way they influence our perception (see 3.3 and 3.3.1). Here all the cases featuring a specific "animal" are not only combined but also studied as a single dataset, to then be further categorised in sub-clusters based on recurrent motifs and themes. These sub-clusters are next subjected to a narratological analysis. For example, the 127 "Jaguar"-narratives are divided and studied in five sub-clusters such as: "Jaguar and the origin of fire" (see Appendix D, section E). The results of this are compared to the outcome of the overall analysis of the 706 stories (see Chapter 4) in order to detect any significant variations in the "animal" narratives.

[196] These specific "birds" were not dealt with as a separate cluster in Appendix D, but the identified differences are focused on in the section entitled "General birds". All these "birds" are discussed separately (see Chapter 6) according to their roles in the tales, in nature and in native cosmologies.

### *A multiplicity of identities*

As stated previously (see 8.1.1), the importance of the story world for this research is: it not only embraces but also parades the Amerindian worldview, resulting in multiple points of views. In the narratives, each viewpoint (e.g., "human", "jaguar", "spirit") is not only staged within a specific chronotope of space and time but also framed in relation to each other. I thus suggest that, in the narratives, each personage (i.e., "animal", "human") is described departing from its own perspective and from the perspective of others.

The 706 narratives provide us with a multitude of contexts in which the interiority, as well as the physicality and attributes of each featured personage, are described. All actions and encounters take place against a specific backdrop of space and time and in relation to "others" i.e., subjectivities meet and interact within specific settings. This framing of personages/ subjectivities may well support, or contribute to, the conceptualisation of these personages as subjectivities amongst the audience. Consequently, through these narratives, we become acquainted with the multiplicity of identities of all the personages/subjectivities, which are considered "cultural signs" in the present research.

Another example rendering this statement more tangible and understandable comprises "Jaguar", in certain cases, being portrayed as the Owner of Fire (see 5.4.1), which it keeps in its own village. In a number of instances, "Jaguar" willingly supplies, or shares its fire, whereas in other cases this fire is stolen. In a warrior song, "Jaguar" is called upon as the "spirit of violence" (see Story no. 707; Cariban). Yet, in other cases, it is portrayed as a dangerous predator that slays many Amerindians and is killed in revenge. In various trickster narratives, "Jaguar" is framed as a gullible fool (see 5.4.1).

However, I propose that the identities and interrelatedness between these numerous subjectivities (human and non-human) are also communicated by means of, for example, encounters in nature as well as by cultural displays (e.g., iconography, ritual, dance, song). Through all these varied "encounters" humans are acquainted not only with the multitude of identities but also with the main attributes and associations of each subjectivity. When applying the term "multiplicity of identities" I suggest that the identity of "jaguar", for instance, is shaped and framed by the above "encounters" through which people become acquainted with "jaguar". As a result, this "animal" is feared but also seen as equal to a hunter, but also sometimes ridiculed. These "encounters" take place through stories as "Jaguar" as a protagonist in displayed both as a fool and a powerful shaman, but also when "jaguar" is part of rituals, songs and dances.

Part of this framing of "animal" personages in the narratives comprises the spatial and temporal context i.e., the chronotope in which the subject acts. This chronotope forms the backdrop against which a personage is staged. It probably influences the way it is conceptualised as both the temporal and spatial setting are intertwined with their own sets

of connotations. A narrative that unfolds in the water-layer of the cosmos has inherent, varied connotations when compared with encounters in the sky world. Moreover, a narrative unfolding in an Amerindian village differs from one staged in the forest or in "Jaguar's" village. Several personages are mainly portrayed in the shamanic realm, for instance, because a shaman visits them in the sky or the underworld. Other personages are linked to the realm of spirits, met in the forest at night, or spirits visited in the water realm. A more "mundane" context, e.g., village life, a field (or village garden), a bathing place is a common setting, too.

The temporal setting can vary as well. It can include the "Before time", or "mythical" era, when humans and "animals" still spoke to each other to extend to the "present" time, which still can be divided into day, night, dusk, and dawn.[197] Conversely, in Amerindian worldviews, time itself is not only linear but is also cyclic in which the "Before time" and the "present" are related in a continuum (see 2.3.1). Several tales explicate how "animals", humans and "things" came into being, informing us from where they originated or how they reached their current state of being to still affect us today.[198]

As shown in Chapters 5-7, the majority of "animals" are found in a variety of temporal, spatial and cosmological contexts. For example, in Story X, a "bird" is hunted as game or for its eggs (within a forest context), whereas in Story Y the same "bird" is described and portrayed as the Master of all "Birds", a transformed hunter itself (within a shamanic setting). In the first abovementioned context, the "bird" is conceptualised as a (game) animal, but in the second context, it is a subjectivity as well as a powerful agent with its own point of view. This multiplicity of settings and actions shape the identity rendering the "identities" of the subjectivities/"animals" i.e., "jaguar", "bat" etc. more accurately. Observed from a Western perspective, these identities are relevant to conceptualising these subjects as *signs**.

### *Roles and contexts: shamanic, spiritual and mundane*

This research focuses on the contextualisation of various "animals". They are portrayed either as (powerful) agents with subjectivity (e.g., masters, shamans) and/or as *significant other-than-human-persons** (i.e., spirits), or as lacking any agency whatsoever and described as a (prey) animal. This phenomenon is, however, always related to one's personal perspective, as all creatures and things have their (own) "jaguar": Amerindians are the prey of "jaguars", while "water snake" is "jaguar" of "frogs", see 3.4.2.

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[197] A description provided by the Kaliña (Cariban) chief Ricardo Pané concerning the Before (or "mythical") time is freely translated as: events that occurred when everything still spoke to each other or did so in narratives dating from the time of our beginning (Carlin 2018: 332).

[198] On how, in the past, "animals" lost key attributes, to become animals and now seek revenge by causing diseases, see 2.3.1 under the heading *"World making"*). Pertaining to the Tukuna people, their origin myths and how the human body is made up of cultural artefacts, we read: "the Instruments of Life and transformation are not human productions but divine bodies existing as bone and crystal…" (Hugh-Jones 2009: 49).

Tables 8.5 and 8.6 divide the "animals" discussed here into the following categories, or contexts: (a) spiritual realm, which in turn can be subdivided into Spirit (S), the spirit's Helper or pet (H), and the Ancestral realm (A), (b) a shamanic realm, split into Shamans (S), the Master/Owner (M), the shaman's Helper/assistant (H), and (c) the secular context, subdivided into Helpers (H), and Game, prey (G). The column to the far right summarises the main associations and attributes ascribed to the "animals" featuring in the narratives.

Spirits, shamans and Masters/Owners are considered powerful agents (see 3.4.2 under the heading *Nature and intensity of subjectivity*). The "animal" shamans are: (a) linked to multiple spatial/cosmological contexts (e.g., underworld, the water and sky realms), (b) ascribed the ability of transformation, and (c) associated with the duality of life (i.e., they are givers and takers of cultural attributes, or life itself). This observation holds true for "Jaguar", "Caiman", "Birds of prey", and "Scavenger birds". However, "Woodpecker" is also contextualised as a shaman, but is less linked to the duality of life, nor is it described as a traveller between realms. This "bird" is more contextualised as a culture giver, intermingled with "origin myths" as the carver of the "wooden bride" (see 6.2.5 under the heading *"Woodpecker" in the narratives*).

Other "animals" are less directly associated with shamanism (i.e., not described as shamans). "Birds", "Woodpecker", "Hummingbirds" as well as various "Shorebirds and waders" come to the shaman's help on his demand. "Ants", "Caiman" and "Jaguar" are also contextualised as the assistant of a shaman.

In section 3.4.2, the concept of mastery has already been elaborated upon. In the narratives, various "animals" (e.g., "Caiman", "Jaguar", "Birds") are described as the Master of Water and everything it contains, the Master of Immortality, the Master of Game, the Master of Food/Drink, etc. These Masters/Owners often introduce themselves or are introduced, as a Master/Owner to the protagonist (through direct characterization).

Other powerful agents (e.g., "Nocturnal birds", "Bats") are not or to a lesser degree linked to a strictly (or ritualistic) shamanic realm and more linked to the spiritual. They are often closely associated with the night and repeatedly portrayed as embodiments of ancestral souls/spirits and/or malevolent spirits. As such they are depicted as powerful agents lacking certain "civilised/human" traits, causing them to be *significant other-than-human-person*s*.

As with most categorisations, the distinctions between classes can be ambiguous, as is the case with the difference between the shamanic and spiritual realm. Shamans and spirits are considered powerful agents. Both can enter the perspectives of others when transforming. Shamans also interact with the spirits. Auxiliary spirits are consulted or called upon to assist. Shamans protect against malevolent spirits, who for instance cause diseases. However, the shamanic realm is intertwined with (shamanic) rituals, whereby a shaman who fulfils the role

of the negotiator between realms, healer and protector and forms a danger to “others” (see 3.4.2).

The third category consists of “animals” that are more contextualised in every day (village or forest) life, such as “Dogs” and (various) “Birds”. These “animals” offer help in daily life, for instance, as a guard, messenger, or advisor. Interestingly pertaining to “Dogs” in particular is: they connect the forest with the village context. Especially hunting dogs act as hunters (i.e., predators) within the forest setting, and return to the village with game. In sum, “Dogs” can be pets, spouses, potential killers, and predators.

Able to fly and cross natural boundaries, “birds” are messengers *pur sang* rendering them perfect assistants to Amerindians, shamans and spirits. Some “birds” such as “Hummingbird” are strongly linked to the shamanic realm and consequently to the origin of shamanism and/or shamanic paraphernalia.

Secular is the last category mentioned (i.e., in Tables 8.5 and 8.6) and pertains to “animals” referred to as being hunted. This catalyser function is, for example, visible in the narrative describing how: “a man went hunting macaws in the forest”, after which the events unfold. What, or whom is considered food or game also depends on the perspective of the hunter, or of the one eating. “Caiman” (*lewoo* in Matacoan) is, for instance, considered the game “animal” of the Sun.

Tables 8.5 and 8.6 (pp. 374-375) indicate that the categories are not strictly mutually exclusive and thus that “animals” can be part of more than one category. These categories do not cover all the contexts as trickster narratives are not included. Perhaps more importantly, these categories are ambiguous: should “Caiman” (the Sun’s game) be also part of the “game” category? However, the sole purpose of this categorisation is to illustrate that, although all personages act in the narratives with at least a certain autonomy, the narratives contextualise each and every personage, hereby providing an indication as to the nature of subjectivity (i.e., the level of intentionality and agency). Consequently, Tables 8.5 and 8.6, for instance, reveal that: (a) not all “animals” are portrayed as powerful shamanic or spiritual agents, and (b) different roles and attributes are ascribed to different “animals”, both relevant to our understanding of “animal” imagery.

**Table 8.5.** "Animals" in the narratives categorised according to main contexts, ascribed attributes and associations.

| | *Narratological contexts* | | | | | | | | *Main associations and attributes encountered in narratives* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Spiritual | | | Shamanic | | | Secular | | |
| | S | H | A | S | M | H | H | G | |
| 1.Caiman | - | + | - | + | + | + | - | - | Able to transform; a powerful shaman (life giver and taker); rules the water realm also linked to the sky world. Framed as the Master/Owner of Water and everything that lives in it and of Rain/Thunder; an excellent diver. ***Attributes:*** notches/scales as punishments, short or absent tongue. |
| 2. Birds (general) | - | - | + | - | + | + | + | + | First to roam this world, linked to sky world; helper (of shamans and human protagonists) as guardians, messengers, advisors, rescuers. Described as embodiments of ancestral, auxiliary spirits; associated with the origin of various goods, especially with "food", even as Master of Food or Drink. Contextualised in a mundane setting, associated with family affairs, adultery, thievery, and quarrelling siblings. ***Attributes:*** feathers, beak, colouring (i.e. caused by blood). |
| 3. Bat | + | - | - | - | + | - | - | - | Guardians of cosmic realms (i.e., gatekeepers living in caves), rulers of the night, ascribed the quality of transformation; avengers of broken taboos, associated with sickness, death and the dead. ***Attributes:*** long-snouted bloodsuckers with distinctive vocalisation (i.e., laughter); wings with long nails (i.e., wearing finger bones), nose patches and large ears. |
| 4. Dog | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | Contextualised as a secular, helpful animal, closely associated with people and Amerindians village life, as a wife and/or hunting companion. Associated with game (i.e., bridging the forest and village); a protector and guide (even after death). ***Attributes:*** fearless, excellent sense of smell, hunting skills, and food provider. |
| 5. Jaguar | + | - | - | + | + | + | - | - | Able to transform, powerful shaman (life giver and taker). Framed both as protector, rescuer and provider (important factors such as fire, festivals, ceremonies, bow and arrow, tobacco, spinning, and even humankind itself, but also as predator *par excellence* (i.e., dangerous killer) and traveller across realms). ***Attributes***: strong claws, fangs, spots, illuminating eyes, and a thunder-like voice. Ascribed qualities: strength, agility and great hunting, climbing and digging skills. |
| 6. Ant | + | - | - | - | - | + | - | - | Powerful, ascribed with the quality of transformation and the ability to perform extraordinary tasks. Linked to both the sky world and underworld. ***Attributes:*** numerous, strong, mighty and wise. Their nests are gateways to other realms, especially to the underworld. |

| **Legend:** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Spiritual:** | | **Shamanic:** | | **Secular:** | |
| S | Spirit | S | Shaman | H | Helper |
| H | Helper or pet of spirit | M | Master/Owner (see Glossary) | G | Game, prey |
| A | (Embodiment) of ancestral spirit | H | Helper of a shaman | | |

**Table 8.6.** "Bird" personages in the narratives studied by means of main contexts, ascribed attributes and associations.

| | ***Narratological contexts*** | | | | | | | | ***Main associations and attributes*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Spiritual** | | | **Shamanic** | | | **Secular** | | |
| | **S** | **H** | **A** | **S** | **M** | **H** | **H** | **G** | |
| a. Parrot-like birds | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | + | Described as helpful "birds" and pets, even wives; often related to food (i.e. Master/Owner of Food), certain types of fruit, *cassiri** and maize beer.<br><br>***Attributes:*** pet, game, talkative. |
| b. Ducks | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | + | Associated to the water realm, as helpful "birds" they assist people crossing bodies of water (i.e., bridging land and water). Masters, and teachers, of canoes.<br><br>***Attributes*** float, associated with boats/canoes (i.e. their bodies as boat). |
| c. Shorebirds and waders | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | + | Associated with the shamanic realm, Masters or containers of Water and Master of Storm; linked to both the sky and water realm; bringers of cultural goods (e.g., fish poison, earthenware, bow and arrow).<br><br>***Attributes:*** strong or weak beaks, utilised to hide people, fish poison, intoxicating (i.e., their hunting technique mimics the use of fish poison). |
| d. Hum-ming-birds | - | - | - | - | + | + | - | - | Associated with the shamanic (and sky) realm, as an important aid and bringer of shamanic paraphernalia, i.e. tobacco, rattle, knowledge etc. Associated with the origin of important gifts like fire, childbirth and cloth making.<br><br>***Attributes*** hardworking, fast flying and brave. |
| e. Woodpec-kers | - | - | - | + | + | + | - | - | Associated with the shamanic (and sky) realm and important cultural gifts. A rescuer, guard and messenger and provider of food, especially honey. Master of Axes and Honey.<br><br>***Attributes:*** strong beak (i.e., his axe), short tail and beautiful crest (i.e., the headdress of Sun) and excellent food provider. |
| f. Birds of prey | + | - | - | + | - | - | - | - | Rulers of the sky realm ascribed the quality of transformation; life-takers (i.e., devastating birds) as life givers (i.e., the origin of things and healing practices).<br><br>***Attributes:*** large claws, powerful beak, excellent vision, invisibility. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| g. Scavenger birds | - - - | + + - | - - | Ruler of sky world; ascribed the quality of transformation, powerful, shamanic rulers of the sky world; associated with smelliness, death and immortality; Master/Owner of the Sun/Fire, Tobacco; teacher of shamanic practices and healer; beautiful women, when feathers are put down.<br><br>***Attributes:*** wattle on the nose (i.e., nose ornament), two-headed, carrion-eating, smelliness. |
| h. Nocturnal birds | + - + | - + - | - - | Guardians of the night, i.e., Master/Owner of the Moon. Often as embodiments of malevolent, cannibalistic spirits. Their distinctive sounds are associated with the origin/coming of the night.<br><br>***Attributes*** wide, vulva-like mouth, howling at the moon (= nightjar); Their sounds scare people and predict ill fate. |

| **Legend:** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Spiritual:** | | **Secular:** | |
| | | H | Helper |
| S | Spirit | G | Game, prey |
| H | Helper/pet of spirit | | |
| A | (Embodiment) of ancestral spirit | | |
| | | | |
| **Shamanic:** | | | |
| S | Shaman | | |
| M | Master/Owner, see Glossary | | |
| H | Helper of a shaman | | |

## 8.3 Discussing the data: so who is who?

Let us now set out to answer the yet untouched research questions: Why are certain "animals" more prominent than others? And what does this research tell us about the socio-cultural behaviour of the Early Ceramic Age Amerindian islanders? The presented data will, therefore, be analysed on a meta level, which discloses general observations on how "animals" are contextualised, in order to establish a better understanding as to why certain creatures are more prominent than others.

### 8.3.1 Establishing a hierarchy

In 8.2.2, all "animals" were framed within spiritual, overtly shamanic and, or secular settings as well as in accordance with their ascribed attributes and associations. The next step is: to establish a relative hierarchy of prominence in order to answer the question: why are certain "animals" apparently more significant than others? This issue will be analysed in relation to how these creatures are portrayed, primarily as *adornos* and actors in tales, but also by (potential) other ways of depiction. This approach is preferred because I assume that the Amerindians of the (early) Ceramic Age became familiar with the "multiple identities" of all

humans and non-humans either by means of personal, or hear-say, encounters as well as through cultural displays (e.g., iconography, ritual, dance, and song).

Identity here should be defined as a set of associations and attributes ascribed to a subjectivity within a specific context. These associations and attributes next become mental constructs, or high order representations, communicated through *signs** (e.g., zoomorphic *adornos,* personages in stories, pendants, ritual and dance). Therefore, that *what,* or which identity, is communicated depends on the context. For instance, "Jaguar" as a subjectivity embodies a multitude of identities, conversed through "jaguar" pendants, *adornos,* rituals, dances, encounters in the forest, etc. It would thus be feasible that the identity expressed differs by means of the display and the context(s) in which it is presented, whereby "jaguar" called upon during a warrior song could comprise a different identity (with specific connotations and associations) than "jaguar" portrayed as an *adorno*.

The fact that (zoomorphic) *adornos* are abundantly present in the Saladoid archaeological record does suggest they are more than *l'art-pour-l'art* and indeed serve an additional function. However, several studied "animals" are also prominent, or solely prominent, in other forms of art and ritual. As shown throughout this research, certain "animals" stand out in the analysed narratives but are absent in ceramic iconography. Then again they could have been part of rituals, or (also) displayed as for example pendants, petroglyphs and benches. Can this variety, and perhaps even preference, contribute to our understanding of the reason why certain "animals" are more prominent than others?

### *The ways of depiction in relation to what is indicated*

The form chosen to depict and to display the various "animals" presumably was and still is, interconnected with the way they have been conceptualised. This process works both ways. Firstly, their conceptualisation may well have resulted in a preferred way of display (e.g., iconography, dance, oral narratives). Secondly, the way they are depicted as *signs** also contributes to their indigenous conceptualisation.

It was indeed an erroneous assumption to hope to answer the research questions merely from a (ceramic) iconographical perspective, i.e., by means of identified zoomorphic *adornos*.[199] Although the iconographical identifications matched *quite* well with the identified "animal" personages featured in the narratives, the discrepancies could even be of more value when answering these questions than the "perfect" matches. It was only during the present research that I realised that we are more likely to open our eyes to the full extent of these "animals" as a high-order representation when studying them from a much broader perspective. Hereby I am not only focusing on zoomorphic *adornos* but also on their presence on other materials as well as the role they fulfil in ceremonial life. By studying the "animals"

[199] The research question referred to here is: Why are certain "animals" more prominent than others?

encountered in these various contexts, we should acquire a better understanding of their indigenous conceptualisation.

Of course, from an archaeological perspective, many of these contexts are lost if consisting, for example, of perishable, long since disintegrated goods. In addition, only limited direct historical references are available concerning the ritual/ceremonial life of the so-called "Taíno" and Island Carib. Even these references most likely do not completely correspond to the ceremonial life of the Ceramic Age peoples. Considering the available archaeological findings, ethnographical research, the narratives and historical accounts at our disposal, we can only catch a glimpse of what could have been. Equally important, as I have hopefully shown, too, is the relevance of our ability to alter our ontological perspective.

In my opinion, singling out zoomorphic *adornos* would limit our view. Therefore additional data have been introduced in the discussion on "animal" iconography. They pertain to other means through which the "animals" as *signs** were, or may have been, displayed. The data dealt with here are displayed in Table 8.7. Firstly, their quantitative presence in the narratives is indicated. Next, two iconographical contexts are distinguished: *Adornos* and "Other". The latter is a broad category including (e.g., stone, teeth, bone) pendants, petroglyphs, benches and decorated tools. The two columns on the far right of Table 8.7 contain references in relation to "animals" being part of, or displayed in specific rituals or ceremonies. For instance, a "caiman" bench used at a marriage ceremony, or plumage applied during a trance/healing ritual, or human and dog burials. However, this category also includes references to (what has been referred to as) "symbolic knowledge", such as taboos associated with specific "animals", or certain associations related to these "animals" (e.g., bat droppings as a bad omen) or food taboos for hunting dogs.

In Table 8.7, too, the incidences of the zoomorphic motifs are more precisely indicated, including the narratives and *adornos* by means of symbols (</-/+, M/I, see legend). All "animals" occur frequently (+/++) in the narratives, as they would not have been mentioned in this study if absent. The "pelican" is excluded as it plays no role at all, although "pelican" *adornos* have been identified. The number of their occurrences in "iconography" is quantified and based on Waldron's identification of zoomorphic *adornos* (see 2.1.2.). However, examples of other forms of art and ritual are less accurately documented with regard to the present research. They are, therefore, only indicated with a "p" (i.e., positive) whenever a positive identification has been recorded and discussed (see Chapter 5-7, under the headings: (a) *The iconography of "animal"*, and (b) *"Animal" in Amerindian cosmologies*).

The reader is reminded of the fact that the various columns, or categories, are also obscured by the differences in the time span they refer to. The *adornos* from Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands are identified as Saladoid (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE, see 2.1). The sources used for the narratives are (mainly) contemporary (see 3.3 and 3.5), as are the references

found with regard to ritual/ceremonial issues. The category of "other" forms of iconography/ art includes references to Saladoid material as well as 15th to 17th-century references to "Taíno" or Island Carib art/tools and contemporary references concerning perishable goods. For instance, jaguar skin, and bird feathers are presumably not retrieved from archaeological records, whereas other materials are rare, e.g., delicate bone material.

Whether these perishables or ceremonies were part the Ceramic Age peoples' (ceremonial) lives can therefore not be confirmed with certainty. However, the absence of these materials, or "eye-witness" accounts, does not deliver any proof they were not part of the ritual/ ceremonial life of these Amerindians. Whatever archaeologists recover is only a fragment of all that once existed.[200] These references are not meant as a direct analogy but serve to reveal the (likely!) possibility that elements of the insular Ceramic Age peoples' ceremonial traditions are more inclusive than can be reconstructed through archaeology alone.

Thus combining a varied set of data, Table 8.7 illustrates that any absence, or subordinance, of certain zoomorphic motifs (e.g., *adornos*) does not imply their absence within other contexts or their display by other means. Without entailing a direct analogy, this could help to understand several discrepancies encountered in the data. For instance, how can we or should we understand the subordinance in the identified *adornos* of the powerful, shamanic rulers of land and sky i.e., "jaguar" and "birds of prey"? How did "nocturnal birds" and "caiman", not depicted on any mainland ceramics, nevertheless become prominent features on island ceramics? Could this fact be a direct reflection of a shift in their conceptualisation? Could these discrepancies, or anomalies, further contribute to finding an answer to one of the main research questions: Why are certain "animals" more prominent than others?

[200] Readers interested in this bias in the archaeological records and how more contemporary archaeological research could help to fill this hiatus are referred to the PhD study of Jimmy Mans (Mans 2012) who researches the movements of both peoples and objects of the Trio, an Cariban community of Surinam.

