



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Paulsen, E.R.

Citation

Paulsen, E. R. (2019, September 5). *Everything has its Jaguar. A narratological approach to conceptualising Caribbean Saladoid animal imagery*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/77630>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/77630>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/77630> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Paulsen, E.R.

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

Issue Date: 2019-09-05

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 “vener” (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, smoothed 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 smoothed, 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 deducible, 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

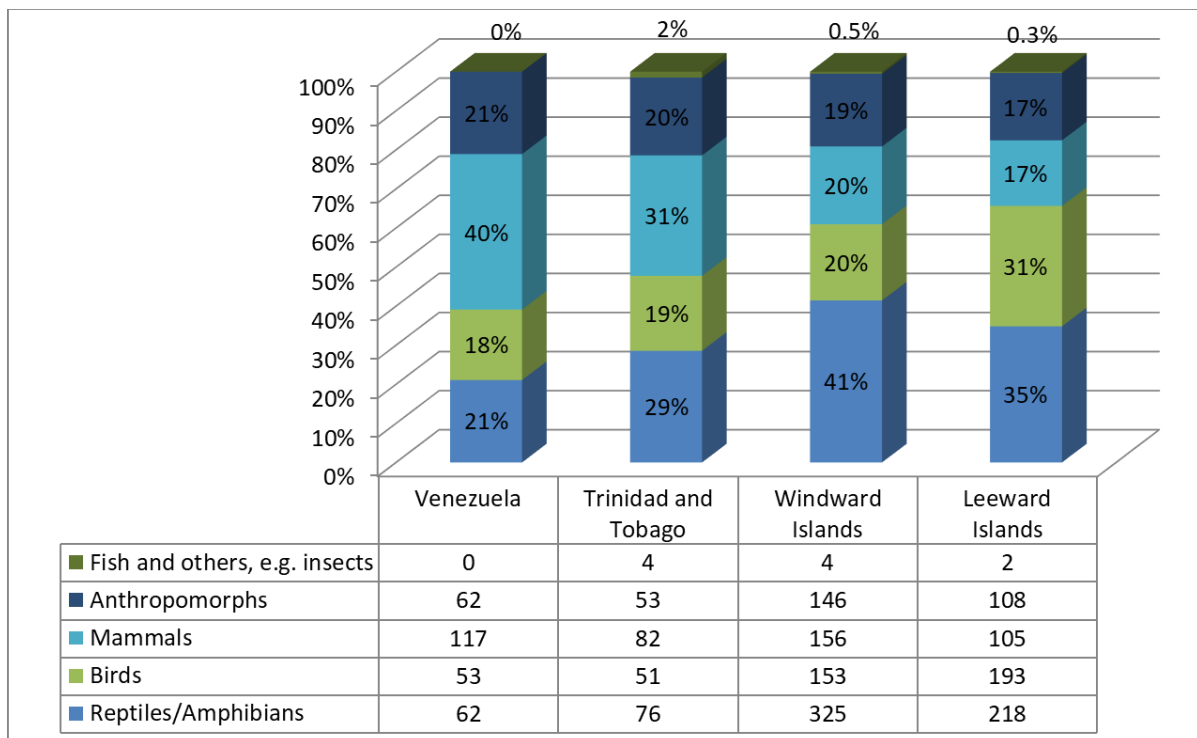
Waldron's research forms the quantitative iconographic basis for this dissertation which, in total, studies 1,958 Saladoid *adornos* originating from Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles. As many as 1,599 (81.7 percent) of these *adornos* are identified as zoomorphs (see Table 2.1; Waldron 2010: 2-7; see 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

