

This is an extract from:

*Gold and Power in Ancient Costa Rica,
Panama, and Colombia*

Jeffrey Quilter and John W. Hoopes, Editors

published by

*Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection
Washington, D. C.*

© 2003 Dumbarton Oaks
Trustees for Harvard University
Washington, D.C.
Printed in the United States of America

www.doaks.org/etexts.html

Gold, Stone, and Ideology: Symbols of Power in the Tairona Tradition of Northern Colombia

Warwick Bray

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

We are the Elder Brothers.
We have not forgotten the old ways. . . .
We still know how to dance.
We have forgotten nothing. . . .
We know how to bless the world and make it flourish.
Kogi priest, quoted in Ereira 1990: 113

Certain gold and stone artifacts functioned as symbols of rank, status, and power in the Tairona world. Examination of these artifacts provides a chronicle of fifteen hundred years of continuity and change within a single cultural tradition.

The Tairona at the Time of European Contact

The term *Tairona* is a general, if not very accurate, label for the contact period Indian groups of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the adjacent areas of the Caribbean coast (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1953: 17–27; Bischof 1971; 1982–83). The word also applies to the archaeological culture created by their ancestors from around A.D. 800 to the Spanish Conquest. Spanish fleets first visited this coast in 1501–1502, and in 1524 Rodrigo de Bastidas founded the port of Santa Marta, from which military expeditions explored and eventually subjugated the hinterland. Tairona resistance was not finally broken until 1600. During the century between contact and conquest, Spanish soldiers and officials visited many parts of the Tairona homeland (usually to put down rebellions and to steal gold), and their observations entered into the writings of early colonial historians including Oviedo, Simón, Castellanos, and Aguado. Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff (1951) has collated this ethnohistorical information with full citations.

Spanish informants describe a densely populated area with towns and settlements of all sizes, from *pueblos* of 20, 40, or 80 houses to large towns with 400 to 1,000 structures that included ceremonial houses and temples. These figures fit well with the archaeological evidence from coastal and from highland regions for the existence of a three-level hierarchy of sites (Serje 1987; Oyuela Caycedo 1987b) in which the larger ones, such as Pueblito, have

some 1,000 structures (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1954a: 161; 1954b; G. Reichel-Dolmatoff and A. Reichel-Dolmatoff 1955).

Major towns, such as Bonda and Pocigueica, were governed by chiefs (*caciques*) and seem to have formed the nuclei of incipient states. There is an unresolved debate about whether a higher level of organization ever existed. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1951: 88–90) argues that a number of confederations had emerged by the sixteenth century; Henning Bischof (1971; 1982–83) maintains that these were ephemeral alliances and that no permanent supralocal structure can be recognized.

Whatever the truth, Spanish sources suggest that the Tairona had a hierarchy of office-holders. Oviedo notes that the ruler of Bonda was “the Lord of all the *caciques* of that province” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1953: 88), and for the Valle de la Caldera Father Pedro Simón wrote in 1628, “The towns [*pueblos*] would be about two hundred and fifty, and most of them obey a *cacique* called Guacanaoma, though there is not a single town that does not have its own *Cacique* or *Mohan*” (Simón 1882–92, 5: 192). *Mohanes* were native priests, and the significance of the *naoma* element in the *cacique*’s name is examined below. There is one possible mention of a female ruler, “a *caciqua* or principal woman among them” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1951: 10), though the text is unclear about whether she was a ruler in her own right or simply a woman of high status, perhaps the wife of a chief. Some towns were divided into *barrios*, each of which had its subsidiary *cacique* (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1951: 88). Besides *caciques*, Spanish sources mention *capitanes*, *principales* (nobles), *mandadores* (commanders), and *capitanes de guerra*. Fray Pedro Simón (1882–92, 5: 197) also lists a *pregonero* (speaker or crier) who was second only to the chief. Spanish accounts do not list the duties and powers of all these officials, but it seems clear that there was a hierarchy of civil and military office-holders. One source mentions inheritance from father to son “en el oficio” (Bischof 1982–83: 88). The texts also mention merchants, craftsmen, weavers, goldsmiths, carpenters, and farmers, and one recorded example refers to earned status. Simón (1882–92, 5: 198) describes a category of warriors “who had demonstrated their bravery on various occasions, and were allowed to wear their hair long, and tucked into their belts at the back,” a reminder that not all status symbols will be archaeologically identifiable.