**Table 8.7.** Frequency of zoomorphic display in narratives, iconography and ceremonial contexts.

| | Narratives | Iconography/*art* | | | | In ritual** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Adorno* | | Other* | | | |
| | | Mainl. | Island | Mainl. | Island | Mainl. | Island |
| 1. "Caiman" | + | < | ++ | p | p | p | ***n*** |
| 2. "Birds (general)" | ++ | ++ | ++ | p | p | p | p |
| a. "Parrot-like birds" | + | < | + | p | p | p | p |
| b. "Ducks" | + | - | +/- | p | ***n*** | ***n*** | ***n*** |
| c. "Shorebirds & waders" | + | < | + | p | p | p | P |
| d. "Hummingbirds" | + | - | - | p | ***n*** | p | P |
| e. "Woodpeckers" | + | - | - | ***n*** | p | p | ***n*** |
| f. "Birds of prey" | ++ | - | - | p | P | p | P |
| g. "Scavenger birds" | ++ | +/- | +/- | p | P | P | p |
| h. "Nocturnal birds" | + | - | ++ | p | p | p | P |
| 3. "Bat" | + | +/- | ++ | ***n*** | p | p | P |
| 4. "Dog" | + | ++ | ++ | p | p | p | P |
| 5. "Jaguar" | ++ | - | - | p | p | p | P |
| 6. "Ants" | + | - | - | ***n*** | ***n*** | p | p |

**Examples of other forms of "art": petroglyphs, pendants, use of feathers, teeth, bone.*

***References relating specific "animal" to rituals or ceremonies, but also references in relation to ritual knowledge (e.g., taboos, or associations related to the 'animal', e.g., a sign of strength, omen for good/bad luck).*

| **Legend:** | |
|---|---|
| - | No records |
| < | < 10 records |
| +/- | 10-20 records |
| + | 20-50 records |
| ++ | > 50 records |
| p | Positive (references recorded) |
| ***n*** | Negative (no references recorded) |
| Mainl./Island | Mainland/Islands |

### 8.3.2 Narrative contexts related to iconography and ways of depiction

A multitude of contexts in which "animals" act are framed by means of the setting as well as by the ascribed attributes and qualities. This procedure has resulted in three main categories: spiritual, shamanic, and secular which are further subdivided (see 8.2.2). In order to ascertain if these contexts can be related to ways of display of "animals", they are not only combined with identified *adornos* but also with other ways of depiction and with their display within ceremonial contexts. Table 8.8 combines all these data. In order to simplify the information, the narratological and iconographical data are not quantified, as was the case in Table 8.7. Table 8.8 simply indicates whether zoomorphic *adornos* have been identified in Mainland (M) and/or Island (I) Saladoid contexts, but not how frequently they occur.

The first column of Table 8.8 displays the context(s) in which the "animal-actor" is identified in the narratives (see 8.2.2). The narratives contexts are subdivided into: (a) spiritual contexts, i.e., Spirit, Helper/pet and Ancestral, (b) a shamanic context, i.e., the "animal" as a (transformed) Shaman, Master, or as Helper, and (c) a secular context, subdivided into Helper and Game. The next column concerns the two iconographical contexts: *Adorno* and "Other". For their presence or absence, within any ritual contexts, see the column to the far right. As to the two columns at the right, only the "animals" identification within a Mainland (M), or Island (I) setting is provided, yet again without quantifying the data.[201]

Table 8.8 combines each and every type of data presented in this research. The aim is to demonstrate if any narrative context corresponds to any specific iconographic or ritual display. For instance, are "animals" contextualised within the spiritual context expressed by other means when compared with "animals" contextualised within a secular setting?

[201] "Jaguar" is not indicated in Table 8.8 as identified *adorno*, because Waldron only identified "feline" (not further specified).

**Table 8.8.** Narrative contexts in relation to iconographical and ritual contexts.

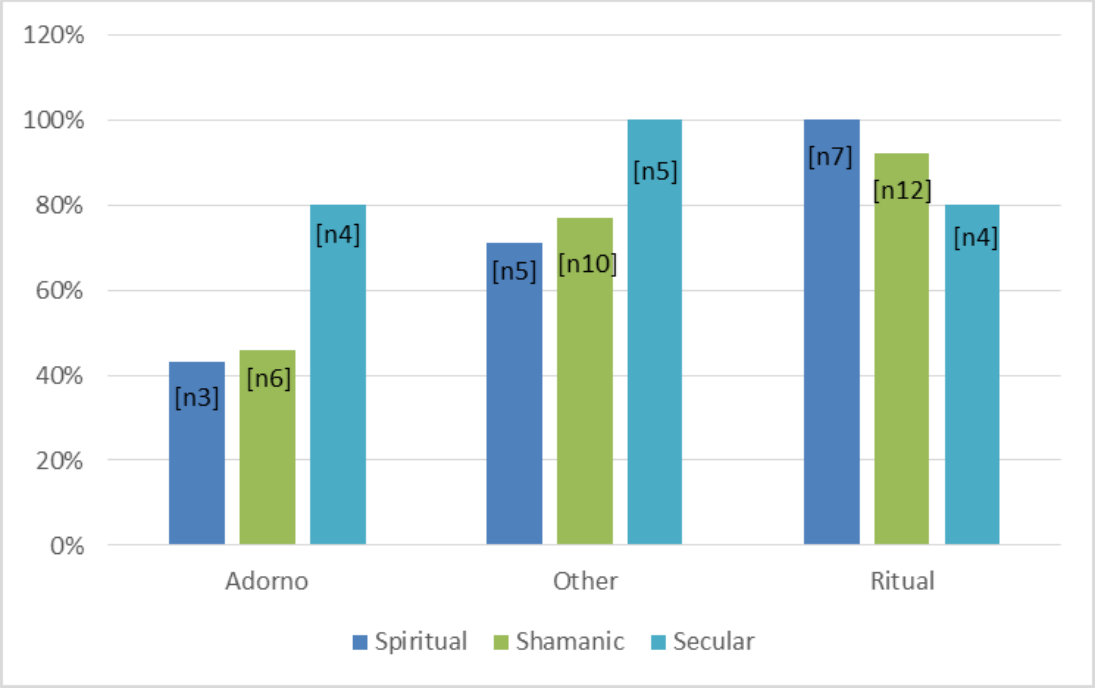
| | Narrative contexts | | | | | | | | Iconographical context | | In ritual context |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Spiritual | | | Shamanic | | | Secular | | Mainland/Island | | Mainland/Island |
| | Spirit | Helper/pet | Ancestral | Shaman | Master | Helper | Helper | Game | *Adorno* | Other | |
| 1. "Caimans" | - | p. | - | p | p | p | - | - | M/I | M/I | M |
| 2. "Birds (general) " | - | - | p | - | p | p | p | p | M/I | M/I | M/I |
| a. "Parrot-like birds" | - | - | - | - | p | p | p | p | M/I | M/I | M/I |
| b. "Ducks" | - | - | - | - | p | p | p | p | I | M | - |
| c. "Shorebirds & waders" | - | - | - | p | p | p | p | p | M/I | M/I | M/I |
| d. "Hummingbirds" | - | - | - | - | p | p | - | - | - | M | M/I |
| e. "Woodpeckers" | - | - | - | p | p | p | - | - | - | I | M |
| f. "Birds of prey" | p | - | - | p | - | - | - | - | - | M/I | M/I |
| g. "Scavenger birds" | - | - | - | p | p | - | - | - | M/I | M/I | M/I |
| h. "Nocturnal birds" | p | - | p | - | p | - | - | - | I | M/I | M/I |
| 3. "Bats" | p | - | - | - | p | - | - | - | M/I | I | M/I |
| 4. "Dogs" | - | - | - | - | - | - | p | - | M/I | M/I | M/I |
| 5. "Jaguars" | p | - | - | p | p | p | - | - | - | M/I | M/I |
| 6. "Ants" | p | - | - | - | - | p | - | - | - | - | M/I |

******Other forms of "art" include petroglyphs, pendants, use of feathers, teeth, bone.*

***References relating specific "animal" to rituals or ceremonies, but also references pertaining to ritual knowledge (e.g., taboos, or associations related to the "animal" e.g., a sign of strength, omen for good/bad luck).*

To further address this question, the data are simplified in Table 8.9. It depicts the relationship between the narrative context (i.e., Spiritual, Shamanic, Secular) to a way of display (i.e., *Adorno,* Other and Ritual). Excluding the island iconography, merely the mainland iconography has been utilised for this comparison because the stories applied in order to establish the narrative contexts almost entirely hail from Amazonia. Shifts in the display resulting from a change in the indigenous conceptualisation in the islands may obscure this comparison, especially as establishing *if* shifts between mainland and islands have occurred is indeed a subject of investigation.

**Table 8.9.** Relatedness between ways of display and the context of "animal" encountered in narratives.[202]




Although the quantities, placed between square brackets, are low, Table 8.9 reveals that "animals" contextualised within the spiritual and shamanic realms are less likely to be depicted as *adornos* and indeed more likely to be displayed within a ritual context. As indicated, 100 percent of the "animals" contextualised within the spiritual context are identified within a ritual/ceremonial setting and 71 percent is also displayed by other means (e.g., petroglyphs, pendants). However, "animals" contextualised within a secular context are more evenly dispersed across the various categories pertaining to means of representation: 80 percent of those "animals" is depicted as *adorno,* 80 percent is encountered in a ritual context, whereas 100 percent is also displayed by other means.

[202] Multiple records within a single narratological context have been counted as one, e.g., "Nocturnal birds" have been recorded twice for the "Spiritual", respectively as "spirits" and "ancestral", but only counted once as to the ways of display and, in this example, once for the categories "Other" and "Ritual".

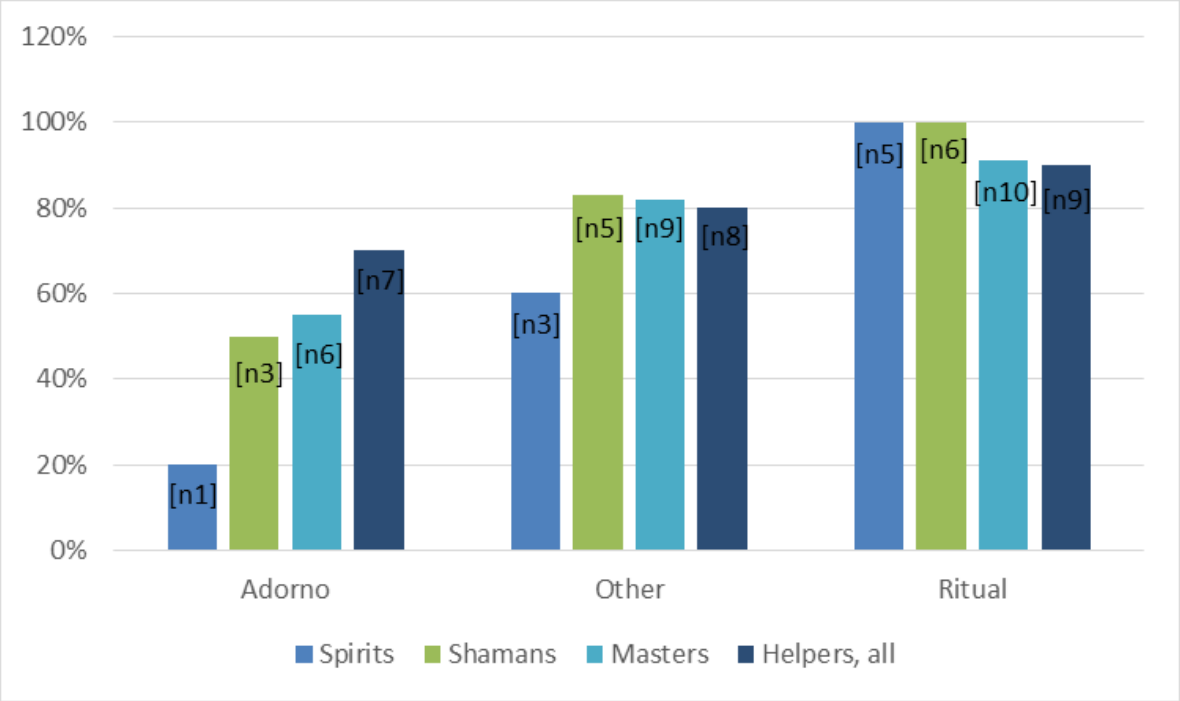
Table 8.9 illustrates the accumulation of all "animals" joined by a shared narratological setting, which results in very broad categories. For instance, the shamanic context now includes all "animals" with the exception of "Dog". All narratological settings were also further subdivided to end in more precise categories. It is feasible here that Amerindians differentiate, not only in ascribed attributes but also in qualities, between a shaman, a Master/Owner or a shaman's assistant. As described in 3.4.2. (under the sub-heading *Nature and intensity of subjectivity*), shamans and spirits are the only subjectivities with the ability to "change clothes" (i.e., to transform). Moreover, they are probably the most powerful subjectivities to express a high degree of agency and animacy.

Masters/Owners take in a conceivable high position on the "scale of subjectivity", but this category is more ambiguous. Presumably, there was and is a difference in ascribed subjectivity between the various masters. Several of those masters are conceived as being more powerful than others (e.g., "caiman" as a Master of Water and its entire contents for instance compared to "woodpecker", the Master of Axes, or "duck", the Master of Canoes). In my vie, any distinguishing between Master/Owners would be ambiguous, indeed arbitrary if based on this research alone. However, several masters are also contextualised as shaman and/or spirit (e.g., "caiman", "nocturnal bird"), thus differentiating them from the masters who are not shamans or spirits (e.g., "parrot-like birds", "ducks").

Table 8.10 draws distinctions between "animals" contextualised as spirits, as shamans and as masters and also shows how they are displayed. The category "helpers" concerns all assistants (spiritual, shamanic, secular) simply because the shamanic assistants include all others (e.g., "caiman" assists both a shaman and a spirit. "Birds" help in a secular as well as a shamanic setting. It becomes apparent that a spirit is not often imaged as an *adorno* (n=1; 20 percent). Only half of the ascribed shamans is portrayed as an *adorno* (n=3; 50 percent). Masters are only slightly more frequently encountered as *adornos* (n=6; 55 percent), but especially "helpers" are pictured in this manner. Moreover, spirits and shamans are more regularly displayed by others means and/or utilised in a ritual setting.

However, the present study is rich in both narratological data (n=706) and iconographical data (i.e., zoomorphic *adornos* (n=1599), as identified by Waldron (2010, 2016; see 2.1.2). The data presented in the categories entitled "Other" and "In ritual" are arbitrary and therefore inconclusive. Nonetheless, I hope to have pointed here at an opportunity for further research (see also 8.4.2).

**Table 8.10.** Specific narratological roles related to iconographical and ritual contexts (mainland).




### 8.3.3 Explaining anomalies and shifts

Interrelating narrative contexts and ways of display can contribute to our conceptualisation of "animal" imagery, especially when zooming in on "anomalies" and shifts. Zoomorphic motifs shift whenever Venezuelan mainland and Lesser Antillean zoomorphic *adornos* are compared (Waldron 2010, 2016; see also 2.1.2). The preference of depicting mammals in the South American mainland paves the way for dominance of reptiles and amphibians, and to a lesser extent of birds. In addition to this transition of depicted classes of "animals", other or additional, "animals/birds" have been identified in the islands, such as *adornos* imaging "manatee", "owl", "nightjar", and various aquatic "birds", e.g., "duck".

A number of the suggested modifications in identified motifs of *adornos* are apparently the direct outcome of the changed environment of the Amerindian islanders. When the Saladoid communities migrated to the Caribbean islands they came across a very different environment, deprived of various (especially mammal) species, but relatively rich on aquatic species such as amphibians (see 2.1.2). The vista of an (almost) ubiquitous body of water sharply contrasts the dense forests or savannas in the mainland. This unfamiliar environment leads to new or supplementary subsistence strategies, enhanced by everything the sea, swamps and wetlands have to offer. Nevertheless, the diets of these Amerindians included local (and imported) mammal and avian species.

These "new" environments and ways of life must surely have impacted indigenous lore and art. As worlds are built on worlds at hand, it only makes sense that if one of these worlds (i.e., environmental) transforms, the world built upon it will follow (see also 2.3.1 under the sub-

heading *"World-making"*). These habitat changes, therefore, probably contribute to an emergent display of both avian and reptiles/amphibians in the shape of *adornos*. Conversely, these changes do not explain the significant increase or seeming abrupt appearances, of species also native to the Venezuelan mainland i.e., bats, caimans, nocturnal birds, and ducks. Nor could these changes explain the seeming absence, or inferiority, of the main predators as *adornos* considering the fact that "jaguars", "birds of prey" and "caimans" have not (yet) or scarcely been identified in Venezuelan Saladoid assemblages. Moreover, in the case of "raptor birds", even their absence as *adornos* on the island assemblages cannot be accounted for whenever solely based on habitat.

Thus, three types of anomalies cannot be contributed to any environmental conditions because: (a) the recurrence of "animals" in the stories, which are either not or rarely, identified as Venezuelan *adornos* (i.e., jaguars, caimans, birds of prey, nocturnal birds, ducks), (b) the evidence of an increase (appearance) in zoomorphic motifs in Saladoid island assemblages of "animals/birds" also present in the mainland (i.e., bats, nocturnal birds, caimans), and (c) pertaining to entirely unidentified *adornos* of "animals/birds" present in both the mainland and Caribbean islands (i.e., birds of prey, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, and ants, see 5.1).

### *Embodied identities*

Interrelating the narrative contexts and ways of display (see 8.3.2) indicates that "animals" framed as helpers and/or as Masters/Owners and "animals" associated with ancestry (e.g., as the embodiment of souls) in the narratives are most likely to be depicted as *adornos*. Those ascribed full attributes and qualities of shamans or spirits (i.e., potentially our (i.e., human) "jaguars", our predators) are more likely to be imaged by other means and/or through display in ceremonial contexts. This would imply that a way of display in itself signifies, perhaps even contributes to, the ascribed roles, attributes and associations of the portrayed "animals". What will happen when the identified modifications and anomalies are reassessed with this implication as a starting point?

Initially the above would presuppose that powerful, potentially predatory shamans or spirits that "suddenly" emerge in the Caribbean islands in the shape of Saladoid *adornos* are no longer (solely) conceived as such. This conclusion entails that "bats", "nocturnal birds" and "caimans" would have had varied connotations because they are (more prominently) displayed as *adornos* in the islands than in the South American mainland. Moreover, they would have been framed differently, at least as *adornos*, rather as a helper, Master/Owner or an ancestral spirit.

Both "Bats" and "Nocturnal birds" are ostensibly of more relevance to the Saladoid potters of the Caribbean islands because their numbers as to identified *adornos* increase significantly. Waldron does not identify any Venezuelan "owls" and "nightjars" whatsoever. He makes a strong case of a transition in "symbolic meaning" for bats and nocturnal birds (see also 5.3.4,

Waldron 2010: 164-5; a shared contextualisation pertaining to "owl-nightjar-oilbird-bat" or "owl-bat" is mentioned). In various stories "nocturnal birds" and "owls" are either brothers or brothers-in-law. They apparently share a set of ascribed associations which are also present in the Caribbean islands. I am inclined here to agree with Waldron, and many before him, that the manner in which Amerindian islanders connotate the "owl-bats" altered. For the Islanders, their connotations probably moved more strongly towards ancestry and to the gatekeepers/ guardians of various realms (see 5.3 and 6.5).

This modification in associations directed away from malevolent, dangerous predatory spirits and ill omens, but moving towards (embodiments) of the ancestral realm may have contributed to the increase of "bat", "owl" and "nightjar" *adornos.* Their dominance could even indicate the growing importance of ancestry and ancestor worship. Their association with the nocturnal hours, serving as guardians, bringers and signallers of the night may well have remained significant. However, the large variety of display of "owls", "nightjars" and "bats" renders a differentiation between depicted "animals/birds" quite feasible.

In short, the dominant mainland associations of "bats" and "nocturnal birds" are presumably more linked to bloodsucking bats (a species absent in the islands) and to malevolent, predatory spirits. However, their association with ancestry and departed souls has also been identified in the mainland (see 5.3.4). These connotations and ascribed attributes seem to have become more and more important to the Saladoid Amerindians islanders, which next contributed to an increasing number of depictions, even a dominance, on Saladoid *adornos* from the Antilles.

Similar discrepancy concerns the following. The "caiman" was only marginally identified as a Venezuelan zoomorphic *adorno,* whereas "Caiman" was identified as a common actor in the narratives. Furthermore, in spite of their presumed absence in the immediate proximity of the Antillean potters, the number of identified "caiman" *adornos* in the Antillean assemblages increases. Can a similar change in ascribed attributes and associations explain their increase in being depicted as an *adorno?* If so, this would implicate that "caiman" is contextualised differently, less as a powerful, potential predatory, shaman *per sé*, but more as a helper or Master/Owner. Attributes and associations identified in mainland narratives to stay on are: the wet season, thunder and storm. Especially these associations make sense. For, caimans mainly wash ashore during the rain and hurricane seasons. The potential implications for Amerindian Islanders only recently have become obvious, after Hurricane Irma (Sept. 2017) brought about destruction and desperation on various islands.[203] These connotations could have interrelated "caiman" with these natural forces, especially relevant for activities such as travelling overseas (including going on fishing trips). In that sense, "Caiman" could have

[203] The consequences of the hurricane season involved, for instance, the resilience and flexibility of the Saladoid islanders to protect themselves from destructive forces perhaps by seeking refuge in caves, or constructing stilted dwellings behind protective mangrove islands (Bright 2011: 33-4).

remained the one to ask for help whenever crossing large bodies of water was required. This role is repeatedly ascribed to “Caiman” (see 7.1).

Conversely, I would suggest that the connotation of “Caiman” as a Master of Water, and all living in it, was lost as a result of this creature’s absence on most Caribbean Islands. None of the animals dealt with in this research is a likely candidate for this more all-inclusive connotation. “Sharks” could have occupied this role as main sea predator. As to local island rivers, or creeks, any present local predator would do so, too. An alternative could comprise replacing this overall Master of Water and everything in it, with a variety of “animal” specific Masters, for instance, the Master/Owner of Fish, of Crab, etc. Likely candidates for Masters of Fish are aquatic birds, especially because otters, the Masters of Fish according to the mainland lore (see 7.1), are also absent on most of the islands. The dominance of “pelican” and “stilt bird” *adornos* in the island assemblages is undeniable, hereby disclosing their relevance to the Amerindian islanders. Caimans once infested the mainland waters, but now these two abovementioned aquatic birds pervade the shores, marshes and swamps of the Caribbean islands. Here one would continually witness their excellent fishing skills, a theme that also dominates the studied narratives.

As discussed above, “Shorebirds and waders” in various mainland stories are related to fishing techniques (e.g., fish poison), and containers (Masters/Owners) of Water and Fish (see 6.2.3, under the sub-heading "*Shorebirds and wader in the narratives*). I would suggest that as “otter” and “caiman’ have lost (at least in part) their associations as the Master of Fish, “shorebirds and waders” could have gained significance in this aspect. One can only wonder if the large variety of these “birds” (e.g., heron, ibis, flamingo) has led to a differentiation, whereby one specific “shorebird” or “wader” is associated to a (specific) fish and another to “sea creatures” e.g., shellfish, crab. Even a variation between islands is feasible here. The great variety and details observed in the identified *adornos* (i.e., referred to as “stilt birds” by Waldron) could then reflect a differentiation.

The “duck” is clearly an aquatic bird with its own associations and attributes, which differ from the studied “shorebirds and waders”. Could a “duck’s” dominating associations with boats contribute to our understanding of its imagery? That gives rise to the question: where is “duck” to be encountered on the mainland Saladoid iconography? Canoes/boats were *also* important to the mainland Saladoid Amerindians, as the Amazon rivers were and still are the highways of the forest. Even if, as suggested in 8.2.2, “ducks” are depicted by other means in the mainland (e.g., in the form of pendants, motifs on canoes, parts of canoe-related rituals), then why are they (also) displayed as *adornos* in the Caribbean islands? I suggest that “duck’s” association with overcoming wetness, the bridging of land and water grew even stronger in the Amerindians’ new habitat. This development may have led to an extended arsenal of attributes, not necessarily solely interconnected with “boats” but also with long sea voyages and/or perhaps even periodic floods. Still possessing the important qualification of being able

to float, “ducks” could have become even more relevant helpers when crossing, or overcoming, vast bodies of water.

### Predatory agents

The supposition suggested here is: powerful, predatory “animals”, that is, those ascribed the attributes and qualities of shamans, or spirits, are not likely to be imaged as *adornos.* Conversely “vulture” is repeatedly identified among Saladoid *adornos,* both within mainland and island contexts, although their frequency evidently drops in the northern assemblages (see 6.4.3). As discussed in 8.2.2, “vulture” is closely related to the shamanic realm, and regularly described as a shaman itself, i.e., as a powerful agent and ruler of the sky world. Conversely, although “vulture” is associated with death and immortality, it is less described as a murderer, kidnapper or destroyer (the “life-taking” aspect of the shaman). “Vulture” is deprived of any dominant predatory (i.e., killer) qualities, which are ascribed to most other shamans and spirits. For instance, “jaguar”, “caiman”, and “birds of prey”, as well as malevolent spirits (including “bats” and “nocturnal birds”) are all characterized as potentially dangerous killers, kidnappers, or otherwise destructive agents. Conversely, “vulture” is powerful and holds sway over decay and death which is a precursor of transformation, i.e., this is the creative aspect of death. It is thus more a benefactor and not so much portrayed as the cause of destruction.

The absence of the aforementioned predatory attributes generally speaking mainly distinguishes “vulture” from other powerful shamans or spirits such as “owls”, “jaguar” and “birds of prey”, which are presumably not imaged by means of *adornos.* Likewise, other ways of displaying “vulture” have been recovered (e.g., pendants, axe blades, see 6.4.3). Could this variety in ways to display “vultures” reflect a discrepancy in signalled connotations which is perhaps related to the setting in which this “bird” was applied or featured? I would suggest this to indeed be the case, especially as the Huecoid pendants presumably portray “king vulture”, whereas Waldron mainly identifies “turkey vulture” as *adornos* (Waldron 2010: 170).