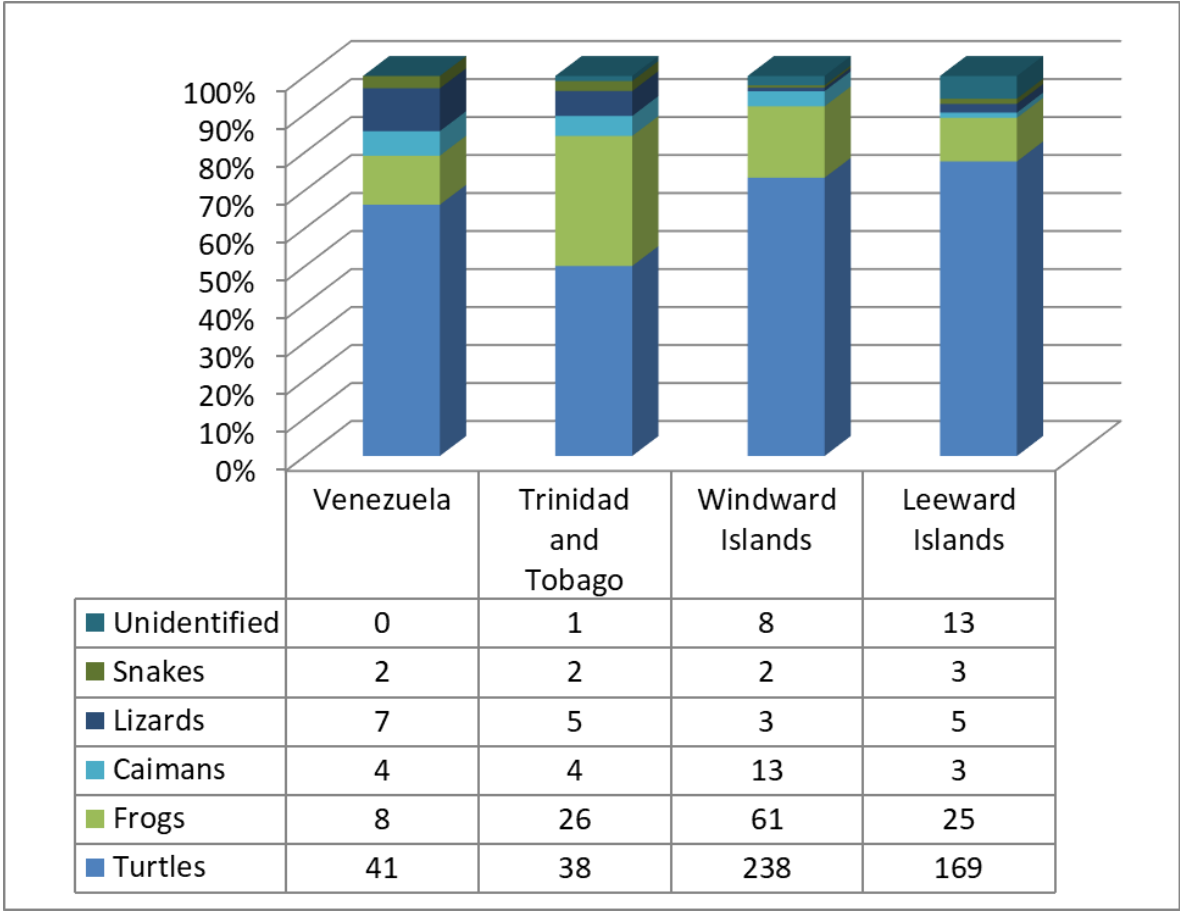


Waldron also provides more specific identifications regarding within each class. Appendix C, Table C-1 an overview that discloses the number of identified “animals” and “birds”, listed according to class. The distribution of the specific “animals” according to class could illustrate local variations. 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).