The chronicles make frequent reference to *naomas* and *mohanes*, of whom there could be several in each town. The two words are often used interchangeably, and these people are usually considered to be priests and ritual specialists, the possible ancestors of the present-day Kogi and Ika *mamas* (Dussán de Reichel 2000: 88; for a contrary view see Bischof 1971; 1982–83: 88). In this connection, there is an interesting mention in the *Relación de Tayrona* (1571) to a town with two *caciques*; the principal one was called Mamanauma (Oyuela-Caycedo 1998: 52). The *mohanes* are undoubtedly priests (see Castellanos 1955, 2: 596), but the status of the *naomas* is less clear. Juan de Castellanos, writing in 1601, notes that *naomas* could hold political office and that they outranked ordinary *caciques*: “fifteen *caciques*, great señores, are subject to the command of the *naoma* called, it is said, Marocando” (Castellanos 1955, 2: 340). The same author also mentions a personage called Betoma, “whom they recognized as a *Naoma* and who held command over all the *caciques*” (*ibid.*: 548). The political power of sixteenth-century *naomas* is not in doubt, but their priestly role remains ambigu-

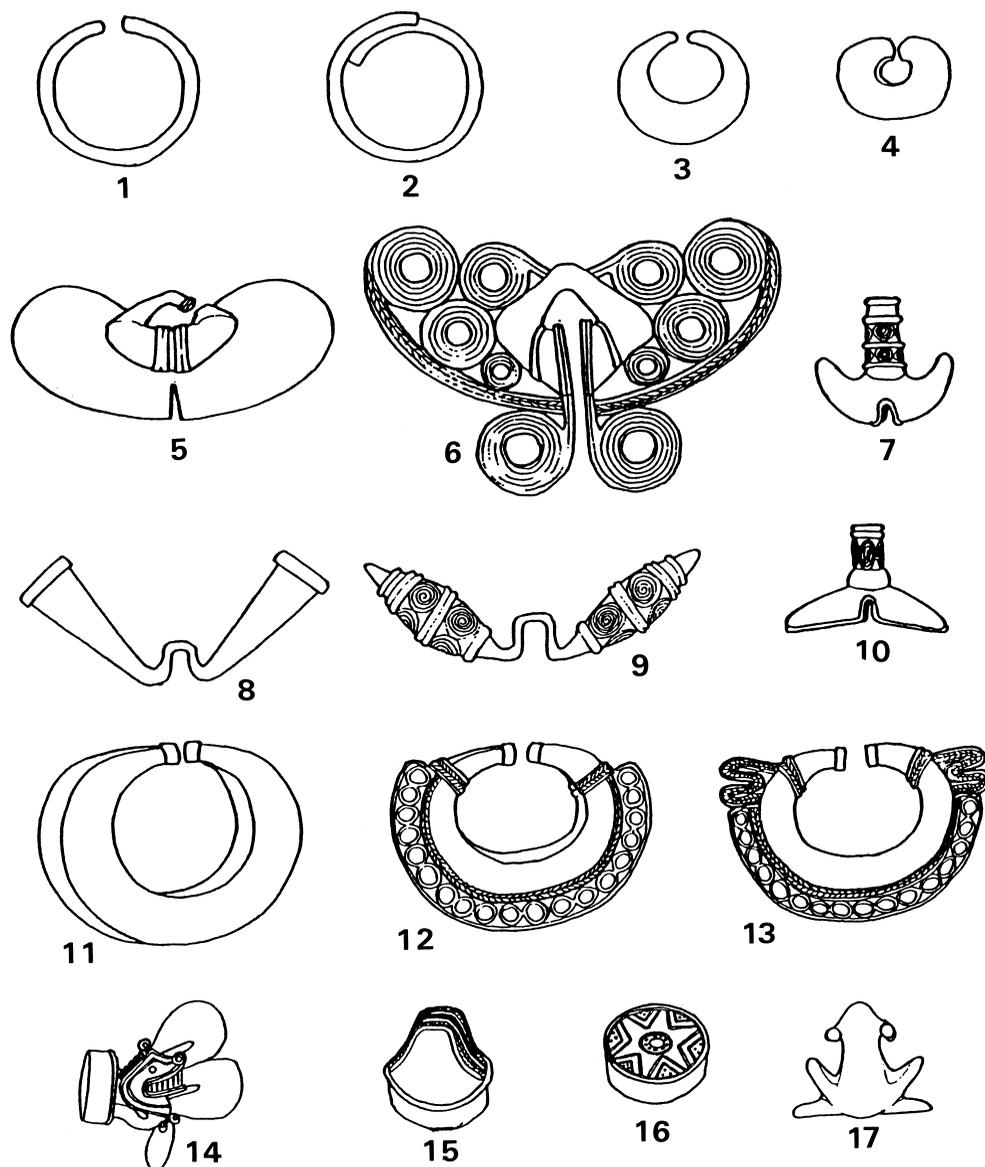


Fig. 1 Common categories of Tairona goldwork (after Plazas 1987)

ous. Among the present-day Kogi all *mayores*, adult men of high status, are called *naoma* or *nauma* (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1953: 46, 55).

The ethnohistorical sources provide evidence of ranking in the form of special costumes or insignia. On the coast, some people wore little beyond a belt or penis cover, sometimes made of gold, but others dressed more elaborately. Contact period descriptions of Tairona costume are consistent (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1951: 83–85) and emphasize four elements: cotton skirts and mantles with complex designs, multicolored feather headdresses,

gold jewelry (Fig. 1), and a profusion of stone beads of various colors. Concentration on archaeological goldwork has masked the fact that these were multimedia costumes, with a preponderance of brilliant or iridescent materials that are, in themselves, symbolic of secular and supernatural power (Saunders 1998 and in this volume). In this context, as José Oliver (2000) has demonstrated for the Tainos of the Antilles, each item of chiefly regalia reinforces the others so that the message is a configuration of symbolic meanings that is more than just the sum of its parts. Brilliance is also a metaphor for moral virtue. Among the present-day Kogi, Bunkuase (the Shining One), one of the sons of the Universal Mother, is “the personification of the highest moral principles in Kogi ethics, and is the patron and special guardian of the mamas” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1977: 274).