The identification of secondary figures or motifs in relation to the depicted “vulture” comprises contextualising the depicted “vulture” as a *sign**. Waldron (and others) have identified various such motifs, e.g., another bird, frog or an anthropomorphic creature (see 6.4.3; Waldron 2010: 173). The “vulture” in combination with the other “animals” or other alter egos could, in my opinion, indicate that the identity displayed possesses the ascribed attributes and qualities of the “vulture” as a shaman/spirit (i.e., powerful life giver/taker (immortality), Master of Tobacco). Other “vulture” imagery may perhaps be more linked to its associations with the Sun, fire, or as a healer. More contextual information on the object portraying a “vulture” would be essential for establishing which identity was displayed. However, the number of *adornos* featuring images of “vultures” evidently decrease in the Caribbean islands. In fact, only four positive identifications pertaining to “vultures” encountered on both the Windward and Leeward Islands are known.

This difference in connotations, in addition to function, when considering *adornos* or pendants also contributes to our understanding of "dog" display. As discussed in 5.2, "dog" imagery and display varies. "Dog" *adornos* are identified in Venezuelan and Antillean assemblages (although mainly as a Leeward Island phenomenon). The vessels adorned with "dog" *adornos* have not only been recovered as burial paraphernalia but within other contexts, too. In the Caribbean Islands, dog graves and canine teeth pendants have been found. As to those vessels encountered within burial contexts projecting the posed hypothesis implies that the "dog" *adornos* probably signal its qualities as a protector and a guardian, for instance, of the deceased (see 5.2.3). The pendants made of dog teeth could then be linked to a canine's "predatory" qualities as hunting dog being "(like-)Jaguar" to those it catches, i.e., its prey. The hunter adorned with canine teeth would wish to own these jaguar-like qualities in order to secure (or contribute to) success, perhaps even as a means to improve his hunting skills. The "dog" (teeth) pendant then becomes a way to become or appear to be "like-jaguar" to the hunted prey (see also 8.2.4).

My conclusion is: "animals" depicted as *adornos* are mainly contextualised as (shamanic) helpers, Masters/Owners or as ancestral spirits and guardians. Hence I infer that establishing an order of relative significance of "animals" based on their occurrences as *adornos* leads to incomplete results. The question concerning the relative significance of "animals" should be studied from a much broader perspective, whereby the full repertoire of "animal" display includes its utilisation and its relationship to humans and other beings. Nevertheless, numerous examples (e.g., oral narratives, songs, rituals, forms of display by means of perishable ware) are sadly forever lost. Now contemporary analogies can amplify our perspective of what ***could*** have been or at least function as a reminder of the fact that all we archaeologists are able to recover is merely a glimpse of what once was. In that sense contemporary narratives, ethnographies, as well as historic sources, are relevant to framing all we do reveal, as I hope to have achieved here.

Let us now return to the identified zoomorphic *adornos* in an attempt to determine why certain "animals" are more prominent than others. Waldron's comparative research in my opinion clearly shows that the Early Ceramic mainland and Island potters had clear preferences. Waldron's data also indicate a shift in motifs between the mainland and the Caribbean islands. This modification impels a dominance of reptile/amphibian and avian motifs, in favour of the imagery of mammals which is dominant in Venezuelan and Trinidadian assemblages. It also seems, at least partly, to reflect the changed environment with its varied, but now deprived flora and fauna. This transition was probably also influenced by incoming social dynamics, with a great reliance on sea voyages, new challenges such as recurrent hurricanes, and the ostensibly growing importance of ancestry. The latter phenomenon may have been a consequence of saying farewell to the mainland which implies a direct, physical departure from ancestral grounds and roots, even despite the fact the colonists and settlers remained in contact with their mainland "cousins".

I suggest with regard to "animals" depicted as *adornos*: attributed to important attributes and qualities, they are mainly powerful helpers and not only the Master/Owners of Food, Game, Water, Tobacco or important events (e.g., rainfall and storms), but also the guardians or even the embodiments of ancestral spirits. The vessels adorned with these "animals" were thus a means to communicate with these other (like-)humans, non-humans and possibly *significant other-than-human-persons**. The adorned vessels hereby present a means to communicate with a multitude of identities and relationships constituting the cosmic web of which the islanders formed a part.

The *adornos* reveal (even embodied) a segment of the identity of the "animal" displayed. However, each "animal" can potentially express a multitude of identities. The context in which the "animal" is portrayed (i.e., as additions to graves, a utility, during a ceremony) is part of its identity as well. The means by which it is imaged (e.g., *adorno* vs. pendant) must have contributed to the framing and the conceptualisation of the "animal" as a *sign**. Although the display of, for instance, "dog", "caiman", "heron" includes a large number of identities (i.e., sets of ascribed associations, attributes and qualities), it is through the context of display that we make sense of the image and grasp who or what it portrays. Who the Amerindians met/saw when utilising a specific adorned pot, we will probably never completely be able to ascertain, but when the context is known (after analysing its content or analysis or positioning in a grave) the portrayed identity can be reconstructed more closely (see also 8.3.1).

### 8.3.4 What about the islanders themselves?

It might seem that the objective of archaeology as a discipline, namely the study of people and human activity through material culture, was no longer in the foreground. The reason for this is: the present research was, and is, very much focussed on "animals" and becoming acquainted with them. Therefore, I would like now to return to the aforementioned objective by means of discussing the final question: What does this research tell us about the socio-cultural behaviour of the Early Ceramic Age Amerindian islanders?

This study provides us with a glimpse of the inclusive world which Ceramic Age Amerindian islanders shared with numerous other humans, non-human and *significant other-than-human-persons**. In this world, identities are fluid because shamans and spirits can transform into others by changing clothes. Identity seems fluid, too, because discerning who or what is human (or not) is problematic, at least from our Western point of view. "Jaguar" can be like-human, a shaman, a spirit or predator. However, Amerindians live apparently intermingled with all these "others", and necessitate various strategies and ways to communicate with them. A number of these strategies are presumably direct and include the responsibility of the shaman, for instance, to restore the order, deflect diseases and (potential) death. Nevertheless, everyone in the community probably has his/her responsibility to sustain "cosmic balance", e.g., by not crossing ontological boundaries, not breaching social contracts, acknowledging the Masters/Owners of this world, etc. One condition would be: everyone not

only knows of these rules, boundaries, their responsibilities but also of the various "identities" of the other with which they share their world. Artistic behaviour would have been a means through which this collective knowledge is transmitted and put into effect. It is through lore, as well as iconographical display, that the Amerindian communities become acquainted with a variety of "animals" whereby their ascribed attributes and associations are reinforced in their ideas.

The (Early) Ceramic Age potters, both mainland and island, apparently have preferences in displaying specific zoomorphic *adornos.* This research indicates that zoomorphic *adornos* are cultural *signs** that convey numerous, needless to say, always modifying and variable identities (Barth 1987). They are framed and understood by means of their respective contexts and ways of display. This is hardly a differentiating feature of "animals" when we compare their identities with our own. My name is Eva, a mother of two, employed at DICTU, a self-funded PhD student, a (grand) daughter, a wife, a friend, and perhaps (but hopefully not) a foe. I can assure you that the attributes, qualities and associations ascribed to me, can vary (quite significantly!) if compared with the contexts in which "Eva" is framed. However, the main difference is here: I am not a cultural *sign** (i.e., I do not evoke similar recollections of sentiment).

My research aims to illustrate that zoomorphic *adornos* are presumably a <u>specific</u> means to "communicate", a means to an end whereby the ascribed attributes and association of the displayed helper, or Master/Owner, or ancestral guardian are addressed. The identity depicted was then linked to either what was once contained in the vessel or to the context in which it is utilised (e.g., assuring success during a fishing trip). The very purpose of vessels is to contain "something". This could subscribe the likelihood that Masters/Owners are depicted and/or attached to these vessels. Especially Masters/Owners are conceptualised as containing and attributed with what they own or master.

Moreover, pendants embellished with a similar "animal" could, in fact, express another identity and have even fulfilled a different function in communicating with the "animal" on display. An interesting perspective on the adornments of the (human) body comprises the indigenous conceptualisation of "transforming", that is, changing clothes (see 3.4.2). Especially fur or teeth could have been considered either elements of an (incomplete/partial) transformation or the inclusion of several attributes and qualities of one's identity. This would imply that these pendants and adornments are more than a display of male prowess, but indeed a means to "become". Dog teeth contribute to developing into an excellent hunter when chasing the prey animals of dogs (i.e., turning into their "jaguar"). However, this "becoming" is presumably not without danger, one could become one's own "jaguar" (i.e., one that predates Amerindians). Should restrictions and/or precautions therefore perhaps not

manage the dressing in the "clothes" of shamans, spirits or predators?[204] What I do suggest, based on this research, is: the "identity/identities" encountered here probably vary with regard to the context of their display and use, as well as to deciphering an identity (e.g., specific *adorno,* pendant, axe). Therefore it can only be carried out after a study and appreciation of these (social) contexts concerning use and display has been established (see 2.3.1).

Interrelating iconography and stories results in interesting avenues along which to better understand the Early Ceramic Age communities. We can safely assume that oral narratives, iconographical display, and other "art" forms fulfilled similar functions for those who, independent of their locations, told/listened, created/witnessed these narratives during the Ceramic Age. From that perspective the questions rise: (a) what can the material culture (i.e., Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos*) inform us on the communities in which they were created and applied, and (b) which forms of knowledge do they presumably share through narratives as well as other means of "animal" display?

Would the same narrative clusters have been identified? I personally doubt it. Could the same motifs and themes be part of Ceramic Age folklore? Probably! Motifs and themes are specifically linked to the functions oral narratives served, and to date serve, in the lives of humans: validating the world, encoding social behaviour and informing (see 3.2 and 4.1.1). Narratives would have provided an avenue to explain why things are as they are, thus providing insights into social etiquette as well as practical information on everyday life. Moreover, Ceramic Age folklore mirrors a worldview, perhaps framing humans and non-humans, helpers, masters, shamans, and spirits not only in relation to each other but also within their respective spatial and temporal contexts. The "arts" (e.g., iconographical display) remains a means to share forms of encyclopaedic and to what has been referred to as "symbolic knowledge".

The transformed way of life of the Early Ceramic Age islanders, migrating from the South American mainland to the Caribbean Islands, required new forms of knowledge, both encyclopaedic as well as symbolic, including *signs** (both iconic and symbolic) in order to easily transmit and share any recently acquired insights. This transition not only includes the incorporation of new themes played out by new or altered actors but also motifs which most probably assist the island communities the most when dealing with their natural, social and cosmological realities. In this respect, I consider the following three themes to be most probable: (overseas) travelling and trade as well as seasonal and geographical information.

[204] The way Ceramic Age Amerindians conceptualise teeth pendants can only be conjectured. Perhaps a pendant was deprived of its most deadly/dangerous qualities through ritual or social restrictions? Was its utilisation only available to shamans, and perhaps to other appointed "powerful" men? Or, was it restricted to "controlled" contexts? See also 3.4.2 under the sub-heading *Nature and the intensity of subjectivity*.

Extensive exchange networks characterize the Saladoid cultural era. They interconnect the entire insular Caribbean as well as the surrounding mainland (see 1.1). I, therefore, would have expected to come across more narratives on oversea voyages which would, for instance, entail motifs describing the best (or worst) time to travel and associated actors that signify this moment. Other motifs related to this topic could have concerned: (a) the best routes and places to visit in search of specific goods or raw materials, and (b) entering unknown areas, for instance, hereby describing how to find fresh water (e.g., frogs as indicators of water).

As a second point of interest, I would expect to encounter motifs related to either seasonality with associated dangers or to opportunities (e.g., warnings regarding the hurricane season, floods, strong currents, winds). This theme would also include motifs dealing with the arrival of migrating species (e.g., crabs). Thirdly, narratives with a geographical element pertaining to finding the right direction at sea assisted by navigation and the constellations. These narratives would involve motifs concerning identifying specific islands, fishing grounds, hunting places, and sources for raw material (e.g., wood, clay) in order to produce certain goods.

Throughout place and time, communities have remained interconnected. Islanders liaise with residents of the mainland and other isles, exchanging narratives, expressions of belief and examples of material culture. Therefore, in addition to local variations, broadly shared themes and motifs would have existed. All aspects of (local) Amerindian life (i.e., social, natural, cosmological) are, and were, embodied in folklore, iconography and ceremonial life. Narratives would thus mirror the high variety as well as the homogeneity of South American mainland lore. They reflect the identified *adornos,* which notwithstanding local preferences also present a high degree of consistency.

The identified *adornos* in the islands reveal transitioning motifs, whereby overall reptile/amphibian and aquatic “animals” and “birds” become more prominent, whereas the incidences of mammals decrease. These changes are presumably also reflected in their lore, which as always portrays “animals” in various contexts. Whenever incoming creatures are incorporated, a number of them are contextualised differently, while others may have disappeared from lore as is the case pertaining to iconography. I reject the assumption that one-to-one replacements, whereby one “animal” substitutes another, occurred. It is more probable that certain associations and attributes are transferred, or actually ascribed, to other “animals”. The reason for this is: each “animal” as a cultural *sign** embodies a unique set of identities, intertwined with their roles in nature, in indigenous cosmologies, in iconography and lore, rendering a one-to-one substitution unlikely.

Initially, this study aimed at quantifying the narratives, their motifs, actors and themes which we, Caribbean archaeologists, tend to turn to quite frequently. Facilitating any future Caribbean archaeologists to forward more grounded statements in relation to (mainland)

narratives, I propose a means to test: (a) if supposed motifs, attributes and association of an "animal" are indeed linked to that specific "animal' or if they are overall very often independent of a specific actor, and (b) if a specific narrative or theme is either an isolate or broadly shared (e.g., restricted to one language or dispersed). As has hopefully become clear throughout the present research, it was never my intention or suggestion to apply the studied narratives as a direct analogy to any interpreted specific archaeological, iconographical features. As a means to frame, or contextualise, the archaeological material, especially the iconographical display, we should embrace the various narratives available to us.

These final paragraphs have disclosed that we do not necessarily have to look for, or at, mainland stories as a source for a direct analogy to interpret archaeological findings. We can, however, safely assume that all expressions of "making special-behaviour", i.e., narratives and iconographical display are and were built upon the worlds at hand. This implies that the Ceramic Age islanders' "new" social, natural, material and cosmological reality is reflected in all forms of "art". As Caribbean archaeologists, we continually improve our knowledge of all these realities, and therefore implicitly also expand our understanding of imagery, such as zoomorphic *adornos.*

## 8.4 So what?

Some final thoughts now on the relevance of this particular research as well as on its limitations and avenues for further research. For instance, how can this study contribute to the interpretation of a specific *adorno* or pendant or any other comparable remains we may (have) come across?

### 8.4.1 A means to an end

I would now like to reflect on the methodologies, theories, conclusions, and results. In which manner did the methodologies and theories contribute to the results presented here? And more importantly, how do these results contribute to our current understanding of the ancient Saladoid iconography and its creators.

The 706 stories investigated in this dissertation served as a means to contextualise and conceptualise "animals" motifs. Narratological methods (focusing on the fabula- and the story-layer) have been applied in order to target the spatial as well as the temporal contexts in which (specifically) "animals" are positioned within these tales. These 706 narratives were studied as an integral dataset, clustered by means of "animal" actors. Moreover, they were further sub-categorised on the basis of specific themes and motifs linked to "animal" actor. This approach has unravelled indigenous forms of knowledge which lay at the core of the ascribed connotations and associations pertaining to these "animals" personages. This in-depth analysis demonstrated that specific motifs, associations and contexts are not only related to specific "animals" but also revealed a multiplicity of identities of each "animal".

A unique trait of tales is: each actor is described based on its, his or her own perspective as well as on the perspective of others, a phenomenon also referred to as "perspectivism in action". Especially this trait renders tales a valuable expression of native ontologies, and therefore highly suitable as a framework with which to study native perceptions on "animals". Hence this research indicated which "animal" personages are portrayed either as (powerful) agents with subjectivity and/or as the *significant other-than-human-persons** (i.e., spirits), and/or as lacking agency, for instance when described as prey animals (see 8.2.2). Considering that stories parade "perspectivism in action", this study has shown that the abovementioned outcome is linked to the personage who perceives. For example "dog" is perceived a helper (or wife, paramour) from Amerindian-protagonist's perspective, as he assists him, whereas he is also perceived as "jaguar" by the (prey) animal it kills.

As part of this research, the narratological data were compared to other sets of data. Here, Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* served as the (main) case study. These data were next supplemented with ethnographic and historical references pertaining to other forms of "animal" display and (ceremonial) use. This comparative analysis disclosed that: (a) the most common "animal" personages are also most commonly encountered in other forms of display, and (b) the existence of several discrepancies when compared with identified Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos.* Especially these discrepancies proved interesting when conceptualising "animal" imagery. Moreover, they indicated that the "animal" on display cannot be studied independently from the (social) context in which it was displayed. A "Dog" (tooth) pendant and a "Dog" *adorno* therefore presumably display a different identity as well as ascribed different sets of associations and attributes. The multiplicity of identities of "animals" recognised in the stories thus helps to conceptualise this variety of "animal" display.

Contributing to the field of Caribbean archaeology, this dissertation comprises a quantitative and qualitative analysis of stories whereby our understanding of "animals" in Amerindian worldviews is enriched. A quantitative approach enables trends for each "animal" actor to be investigated in relation to other tales. The qualitative approach provides a rich, in-depth account of the roles and attributes of each "animal" hereby disclosing the multiplicity of their identities. These identities are useful when conceptualising the variety of "animal" display we encounter in the field of Caribbean archaeology. This dissertation, therefore, shows that a more thorough understanding of native ontologies and of those narratives which express these ontologies does indeed serve the conceptualisation of "animal" imagery.

### 8.4.2 It is all about context(s)

The present dissertation does not entail a full contextual iconographical study, but focuses merely on the "understanding stage", by contributing to the re-creation of the social context and social reality of zoomorphic *adornos* (see 3.1.1). Moreover, re-creating this reality is conducted from a dominant narratological perspective. This study does nonetheless pose an interesting hypothesis that opens possibilities for further avenues comprising: (a) ways of

display (e.g., pendant vs. *adorno*) is linked to the imaged identities and to the context(s) in which it is applied. This hypothesis is further concretized in: (a.1) *adornos* which are more likely to feature helpers, Masters/Owners, or (embodiments of) ancestral spirits, and less likely to display predatory, powerful shamans and spirits, and (a.2) predatory, powerful shamans and spirits which are more likely to form parts of ritual and ceremonial acts as well as to be portrayed by other means, including (tooth) pendants, fur/skin, ritual paraphernalia (e.g., axes).

This hypothesis now, for instance, suggests that "caiman" *adornos* and "caiman" teeth pendants would reflect another identity i.e., a different set of attributes and associations. However, more contextual data on a particular ornament are required in order to establish which identities were most probably expressed.

Only further research can shed more light on the contexts in which zoomorphic *adornos* were created, used and dispersed. This should entail a holistic approach and comprise a formal iconographical study, whereby attention is paid to morphological analysis, object positioning within the site and image position on the vessel (see for instance Wauben 2018). This complementary analysis could then lead to a better understanding of which identity/identities are presumably displayed by means of the studied object(s). Similar research on (teeth) pendants, benches, ritual axes, and other items portraying "animals" can then be compared in order to test the hypothesis, followed by it being either accepted or rejected.

This is not a futuristic prospect as, for instance, the interest of many of my peers in the "biographical approach" (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986) indicates. This approach results in thorough studies on, for example, beads, *threepointers** (i.e., objects of worship, with three cardinal points), and ceramics. Each study focusses on these archaeological remains departing from every step of their owner's "lives", ranging from chosen raw materials to production stages, ways they were utilised or functioned, the context of dispersal, the inner context, and to the context of the archaeological site itself.

However, even in these aforementioned studies, the focus tends to lie on one particular material culture category (e.g., ceramics, lithics, glass or shell). This monolithic approach limits our view significantly. For a more adequate understanding of "animal imagery", we require broad comparative studies that include multiple categories of material culture. These classifications can provide additional qualitative data, holistic contextual information as well as quantitative information on other materials (e.g., which "animals" are prominent in shell and which in stone?). This assessment will not only substantially add to our comprehension as to why certain "animals" are more prominent in display, but also further enrich our appreciation of their indigenous significance.

### 8.4.3 Unravelling identities

In addition to this more long-term avenue, other prospects follow from the present research. They should contribute to our understanding of zoomorphic *adornos*, even of zoomorphs not dealt with in this study. Firstly, as to the general frame, that is as an *adorno,* it is presumably ascribed attributes of a helper and/or Master. Secondly, this investigation has also revealed that many attributes and associations were rooted in natural qualities (both physical and behavioural), as well as in social and cosmological contexts which reinforce each other.

Therefore, it would make sense to at least study these contexts in an attempt to reconstruct their specific identities. Does the "animal" here display any noteworthy behaviour? For instance, are its hunting or fishing skills impressive? Is it a possible marker for seasonal changes (e.g., rainy season, the best time to sow)? Can it be linked to any specific temporal or spatial settings, i.e., serve as a marker of night, day, nearby bodies of water, specific (useful) plants or materials? What is its most likely function in Amerindian cosmology? And, how then could the posed association(s) be related to the social reality and to challenges presented to the indigenous communities who not only create but also interpret these identities?

And while doing so, we must keep in mind that the world is full of humans, like-humans, non-humans and *significant other-than-human persons**. All are intricately interconnected with the perspective of the differentiator. We ourselves are (like-)jaguar when assessing that which ends up on our plate. Others may turn out to be (or are) our (like-)jaguar, the ones that hunt us down, even kill us. So, please remain careful when you meet somebody else, because everything indeed does have its jaguar!

# Appendix A. Stories recalled by Sjaak and Yvonne Ebecilio as recorded in the summer of 2009 (Matta, Suriname)

| ENG | NL |
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| **1. The beginning of the Biswane family**<br>Narrated on 27-6-2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br>There was an Indian* who lived alone with a dog. This dog was only lying around in the ashes the whole day. Once the man came back from the hunt, he found cassiri, betriet and cassava had been prepared. He only saw his dog lying in the ashes, the Indian asked: "Hey, did you do this?" The dog merely wagged its tail. A few days later the same thing happened and the Indian decided to cheat. He had a suspicion that his dog caused it, but did not know for sure. Then he saw a woman preparing cassiri, betriet and cassava, and he saw a fur coat hanging in a tree. The Indian ran to the tree, took the coat and threw it into the fire. The woman started to cry no end. She asked, "Why did you do that?" The Indian replied, "You wanted to be a wife? Now you are my wife."<br>This was the beginning of the Biswane family.<br>*In Suriname the Lokono (Arawak) refer to themselves as Indian. | **1. Het begin van de familie Biswane**<br>Verteld op 27-6-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br>Er was een indiaan* die leefde alleen met een hond. Deze hond lag alleen maar in het as de gehele dag. Een keer kwam de man terug van de jacht. Toen hij terugkeerde vond hij cassiri en betriet gemaakt en de cassave gereed. Hij zag alleen maar zijn hond liggen in het as. De indiaan vroeg: "Hey, heb jij dit gedaan?" De hond kwispelde alleen. Een paar dagen daarna gebeurde hetzelfde en de indiaan besloot te spieken. Hij had wel een vermoeden dat z'n hond erachter zat, maar wist het niet zeker. Toen zag hij een vrouw cassiri en betriet en cassave maken en hij zag een jas (vacht) hangen in een boom. De indiaan rende naar de boom, pakte de jas en gooide deze in het vuur. De vrouw begon te huilen en te huilen. Ze vroeg: "Waarom deed je dat?" De indiaan zei: "Je wilde toch een vrouw zijn? Nu ben je mijn vrouw."<br>Dit was het begin van de familie Biswane.<br>*In Suriname noemen de Lokono (Arawaks) zichzelf Indiaan. |