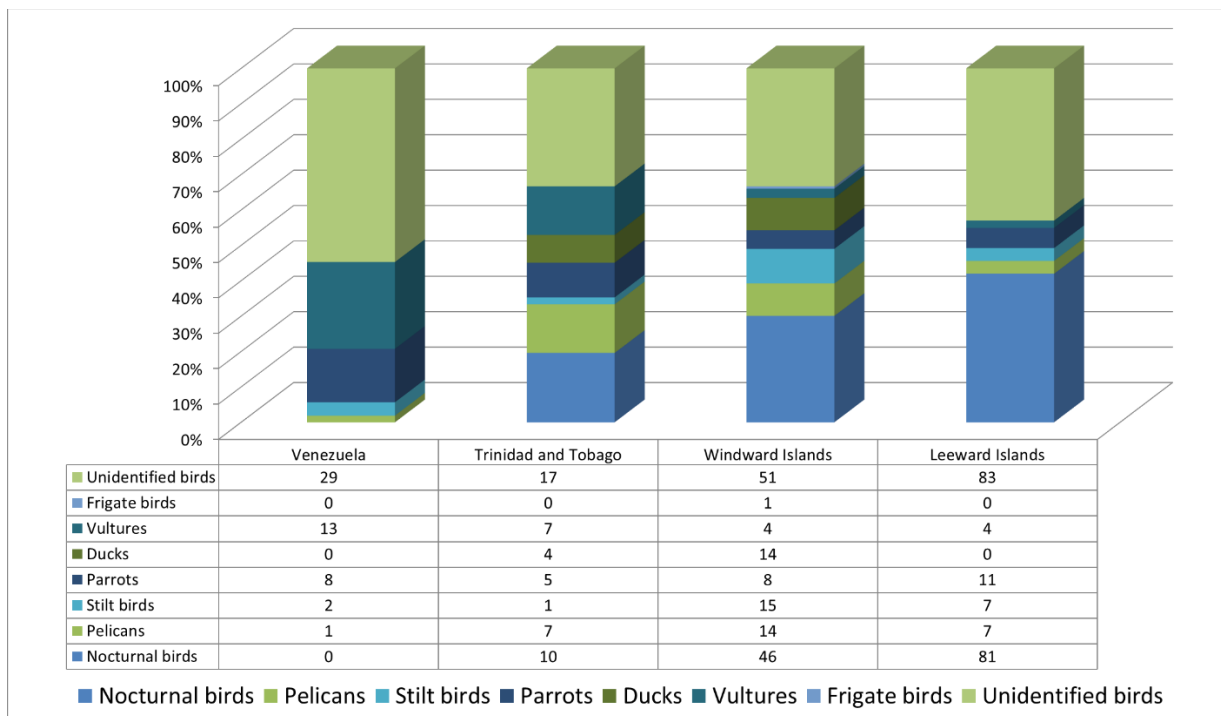
Table 2.2. Distribution of identified Saladoid reptile and amphibian motifs in Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands (%).²¹



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



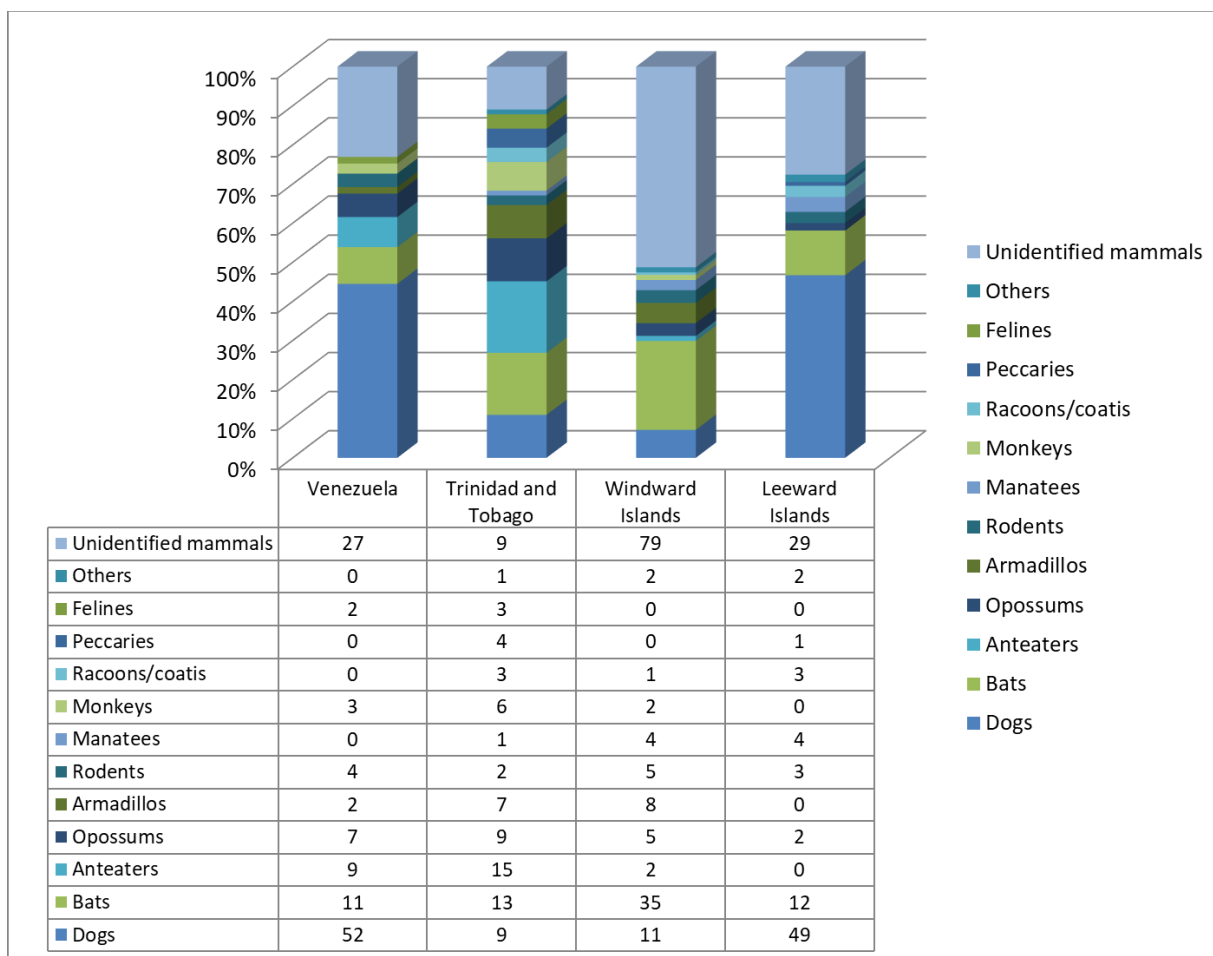
Vultures, on the contrary, are dominant in Venezuela and take in the (shared) second position in Trinidad and Tobago. These birds are significantly less recurrent in the Windward and Leeward Islands. Parrots are similarly distributed when compared with vultures. Parrots, though relatively less prominent 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



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. Categorized 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 Vredenburg 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* (Vredenburg 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 not the recovery of the hidden meaning of a figurine, but an understanding 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 anthropomorphic 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.

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 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-cosmology 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-clubs³² 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).

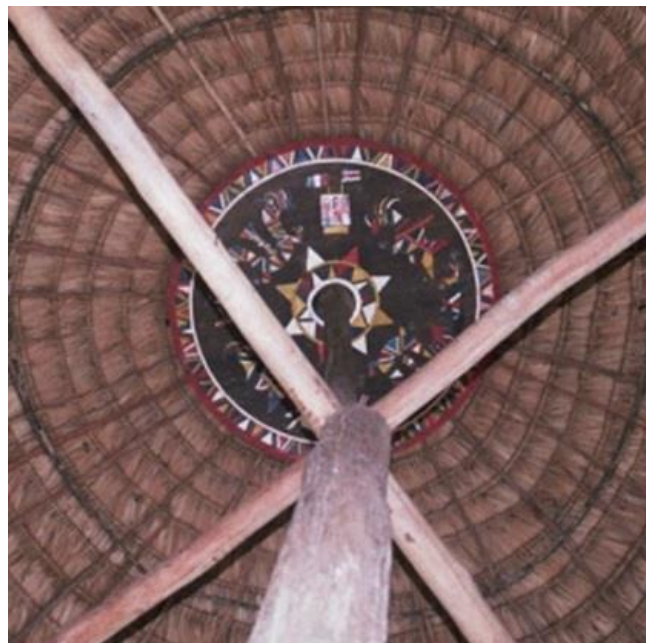


Fig. 2.6. Maluwana in Apetina, Suriname; photograph by the author (2009).

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-cosmology 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 Pané³³ 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 cosmologies 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

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-divided 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).

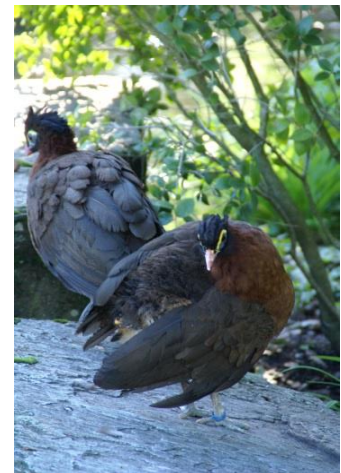


Fig. 2.8. Nocturnal curassow (*Nothocrax urumutum*); Avifauna, Alphen a/d Rijn, 2017; photograph by the author.

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 lherminieri*) 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 manatus*), 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-cosmivision. 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.