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| **2. Halliwali**<br>Narrated on June 27, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>Once there lived a shaman *(pijai)* called Halliwali who one day decided to turn himself into a dead deer in order to attract vultures. A small bird named Boelatata, a red-throated Caracara, saw how Halliwali transformed himself. As the vultures arrived, Halliwali watched how they took off their coat (of feathers) and became women. He then looked for the most beautiful one. Boelatata tried to warn the vultures, calling: "Watch out! It is not a dead deer! It is Halliwali, the pijai!" Nevertheless, Halliwali managed to get hold the coat of feathers belonging to the most beautiful vulture. The other vultures retrieved their coats and flew off. The one who remained became Halliwali's wife. | **2. Halliwali**<br>Verteld op 27-6-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar)<br><br>Er was eens een pijai (sjamaan) Halliwali genaamd. Op een dag veranderde Halliwali zichzelf in een dood hert om aasgieren te lokken. Een klein vogeltje boelatata (boshaan) zag hoe hij zich veranderde. Toen de aasgieren kwamen keek Halliwalli om zich heen en zag hoe de aasgieren hun veren uittrokken. Hij bleef kijken want hij wist dat ze zich veranderden in mensen en hij keek naar één van de mooiste. Hij keek om zich heen om de mooiste uit te zoeken. Boelatata riep naar de aasgieren: "Kijk uit! Het is geen dood hert maar Halliwali, de pijai!" Toen de aasgieren verwijderd waren van hun veren kwam Halliwali overeind rende naar de jas (veren) van de mooiste aasgier om deze te pakken. De andere aasgieren pakten hun veren en vlogen snel weg. Eén vrouw bleef achter en zij werd Halliwali's vrouw. |
| After several months the wife wished to visit her family and Halliwali agreed. Having slipped into her feathered coat, she took Halliwali's hand and together they flew to vultures' land above the clouds. The woman looked up her family there. | Na een paar maanden wilde de vrouw haar familie opzoeken en Halliwali ging akkoord. De vrouw deed haar verenjas aan, pakte Halliwali's hand en samen vlogen ze weg naar Aasgierenland boven de wolken. De vrouw ging daar naar haar familie. |
| The mother of the woman wanted Halliwali to get water for her with a basket. Halliwalli knew that the water would run out of the basket, but went to get water with the basket. When he was busy with the basket, a person came to him, who asked: "Maniri (a former name for an Indian/Arawak), what are you doing? What do you want?"Halliwali replied: "I want to get water for my mother-in-law." The person said: "That will not succeed!" And he decided to help Halliwali. "Who are you if you can put water in a basket," Halliwali asked. He says: "Moenirijo, mother of the large ant species* (ant, -jo is female) is my name." Moenirijo makes balls of cobwebs and Halliwali places them in his basket and fills his basket with water. His wife brings the basket with water to her mother. | De moeder van de vrouw wilde dat Halliwali water voor haar ging halen met een korf. Halliwalli wist dat het water uit de korf zou lopen, maar ging met de korf water halen. Toen hij bezig was met de korf, kwam een persoon achter hem staan, die vroeg: "Maniri (was vroeger naam voor een Indiaan/Arawak), wat doe je? Wat wil je?" Halliwali antwoordde: "Ik wil water halen voor mijn schoonmoeder." De persoon zei: "Dat lukt toch niet!" En hij besloot Halliwali te helpen. "Wie ben je eigenlijk als je water in een korf kan zetten," vroeg Halliwali. Hij zegt: "Moenirijo, moeder van de grote soort mier* (mier, -jo is vrouwelijk) is mijn naam." Moenirijo maakt bollen van spinnenweb en Halliwali plaatst deze bollen in zijn korf en vult zijn korf zo met water. Z'n vrouw brengt de korf met water naar haar moeder. |

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| Halliwali's wife tells her husband: "My mother wants to eat small fish". Halliwali went to the river and caught a few small fish with his hands. They did not have fishings rod then. Having caught a few small fish he made a small basket and put the fish in it and gave it to his wife for her mother. His wife says: "Is this all you bring? This is not enough for my mother!" "Take it to your mother, it's enough," Halliwali says. The woman takes the basket with fish to her mother. The mother started to growl, the woman opens the small basket and at that moment all the fish fell on the ground filling the yard with small fish. It was that much that the small fish spread out to all sides. That was also one of Halliwali's tricks. | Halliwali's vrouw vertelt haar man: Mijn moeder wil visjes eten. Halliwali ging naar de rivier en ving een paar visjes met zijn handen. Ze kenden toen nog geen hengel. En toen hij een paar visjes had gevangen maakte hij een klein korfje en plaatste daar de visjes in en geeft dit aan zijn vrouw voor haar moeder. Zijn vrouw zegt: "Is dit alles wat je brengt? Dit is niet genoeg voor mijn moeder!" "Breng het toch maar naar je moeder, het is genoeg", zegt Halliwali. De vrouw brengt het korfje met vissen naar haar moeder. De moeder begon te knorren, de vrouw opent het korfje en op dat moment valt alle vis op de grond en het erf vult zich met visjes. Het was zoveel dat de visjes zich helemaal naar buiten verspreiden. Dat was ook zo'n kunst van Halliwali. |
| Now the mother-in-law wanted a bench in the shape of her head. The daughter passes it on to her husband Halliwali. However, Halliwali had never seen his mother-in-law, because she always stayed inside. Halliwali performed a shamanic ritual to call for the help of a horéré, an ant and made it go to his mother (a horéré is referred to as a pingo ant in Negro-English). This ant has a venomous bite. The ant slipped into the mother-in-law's house and bit her, but she only reacted by shaking her wings. | Nu wilde de schoonmoeder een bankje in de vorm van haar kop. De dochter geeft het door aan haar man Halliwali. Halliwali had zijn schoonmoeder echter nooit gezien, want zij bleef altijd binnen. Halliwali pijaide de hulp in van Horéré-mier, hij pijaide de Horéré naar zijn moeder toe (pingo mieren in Neger-Engels). Dit is een mier met een venijnige beet. De mier glipte naar binnen bij de schoonmoeder en beet haar, maar zij reageerde enkel door met haar vleugels te schudden. |
| Then Halliwali performed a ritual and the hadëkekërë came (a small ant species that travels in swarms). And they went everywhere. A swarm of ants crept over the mother-in-law and they crawled really everywhere, over her head, into her ears. She could not stay inside. The mother-in-law ran outside, where, Halliwali sat looking around and saw her head. Then he was able to make a bench in the shape of her head. When his wife brought the bench to her mother, she was startled by her own portrait! | Vervolgens pijaide Halliwali de Hadëkekërë-mier (klein soort mier, maar komen als zwerm). En die gingen overal. Een zwerm mieren kroop over de schoonmoeder en zij kropen echt overal; over haar kop, in haar oren. Ze kon niet binnen blijven. De schoonmoeder rende naar buiten en daar zat Halliwali te kijken en hij zag haar kop. Toen was hij in staat een bankje in de vorm van haar kop te maken. Toen zijn vrouw het bankje naar haar moeder bracht schrok zij van haar eigen beeltenis! |
| An elderly woman was Halliwali's nurse. One afternoon he was covered in lice, and she was busy removing and eating them. While doing this, she began to talk saying: "If they have eaten your best bits, then please leave the little leftovers for me!" Halliwali heard this and immediately understood that the woman was talking about him and that his in-laws were planning to kill and eat him! | Een oude vrouw was Halliwali's verzorgster. Op een middag zat hij vol met luizen en zij was bezig hem te ontluizen en ze at de luizen op. Terwijl ze hier mee bezig was begon ze te spreken: "Als zij de beste stukken van jou hebben opgegeten, dan laten ze kleine restjes voor mij brengen!" Halliwali hoorde dit en begreep meteen dat de vrouw het over hem had en dat zijn schoonfamilie van plan was hem te doden en op te eten! |

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| When Halliwali arrived with his wife, he had taken his magic flute of bamboo with him to the vulture world. Early in the morning he stuck his flute through the canopy and crawled outside. Then he removed his flute and returned to Earth playing his flute. When his in-laws came to eat him, they saw him nowhere but did hear a beautiful Arawak melody sent to Earth. That was Halliwali setting off for Earth again. | Toen Halliwali was gekomen met zijn vrouw had hij zijn toverfluit van bamboe meegenomen naar de aasgierenwereld. 's Morgensvroeg stak hij zijn fluit door het bladerdak en daardoor kroop hij naar buiten. Trok vervolgens zijn fluit eruit en keerde terug naar de aarde terwijl hij zijn fluit bespeelde. Toen zijn schoonfamilie kwam om hem op te eten, zagen ze hem nergens maar ze hoorde wel een prachtige Arawakse melodie dat richting aarde ging. Dat was Halliwali die weer naar de aarde vertrok. |
| * Moenirijo is an ant that you often see with a small scoop of water on its head. The rear particle -jo is feminine. This helper is female. | * Moenirijo is een mier die je vaak ziet met een bolletje water op hun hoofd. Het achter voegsel –jo is vrouwelijk. Het is een vrouwelijke helper. |

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| **3. The story of the "beast" Malaro-oyo, the mother of Sapakoro (a giant reptile)** | **3. Het verhaal over het beest Malaro-oyo, moeder van Sapakoro (reuzenreptiel)** |
| Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916) | Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar). |
| There once was a family that consisted of a mother with two sons and a daughter. The daughter was married to a gentleman from another village. The two brothers of the woman were hunters and lucky when hunting. Every time they went hunting, they brought something home. They always brought something for their sister too. The sister's husband, however, had no luck with hunting. He never brought any game home, causing the woman's brothers to feel angry. They said to their mother: "Our sister's husband never brings home anything for our sister or for us. That is why we do no longer give him any meat either." Their mother said: "No, he is my son-in-law, your sister's husband, so you shall also give him part of your game!" | Er was een familie die bestond uit een moeder met twee zonen en een dochter. De dochter was getrouwd met een heer uit een ander dorp. De twee broers van de vrouw waren jagers en ze hadden geluk met jagen. Elke keer dat ze gingen jagen brachten ze iets naar huis. Ze brachten dan ook altijd iets mee voor hun zus. De man van de zus had echter geen geluk met jagen. Hij bracht nooit buit mee naar huis en dat maakten de broers van de vrouw boos. Ze zeiden tegen hun moeder: "De man van onze zus brengt nooit iets voor onze zus en hij geeft ons ook nooit iets. Daarom geven we hem ook geen vlees meer." Hun moeder zei: "Nee, hij is mijn schoonzoon, jullie zus d'r man dus jullie geven hem ook een deel van jullie buit!" |
| A certain afternoon the brothers returned from hunting and it was as if they had not brought along anything that day. They went to their sister and said to their sister: "Look, sister, we shot so much game we could not carry it. Ask your husband, let your husband go to the forest and get the meat there. He has to take his basket and retrieve it at the place where we left it covered by under leaves." | Een zekere middag kwamen de broers thuis van de jacht en het was alsof ze die dag niets hadden meegebracht. Ze gingen naar hun zuster en zeiden tegen hun zus: "Kijk zus, we hebben zoveel wild geschoten dat we het niet konden dragen. Vraag je man, laat je man naar het bos gaan en daar het vlees gaan halen. Hij moet zijn korf meenemen en het gaan halen op de plaats waar wij het hebben achter gelaten onder bladeren." |
| The next morning the man takes his basket, bow and poison arrows and goes towards the place described by the brothers. He thought: I am going to collect the game. He approaches a place where two trees stood together and then he sees a kind of flash of lightning, and he stands still. Looking closely he sees a huge head! What he saw before had not been lightning, but a huge tongue that had swiftly protruded from the head! He thought: this is the Malaro oyo. The brothers sent me here for Malaro-oyo to eat me! What did he do? He took his poison arrows, made a detour, so that he was not seen, crawled towards the monster and killed Malaro-oyo. He shot it below the armpit, where it is soft, killing it in this way! | De volgende morgen neemt de man zijn korf, pijl en boog met gifpijlen en gaat richting de door de broers beschreven plek. Hij dacht: ik ga het wild halen. Hij nadert een plek waar twee bomen bij elkaar stonden en dan ziet hij een soort bliksemstraal, en hij blijft staan. Als hij goed kijkt ziet hij een grote reuzenkop! Wat hij eerder zag was geen bliksem geweest, maar een enorme tong dat uit de kop tevoorschijn schoot! Hij dacht: dit is de Malaro-oyo. De broers hebben mij hierheen gestuurd zodat Malaro-oyo mij zou opeten! Wat deed hij? Hij pakte zijn gifpijlen, maakte een omweg, zodat hij niet gezien werd, kroop naar het monster toe en doodde Malaro-oyo. Hij schoot het onder de oksel, waar het zacht is, en zo doodde hij het! |

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| Then he took out his beautiful knife, which he had made of bone. Next, he took the beast's tongue, cut it into pieces and put it in his basket. Then he brought the basket home and told his wife, "I went to the place designated by your brothers," and gave her the basket containing the tongue. Then he said: "Give this to your brothers. Those brothers of yours are mean. They sent me to be torn apart and devoured! However, it did not work, because I killed it and brought this back with me. Let them eat that piece of the tongue!" | Toen pakte hij zijn mooie mes, dat hij gemaakt had van been. Nam de tong van het beest, sneed het in stukken en deed het in zijn korf. Toen bracht hij de korf naar huis en zei tegen zijn vrouw: "Ik ben naar de door jouw broers aangewezen plek geweest," en gaf haar de korf met tong. Toen zei hij: "Geef dit aan je broers. Die broers van jou zijn gemeen. Zij hebben mij gestuurd om me te laten verscheuren en opeten! Het is echter niet gelukt, want ik heb het gedood en dit meegebracht. Laat zij het maar opeten dat stuk van de tong!" |
| The woman went to her mother and said: "Mom! See how mean my brothers are. They sent my husband into the forest so that the giant Malaro-oyo would eat him. Here is the beast. Let them eat it! He had to get the meat. Well here is part of it." | De vrouw ging naar haar moeder en zei: "Mamma! Kijk hoe gemeen mijn broers zijn. Zij hebben mijn man het bos in gestuurd zodat de reus Malaro-oyo hem zou opeten. Hier is het beest. Laat hen dit maar opeten! Hij moest het vlees halen. Nou hier is een deel ervan." |
| Needless to say, the woman was also angry with her brothers. The next morning the woman says to her husband: "Go to the forest, shoot a hummingbird (*bienti*) and bring it to me." The man did as told. "Hey woman, I have brought it," he says. The woman cleaned the hummingbird and cooked it. She put it in a large pot and cooked the little hummingbird. She said to her husband, "Look, I make a soup out of it which you have to eat for 8 days. You get this soup for 8 days." Such a little bird, of course, cannot provide 8 days of soup ... But for 8 days the man ate the soup with cassava. On the 8th day, his wife says: "Go to the forest and whatever you see, you cannot shoot it, just come back." And once again the man did as told. When he had returned, his wife asked: "What kind of game did you see?" He replied: "I have seen a lot of game, more than I could have carried, but I did not shoot anything, as you had told me." | Vanzelf werd de vrouw ook boos op haar broers natuurlijk. De volgende morgen zegt de vrouw tegen haar man: "Ga naar het bos, schiet een kolibrie (bienti) en breng het." De man deed zoals hem gezegd was. "Hey vrouw, ik heb het gebracht", zegt hij. De vrouw maakte de kolibrie schoon en kookte het. Ze deed de kolibrie in een grote pot en kookte het kolibrietje. Ze zei tegen haar man: "Kijk, ik maak er soep van en van deze soep moet jij 8 dagen eten. Acht dagen lang krijg je er soep van." Zo'n klein vogeltje is natuurlijk niets voor 8 dagen soep... Maar 8 dagen at de man de soep met cassave. De 8ste dag zegt zijn vrouw: "Ga naar het bos en al wat je ook ziet, je mag het niet schieten, kom gewoon terug." En de man deed weer wat hem gezegd werd. Toen hij terug was, vroeg zijn vrouw: "Wat heb je voor wild gezien?" Hij antwoordde: "Ik heb heel veel wild gezien, wild in overvloed meer dan ik had kunnen dragen, maar ik heb niets geschoten, zoals je me gezegd had." |
| Then his wife says: "Today you can go and may shoot everything you can carry and bring it home." The man went to the forest and shot as much as he could carry. From that day on, he was lucky with hunting! Every time he went hunting, he returned home with game.And from the same moment, the two brothers no longer had any luck. Whatever the two tried to shoot, they came home empty-handed. | Dan zegt z'n vrouw: "Vandaag mag je gaan en mag je alles schieten wat je kunt dragen en breng het naar huis." De man ging naar het bos en schoot zoveel als hij dragen kon. Vanaf die dag had hij geluk met jagen! Elke keer als hij ging jagen, bracht hij wild mee naar huis. En vanaf datzelfde moment hadden de twee broers geen geluk meer. Wat de twee ook probeerden te schieten, ze kwamen thuis met niets. |

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| The woman only brought meat for her mother but gave her brothers nothing. She said to her mother: “Mom, I only bring for you. Do not give my brothers anything, because they wanted to kill my husband.” As the brothers were no longer lucky, they moved. Mother did not really want to move, but had no choice and left with her sons. | De vrouw bracht alleen vlees voor haar moeder, maar gaf haar broers niets. Ze zei tegen haar moeder: “Mamma, ik breng alleen voor jou. Geef mijn broers niets, want zij wilden mijn man doden.” Omdat de broers geen geluk meer hadden, verhuisden ze. Moeder wilde eigenlijk niet verhuizen, maar had geen keus en ging mee met haar zoons. |

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| **4. Sibanalë and the wild pigs (pingo)**<br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>You had a village, and once you had a man from that village who went hunting, Sibanalë. But when he was in the forest, the afternoon came. So he had been there and said to his people, "I will return in a few days, I am going to hunt, then there will be time to dry it and then it is time to go back home." | **4. Sibanalë en de pingo's (bosvarkens)**<br>(verteld 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>Je had een dorp, en je had een keer een man uit dat dorp die ging jagen, Sibanalë. Maar toen hij in het bos was, werd het 's middags. Dus hij was geweest en hij zei tegen z'n mensen: "Ik kom over een paar dagen weer terug, ik ga jagen, dan heeft het tijd om te drogen en is het tijd naar huis terug te komen." |
| When he walked there in the dark, he heard talk in the forest, but he also heard women's voices and children. And the people were busy felling trees. He went to look and they were people, but it turned out he was chasing a group of forest pigs we call "pingos". Pingos are a kind of wild pigs. | Toen hij daar liep in het donker, hoorde hij gepraat in het bos, maar hij hoorde ook vrouwenstemmen en kinderen. En de mensen waren bezig om te kappen. Hij ging kijken en het waren mensen, maar wat bleek hij achtervolgde een groep bosvarkens; wat wij noemen 'pingo's'. Pingo's zijn een soort bosvarkens. |
| As he approached, he heard women talking, men and children who were preparing their sleeping place. But what did he do? He climbed up a tree to spy on them, to find out what those people were doing. | Toen hij dichterbij kwam hoorde hij gepraat van vrouwen, mannen en kinderen die bezig waren met hun slaapplaats gereed te maken. Maar wat deed hij? Hij klom in een boom om ze te bespieden; wat die mensen aan het doen waren. |
| And while he was there, a woman came towards the tree he was in, and the woman smelled him. "Hey, there is something wrong here: a human being, Maniri!" And the woman looked up and saw someone sitting on a twig, and she screamed at him, "Come down!" | En terwijl hij daar was, kwam er een vrouw naar die kant, naar die boom waar hij in zat en de vrouw rook hem. "Hé, dit is niet pluis: een mens, Maniri!" En de vrouw keek naar boven en zag iemand op een takje zitten en ze schreeuwde naar hem: "Kom naar beneden!" |
| He came down and then she said: "You have seen who we are. We are the pingos. You walked behind us to shoot us, but we are not angry. If you want to stay with me, I will become your wife, but then you will also have to learn what you need to do in order to become a pingo. But first, we must ask the chief." | Hij kwam naar beneden en toen zei ze: "Je hebt gezien wie wij zijn. Wij zijn de pingo's. Jij liep achter ons om ons te schieten, maar wij zijn niet boos. Als je bij mij wilt blijven, dan word ik jouw vrouw, maar dan moet je wel leren wat je moet doen om ook een pingo te worden. Maar eerst moeten we het opperhoofd vragen." |
| The pingo woman and the Indian went to the chief of the pingos. But those elderly people objected a little: "No, no, no, we are animals, we are pingos. These people are chasing us to kill us and to eat us!" But the woman said: "If he cannot stay, then I will go with him!" They did not want that either so they gave in and the man was allowed to stay, but then he would have to change into a pingo. | De pingo-vrouw en de indiaan gingen naar het opperhoofd van de pingo's. Maar die oude mensen maakten een beetje bezwaar: "Nee, nee, nee, wij zijn dieren, wij zijn pingo's. Deze mensen achtervolgen ons, om ons dood te maken en ons op te eten!" Maar de vrouw zei: "Als hij niet mag blijven, dan ga ik met hem mee!", dat wilden die mensen ook niet hebben. Ze gaven toe en de man mocht blijven, maar dan zou hij wel moeten veranderen in een pingo. |

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| When the couple arrived where the others were, the other women were jealous: she had a handsome man! A living human being. The chief did what was required for Sibanalë to become a pingo when they had to set off in the morning. That is what happened that night. At 5 o'clock they all changed into wild pigs, pingos. The man became a pingo and then they left. | Toen het stel kwam waar de anderen waren, bleken de andere vrouwen jaloers: zij had een mooie man! Een levende mens. Het opperhoofd deed wat zodat Sibanalë in een pingo zou kunnen veranderen, wanneer ze 's morgens verder moesten. Zo gebeurde het die avond. Toen het 5 uur was veranderden ze allemaal in bosvarkens, in pingos. De man werd veranderd in een pingo en toen trokken ze weg. |
| But what happened in this man's village, after 3 days he had not returned home, not even on the 4th day or the 5th day! The pijai performed a ritual to find out where the man had gone. And there the pijai discovered that the man had become a pingo, had a female partner and had joined that group. So that man would not return for the time being. And then it was decided to go look for that man. So a group of men went hunting in search of those pingos. Having had to walk for days before coming across the traces of a group of pingo's. They followed the broad track. | Maar wat gebeurde er in het dorp van die man? Na 3 dagen nog niet thuis, 4e dag, 5e dag nog niet! De pijai pijaide om erachter te komen waar de man gebleven was. En daar maakte hij uit, die pijai, dat hij pingo was geworden en een vrouwtje heeft en ook met die groep mee trok. Dus dat die man voorlopig niet zou komen. En toen werd besloten om die man te gaan opzoeken. Dus ging een groep mannen op jacht, op zoek naar die pingo's. Ze hadden dagen moeten lopen voordat ze de sporen van een groep pingo's zagen. Ze volgden het brede spoor. |
| The hunters were indeed well prepared. They had brought along a specific arrow (Otomo), which is fired with a long rope. In those days they did not have guns yet, but only bows and arrow. The tip of the arrow was attached to a long vine. When you have shot such an animal and it runs off, you will have to hang onto it and pull it in. The animal will pull so you have to hold onto it. This they did successfully, but it was an accident, they had shot the man, the Indian. He and his wife had fallen behind slightly and when the man was struck by the arrow with the rope, he had to pull. The hunters tried to pull him towards them. Sibanalë fought back pulling the rope, and his wife encouraged him: "Pull, pull man!" Finally, he managed to succeed because the rope snapped! | Maar wat het geval is, ze hadden zich goed voorbereid. Ze hadden een soort van een pijl (Otomo) die afgeschoten wordt met een lang touw. Ze hadden nog geen geweer hè, maar pijl en boog. Een pijl met punt en die punt was vastgebonden aan een lange liaan. Wanneer je zo'n beest hebt geschoten, en het wegrent dan moet je het houden en binnen halen. Dus het beest gaat trekken, maar jij moet het houden. En dat hebben ze ook gedaan en het was hun gelukt. Maar het was een ongeluk, ze hadden die man, de indiaan, geraakt. Hij en z'n vrouw waren achter en toen die man geraakt was met die pijl met het touw, moest hij trekken. De jagers probeerden hem naar zich toe te trekken. Sibanalë verzette zich en trok aan het touw en zijn vrouw spoorde hem aan: "Trek, trek, trekken man!" Ten slotte was het de man toch gelukt, want het touw brak! |
| He and his wife followed the other pingos, but hebecomes slightly less mobile. The people (hunters) chased him and shot him with the same arrow with a rope and now they could pull him in. They then tied him down and then the pijai man magically transformed him back into a human being. He was sad about his wife, for he now was human again. | Hij en z'n vrouw gingen achter de andere pingo's aan, maar hij was een beetje invalide geworden. De mensen (jagers) renden achter hem en hebben hem weer neergeschoten, met diezelfde pijl met het touw eraan en toen hebben ze hem wel kunnen trekken. Toen hebben ze hem vastgehouden en heeft de pijai hem terug gepijaid in een mens. Hij was wel verdrietig om zijn vrouwtje, maar toen was hij weer een mens geworden. |

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| They took him back to the village, where he was bathed with herbs in order to forget his wife and to get rid of the smell of pingos, and he was given new wives. He was never allowed to hunt agai because then his pingo-wife would look out for him. She had left her group in search of her husband. She would then be shot. | Ze hebben hem terug gebracht naar het dorp, hebben hem gebaad met kruiden om z'n vrouwtje te vergeten en om de pingo geur ook achter te laten, en ze hebben hem 4 vrouwtjes gegeven. Hij mocht nooit meer jagen, want dan zou zijn wijfje hem zoeken. Het wijfje had haar groep verlaten om haar man te zoeken. Dan zouden ze het wijfje doodschieten. |

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| **5. A honey bee woman**<br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>There was once a man who was always looking for honey. He then struck the trunk of a tree with his stone axe. He thus looked if the tree was hollow and then searched for holes from which the honeybees appeared. | **5. Honingbij vrouw**<br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>Er was eens een man die altijd op zoek was naar honing. Hij sloeg dan met zijn stenen bijl op de stam van een boom. Zo keek hij of de boom hol was en dan zocht hij naar gaatjes waar de honingbijen uitkwamen. |
| One day the Indian had success. He opened the tree to obtain the honey. Then he heard a voice saying: "Be careful with felling! Otherwise, you will fell me!" The man asked: "Are you honey?" It replied, "No, cut open, but be careful." He continued to cut and then the man saw a beautiful woman, and asked, "Are you honey?" "Yes, I am honey", the woman answered. He asked: "Do you want to be my wife?" The woman replied: "Yes, of course, that's why you see me! You won me by felling this tree, from today I am your wife." Together they return to his village. The woman warns him: "Be careful, do not say where you found me. If you reveal that, I will leave you!" | Op een dag had de indiaan succes. Hij kapte de boom open om de honing te verkrijgen. Toen hoorde hij een stem, die zei: "Wees toch voorzichtig met kappen! Anders kap je mij!" De man vroeg: "Bent u honing?" Het antwoordde: "Nee, kap maar open, maar wees voorzichtig." Hij kapte door en toen zag de man een mooie vrouw, en hij vroeg: "Ben jij honing?" "Ja, ik ben honing", antwoordde de vrouw. Hij vroeg: "Wil jij mijn vrouw worden?" De vrouw antwoordde: "Ja natuurlijk, daarom zie je mij! Je hebt me gewonnen door deze boom te kappen, vanaf vandaag ben ik je vrouw." Samen keren ze terug naar zijn dorp. De vrouw waarschuwt hem: "Wees voorzichtig, zeg niet waar je me hebt gevonden. Als je dat verklapt verlaat ik je!" |
| The two of them lived like this for a few years. People asked the man: "Where did you find your wife?" But the man does not say anything. On one occasion the villagers made the man drunk and asked him again about his wife: "You have such a beautiful wife. From which village is she?", they asked. The man replied: "Oh, that village a bit further on." They did not believe the man and kept insisting. Once inebriated the man told the secret anyway. At that moment his wife flew off having become a honeybee. | Een paar jaar leefden de twee zo. Mensen vroegen de man: "Waar heb jij je vrouw vandaan?" Maar de man zegt niets. Op een keer maakten de dorpelingen de man dronken en vroegen hem opnieuw over zijn vrouw: "Je hebt zo'n mooie vrouw, van welk dorp komt ze", vroegen ze. De man antwoordde: "Oooh dat dorp verderop." Ze geloofden de man niet en bleven aandringen. Dronken vertelde de man het geheim dan toch. Op dat moment vloog zijn vrouw weg, ze was veranderd in een honingbij. |
| The man always kept looking for honey in the hope of finding his wife in a tree again, but he never found her again. | De man bleef altijd naar honing zoeken in de hoop zijn vrouw opnieuw in een boom te vinden, maar hij vond zijn vrouw nooit meer terug. |

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| **6. The tiger woman**<br><br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>An Indian goes hunting and got a thorn in his foot. He saw a man approaching. The man asked: "What is going on?" The Indian answers: "I have a big thorn in my foot that I cannot remove." The man says: "Come with me." The Indian follows the man but does not arrive at a house but at a hollow giant tree. | **6. Tijgervrouw**<br><br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar)<br><br>Een indiaan gaat op jacht en kreeg een doorn in zijn voet. Hij zag een man aankomen. De man vroeg: "Wat is er aan de hand?" De indiaan antwoordt: "Ik heb een grote doorn in mijn voet die ik er niet uit kan krijgen." De man zegt: "Kom maar met mij mee." De indiaan gaat met de man mee maar komt niet aan in een huis maar in een holle reuze boom. |
| In the giant tree, the man lived with his wife and daughter. He tells his family where he found the Indian and that the Indian has a thorn in his foot. The man's wife enters the forest looking for a leaf. She returned with the leaf and put it on the thorn. | In de reuze boom woonden de man met zijn vrouw en dochter. Hij vertelt aan zijn gezin waar hij de indiaan gevonden heeft en dat de indiaan een doorn in zijn voet heeft. De vrouw van de man ging het bos in om een blad te zoeken. Ze kwam terug met het blad en deed het op de doorn. |
| They had a beautiful daughter and the Indian stayed with them. When the husband and wife went hunting, the Indian stayed behind with the daughter. The daughter tells him: "We are not people, we are tigers. When we hunt, we turn into tigers." | Ze hadden een mooie dochter en de indiaan bleef bij ze. Toen de man en vrouw gingen jagen bleef de indiaan achter met de dochter. De dochter vertelt hem: "Wij zijn geen mensen, wij zijn tijgers. Als we jagen veranderen wij in tijgers." |
| When the parents return, the father says: "You can take my daughter with you but know she is a tigress. I will show you she is a tigress." When the Indian woke up the next morning, he saw no humans but a tiger family. They said to him: "My daughter you may take, but remember, you can never tell where you met your wife." | Als de ouders terugkomen, zegt de vader: "Je kan mijn dochter meenemen maar weet dat ze een tijgerin is. Dat zal ik je tonen, dat zij een tijgerin is." Toen de indiaan de volgende morgen wakker werd zag hij geen mensen maar een tijgerfamilie. Ze zeiden tegen hem: "Mijn dochter mag je meenemen, maar denk er wel om, je mag nooit verklappen waar je je vrouw hebt gehad." |
| The Indian leaves with his wife and together they return to his village. Once there, everyone is surprised, because he left without to return with a wife! He does not tell anyone where he found her. However, everyone keeps asking him: "Where did you meet such a beautiful woman?" | De indiaan vertrekt met zijn vrouwtje en samen keren ze terug naar zijn dorp. Daar aangekomen is iedereen verwonderd, want hij ging weg zonder vrouw en komt terug met een vrouw! Hij vertelt niemand waar hij haar heeft gevonden. Iedereen blijft hem echter vragen: "Waar heb jij zo'n mooie vrouw vandaan?" |
| The Indian was plied with drink and in a drunken mood, he revealed his secret. His crying wife left in the form of a tiger. She left crying, roaring. She returned to her parents. | De indiaan wordt dronken gevoerd en in een dronkenbui vertelde hij zijn geheim. Als tijger vertrok zijn huilende vrouw. Ze vertrok huilend, brullend. Ze ging terug naar haar ouders. |

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| **7. Orijo, the water nymph**<br><br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>Arawara is the conjunction of the Wajambo (tributary Coppename) and the Nickerie River. There at the Wajambo, the Arawara, the two rivers come together. This dates back to earlier times. Orijo is a water nymph, a water spirit who can do good and evil. Pijais work with these water nymphs. | **7. Orijo, de waternimf**<br><br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>Arawara is de doorsnee van de Wajambo (zijrivier Coppename) en de Nickerie rivier. Daar bij de Wajambo is de doorsnee van de Arawara, die verbindt de twee rivieren. Dit is van de vroegere tijd. Orijo is een waternimf. Dat is een geest in het water en ze kan goed en kwaad doen. Pijais werken met deze waternimfen. |
| And when I went there as a teacher, to Wajambo, Donderderskamp, people told me that there is a large round opening in the river. They then took me here to watch. A water nymph, a really evil Orijo, resided there. | En toen ik daar heen ging als onderwijzer, naar Wajambo, Donderderskamp, toen vertelden de mensen mij dat daar een grote ronde (=opening) is in de rivier. Zij hebben mij toen gebracht om te kijken. En daar woonde een waternimf, een echte slechte Orijo. |
| If such a creature/water nymph knew that a boat (a dug-out) was arriving, it turns itself into a raven in a tree. As soon as this raven saw a boat approaching, it flew into the water. Next, the water starts to flow in the direction of the raven. There was a large vortex, turning water, and as soon as it was there, that water nymph swallowed the entire dug-out, dragging it all the way to the bottom. Orijo then devours the occupants after which the dug-out is spat out! We went to look; I did see it. | Als zo'n beest/waternimf wist dat er een boot aankwam, een korjaal, verandert het zichzelf in een raaf in een boom. Zodra deze raaf een boot aan zag komen vloog hij het water in. En dan begint het water te stromen en te stromen naar die plaats toe (=richting van de raaf). Daar was een grote draaikolk, draaiwater, en zodra die daar was slokte die waternimf de korjaal en al op en sleurde korjaal en al mee naar de bodem. Orijo eet dan de inzittenden waarna de korjaal wordt uitgespuwd! We gingen kijken; ik heb het wel gezien. |
| But that actual story is as follows. Once there was an Arawak pijai man, Orjande, who had travelled all the way from another creek. Then an Arawak pijai man arrived at Donderderskamp, having heard of a place where people are not safe and he was a pijai man. He stayed at Donderskamp for 3 days, 3 evenings in order to perform a shamanic ritual. This water nymph named Orijo has done too much harm. | Maar die eigenlijke story is zo. Er kwam eens een Arawakse pijai-man, Orjande, en die kwam helemaal uit de buurt van een andere kreek. Toen kwam een Arawakse pijai-man naar Donderderskamp, want hij had gehoord dat er een plaats is waar de mensen niet veilig zijn en hij was een pijai-man. Hij bleef op Donderskamp drie dagen, drie avonden, om te pijajen. Deze waternimf heeft te veel kwaad gedaan, laten we zeggen Orijo. Deze Orijo heeft te veel kwaad gedaan. |
| After 3 evenings, he grabs his axe, a stone axe, and his knives he himself made from the tusks of a wild pig (pakira). He takes place in a dug-out; the entire population came to see him leave. They thought, "This is probably the last time we see that man." | Na drie avonden pakt hij zijn bijl, stenen bijl, en pakt zijn messen die hij zelf heeft gemaakt van slachttanden van pakira (=wild varken). Hij gaat in een korjaal; de gehele bevolking kwam kijken toen hij weggingen. Ze dachten: Dit is vast de laatste keer dat we die man zien. |

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| And when he got there, he saw that raven dive into the water and the water began to flow faster and faster, and then he arrived at that vortex. The water really turned and the boat went down. He was swallowed, but being a pijai man he knew what he was doing. He took his axe and started chopping into the stomach, from the inside cutting out Orijo's stomach and heart. | En toen hij daar aankwam, zag hij die raaf het water in duiken en het water begon te stromen, sneller en sneller, en toen kwam hij bij die draaikolk. Het water draaide, hè en de boot ging naar onder. Hij werd ingeslikt, maar hij als een pijai-man wist wel wat hij deed. Hij nam zijn bijl en begint in de maag te hakken, te kappen, te kappen van binnenuit (= hij kapte de maag en het hart van Orijo). |
| But because such things are not human-like: if you chop it, will it die? No! After chopping it, Orijo felt a pain inside and swam off! It went with the tide; not able to stand the pain it swam away from Donderderskamp. And when it was at the end, it spat that pijai man ashore. And that Orijo went to the Coppename River (Suriname) to reach the sea! | Maar omdat zulke dingen niet als een mens zijn, dus als je het kapt gaat ie dan dood? Nee! En toen hij dat had gedaan, voelde die Orijo pijn van binnen en zwom weg! Hij ging met het tij; hij kon niet tegen de pijn en zwom weg van Donderderskamp. En toen hij aan het eind was, toen spuwde hij die pijai-man aan wal. En die Orijo die ging naar de Coppename (= rivier, Suriname), en naar de zee! |
| And when the pijai man returned to Donderderskamp, he told what he had done. He says: on the inside, he had destroyed it in such a way. And then he had to start a ritual in order to see where that Orijo had gone. While doing so, he said, it must have gone to the sea. Then it arrived at his other family members and they insulted him there! They said: "Look, we told you not to give the Maniri (= Indians) a difficult time!" | En toen de pijai-man daar weer teruggekeerd was in Donderderskamp, toen vertelde hij wat hij gedaan had. Hij zegt: van binnen had hij het zo vernield. En toen moest hij gaan pijaien om te zien waar die Orijo gebleven was. En toen hij piajide, zei hij, het moet zijn doorgegaan tot de zee en toen kwam hij daar bij zijn andere familie en daar hebben ze hem uitgescholden! Ze zeiden: "Kijk we hebben je gezegd om het die Maniri (=indianen), niet te lastig te maken!" |
| Because they say that Orijos see those people and dug-outs as parrots. Those people and dug-outs are birds, so they are shot like parrots.* "And we have said that no one of us is going to live there. We have sent you there to keep watch in order to protect those people from evil. We have already heard what you did there for a long time. We knew there is an end to it, and that is how your end has now come. And for punishment, you must stay somewhere in the sea." | Want ze zeggen, die Orijo's zien die mensen en korjalen als papegaaien. Die mensen en korjalen zijn vogels, dus die worden geschoten als papegaaien.* "En we hebben gezegd dat daar niemand van ons gaat wonen. We hebben je daar gestuurd om wacht te houden om juist die mensen te beschermen tegen het kwaad. We hebben al lang gehoord wat jij daar deed. We wisten dat er komt een keer een einde aan, en zo is je einde nu gekomen. En voor straf moet je ergens in de zee blijven." |
| But if you go there you will indeed see it, the opening of that creek. And the people insist that Orijo was there. That is one of those things, that place can still be seen, but if it was there, I do not know, but that is how it is told. It is one of those time-honoured things. So I would say it is not a myth, but a story about where Orijo lived. | Maar als je daar gaat dan zie je het wel hoor, de opening van die kreek. En de mensen houden vol dat daar die Orijo was. Dat is een van die dingen. Die plaats is nog te zien, maar of het daar was, dat weet ik niet maar zo wordt het verteld. Het is een van die oude dingen. Dus ik zou zeggen het is geen mythe, maar een story van waar Orijo geleefd heeft. |
| * They see people from the water, as being above them, thus as parrots. | *Toelichting achteraf: Ze zien de mensen vanuit het water, als zijnde boven, dus als papegaaien. |

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| **8. How Halliwali becomes a good pijai** | **8. Hoe Halliwali een goede pijai wordt** |
| Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916). | Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar) |
| Halliwali had three wives and one brother. One of his wives was unfaithful to him and Halliwali said: "I am going to punish you!" The woman says: "No, I will never do it again! I will remain loyal to you, but please do not punish me!" Halliwali says: "No, you must be punished because you took my brother while we were married." | Halliwali had drie vrouwen en hij had 1 broer. Eén van z'n vrouwen was hem ontrouw en Halliwali zegt: "Ik ga je straffen!" De vrouw zegt: "Nee, ik zal het nooit meer doen! Ik blijf je trouw, maar straf me alsjeblieft niet!" Halliwali zegt echter: "Nee, je moet gestraft worden, want je hebt mijn broer genomen terwijl wij getrouwd zijn." |
| "Let's go fishing," he told his wife and they went. The boat sank and the woman disappeared. There was a manatee on the river bank, which called, "Halliwali come to fetch me, I have turned into a manatee!" But Halliwali answered: "No, this is your punishment!" | "Laten we gaan hengelen", zei hij tegen zijn vrouw en ze gingen. De boot zonk en de vrouw verdween. Op de oever zat een lamantijn en de lamantijn riep: "Halliwali kom me halen, ik ben veranderd in een lamantijn!" Maar Halliwali antwoord: "Nee, dit is je straf!" |
| His other wives also received punishment. Halliwali would go to heaven. Together with his wives, he lived in a large tree. The tree went out of the ground and the women had to hold the branches. Halliwali had to leave for another place. He said to his wife, "It is time for me to leave. If you want to join me, you will stay with me. The tree is being torn loose, so you have to hold on tightly because if you do not, you will stay on Earth. I am going to a place where they need me because that is what the Lord told me." | Zijn andere vrouwen kregen ook straf. Halliwali zou naar de hemel gaan. Samen met zijn vrouwen woonde hij in een grote boom. De boom ging uit de grond en de vrouwen moesten de takken vasthouden. Halliwali moest weg naar een ander oord. Hij zei tegen zijn vrouw: "Het is tijd voor mij om te vertrekken. Als jullie mee willen, blijven jullie bij mij. De boom wordt losgerukt, dus jullie moeten je goed vast houden, want als jullie dat niet doen blijven jullie op aarde. Ik ga nu naar een oord waar ze me nodig hebben, want dat heeft de Heer me gezegd." |
| Halliwali has been chosen to become a pijai and to become one God sends him to various locations. | Halliwali is uitgekozen om pijai te worden en om dat te worden stuurt God hem naar verschillende plaatsen. |
| Halliwali arrived in a strange place with strange houses. God said: "You cannot accept anything, whatever they say: refuse everything! The place is so tempting that you wish to stay, but you have to resist this." He arrived and women asked him to please stay. But he said: "No, I will continue." He travels on to the second place. This location is tempting because of all the liquor, all the food and the women. God says: "Be careful, if you want to become pijai you must abstain from everything." Halliwali does what he is told and resists all temptations. | Halliwali kwam aan op een vreemde plaats met vreemde huizen. God zei: "Je mag niets aannemen, wat ze ook zeggen: alles weigeren! De plaats is zo verleidelijk dat je wilt blijven, maar dit moet je weerstaan." Hij kwam aan en vrouwen vroegen hem toch vooral te blijven. Maar hij zei: "Nee ik ga verder." Hij reist verder naar de 2e plaats. Deze plaats is verleidelijk door alle drank, al het eten en de vrouwen. God zegt: "Wees voorzichtig, als je pijai wilt worden, moet je je onthouden van alles." Halliwali doet wat hem verteld is en weerstaat alle verleidingen. |

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| The third place is a city with only women and only a few men. The Lord tells him: “This is the hardest test. The women will seduce you. If you overcome this, you will become a good pijai.” Halliwalli overcame this temptation, too. | De derde plaats is een stad met alleen maar vrouwen en maar een paar mannen. De Heer zegt hem: “Dit is de zwaarste beproeving. De vrouwen zullen je verleiden. Als je dit overwint wordt je een goede pijai.” Halliwalli overwon ook deze verleiding. |
| Now he had to go to another place, located under the mountain, “Your future lies there”, God said who goes on to mention: “Whatever you are promised, money, jewels etc. do not accept anything.” This place was also very tempting, but Halliwali conquered himself. | Nu moest hij naar een andere plaats. Een plaats onder de berg, “daar is jouw toekomst”, sprak God. God zegt verder: “Wat je ook beloofd wordt, geld, juwelen etc. niets aannemen.” Ook deze plaats was heel verlokkelijk maar Halliwali overwon zichzelf. |
| The Lord said, “Very well, return to Earth, you are a good pijai.” However, a woman stayed behind and became a bird, the Bulatata (forest cockerel). | De Heer zei: “Heel goed, ga maar terug naar aarde, je bent een goede pijai.” Een vrouw bleef echter achter. Ze veranderde in een vogel, de Bulatata (boshaan). |
| This is an early story about Halliwali, the pijai. | Dit is een vroege story over Halliwali de pijai. |

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| **9. The great journey**<br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>You used to have separate people who explored the world. Four or five young people were selected and the elderly warned these youngsters: "Be careful, there are bats, vampires (Oeroesio-oyo). With their long muzzles, they penetrate through the leaf roofs and suck your blood. Build a large camp and stay mainly in the middle. When you pass by, you arrive at a house. This is the residence of the mother of all fish. She is friendly, she cooks for you, but when in her neighbourhood do not shoot fish! | **9. Grote reis**<br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>Je had vroeger aparte mensen die de wereld verkenden. Er werden eens 4 à 5 jongeren geselecteerd en ouderen waarschuwden die jongeren: "Wees toch voorzichtig: je hebt vleermuizen, vampiers (Oeroesio-oyo). Met hun lange snuit komen ze door de bladerendaken en zuigen je bloed. Maak een groot kamp en blijven jullie vooral in het midden. Als je daar voorbij bent kom je bij een huis. Dit is het huis van de moeder van alle vissen. Zij is vriendelijk, zij kookt voor jullie, maar in haar buurt moet je geen vissen dood schieten! |
| When you leave from there, having passed the mouth of the river, you will come to a place where you will see many naked people. However, they are not humans, but water nymphs. If you engage with them you will also become one of them! | Wanneer jullie van daar vertrekken komen jullie na de monding van de rivier op een plek waar jullie veel naakte mensen zullen zien. Dit zijn echter geen mensen, maar waternimfen. Als je je met hun inlaat wordt je ook een van hen! |
| Then you reach the sea. You can stay on that island there. And so it went. People, Indians populate that island. And then you stay there maybe for 5 years. The Indians there know the area and from there you set off for another island where you also stay a few years until you are old and return to your village." | Daarna komen jullie bij zee. Daar is een eiland en op dat eiland mogen jullie blijven." En zo ging het. "Daar op dat eiland wonen mensen, indianen. En dan blijven jullie daar misschien 5 jaar. De indianen aldaar kennen de omgeving en vanuit daar vertrekken jullie naar een ander eiland en ook daar blijven jullie een paar jaar tot jullie oud zijn en terugkeren naar je dorp." |
| It was once said that if you travel you will only return when you are old and your hair is grey. | Vroeger zei men dat als je reist je pas weer terug komt als je oud bent met grijs haar. |

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| **10. The founding of Matta: Caribs versus Arawaks (legend ?)**<br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916).<br><br>A short introduction to the story. In Nickerie there was an Arawak village. At that time the Caribs came to Suriname to wage war with the Arawaks. The Caribs searched for Arawaks to sell as slaves. Runaway slaves attacked the Arawak village of Sarong founded by the Evangelische Broedergemeente, on the Saramaca River. This village was attacked because they thought stealing slaves was going on there. They have wiped out that village and from there the survivors set off for Matta. The origin of Matta as described in the newspaper is incorrect! | **10. Stichting van Matta: Caraiben versus Arawakken (legende?)**<br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>Korte intro op het verhaal. In Nickerie was er een Arawaks dorp. In de tijd dat Caraiben naar Suriname kwamen en oorlog voerden met de Arawakken. Caraiben zochten naar Arawakken om te verkopen als slaven. Weggelopen slaven vielen Sarong aan, aan de Saramaca. Dat was een Arawaks dorp van de Broedergemeente. Dit dorp werd aangevallen, omdat ze dachten dat er daar geroofd werd voor slaven. Ze hebben dat dorp uitgeroeid en vanuit daar zijn de overlevenden naar Matta getrokken. Het ontstaan van Matta zoals het in de krant staat, klopt niet! |
| Via a footpath, you arrive at a large Carib village. Sabajos (Arawaks) sent off people to spot enemies. The captain sent someone because they had explored the entire neighbourhood. At the creek, they saw a large open swamp. They sent people to explore this swamp and see if they could live there. They found mounds there. That swamp was filled with lotus plants with broad leaves known as pankoekoe leaves. A large island was found there. If you went there with your dug-out, then everything immediately closed behind you. Here the Arawaks have founded a village in the swamp. From another mound, they have brought sand to raise it. It was inhabited by between 200 and 300 Amerindians. From there my people have moved. The area was further explored with regard to small islands for fields and every day spies kept an eye on whether the enemies did not come. Men armed with bow and arrow stayed behind to keep watch. | Via een voetpad kwam je bij een groot Caraiben dorp. Sabajo's (Arawakken) stuurden mensen er op uit om vijanden te spotten. De kapitein stuurde iemand, want ze hadden de hele buurt verkend. Bij de kreek zagen ze een grote open swamp. Ze stuurden mensen om deze swamp te verkennen en om te kijken of ze daar konden gaan wonen. Daar hebben ze terpen gevonden. Die swamp was vol met lotus met brede bladeren, dat waren pankoekoe bladeren. Daar werd een groot eiland gevonden. Ging je daar naartoe met je korjaal dan ging alles achter je meteen dicht. Daar hebben de Arawaken een dorp gesticht in de swamp. Vanuit een andere terp hebben ze zand gebracht om het op te hogen. Er woonden daar 200/300 mensen. Vandaar uit zijn mijn mensen verhuisd. De omgeving werd verder verkend naar eilandjes voor kostgrondjes en spionnen hielden dagelijks in de gaten of de vijanden niet kwamen. Met pijl en boog bleven bewapende manschappen achter om wacht te houden. |
| One day the spies spotted a dug-out with suspicious people. They were travelling very slowly because they were probably searching for creeks. They then saw the creek those Arawaks had sailed through in order to reach swamps. If they found us, they would fight us. Caribs were sailing there. An Arawak spy journeyed through the forest and swam through the swamp with the message: the enemy is | Op een dag spotten de spionnen een korjaal met verdachte mensen. Ze voeren zeer langzaam want ze zochten waarschijnlijk naar kreken. Ze zagen toen de kreek waar die Arawaken door waren gevaren om bij swamp te komen. Als ze ons zouden vinden dan zouden ze met ons vechten. Caraiben voeren daar. Een Arawakse spion ging door het bos, en is door de swamp gezwommen met de boodschap: de vijand |

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| coming! The Caribs were fought and expelled. Some were taken prisoner. The Arawaks then advanced. | komt! Er werd gevochten met de Caraiben en de Caraiben werden verdreven en sommigen werden gevangen genomen. De Arawaken zijn toen verder opgerukt. |
| On the way they heard howler monkeys, implying large trees and therefore mainland. So they were in a different place. Then they moved on to Nickerie (a large swamp, near the Corantijn River). Special men went looking for suitable building sites. They went as far as they could on land and made a footpath so that they could be followed. After two days they reached the savannah. It was very large and open there. In the distance, they heard a roar. They said: "That roar spells danger. You did not hear that roar in the swamp. We are now on the mainland which has other sounds than in the swamp!" In the evening they made camp in young trees with broad crowns and stayed there until the next day. What was the case? At that time tigers of the Baraka Creek which hunt in small groups, killed people. The men knew this. That is why they returned to their canoe. | Onderweg hoorden ze brulapen: dat betekent grote bomen en dus vasteland. Dus ze waren op een andere plaats. Toen zijn ze verder gegaan richting Nickerie (grote swamp, kant van Corantijn). Speciale mannen gingen op zoek naar geschikte bouwplaatsen. Ze gingen zo ver als ze konden over land en maakten zo een voetpad. Zodat ze gevolgd konden worden. Na twee dagen kwamen ze bij de Savanne. Het was daar heel groot en open. In de verte hoorden ze gebrul. Ze zeiden: "Het is gevaarlijk dat gebrul. In de swamp hoorde je dat gebrul niet. We zijn nu op het vaste land en dat heeft andere geluiden dan de swamp!" 's Avonds maakten ze kamp in jonge bomen, met brede kruinen en daar bleven ze tot de volgende dag. Want wat was het geval: in die tijd had je barakara tijgers (deze tijgers jagen en doden mensen. Ze jagen in groepen). Barakara tijgers komen altijd in groepjes en dat wisten ze en daarom keerden ze om, terug naar hun korjaal. |
| They had heard a story that a man had left his village to attend a party and had been caught by those tigers on his way back to his village, and the Tigers had torn him to pieces. After searching, they found pieces of clothing, which was proof that tigers had devoured the man. | Ze hadden een verhaal gehoord dat een man vanuit zijn dorp naar een feest was gegaan en op de terugweg naar zijn dorp was overvallen door die tijgers en de tijgers hadden hem verscheurd. Na zoeken vonden ze stukken kleding, wat het bewijs was dat die man was opgegeten door de tijgers. |
| All the men grabbed their lances, bow and arrow and climbed into trees. The Tigers are coming! Those tigers simply climb into the tree, but with their long lance, these men stick their lengthy lances in the open mouth of the tigers. The dead tigers were eaten by other tigers. The men knew this too. | Alle mannen pakten hun lansen, pijl en boog en klommen in bomen. De tijgers komen! Die tijgers klimmen gewoon in de boom, maar met hun lange lansen staken ze in de open muil van de tijgers. De dode tijgers werden opgegeten door de andere tijgers. Dit wisten die mannen ook. |
| That's why they returned to their canoes to get even more weapons. They left again the next morning. They wanted to go on and again they heard roars. That was the beast Malaro-oyo. They saw the big legs, their traces. That's why they had to open another route to the south. That is how they went south. When they arrived at the Nickerie River, they made dug-out canoes. They chopped large trees to make themselves dug-outs. | Daarom keerden ze terug naar hun korjalen om nog meer wapens te halen. De volgende morgen vertrokken ze weer. Ze wilden verder gaan en opnieuw hoorden ze gebrul. Dat was het beest Malaro-oyo. Ze zagen de grote poten, de sporen ervan. Daarom moesten ze een andere route naar het zuiden open kappen. Zo zijn ze naar het zuiden gegaan. Toen ze bij de Nickerie rivier kwamen, maakten ze korjalen. Ze kapten grote bomen om daarmee zelf korjalen te maken. |

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| They wanted to travel down the river. The making of dug-outs took so long that by the time they were ready, the other families also arrived. There they founded another camp along the Nickerie River. Then they went further up to Arawara, that's how it was discovered. Why is that river flowing like that? While it is a creek connected to the Wajambo? | Ze wilden de rivier af reizen. Het maken van korjalen duurde zo lang, dat tegen de tijd dat ze klaar waren, de andere families er ook aan kwamen. Daar hebben ze toen een ander kamp gesticht, langs de Nickerie rivier. Vervolgens zijn ze bovenwaarts verder gegaan naar Arawara, zo is dat ontdekt. Waarom stroomt die rivier zo? Terwijl het een kreek is verbonden met de Wajambo? |
| That is how they travelled down the Arawara to the Wajambo. They travelled down the Wajambo and arrived in Coppename river. So they travelled through the Coppename, around the Saramacca. There was a small problem there was no channel to continue to Paramaribo. That's why they made a road there. When they later built the railway there was already a path. The Indians had already made a path! | Zo zijn ze de Arawara afgezakt tot de Wajambo. Toen de Wajambo afgevaren en toen kwamen bij de Coppename rivier aan. Zo zijn ze doorgereisd van de Coppename, rond de Saramacca. Daar was een klein probleem, want er was geen kanaal om door te varen naar Paramaribo. Daarom hebben ze daar vroeger een weg gemaakt. Toen ze de spoorlijn aanlegden was er dus al een pad. Toen hadden de indianen al een pad gemaakt! |
| In the past, Suralco published books, such things were in them. About the plantations and stuff. These were the first Indians who walked from the swamp to Paramaribo. | Vroeger gaf Suralco boeken uit, toen stonden er zulke dingen in. Over de plantages enzo. Dit waren de eerste indianen, die liepen vanuit de swamp naar Paramaribo. |

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| **11. Why the Caribs do not eat turtle** | **11. Waarom Caraiben geen schildpad eten** |
| Narrated on June 26, 2009 by Yvonne Ebecilio (not on tape) | Verteld door Yvonne Ebecilio op 26-06-2009 (niet op tape) |
| In a Carib village, the men were once very plied with drink after consuming too much *cassiri**. They beat their wives who were so fed up with the conduct of their husbands, they said: "We will teach them, those men of us!" When the men left, all the women also left. When the men later returned to their village, all the women had disappeared. The men only saw a group of turtles walk towards the sea. The men thought they were their wives. This is why Carib do not eat turtles. | In een Caraibisch dorp waren de mannen een keer zo dronken. Ze hadden veel te veel *cassiri* gedronken en waren nu dronken. Ze sloegen hun vrouwen. De vrouwen werden het gedrag van hun mannen zo zat, ze zeiden: "We zullen ze leren, die mannen van ons!" Toen de mannen weg gingen, vertrokken alle vrouwen. Toen de mannen later terugkeerden naar hun dorp waren alle vrouwen verdwenen. Maar de mannen zagen nog net hoe een stel schildpadden naar zee liepen. De mannen dachten dat deze schildpadden hun vrouwen waren. Dit is de reden waarom Caraiben geen schildpadden eten. |

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| **12. The Sun and the Moon and how the caiman received his notches.**<br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>The moon has referred the Indians to the Earth. The Moon says: "Look, you can live on such a savanna: I give you light." A man and woman are going to live on Earth, but they do not have any clothes. The Moon says: "You do not need any clothing, as you were born naked too. Tonight there is no light because I'm going to sleep too. When I sleep you also have to sleep, you should not go hunting then. You can do so during the daytime." When the couple goes hunting, they go to the creek, close the creeks and put the fish traps in front of it. But while the Indians sleep and the moon sets, otters and caimans arrive to break open the traps and eat all fish. | **12. De zon en maan en hoe de kaaiman aan zijn deuken komt.**<br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>De maan heeft de indianen naar de aarde verwezen. De maan zegt: "Kijk op zo'n savanne kunnen jullie leven: ik geef jullie licht." Een man en vrouw gaan op aarde leven, maar hebben geen kleren. De maan zegt: "Jullie hebben geen kleding nodig, jullie zijn immers ook bloot geboren. Vanavond is er geen licht want ik ga ook slapen. En als ik slaap moeten jullie ook slapen, dan moeten jullie niet gaan jagen. Wel overdag." En als het stel gaat jagen, gaan ze naar de kreek en maken de kreken dicht en zetten fuiken ervoor. Maar terwijl de indianen slapen en de maan ondergaat, komen er otters en kaaimannen en die breken de fuiken open en vreten alle vissen op. |
| As the Sun named Iriwiri rises, he says: "Hey, who did this?" He gets so angry and grabs a hack and starts cutting! He cuts the caiman. "It was not me! I have not touched the fish traps. You must not cut me down," the cayman says. But the Sun knew he was lying and continued to cut. This is how cayman got dents on his back. Irirwiri says: "You may not do it otherwise I will cut you." | Dan komt de zon, Iriwiri, op en hij zegt: "Hey, wie heeft dit gedaan?" Hij wordt zo kwaad en pakt een houwer en gaat kappen! Hij kapt de kaaiman. "Ik was het niet! Ik ben niet aan de fuiken geweest. Je moet mij niet kappen", zegt kaaiman. Maar de zon wist dat hij loog en de zon bleef kappen. Zo komt kaaiman aan zijn deuken op z'n rug. Irirwiri zegt: "Je mag het niet doen, anders kap ik je." |
| The otters, small and large, had also stolen fish. The small otters did not get away and also got a beating. Then the small otters return home and complain to their mother: "We have been beaten by Iriwiri." | De otters, klein en groot, hadden ook vis gestolen. De kleine otters kwamen niet weg en kregen ook een pak slaag. Dan keren de kleine otters terug naar huis en klagen bij hun moeder: "We zijn afgerammeld door Iriwiri." |
| There is a song about this, too. | Hier is ook een lied van. |

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| **13. Do not hunt on White Thursday (a real story)**<br>Narrated on July 2, 2009 by Sjaak Ebecilio (b. 1916)<br><br>It was White Thursday and an Indian wanted to hunt deer. People still warned him: "Do not go hunting, stay home, it's White Thursday. Stay home anyway." However, he had no food and decided to go anyway. | **13. Niet jagen op witte donderdag (waargebeurd)**<br>Verteld op 02-07-2009 door Sjaak Ebecilio (93 jaar).<br><br>Het was witte donderdag en een indiaan wilde hert gaan jagen. Mensen waarschuwden hem nog: "Ga niet jagen, blijf toch thuis het is witte donderdag. Blijf toch thuis." Hij had echter geen eten en besloot toch te gaan. |
| He spotted a rabbit, aimed at it but it jumped away. While continuing, after 15 minutes he sees a buffalo, such a large angry beast. He changes his hail round into a bullet round, he aims but the buffalo jumps away. How is that possible? They told him he should not go hunting, but he did anyway. He continues. Then he sees a pakira and thinks to himself: I will not shoot. But this pakira stays put. He then grabs his gun but the animal jumps away. He saw game all day, but could not shoot anything. On the savannah, he spots a deer with a cross on its head. He then fell to his knees and exclaimed: "Forgive me! I did not want to listen." This really happened. | Hij zag een konijn mikte, maar het konijn sprong weg. Hij gaat door en na een kwartier zag hij een buffel, zo'n groot boos beest. Hij verandert zijn hagelpatroon in een kogelpatroon hij mikt, maar de buffel springt weg. Hoe komt dat nu? Ze hadden hem al gezegd dat hij niet moest gaan jagen, maar hij deed het toch. Hij loopt door. Dan ziet hij pakira, hij denkt bij zichzelf: ik schiet niet. Maar deze pakira blijft zitten. Hij pakt dan toch zijn geweer maar het dier springt weg. De gehele dag zag hij wild maar hij kon niets schieten. Op de savanne ziet hij een hert met een kruis op zijn kop. Hij is toen op z'n knieën gevallen en riep uit: "Vergeef me! Ik heb niet willen luisteren." Dit is echt gebeurd. |

# Appendix B. List of all narratives (including source and linguistic affiliation)[205]

| Story no. | Language family | Language/description | First author | Year of publication | Pages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 174-5 |
| 2 | Cariban | Wayana | Duin | 2009 | 471-7 |
| 3 | Cariban | Wayana | Duin | 2009 | 477-82 |
| 4 | Cariban | Wayana | Duin | 2009 | 482-5 |
| 5 | Arawakan | Taíno | Pané | 1999 | 6-7 |
| 6 | Arawakan | Taíno | Pané | 1999 | 7-8 |
| 7 | Arawakan | Taíno | Pané | 1999 | 11-2 |
| 8 | Arawakan | Taíno | Pané | 1999 | 13-7 |
| 9 | Arawakan | Island Carib of Dominica | Taylor | 1938 | 151 |
| 10 | Arawakan | Island Carib of Dominica | Taylor | 1938 | 150 |
| 11 | Arawakan | Island Carib of Dominica | Taylor | 1938 | 123-4 |
| 12 | Arawakan | Island Carib of Dominica | Taylor | 1938 | 123 |
| 13 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Bel | 1995 | 68-72 |
| 14 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Bel | 1995 | 55-8 |
| 15 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Kempen | 1993 | 38-42 |
| 16 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 122-6 |

[205] This lists displays 713 unique story numbers. During this research seven stories (nos. 22, 33, 114, 339, 388, 506, 579) were excluded and removed. This is because a story was incorporated by mistake (for instance it had an origin other than the study region), or because a story was mistakenly registered multiple times (with a different Story number). The final story listed here (Story no. 1096) was added later, during the stage of analysis, so I decided to provide it with a deviating Story number. A bibliography of all narratives is included in Appendix D.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 231-2 |
| 16 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 279-84 |
| 16 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 301-7 |
| 16 | Warao | | Van Kempen | 1993 | 43-7 |
| 16 | Warao | | Van Capelle | 1926 | 66-73 |
| 17 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 83 |
| 17 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 175-6 |
| 17 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Kempen | 1993 | 48-9 |
| 18 | Cariban | Trio | Anderson | 2001 | 13-23 |
| 18 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 15-25 |
| 18 | Cariban | Trio | Van Kempen | 1993 | 27-37 |
| 19 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Kloos | 1991 | 32-3 |
| 20 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 20 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Sabajo | 1991 | 35 |
| 21 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Penard | 1907-1908 | 101-2 |
| 23 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 165-9 |
| 23 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 43-4 |
| 23 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Penard | 1907-1908 | 43-5 |
| 24 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Penard | 1907-1908 | 20-2 |
| 25 | Cariban | Kaliña | Penard | 1907-1908 | 29 |
| 26 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Penard | 1907-1908 | 39-43 |
| 27 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Penard | 1907-1908 | 57 |
| 28 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Penard | 1907-1908 | 59 |
| 29 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 22-5 |
| 30 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 32-6 |
| 31 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 31 |
| 32 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 26-30 |
| 34 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 65-70 |
| 35 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 71-4 |
| 36 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 75-7 |
| 37 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 78-80 |
| 38 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 112-3 |
| 39 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 107-9 |
| 40 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 129-30 |
| 41 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 131 |
| 42 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 93-4 |
| 43 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 95-6 |
| 44 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 81-4 |
| 45 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 85-8 |
| 46 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 89-92 |
| 47 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 97-8 |
| 48 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 102-6 |
| 49 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 139-41 |
| 50 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 149-52 |
| 51 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 182-3 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 52 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 193-6 |
| 53 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 168-73 |
| 54 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 205-8 |
| 55 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 219-22 |
| 56 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 223-5 |
| 57 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 37-44 |
| 58 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 45-6 |
| 59 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 47-8 |
| 60 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 49-52 |
| 61 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 55-8 |
| 62 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 59-64 |
| 63 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 127-8 |
| 64 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 124-6 |
| 65 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 121-2 |
| 66 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 118-20 |
| 67 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 114-7 |
| 68 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 144 |
| 68 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 76-7 |
| 69 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 73-5 |
| 70 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 147 |
| 70 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 77-9 |
| 71 | unknown | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 151 |
| 71 | unknown | | Brett | 1880 | 177 |
| 71 | unknown | | Van Capelle | 1926 | 79-81 |
| 72 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 231 |
| 72 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 86-8 |
| 73 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 89-91 |
| 74 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 209-10 |
| 74 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 91-4 |
| 75 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 114-5 |
| 76 | Warao | | Van Capelle | 1926 | 124-5 |
| 77 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 125-30 |
| 77 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 343-4 |
| 78 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 131-9 |
| 79 | Warao | | Van Capelle | 1926 | 140-4 |
| 79 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 334-6 |
| 80 | unknown | | Van Capelle | 1926 | 147-8 |
| 80 | unknown | | Brett | 1880 | 173-5 |
| 81 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 215-6 |
| 82 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 216-7 |
| 83 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 211 |
| 84 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 210-1 |
| 85 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 206-8 |
| 86 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 205-6 |
| 86 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 87-9 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 87 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 205 |
| 88 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 204 |
| 89 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 202-3 |
| 90 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 201-2 |
| 91 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 192 |
| 92 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 199-201 |
| 93 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 173 |
| 94 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 182-3 |
| 95 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 143 |
| 96 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 133-5 |
| 97 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 284 |
| 98 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 126-30 |
| 98 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 126-30 |
| 98 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Wilbert | 1970 | 470-4 |
| 98 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 470-4 |
| 99 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 130-2 |
| 100 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 292-3 |
| 101 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 227 |
| 102 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Brett | 1880 | 191-2 |
| 102 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 265-6 |
| 103 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 263-5 |
| 104 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 261-2 |
| 105 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 245 |
| 105 | Cariban | Kaliña | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 245 |
| 105 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Magaña | 1987 | 253 |
| 105 | Cariban | Kaliña | Magaña | 1987 | 253 |
| 106 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 245-6 |
| 107 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 250-1 |
| 108 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 232-3 |
| 109 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 217-8 |
| 110 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 217-8 |
| 111 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 218-9 |
| 112 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 336-8 |
| 113 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 342 |
| 115 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 220-3 |
| 116 | Cariban | Bakairí | De Goeje | 1943 | 109 |
| 117 | Cariban | Uapes | De Goeje | 1943 | 109-10 |
| 118 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | De Goeje | 1943 | 110 |
| 119 | Tupian | Tupi | De Goeje | 1943 | 109 |
| 120 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | De Goeje | 1943 | 109 |
| 121 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | De Goeje | 1943 | 110 |
| 122 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | De Goeje | 1943 | 28 |
| 123 | unknown | | De Goeje | 1943 | 111 |
| 124 | unknown | | De Goeje | 1943 | 121 |
| 125 | Cariban | Kaliña | De Goeje | 1943 | 124 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 126 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | De Goeje | 1943 | 125-6 |
| 127 | Cariban | Kaliña | De Goeje | 1943 | 125 |
| 128 | Cariban | Taulipang | De Goeje | 1943 | 126 |
| 129 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | De Goeje | 1943 | 127 |
| 130 | Cariban | Arekuna | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 93-5 |
| 131 | Cariban | Arekuna | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 95-105 |
| 132 | Cariban | Taulipang | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 105-9 |
| 133 | Cariban | Taulipang | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 109-22 |
| 134 | Cariban | Taulipang | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 123-30 |
| 135 | Cariban | Taulipang | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 130-3 |
| 136 | Cariban | Taulipang | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 137-8 |
| 137 | Cariban | Taulipang | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 139-40 |
| 138 | unknown | Rio Negro | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 144-5 |
| 139 | unknown | Rio Negro | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 145-50 |
| 140 | unknown | Rio Negro | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 150-3 |
| 141 | unknown | Rio Negro | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 153-4 |
| 142 | unknown | Rio Negro | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 154 |
| 143 | unknown | Amazone/Amazonia | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 155-6 |
| 144 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 229-32 |
| 145 | Tupian | Munduruku | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 227-9 |
| 146 | Tupian | Munduruku | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 225-7 |
| 147 | Cariban | Bakairí | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 222-5 |
| 148 | Cariban | Bakairí | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 216-22 |
| 149 | Cariban | Wayana | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 213-5 |
| 149 | Tupian (Guaraní) | Guaraní | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 213-5 |
| 149 | Cariban | Wayana | Magaña | 1987 | 42-3 |
| 149 | Tupian (Guaraní) | Guaraní | Magaña | 1987 | 42-3 |
| 150 | unknown | Aré | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 212-3 |
| 151 | Gê | Kaingáng (extinct) | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 209-12 |
| 152 | Gê | Karajá | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 203-6 |
| 153 | Gê | Karajá | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 200-2 |
| 154 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 195-6 |
| 155 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 194-5 |
| 156 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 191-3 |
| 157 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 188-91 |
| 158 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 187-8 |
| 159 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 186-7 |
| 160 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 180-6 |
| 161 | Tupian | Tembé | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 178-80 |
| 162 | Arawakan | Tariano/Tariana | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 173-6 |
| 162 | Tucanoan | Tucano | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 173-6 |
| 163 | Arawakan | Tariano/Tariana | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 168-73 |
| 163 | Tucanoan | Tucano | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 168-73 |

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| 164 | unknown | Amazon/Amazonia | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 164-6 |
| 165 | unknown | Amazon/Amazonia | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 163-4 |
| 166 | unknown | Amazon/Amazonia | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 160-1 |
| 167 | unknown | Amazon/Amazonia | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 158-9 |
| 168 | unknown | Amazon/Amazonia | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 159-60 |
| 169 | unknown | Tumpasa | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 273-5 |
| 170 | Arawakan | Chané, Izocëno | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 284-5 |
| 171 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 232-41 |
| 172 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 241-5 |
| 173 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 245-6 |
| 174 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 251-4 |
| 175 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 246-8 |
| 176 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 249-51 |
| 177 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 254-6 |
| 178 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 257-8 |
| 179 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 260-2 |
| 180 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 259-60 |
| 181 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 262-4 |
| 182 | Mosetenan (isolate) | Tsimane/Chimane | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 266-8 |
| 183 | Mosetenan (isolate) | Tsimane/Chimane | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 269-71 |
| 184 | Mosetenan (isolate) | Tsimane/Chimane | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 272 |
| 185 | Yuracare (isolate) | | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 275-82 |
| 186 | Tupian (Guaraní) | Guaraní | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 301 |
| 187 | Tupian (Guaraní) | Guaraní | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 302 |
| 188 | Tupian (Guaraní) | Guaraní | Koch-Grünberg | 1921 | 302-3 |
| 189 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 35-7 |
| 190 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 49-50 |
| 191 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 181-4 |
| 191 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 66-7 |
| 192 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Wilbert | 1978 | 177-80 |
| 192 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 67-8 |
| 193 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 172-7 |
| 193 | Gê | Apinayé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 68-9 |
| 194 | Gê | Timbira | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 71 |
| 194 | Gê | Timbira | Wilbert | 1978 | 164-6 |
| 195 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 84-5 |
| 196 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 85 |
| 197 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 86 |
| 198 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 94-5 |
| 199 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 99 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 200 | Guaicuruan | Toba-Pilaga | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 99-100 |
| 201 | Arawakan | Tereno | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 100 |
| 202 | Unclassified | Kariri | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 101 |
| 203 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 103-4 |
| 204 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 104-5 |
| 205 | Guaicuruan | Toba-Pilaga | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 113 |
| 206 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 114 |
| 207 | Guaicuruan | Toba-Pilaga | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 120 |
| 208 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 120-1 |
| 209 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 121 |
| 210 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 122-3 |
| 211 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 121-2 |
| 212 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 122 |
| 213 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 123-4 |
| 214 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 124 |
| 215 | Guaicuruan | Toba-Pilaga | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 124 |
| 216 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 125 |
| 217 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 126 |
| 218 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 126-7 |
| 219 | Chibchan | Cuna | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 138 |
| 220 | Tupian | Apapocuva | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 139-40 |
| 221 | Gê | Opayé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 128-9 |
| 222 | Tupian | Siriono, Mbya | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 140 |
| 223 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 140-1 |
| 224 | Tupian (extinct) | Shipaya | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 141 |
| 225 | Tupian | Guarayu | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 141 |
| 226 | Gê | Sherente | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 72-3 |
| 227 | Gê | Opayé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 82-3 |
| 228 | Tupian (extinct) | Shipaya | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 155 |
| 229 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 156 |
| 230 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 158 |
| 231 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 159 |
| 232 | Gê | Karajá | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 161 |
| 233 | Gê | Apinayé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 165-6 |
| 234 | Gê | Timbira | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 166 |
| 235 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 167 |
| 236 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 167-8 |
| 236 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Wilbert | 1978 | 224-6 |
| 237 | Gê | Sherente | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 168-9 |
| 238 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 171 |
| 239 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 172 |
| 240 | Arawakan | Wapishana | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 172 |
| 240 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 172 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 240 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 172 |
| 241 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 178-9 |
| 242 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 181 |
| 243 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 174 |
| 244 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 175 |
| 245 | Gê | Sherente | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 199-200 |
| 246 | Tupian | Apapocuva | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 190 |
| 246 | Tupian-Guarani | Kaiwa | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 190 |
| 247 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 193 |
| 248 | Gê | Bororo | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 213 |
| 249 | Gê | Sherente | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 250-1 |
| 250 | Gê | Krahô | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 252-3 |
| 251 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 251 |
| 252 | Arawakan | Wapishana | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 260-1 |
| 253 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 260 |
| 254 | unknown | Amazone/Amazonia | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 263-4 |
| 254 | unknown | Rio Negro | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 263-4 |
| 255 | Gê | Opayé | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 268 |
| 256 | Gê | Canela-Apanyekra | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 292 |
| 256 | Gê | unspecified | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 292 |
| 256 | Gê | Canela-Apanyekra | Wilbert | 1978 | 32-8 |
| 256 | Gê | unspecified | Wilbert | 1978 | 32-8 |
| 257 | unknown | | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 302 |
| 258 | Cariban | Kaxuiâna, Kachuana | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 273-4 |
| 259 | Lule-Vilela | Vilela | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 304 |
| 260 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 305-6 |
| 261 | Tupian (ex-tinct) | Shipaya | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 312 |
| 262 | Tupian | Parintintin | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 313-4 |
| 263 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 317 |
| 264 | unknown | Amazone/Amazonia | Lévi-Strauss | 1983 [1964] | 322-3 |
| 265 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 14-5 |
| 266 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 15 |
| 267 | Jivaroan | Jibaro, Achuar | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 16 |
| 268 | unknown | Amazone/Amazonia | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 25 |
| 269 | Tupian | Urubu | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 164 |
| 270 | unknown | Amazone/Amazonia | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 38-9 |
| 271 | Tupian (Guaraní) | Guaraní | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 39 |
| 272 | Tacanan | Cavina | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 41 |
| 273 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 42 |
| 274 | Quechua | Peru | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 43 |
| 275 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 43 |
| 276 | Zamucoan | Ayoré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 45-6 |

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| 277 | Zamucoan | Ayoré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 46 |
| 278 | Zamucoan | Ayoré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 46 |
| 279 | Zamucoan | Ayoré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 46-7 |
| 280 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 53-4 |
| 281 | Arawakan | Mojo | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 54-5 |
| 282 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 72-4 |
| 283 | Arawakan | Apurinã | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 78-9 |
| 284 | Tucanoan | Retuama | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 80 |
| 285 | Bororoan | Bororo, Umotína | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 80 |
| 286 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 85-6 |
| 287 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 86 |
| 288 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 83 |
| 289 | Arawakan | Baré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 88 |
| 290 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 121-2 |
| 291 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 164 |
| 292 | unknown | Tumpasa | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 168 |
| 293 | Zamucoan | Ayoré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 168-9 |
| 294 | Zamucoan | Ayoré | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 169 |
| 295 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 182 |
| 296 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Karsten | 1935 | 517-8 |
| 297 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Karsten | 1935 | 522-3 |
| 298 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Karsten | 1935 | 523-6 |
| 299 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Karsten | 1935 | 530-2 |
| 300 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Karsten | 1935 | 532-5 |
| 301 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 33-4 |
| 302 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 34-5 |
| 303 | Irantxe | Münkü | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 61 |
| 304 | Gê | Opayé | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 70-2 |
| 305 | Gê | Botocudo | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 87 |
| 306 | Gê | Botocudo | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 87 |
| 307 | Guaicuruan | Toba | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 92-3 |
| 308 | Guaicuruan | Toba | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 93 |
| 309 | Guaicuruan | Toba | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 97 |
| 310 | Guaicuruan | Toba | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 104 |
| 311 | Guaicuruan | Toba | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 105-6 |
| 312 | Guaicuruan | Toba | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 107 |
| 313 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 108-9 |
| 314 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 110-1 |
| 315 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 109-10 |
| 316 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 111 |
| 317 | Guaicuruan | Mocoví | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 114 |
| 318 | Gê | Krahô | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 132 |
| 319 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 196 |
| 320 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 81 |
| 320 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 205 |

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| 321 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 207 |
| 322 | Matacoan | Matacoan | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 208 |
| 323 | Arawakan | Wapishana | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 220 |
| 324 | Tucanoan | Cubeo | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 223-4 |
| 325 | unknown | Amazonia Teffé area | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 291 |
| 326 | Arawakan | Machiguanga | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 320-1 |
| 327 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 336 |
| 328 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 340-1 |
| 329 | Tacanan | Tacana | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 346-9 |
| 330 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 363-4 |
| 331 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 373-4 |
| 332 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | De Goeje | 1943 | 114 |
| 332 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 394 |
| 333 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 400 |
| 334 | Tupian | Tupi | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 416-7 |
| 335 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Lévi-Strauss | 1973 | 613-4 |
| 336 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 25-8 |
| 337 | Cariban | Macushi | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 46-7 |
| 338 | Cariban | Macushi | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 47 |
| 340 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 79 |
| 341 | Panoan | Cashinahua | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 80 |
| 342 | Tupian | Tembé | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 92 |
| 343 | Tupian (ex-tinct) | Shipaya | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 122 |
| 344 | Tupian | Munduruku | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 122 |
| 345 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 136 |
| 346 | Cariban | Yukpa | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 155 |
| 347 | Araucanian | Mapudungun | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 157-8 |
| 348 | Cariban | Yabarana | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 161-4 |
| 349 | Araucanian | Mapudungun | Lévi-Strauss | 1990 [1968] | 183-4 |
| 350 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ahlbrinck | 1931 | 124-5 |
| 351 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ahlbrinck | 1931 | 125 |
| 352 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ahlbrinck | 1931 | 123 |
| 353 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ahlbrinck | 1931 | 123 |
| 354 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ahlbrinck | 1931 | 123 |
| 355 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ahlbrinck | 1931 | 521-2 |
| 355 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 66-7 |
| 356 | Cariban | Kaliña | Van Kempen | 1993 | 38-42 |
| 357 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Kloos | 1991 | 31-2 |
| 358 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Kloos | 1991 | 32-3 |
| 359 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Kloos | 1991 | 35 |
| 360 | Warao | | Brett | 1880 | 55-60 |
| 361 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Brett | 1880 | 29-30 |
| 362 | Warao | | Brett | 1880 | 64-74 |
| 363 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 122-5 |

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| 363 | Warao | | Brett | 1880 | 77-83 |
| 364 | Cariban | Akawaio | Brett | 1880 | 131-3 |
| 365 | Cariban | Akawaio | Brett | 1880 | 127-31 |
| 366 | unknown | | Brett | 1880 | 172-3 |
| 367 | Cariban | Kaliña | Hoff | 2008 | - |
| 368 | Cariban | Kaliña | Hoff | 2008 | - |
| 369 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 137-8 |
| 370 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 146-8 |
| 371 | Cariban | Macushi | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 259 |
| 372 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 259 |
| 373 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 123 |
| 373 | Cariban | Trio | Anderson | 2001 | 69-70 |
| 374 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 132-3 |
| 375 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 188-92 |
| 376 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 199-200 |
| 377 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 133-5 |
| 378 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 213-4 |
| 378 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 213-4 |
| 379 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 198 |
| 380 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 215 |
| 381 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 279 |
| 382 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 195-6 |
| 383 | Cariban | Trio | Anderson | 2001 | 63-5 |
| 384 | Cariban | Trio | Oosterhout | 1994 | 108-10 |
| 384 | Cariban | Trio | Anderson | 2001 | 32-3 |
| 384 | Cariban | Trio | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 33-4 |
| 385 | Cariban | Waiwai | Fock | 1963 | 48-50 |
| 386 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 130-3 |
| 386 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 130-3 |
| 387 | unknown | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 218 |
| 387 | unknown | | Brett | 1880 | 167-72 |
| 389 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 290-2 |
| 390 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 293 |
| 391 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 295 |
| 392 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 212-3 |
| 393 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 223 |
| 393 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 223 |
| 394 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 223-5 |
| 395 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 226-7 |
| 396 | Cariban | Waiwai | Fock | 1963 | 38-42 |
| 397 | Cariban | Waiwai | Fock | 1963 | 56-67 |
| 398 | Tupian | Tupi | Grenand | 1982 | 355-8 |
| 399 | Tupian | Tupi | Grenand | 1982 | 359-62 |
| 400 | Tupian | Tupi | Grenand | 1982 | 352 |
| 401 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 7-8 |

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| 402 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 9 |
| 403 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 13-4 |
| 404 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 20-1 |
| 405 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 22-3 |
| 406 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 28-9 |
| 407 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 30-2 |
| 408 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 38-9 |
| 409 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 41-2 |
| 410 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 46-7 |
| 411 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 50 |
| 412 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 51-2 |
| 413 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 58 |
| 414 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 59-60 |
| 415 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 1977 | 11-2 |
| 416 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 1977 | 17-8 |
| 417 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 1977 | 25-6 |
| 418 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 1977 | 32-3 |
| 419 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 1977 | 41-2 |
| 420 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 75-6 |
| 421 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 76-7 |
| 422 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 78 |
| 423 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 80-4 |
| 424 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 92-4 |
| 425 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 106-7 |
| 426 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 109-10 |
| 427 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 113-4 |
| 428 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 114 |
| 429 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 116 |
| 430 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 117-8 |
| 431 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 118-9 |
| 432 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 119-20 |
| 433 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 120 |
| 434 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 121-2 |
| 435 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 122-3 |
| 436 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 123-4 |
| 437 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 124-6 |
| 438 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 126-7 |
| 439 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 127-31 |
| 440 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 136-7 |
| 441 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 141-2 |
| 442 | Cariban | Yukpa | Wilbert | 1974 | 142-3 |
| 443 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 46-7 |
| 444 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 50-1 |
| 445 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 53 |
| 446 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 56-7 |

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| 447 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 57-8 |
| 448 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 76-8 |
| 449 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 106-8 |
| 450 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 108-10 |
| 451 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 112-5 |
| 452 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 158-60 |
| 453 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 168-70 |
| 454 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 170-3 |
| 455 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 173-4 |
| 456 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 175-7 |
| 457 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 179-80 |
| 458 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 180 |
| 459 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 181-3 |
| 460 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 183 |
| 461 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 126-8 |
| 462 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 122-4 |
| 463 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 118-20 |
| 464 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 128-33 |
| 465 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 133-8 |
| 466 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 151-2 |
| 467 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 197-8 |
| 468 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 198-9 |
| 468 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 198-9 |
| 469 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 199-201 |
| 470 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 201 |
| 471 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 205-7 |
| 472 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 209-11 |
| 473 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 211-2 |
| 474 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 215-6 |
| 475 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 218-9 |
| 476 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 220 |
| 477 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 227-8 |
| 478 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 240-2 |
| 479 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 243-4 |
| 480 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 247-8 |
| 481 | Warao | | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 378 |
| 481 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 161-2 |
| 482 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 270-1 |
| 483 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 274 |
| 484 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 307-10 |
| 485 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 311-4 |
| 486 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 314-5 |
| 487 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 315-9 |
| 488 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 319-21 |
| 489 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 325-7 |

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| 490 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 335-7 |
| 491 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 337-40 |
| 492 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 351-4 |
| 493 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 354-6 |
| 494 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 371-4 |
| 495 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 364-71 |
| 496 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 377-9 |
| 497 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 415-8 |
| 498 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 440-2 |
| 499 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 393-5 |
| 500 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 413-4 |
| 501 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 454-5 |
| 502 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 461-2 |
| 503 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 465-6 |
| 504 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 458-60 |
| 505 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 466-8 |
| 507 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 480-1 |
| 508 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 485-6 |
| 509 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 29 |
| 510 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 29-30 (note) |
| 511 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 51-8 |
| 512 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 65-6 |
| 513 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 73-4 |
| 514 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 77-8 |
| 515 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 88-91 |
| 516 | Gê | unspecified | Wilbert | 1978 | 94-5 |
| 517 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 95-6 |
| 518 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 96-9 |
| 519 | Gê | Ramkokamekra-Canela | Wilbert | 1978 | 102-4 |
| 520 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 104 |
| 521 | Gê | Cayapó-Kubenkranken | Wilbert | 1978 | 109-11 |
| 522 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 120-1 |
| 523 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 121 |
| 524 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 138-40 |
| 524 | Gê | Canela-Apanyekra | Wilbert | 1978 | 138-40 |
| 524 | Gê | Crenye | Wilbert | 1978 | 138-40 |
| 525 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 148-51 |
| 526 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 152-3 |
| 527 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 158 |
| 528 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 158-60 |
| 529 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 191-2 |
| 530 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 192-3 |
| 531 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 228-9 |
| 532 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 232-6 |

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| 532 | Gê | Unspecified | Wilbert | 1978 | 232-6 |
| 533 | Gê | Ramkokamekra-Canela | Wilbert | 1978 | 236-7 |
| 534 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 242-4 |
| 535 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 247-8 |
| 535 | Gê | Crenye | Wilbert | 1978 | 247-8 |
| 536 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 255-6 |
| 537 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 256-7 |
| 538 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1975 | 9-11 |
| 539 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 258-9 |
| 540 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 259-60 |
| 541 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 260-1 |
| 542 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 262-3 |
| 543 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 263-4 |
| 544 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 266-8 |
| 545 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 269-72 |
| 546 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 273-4 |
| 547 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 287-92 |
| 548 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 293-5 |
| 549 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 298-9 |
| 550 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 299-301 |
| 551 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 301-4 |
| 552 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 304-6 |
| 553 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 309-11 |
| 554 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 314-7 |
| 555 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 318-9 |
| 556 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 321-4 |
| 557 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 324-5 |
| 558 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 325-6 |
| 559 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 329-30 |
| 560 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 337-9 |
| 561 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 346-7 |
| 562 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 348-52 |
| 563 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 361-3 |
| 564 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 385-7 |
| 565 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 387-9 |
| 566 | Gê | Ramkokamekra-Canela | Wilbert | 1978 | 389-91 |
| 567 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 391-400 |
| 568 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 400-1 |
| 570 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 417-18; 418-19 |
| 571 | Gê | Krahô | Wilbert | 1978 | 424-49 |
| 572 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 449-51 |
| 573 | Gê | Cayapó-Gorotire | Wilbert | 1978 | 458-60 |
| 574 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 27 |
| 575 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 28 |

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| 576 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 29-30 |
| 577 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 30-1 |
| 578 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 31-2 |
| 580 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 40-1 |
| 581 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 44-5 |
| 582 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 78-80 |
| 583 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 85-8 |
| 584 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 90-6 |
| 585 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 111-3 |
| 586 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 116-8 |
| 587 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 118-9 |
| 588 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 120-1 |
| 589 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 122 |
| 590 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 126-7 |
| 591 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 127-8 |
| 592 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 133-4 |
| 593 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 137-8 |
| 594 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 138-40 |
| 595 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 142-3 |
| 596 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 143 |
| 597 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 144-5 |
| 598 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 145-6 |
| 599 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 146-7 |
| 600 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 149-50 |
| 601 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 150-1 |
| 602 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 152-3 |
| 603 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 153-6 |
| 604 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 158-9 |
| 605 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 160-1 |
| 606 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 163-4 |
| 607 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 164-70 |
| 608 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 179-80 |
| 609 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 184-6 |
| 610 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 207-8 |
| 611 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 208-9 |
| 612 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 209-12 |
| 613 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 223-5 |
| 614 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 229 |
| 615 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 229-30 |
| 616 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 230-3 |
| 617 | Guajiboan | Cuiva | Wilbert | 1991 | 235-6 |
| 618 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 31-2 |
| 619 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 39-51 |
| 619 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 51-5 |
| 620 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 61-4 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 621 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 70-2 |
| 622 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 77-83 |
| 622 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 83-93 |
| 623 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 115-33 |
| 624 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 403 |
| 625 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 407-9 |
| 626 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 413-9 |
| 627 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 419-31 |
| 628 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 434-6 |
| 629 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 437-41 |
| 630 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 443-4 |
| 631 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 447-8 |
| 632 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 448-9 |
| 633 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 450-3 |
| 634 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 460-1 |
| 635 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 468-73 |
| 636 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 474-5 |
| 637 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 476-8 |
| 638 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 478-81 |
| 639 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 485-8 |
| 640 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 488-9 |
| 641 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 489-91 |
| 642 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 491-3 |
| 643 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 493-6 |
| 644 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 496-7 |
| 645 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 498 |
| 646 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 498-501 |
| 647 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 501 |
| 648 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 138-41 |
| 649 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 152 |
| 650 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 153 |
| 651 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 182-8 |
| 652 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 188-90 |
| 653 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 191-204 |
| 654 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 221-5 |
| 655 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 232-6 |
| 656 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 236-7 |
| 657 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 238-44 |
| 658 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 245-6 |
| 659 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 246-8 |
| 660 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 250 |
| 661 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 251-9 |
| 662 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 259-64 |
| 663 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 269-71 |
| 664 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 171-2 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 665 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 273-8 |
| 666 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 279 |
| 667 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 280-4 |
| 668 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 289-90 |
| 669 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 291-2 |
| 670 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 293 |
| 671 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 294-303 |
| 672 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 303-8 |
| 673 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 309-29 |
| 674 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 333-5 |
| 675 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 338-41 |
| 676 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 343-4 |
| 677 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 344-51 |
| 678 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 351-3 |
| 679 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 353-6 |
| 680 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 356-8 |
| 681 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 358-64 |
| 682 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 364-6 |
| 683 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 366-8 |
| 684 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 369-71 |
| 685 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 371 |
| 686 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 379 |
| 687 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 383-5 |
| 688 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 388-9 |
| 689 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 390-3 |
| 690 | Guajiboan | Sikuani | Wilbert | 1992 | 55-60 |
| 691 | Gê | Apinayé | Wilbert | 1978 | 168-72 |
| 692 | Cariban | unspecified | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 211 |
| 693 | Ticuna (isolate) | | Lévi-Strauss | 1988 [1985] | 44 |
| 694 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 43-4 |
| 695 | Warao | | Wilbert | 1970 | 322-4 |
| 696 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 697 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 698 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 699 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 700 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 701 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 702 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 703 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 704 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 705 | Arawakan | Lokono, unspecified | Ebecilio | 2009 | - |
| 706 | Jivaroan | Jibaro | Karsten | 1935 | 522 |
| 707 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Van Capelle | 1926 | 45 |
| 708 | Cariban | Kaliña, unspecified | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 17-8 |
| 709 | Cariban | Trio | Magaña | 1987 | 145 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 710 | Cariban | Kaliña | Magaña | 1987 | 253 |
| 711 | Cariban | Trio | Koelewijn | 1987 | 134-5 |
| 712 | Cariban | Akawaio | Cirino | 2000 [1970] | 57 |
| 1096 | Cariban | Macushi | Roth | 1970 [1915] | 135 |

# Appendix C. List of Tables

**Table C-1.** Identified animals in Saladoid iconography categorised according to class.[206]

| | Venezuela | Trinidad and Tobago | Windward Islands | Leeward Islands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Turtles** | 41 | 38 | 238 | 169 |
| **Frogs** | 8 | 26 | 61 | 25 |
| **Caimans** | 4 | 5 | 13 | 3 |
| **Lizards** | 7 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| **Snakes** | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| **Nocturnal birds*** | 0 | 10 | 46 | 81 |
| **Pelicans** | 1 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| **Stilt birds**** | 2 | 1 | 15 | 7 |
| **Parrots** | 8 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| **Ducks** | 0 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| **Vultures** | 13 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| **Frigate birds** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

*Nocturnal birds: owls, oilbirds, nightjars

** Stilts: herons, ibises, egrets

[206] Table C-1. is based on Chart 1 "Species Motifs Indices in Sample Collections of Saladoid-Era Ceramics" (see Waldron 2010: 319). It includes data on Fish and Anthropo-morphs, sourced from Chart 2 (see Waldron 2010: 320). For the percentages, see Chart 3 "Species Motifs Percentages in Sample Collections of Saladoid-Era Ceramics" (see Waldron 2010: 321).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dogs** | 52 | 9 | 11 | 49 |
| **Bats** | 11 | 13 | 35 | 12 |
| **Anteaters** | 9 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| **Opossums** | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| **Armadillos** | 2 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| **Rodents** | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| **Manatees** | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| **Monkeys** | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| **Procycons, racoon/coatis** | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| **Peccaries** | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| **Felines** | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **Others** | 0 | 1; porcupine | 2; dolphin/snail | 2; porcupine/dolphin |
| **Fish** | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| **Anthropomorphic creatures** | 62 | 43 | 146 | 108 |

**Table C-2.** Survey of narrative functions based on 706 stories.

| Narrative Functions | Total |
|---|---|
| • **Ensuring knowledge**<br>- Reference to historical events (n=18)<br>- Reference to historical/cultural heroes (n=25)<br>- Naming geographical features (n=25)<br>- Navigational information (n=7) | 75 |
| • **Informing**<br>- Agricultural information (n=18)<br>- On hunting techniques (n=57)<br>- What food (not) to eat (n=107)<br>- Where to find specific objects (n=68)<br>- Calendrical information (n=7)<br>- Good or bad omens (n=38)<br>- How to carry out certain activities (n=158)<br>- How to make fire (n=22)<br>- How to cure (n=37) | 512 |
| • **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies/traditions (n=93)<br>- Rites of passage (n=9)<br>- Exhibiting (in)correct behaviour (n=469)<br>- Seemingly just told for fun (n=27)<br>- Taboos (n=35) | 633 |
| • **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of the world or objects in it (n=139)<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=291)<br>- Explaining why animals help/oppose people (n=8)<br>- Why animals/people (not) have certain features (n=8)<br>- Shamans (n=54)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=274)<br>- On gateways between cosmic layers (n=12)<br>- Dealing with ogres/the weird (n=74) | 860 |
| • **Identity**<br>- Origin of specific communities (n=35)<br>- Specific traits of communities (n=17)<br>- Origin of people (n=27)<br>- War between ethnic groups (n=9) | 88 |

**Table C-3.** Linguistic affiliations of the 706 narratives.

| The linguistic affiliation: language family and language | Total |
|---|---|
| • **Araucanian**<br>- Mapudungun, Araucano, Mapuche, Mapud | 2 |
| • **Arawakan**<br>- Apurinã (n=1)<br>- Baré (n=1)<br>- Chané (n=1)<br>- Island Carib of Dominica (n=4)<br>- Münkü (n=1)<br>- Machiguanga (n=1)<br>- Mojo (n=1)<br>- "Taíno"(n=4)<br>- Tereno (n=1)<br>- Tariano, Tariana (n=2)<br>- Wapishana (n=3)<br>- Unspecified (n=35) | 55 |
| • **Bororoan**<br>- Bororo, Umotína (n=2) | 2 |
| **Cariban**<br>- Akawaio (n=2)<br>- Arekuna (n=2)<br>- Bakairí (n=3)<br>- Kaliña (n=8)<br>- Macushi (n=4)<br>- Taulipang (n=7)<br>- Trio (n=50)<br>- Uapes (n=1)<br>- Waiwai (n=3)<br>- Wayana (n=4)<br>- Yabarana (n=1)<br>- Yukpa (n=24)<br>- Kachuana (n=1)<br>- Unspecified (n=57) | 168 |
| • **Chibchan**<br>- Cuna | 1 |
| • **Gê**<br>- Apinayé (n=17)<br>- Bororo (n=9)<br>- Botocudo (n=2)<br>- Canela Apanyekra (n=2)<br>- Cayapo-Gorotire (n=40)<br>- Cayapó- Kubenkranken (n=8)<br>- Crenye (n=2)<br>- Kaingáng (extinct) (n=1)<br>- Karajá (n=3)<br>- Krahô (n=11)<br>- Opayé (n=4)<br>- Ramkokamekra-Canela (n=3)<br>- Sherente (n=4)<br>- Timbira (Eastern) (n=2)<br>- Unspecified (n=1) | 111 |

| | |
|---|---|
| • **Guaicuruan**<br>- Mocoví (n=1)<br>- Toba (n=6)<br>- Toba-Pillaga (n=4) | 11 |
| • **Guajiboan**<br>- Cuiva (n=43)<br>- Sikuani (n=73) | 116 |
| • **Jivaroan**<br>- Achuar (n=1)<br>- Jibaro, jivaro (n=10) | 11 |
| • **Kariri, Cariri** (unclassified) | 1 |
| • **Lule-Vilela**<br>- Vilela | 1 |
| • **Matacoan** | 9 |
| • **Moseten (isolate)**<br>- Tsimnae, Chimane | 3 |
| • **Panoan**<br>- Cashinahua | 13 |
| • **Quecha** | 1 |
| • **Tacanan**<br>- Cavina (n=1)<br>- Tacana (n=8) | 9 |
| • **Ticuna (isolate)** | 14 |
| • **Tucanoan**<br>- Cubeo (n=1)<br>- Retuama (n=1)<br>- Tucano (n=2) | 4 |
| • **Tupian**<br>- Apapocuva (n=2)<br>- Guaraní (n=5)<br>- Guarayu (n=1)<br>- Kaiwa (n=1)<br>- Mbya (n=1)<br>- Munduruku (n=17)<br>- Parintintin (n=1)<br>- Shipaya (extinct) (n=4)<br>- Tembé (n=16)<br>- Urubu (n=1)<br>- Unclassified (n=5) | 54 |
| • **Warao** | 103 |
| • **Yuracare (isolate)** | 1 |
| • **Zamucoan**<br>- Ayoré | 6 |
| • **Unknown** (designated as “Amazonian”, or by region e.g., Amazon River) | 27 |

**Table C-4.** All narrative functions of Dog narratives.

| Narrative Function | Total |
|---|---|
| **Ensuring knowledge** | 1 |
| **Informing**<br>- On hunting techniques (n=6)<br>- Which food (not) to eat (n=6)<br>- Where to find specific things(n=2)<br>- Calendrical information (n=1)<br>- Good and evil omens (n=1)<br>- How to do specific things (n=6) | 22 |
| **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies/traditions (n=1)<br>- Exhibiting (in)correct behaviour (n=19) | 20 |
| **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=12)<br>- Why animals help/oppose people (n=1)<br>- Shamans (n=1)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=4)<br>- Dealing with ogres/the strange (n=2) | 20 |
| **Identity**<br>- Origin of group/tribe (n=1)<br>- Origin of people (n=1)<br>- Group/tribe characteristics (n=1) | 3 |

**Table C-5.** All narrative functions of Bat narratives.

| Narrative Function | Total |
|---|---|
| **Ensuring knowledge**<br>- Reference to historical events (n=3)<br>- Naming geographical features (n=4) | 7 |
| **Informing**<br>- How to carry out certain activities (n=14)<br>- How to cure disease or ugliness (n=1)<br>- Agricultural (n=2)<br>- What food (not) to eat (n=3)<br>- Where to find specific things (n=6)<br>- Good and bad omens (n=5) | 31 |
| **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies / traditions (n=3)<br>- Exhibiting (in)correct behaviours (n=18)<br>- Taboo broken: menstruation or adulthood (n=1) | 22 |
| **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=16)<br>- Origin of the world or things in it (n=8)<br>- About other worlds or gateways (n=1)<br>- Shamans (n=3)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=10)<br>- Dealing with ogres / the strange (n=9) | 47 |
| **Identity**<br>- Origin of group / tribe (n=2)<br>- Group / tribe characteristics (n=2) | 4 |

**Table C-6.** All the narrative functions of Jaguar narratives.

| Narrative Function | Total |
|---|---|
| **Ensuring knowledge**<br>- Reference to historical events (n=22)<br>- Reference to historical/cultural heroes (n=27)<br>- Naming geographical features (n=26) | 75 |
| **Informing**<br>- On hunting techniques (n=111)<br>- Which food (not) to eat (n=91)<br>- Where to find specific objects (n=68)<br>- How to make fire (n=96)<br>- Agricultural information (n=9)<br>- Good or bad omens (n=65)<br>- Calendrical information (n=1)<br>- How to do carry out certain activities (n=228)<br>- How to cure (n=29)<br>- Navigational information (n=7) | 705 |
| **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies/traditions (n=104)<br>- Displaying (in)correct behaviour (n=634)<br>- Seemingly just told for fun (n=65)<br>- Taboos (n=34) | 841 |
| **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=405)<br>- Explaining why animals help/oppose people (n=54)<br>- Shamans (n=50)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=50)<br>- Origin of world or objects in it (n=116)<br>- On other worlds or gateways between cosmic layers (n=26)<br>- Dealing with ogres/the weird (n=61) | 1078 |
| **Identity**<br>- Origin of ethnic groups/tribes (n=45)<br>- Origin of people (n=33)<br>- War between ethnic groups (n=5)<br>- Specific ethnic group/tribal traits (n=8) | 91 |

**Table C-7.** All narrative functions of Bird narratives.

| Narrative Function | Total |
|---|---|
| **Ensuring knowledge**<br>- Reference to historical events (n=1)<br>- Reference to historical/cultural heroes (n=8)- Naming geographical features (n=3) | 12 |
| **Informing**<br>- Agriculture: when/how to plant seeds sow (n=1)<br>- Calendrical: when to perform certain ceremonies (n=2)<br>- How to carry out certain activities(n=19)<br>- How to cure a disease or ugliness (n=3)<br>- How to make a fire (n=4)<br>- Hunting: which arrows to use for specific animals (n=4)<br>- Which food (not) to eat (n=17)<br>- Where to find specific things(n=5)<br>- Good and bad omens (n=7) | 62 |
| **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies/traditions (n=15)<br>- *Rites de passage* (n=1)<br>- Exhibiting (in)correct behaviour (n=57)<br>- Taboo broken: menstruation or adulthood (n=5) | 78 |
| **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=43)<br>- Origin of world or things in it (n=17)<br>- About other worlds or gateways (n=2)<br>- Shamans (n=6)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=46)<br>- Dealing with ogres / the unfamiliar (n=14) | 128 |
| **Identity**<br>- Group/tribal characteristics (n=2)<br>- Origin of tribe (n=6)<br>- Origin of people (n=11)<br>- War between groups/tribes (n=2) | 21 |

**Table C-8.** All the narrative functions of Caiman/Alligator narratives.

| Narrative Function | Total |
|---|---|
| **Ensuring knowledge**<br>- Reference to historical events (n=3)<br>- Naming geographical features (n=3)<br>- Reference to historical/culture heroes (n=3) | 9 |
| **Informing**<br>- How to carry out certain activities (n=7)<br>- How to cure (n=2)<br>- How to make fire (n=3)<br>- Agricultural information (n=1)<br>- Calendrical information (n=2)<br>- Navigational information (n=1)<br>- Which food (not) to eat (n=9)<br>- Where to find specific objects (n=4)<br>- Good or bad omens (n=2)<br>- On hunting techniques (n=3) | 34 |
| **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies/traditions (n=9)<br>- *Rites de passage* (n=1)<br>- Exhibiting (in)correct behaviour (n=33)<br>- Taboos (n=5)<br>- Seemingly just told for fun (n=1) | 49 |
| **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=18)<br>- Origin of world or objects in it (n=7)<br>- Shamans (n=6)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=17)<br>- Dealing with ogres/the weird (n=11) | 59 |
| **Identity**<br>- Origin of ethnic group/tribes (n=5)<br>- Specific ethnic group/tribal traits (n=4)<br>- Origin of people (n=3) | 12 |

**Table C-9.** All narrative functions of Ant narratives.

| Narrative Function | Total |
|---|---|
| **Ensuring knowledge** | 0 |
| **Informing**<br>- How to carry out certain activities(n=11)<br>- How to cure (n=4)<br>- On hunting techniques (n=3)<br>- What food (not) to eat (n=6)<br>- Where to find specific objects (n=5)<br>- Good or bad omens (n=1) | 30 |
| **Encoding social behaviour**<br>- Ceremonies/traditions (n=8)<br>- *Rites de passage* (n=2)<br>- Exhibiting (in)correct behaviour (n=32)<br>- Taboos (n=3) | 45 |
| **Validating the world**<br>- Origin of animal characteristics (n=26)<br>- Origin of world or objects in it (n=8)<br>- On other worlds or gateways between cosmic layers (n=2)<br>- Shamans (n=4)<br>- Why things are as they are (n=23)<br>- Dealing with ogres/the weird (n=5) | 68 |
| **Identity**<br>- Origin of ethnic groups/tribes (n=3)<br>- Origin of people (n=2) | 5 |

## Appendix D. The “animal” personages in the narratives

This section pertains to an in-depth analysis of the stories dealt with in this research which are clustered according to “animal” actor. This detailed examination based on the set methodology is provided separately, as Appendix D. Scan the QR-code to access Appendix D, or go to: www.globalacademicpress.com/ebooks/eva_paulsen_appendix_d

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# Glossary

***adorno***

A modelled and incised ceramic animal/human figurine, or head lug.

***behique***

An indigenous ("Taíno") term meaning "shaman" (see below).

***cacique***

An indigenous ("Taíno") term for a village chief.

**cassava**

An edible starchy root **(***Manihot esculenta)* aka *yuca*. Raw cassava is toxic. Amerindians cultivate both sweet and bitter cassava. It is commonly used to make bread and *cassiri*, an alcoholic liquor.

***cassiri***

An alcoholic liquor consisting of cassava juice produced by steeping, boiling and fermenting cassava.

***cemí,*** see *zemí*.

***cohoba***

An indigenous ("Taíno") ceremony (aka *yopo*) in which the ground seeds of a tropical tree (*Piptadenia peregrine*) are inhaled in order to create a mind-altering effect. Shamans apply it to enter into a trance. Bilateral tubes serve to deeply inhale this substance.

**demiurge**

The autonomous deity and creator of the material world.

***kenaima/kanaima***

A Carib term referring to a vengeful spirit, an assassin, which can possess humans and cause them to murder others. A *kenaima* turns them into deadly animals. One can "invite" this malevolent spirit by means of drug-induced rituals, for instance, in a quest for vengeance.

**meaning**

That which is evoked by (a) symbol(s) or sign(s) i.e., a shared recollection of emotions.

**motif (in narratology)**

Within the narratological discourse, motifs are the smallest recognisable parts of the narrative (e.g., an evil stepmother, a helpful animal, a magic arrow).

**motifs (in iconography)**

In this research, motifs pertain to visual renditions of a sign (see below). They can take the shape of abstract dots, lines, incisions and patterns. More naturalistic depictions of animals, such as zoomorphic *adornos*, are also encountered

***opías***

A "Taíno" term meaning souls/spirits of the deceased.

**Saladoid**

A ceramic series named after its type site Saladero which is located on the Lower Orinoco River (Venezuela). This pottery style serves to mark the comprehensive cultural tradition of the Early Ceramic Age (*c*.800/200 BCE to 400/600 CE). This specific style and shared material culture enable archaeologists to "identify" the Early Ceramic Age Amerindians of the Caribbean archipelago. The Saladoid ceramic series is characterized by means of thin walled, elaborately painted, incised and modelled ceramic vessels and *adornos.*

**shaman/shamanism**

Shamans are able to enter the point of view of other beings (but still re-enter his or her own perspective), because they are, or can be, conductors of perspectives. Shamans transform and travel through time. **Shamanism** is a practice that involves entering into altered states of consciousness, facilitating shamans to perceive and interact with all "others" in this world, to travel across various cosmological layers, and through time. Shamans protect their communities and maintain the cosmic balance.

**sign**

Anything that stands for or signifies something, i.e., a signifier to a given signified. The relationships between signifier and signified are: (a) iconic signs, whereby a connection is established by means of resemblance: the signifier looks, smells or sounds like the signified, (b) indexical signs whereby a connection is established through contiguity, e.g., cause and effect, and (c) symbolic signs whereby the connection is artificial and arbitrary, i.e., imposed by humans (see also **symbol**).

**significant other-than-human-person**, see **spirit**.

**spirit**

A spirit is a "significant other-than-human-person" that can transmute and therefore appears as (i.e., wear the coat of) an animal and a human being. However, these significant other-than-human-persons lack a key aspect of "being human". For instance, according to Trio (Cariban), spirits do not speak a "human-language", because they have a speech impediment.

**Symbol/symbolism**

For symbols the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary. A symbol cannot be defined in words, but all it evokes is both culturally and personally determined. In this study iconographical features are considered symbols because their meaning cannot be literally translated as if it were a "visual language". Iconography is, however, invested with indigenous knowledge. Within their own cultural context, they have significance comprising a shared recollection of emotions.

***Taíno***

This term serves to denote the (Arawakan) indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, populating the Greater Antilles, when Columbus arrived in the late 15$^{th}$ century. On his second journey, Columbus was greeted with "Taíno, taíno", which was translated as meaning "noble" or "good". Since the 19$^{th}$ century this term is applied to the inhabitants of a large territory, assuming they all spoke the same language and shared a common culture (see Keegan & Hofman 2017: 12-4).

**threepointer**

This object of worship has three cardinal points, see also ***zemi***.

***yopo,*** see ***cohoba***.

***yuca,*** see **cassava**.

***yucuta***

A beverage made of cassava.

***yuruma***

Palm starch produced from the moriche palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*), an ingredient of baked bread.

***zemi/cemí***

An "object[207]" embodying a deity or spirit, which formed part of "Taíno" ceremonial life. *Zemís** are identified as formal deities, e.g., Yúcahu (the supreme spirit), Atabey (his mother), whose images are included in the Caguana ballcourt in Puerto Rico (Saunders 2005: 321). The term *zemí/cemí* is applied to a wide variety of artefacts, which differ in both form and materiality. This term also serves to refer to the cult of which these embodied "objects" are part.

[207] Oliver (2009: 59) states that a *zemí* is not a thing, but a state of being and thus a numinous power as well as a driving force that compels action.

# Summary

This dissertation is a contribution to the conceptualisation of the Caribbean Saladoid zoomorphic iconography (i.e., a ceramic series dating to between 800/200 BCE-400/600 CE). To this end, indigenous South American narratives have been analysed, serving as a framework in order to investigate the imagery on display. It is with reason that we humans tend to tell stories from the very moment we are able to speak. For, storytelling is a strategy through which we make sense of the world around us. In addition, narratives are a means to share and transmit knowledge. They, therefore, themselves provide information not only on the people that tell them but also on how they perceive the world and which information is vital to either share among each other as well as forward to future generations.

As Caribbean archaeologists, we aim to understand past Caribbean cultures by means of their material culture, in the broadest sense. We seek to reconstruct political and social structures, belief systems and the everyday lives of communities. The focal point of the archaeological study presented here is the Saladoid zoomorphic iconography, in particular ceramic modelled and incised animal/human figurines or head lugs (*adornos*). Identified zoomorphic *adornos* have been introduced as case studies in order to answer the central question: what does this imagery tell us about the indigenous peoples who created it?

Iconographical studies conducted by other scholars show that a number of specific zoomorphic motifs are more prominent in the archaeological record than others. The aforementioned *adornos* are of particular interest here: an abundance of these animal figurines have been recovered in the Caribbean. Iconographical studies pertaining to these

*adornos* indicate preferences in zoomorphic motifs as observed on both mainland South America and the insular Caribbean.

An underlying premise of this research is: the act of depicting iconographical imagery as well as the act of storytelling are part of the same "artistic behaviour" and discourse. Both are expressions of such behaviour. Iconography and stories are thus part of the same paradigm. The present study then focuses on, mainly South American, oral narratives as a means to not only contextualise but also to conceptualise the zoomorphic imagery recovered from the Caribbean region.

In order to execute this research a total of 706 narratives have been brought together and analysed according to methods gleaned from the field of narratology. First, the most common motifs, themes, (animal) actors in this conglomerate were established, all not only in relation to each other but also in relation to the specific contexts of space and time encountered in the narratives themselves. An outcome of this analysis comprises an overview of the most common animal personages. It is concluded that the most common animal actors indeed correspond rather well with the majority of the identified zoomorphic motifs. Thus, animals playing a role in the stories are also identified as Saladoid *adornos.*

Next, the stories have been clustered based on animal actors in order to enable an in-depth analysis, again according to narratological principles. The main objective now was to contextualise each animal in the stories at hand, hereby facilitating a study into the animal actors not only in relation to themes and/or motifs encountered in the stories but also in relation to other (animal) actors. This procedure was again carried out against the backdrop of a specific spatial and temporal context. This analysis indicates that specific themes and/or motifs, as well as contexts, are linked to specific animal actors. However, it also revealed a complex web consisting of associations, relationships, roles and contexts pertaining to each animal. Instead of identifying a fixed set of associations ascribed to each animal, these associations and roles vary according to various (narratological) settings or contexts.

In addition to narratological method, the concept referred to as perspectivism has been introduced in order to further interpret the narratives from a more "inside" native viewpoint. Perspectivism describes how Amerindian peoples from Lowland South America conceive themselves in relation to other beings (both human and nonhuman). Amerindian ontologies are based on one joint (human) culture and numerous natures. This implies that all animals, spirits and "things" with a consciousness consider themselves to be human and thus perceive the world as humans do (i.e., one culture shared by all beings). Therefore all humans and nonhumans with a consciousness reside in villages, set on off hunting parties, drink cassava beer, etc.

Introducing perspectivism as a framework in order to make sense of the narratives, contributes to understanding not only the implication of the various settings but also the sets

of associations pertaining to each animal. The dog is a helper, friend and protector of Amerindians as well as a predator (i.e., “jaguar”) to the animals it hunts and kills. Comprehending these various roles, sets of associations and perspectives is helpful when conceptualising the possible roles which the animals played in the stories and the iconography. The usefulness of the perspectivism concept as an explanatory model further increases when in addition to *adornos* other expressions of Saladoid material culture (e.g., animal teeth, stone/shell amulets) are included, hereby revealing that ways or manners of display are linked to specific animals and/or sets of associations linked to animals. For instance, the function (or “meaning”) of a dog *adorno* probably differs from a dog teeth pendant.

The Caribbean is rich in archaeological material. Nevertheless, (in)material things that cannot be recovered (e.g., perishable goods made of wood, cotton, but also performing “arts” such as ritual and dance). Archaeologists often apply insights drawn from ethnography in order to partially fill this shortcoming. Ethnographic and ethnohistoric sources are therefore included in the present research. Incorporated are (17$^{th}$- to 20$^{th}$-century) ethnographies originating from the Island Carib (Amerindians from the island of Dominica), and from the (15$^{th}$-century) "Taíno" culture of the Greater Antilles. However, more recent insights based on Lowland South American ethnographies have included whenever considered relevant. These sources provide us with additional views as to how animals played a role in the daily cultural lives of the Amerindians as well as their place within indigenous cosmologies.

Each animal is thus studied by means of its role in: (a) the narratives, (b) the Saladoid iconography, and (c) the indigenous cosmologies. Finally, the role of each animal in nature is addressed, because natural behaviour and physical traits can contribute to the specific associations ascribed to them. For example, the migration behaviour of a specific bird can link it to (the arrival of) either the dry or rainy season.

The multiplicity of contexts in which each animal is studied here provides a broad frame of reference. Animals on display cannot be deciphered like a foreign language, nor do they have any “meaning” as is the case in a fixed set of associations and connotations. Their ways of display, the (social) contexts in which they are utilised, all form an integral part of their indigenous “meaning”. The narratives themselves reflect a multiplicity of contexts, ascribed attributes and qualities when considering each animal actor. This phenomenon is apparently reflected by means of the variety in which each animal is portrayed by another medium: an animal is displayed as a ceramic *adorno,* or a design, as an amulet, as a tooth pendant, and/or in the performing “arts”. Each medium and way of display refers to a specific set of associations, which can also be conceptualised as a specific identity of this animal. The narratives thus contribute to in unravelling these identities (i.e., sets of associations) on display.

# Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift draagt bij aan het conceptualiseren van de Caribische Saladoid zoömorfische iconografie (aardewerkcomplex van omstreeks 800/200 v.Chr. tot 400/600 n.Chr.). Om dit te realiseren worden inheemse Zuid-Amerikaanse verhalen gebruikt. De reden hiervoor is dat mensen verhalen vertellen vanaf het moment dat ze kunnen spreken. Verhalen vertellen is voor ons als mensen een strategie om betekenis te geven aan de wereld waarvan we deel uitmaken, en deze te verklaren. Daarnaast zijn verhalen een middel om kennis te delen en over te dragen. Dat maakt dat de verhalen ook informatie verschaffen over de mensen die de verhalen vertellen; over hoe zij de wereld waarnemen en welke informatie voor hen belangrijk is om met elkaar te delen en aan toekomstige generaties door te geven.

Caribische archeologen streven ernaar om (verdwenen) Caribische culturen uit het verleden te begrijpen door het bestuderen van hun materiële cultuur. Daarbij richten we ons op het reconstrueren van politieke en sociale structuren, geloofssystemen en het dagelijks leven van de mensen. Centraal in dit onderzoek staat de Saladoid zoömorfische iconografie, in het bijzonder in (en op) aardewerk gemodelleerde en ingekraste dierlijke/menselijke figuren (zgn. *adornos*). Geïdentificeerde zoömorfische *adornos* vormen belangrijke *casestudies* om de centrale vraag te beantwoorden: wat zegt deze iconografie over de mensen die haar hebben gemaakt?

Iconografisch onderzoek toont aan dat sommige zoömorfische motieven significant vaker geïdentificeerd zijn in het Saladoid archeologisch bestand dan andere motieven. De eerdergenoemde *adornos* zijn hierbij van belang, omdat deze dierfiguren in overvloed beschikbaar zijn. Eerder iconografisch onderzoek naar deze Saladoid *adornos* toonde voorkeuren aan voor specifieke zoömorfische motieven op zowel het Zuid-Amerikaanse vasteland als op de Caribische eilanden.

In dit onderzoek wordt aangenomen dat het decoreren van aardewerk (ofwel iconografie), en het vertellen van verhalen expressies zijn van hetzelfde gedrag (“*artistic behaviour”*). Dit impliceert dat ze deel uitmaken van hetzelfde paradigma. Deze studie concentreert zich daarom op voornamelijk Zuid-Amerikaanse, inheemse orale verhalen voor het contextualiseren en conceptualiseren van Caribische zoömorfische representaties.

Voor dit onderzoek zijn in totaal 706 verhalen verzameld en geanalyseerd. Voor deze analyse zijn methoden gebruikt uit de Narratologie. Zo zijn eerst de meest voorkomende verhaalmotieven, -thema's en (dierlijke) actoren geïdentificeerd. Deze zijn vervolgens bestudeerd in relatie tot elkaar, maar er is ook gekeken naar de specifieke context (van ruimte en tijd) waarin ze voorkomen, of het een en ander zich afspeelt. Een van de resultaten hiervan is een overzicht van de meest voorkomende dierpersonages in de verhalen. Dit overzicht laat zien dat de meest voorkomende dierpersonages in de verhalen overeenkomen met de meest geïdentificeerde zoömorfische motieven voor *adornos*. Kortom de dieren die voorkomen in de verhalen, zijn dezelfde dieren die geïdentificeerd zijn als *adorno.*

Voor een meer verdiepende narratologische analyse zijn vervolgens de verhalen geclusterd op basis van dierlijke personages. Hoofddoel hierbij is om elk dier binnen de verhalen te contextualiseren. De dierpersonages zijn bestudeerd in relatie tot de verhaalthema’s, -motieven, en in relatie tot andere (dierlijke) actoren, wederom in relatie tot de chronotoop waarin het een en ander zicht afspeelt (de context van tijd en ruimte). Deze analyse toont aan dat specifieke thema's, motieven en contexten verbonden zijn aan specifieke dierpersonages. Echter, het totaalbeeld resulteert in een complex web van associaties, rollen en contexten per bestudeerd dier. In plaats van een vaste reeks associaties voor elk dier, variëren deze per (narratologische) context.

Naast de methoden uit de narratologie is het perspectivisme geïntroduceerd als verklarend model om de verhalen te interpreteren vanuit een meer emisch perspectief. Het perspectivisme beschrijft hoe de Indianen uit het Laagland van Zuid-Amerika zichzelf zien, ook in relatie tot anderen (zowel mensen als niet-mensen). Amerindiaanse ontologieën zijn gebaseerd op de visie van één gedeelde (menselijke) cultuur en een veelheid aan naturen. Dit impliceert dat alle dieren, geesten en "dingen" met een bewustzijn de wereld bezien met het menselijk perspectief en de wereld waarnemen als mensen (dus cultuur is wat alle mensen en niet-mensen delen). Zodoende wonen allen (mensen en niet-mensen) in dorpen, gaan jagen, drinken *cassiri** (cassava bier), enzovoort.

Het gebruik van het perspectivisme als interpretatief model heeft geholpen om de verhalen, en de rol van dieren daarin, beter te begrijpen. Het duidt de implicaties van de verschillende contexten en associaties verstrengeld met elk dier. De hond is een helper, vriend en beschermer van de Indianen, maar het is ook het roofdier, de vijand (ofwel de “jaguar”) voor de dieren waar de hond op jaagt en die het doodt. Het begrijpen van deze verschillende rollen, combinaties van associaties en perspectieven is daarmee van nut voor het conceptualiseren

van de dierrepresentaties die we tegenkomen in zowel de verhalen als in de archeologie, bijvoorbeeld als iconografisch motief. De toegevoegde waarde van het perspectivisme als interpretatief model blijkt vooral als naast *adornos* ook andere uitingen van de Saladoid materiële cultuur (o.a. dierlijke tanden, amuletten) en immateriële cultuur (o.a., dans, rituelen) worden meegenomen. Door ook hier naar te kijken, is namelijk aangetoond dat de gekozen manier, of vorm waarop of waarin een dier wordt gerepresenteerd samenhangt met specifieke dieren en/of associaties. De functie, of "betekenis", van een hond *adorno* is bijvoorbeeld anders dan die van een hanger gemaakt van een hondentand.

Het Caribisch gebied is relatief rijk aan archeologisch materiaal. Echter, er zijn (im)materiële zaken die niet gevonden (kunnen) worden (bijv. vergankelijk materiaal zoals hout, katoen, maar ook zaken als rituelen en dans). Binnen de archeologie is het gangbaar om etnografische inzichten te gebruiken om deze hiaten deels in te kleuren. Voor dit onderzoek zijn ook etnografische en etno-historische bronnen gebruikt (uit de 17$^{e}$ en 20$^{ste}$ eeuw) van de Eiland-Caraiben (Indianen van het eiland Dominica) en (uit de 15$^{e}$ eeuw) van de "Taíno" cultuur van de Grote Antillen. Daarnaast zijn ook relevante, meer recente inzichten uit Laagland Zuid-Amerikaanse etnografieën opgenomen. Deze bronnen geven additionele inzichten in hoe dieren in het dagelijkse en culturele leven een rol kunnen hebben gespeeld voor de Indianen en wat hun rol en plaats was in de inheemse kosmologieën.

Het resultaat is dat elk dier is bestudeerd aan de hand van zijn rol in: (a) de verhalen, (b) de Saladoid iconografie, en (c) inheemse kosmologieën. Als laatste context is ook de rol van elk dier in de natuur beschreven, omdat natuurlijk gedrag en fysieke kenmerken kunnen bijdragen aan specifieke associaties. Denk daarbij bijvoorbeeld aan migratiegedrag van vogels, die bepaalde vogelsoorten in verband brengen met (de komst van) het droge of regenseizoen.

De veelheid aan contexten waarin elk dier is bestudeerd in dit onderzoek, zorgt voor een breed referentiekader. Dierrepresentaties kunnen niet eenvoudig vertaald worden als zijnde een vreemde taal, of ontcijferd worden in vaste sets aan associaties en betekenissen. Dit mede omdat de sociale context waarin dieren werden gebruikt, getoond, of uit- en afgebeeld inherent bijdraagt aan hun "betekenis". De verhalen tonen een breed scala aan contexten, relaties, associaties, en eigenschappen in relatie tot elk dier. Deze variatie lijkt ook te worden weerspiegeld in de veelheid van contexten waarin het dier op andere manieren werd gerepresenteerd. Bijvoorbeeld als zoömorfische *adorno,* als motief op aardewerk, hout, steen, als een hanger van bot of tand, maar ook in performatieve vormen als dans en ceremoniële rituelen. Elke representatie vertegenwoordigt een verzameling aan associaties, ofwel vertegenwoordigt een specifieke identiteit van dat dier. De verhalen kunnen dan helpen bij het ontrafelen van deze identiteiten.

# Curriculum vitae

Eva Paulsen was born in 1983 in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. In 2002, after completing secondary school in Nijmegen, she moved to Leiden in order to study Archaeology to next specialise in Caribbean Archaeology (Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University). Here she combined an interest in archaeology and the Caribbean with courses on Meso-American iconography, Oral traditions in contemporary North American societies, Shamanism, and Trio language and culture. As a student, she participated in several archaeological fieldwork campaigns (Den Haag, Schipluiden, Naaldwijk, andthe Dominican Republic) conducted by Leiden University. Her BA and MA theses already concentrated on Caribbean iconography, hereby focussing on South American narratives. After graduating in 2007, she was given the opportunity to embark upon a self-funded PhD project embedded in the now Caribbean Research Group at the Faculty of Archaeology (Leiden University). This pursuit was combined with a budding career at the IT Department of the LUMC (Leiden University Medical Center), where she specialised in Communications. In 2009, her PhD research project included a visit to the Wayana people (Carib speakers residing at Apetina in the interior of Suriname) and Matta, an Arawak village located in the Para district. This sojourn brought her into contact with Sjaak and Yvonne Ebecilio who orally shared their knowledge of indigenous Amerindian folklore. During the final stages of work on her dissertation, she has recently been appointed a Senior Communication Advisor at DICTU (Dienst ICT Uitvoering), a section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Climate Policy based at The Hague.