The complexity and variety of Tairona ritual costume, including a multiplicity of feather headdresses, is revealed by little pre-Hispanic ocarinas and miniature figures (Mason 1931–39: pls. CCXXII–CCXLVII). The Kogi of the Sierra Nevada use these archaeological ocarinas today in special ceremonies connected with the summer solstice and equinox or with the appearance of the constellation of the Pleiades (Guillermo Rodríguez, personal communication, 1999).

Pedro de Aguado, writing in 1581, describes the appearance of the Indians in the sixteenth century, before the old customs had disappeared:

Their persons are much adorned with objects and jewels of gold. The men wear ear-ornaments, each of which weighs 15 and 20 pesos, and caricuries in their noses, hanging from the cartilage in the middle, and great chaguales, which are like round plates and half moons [cf. Figs. 3 and 7] on their chests. And around their necks they put many kinds of beads made of bones and shells and green stones, which are much appreciated among them, and beads and metalwork made of gold. The women wear much the same jewels as I have described for the men, including very large bracelets and hanging items of gold, and on their legs above the ankles and on their calves they wear big beads of chaquira [shell], gold and bone, as much as each one’s husband can afford, and they also wear these on the fleshy parts of their arms. Similarly, on their chests they put certain moldaduras [cast figures?] of gold, and with these they go covered. (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1951: 83)

In a 1629 account, Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa describes the dress of the coastal Indians:

The clothing of the Indians of the Diocese and State of Santa Marta consists of shirts and painted cotton blankets; they wear gold earhoops (orejeras), bits of gold in their nostrils, gold plaques and eagles on their breasts, with pebble bracelets, and gold pieces on their wrists and insteps. The caciques and principal men with more wealth than the others, wear also fine round precious stones and gold jewels. The Indian women wear petticoats and painted cotton blankets, lavishly adorned and decorated with gold jewelry and other precious stones. (Vázquez de Espinosa 1942: 316)

One of the most detailed descriptions of Tairona costumes is provided by Simón in his account of the Valle de la Caldera in the sierra. He refers to feather capes, sleeveless vests covered with feathers, feather fans, garments made of jaguar pelts, cotton clothing of various colors and designs, and, of course, gold objects. “There was no woman who did not have a set of jewelry, ear ornaments, necklaces, crowns, lip plugs, *moquillos* [translation uncertain] of fine gold, fine and well made stone items, and strings of beads. Around their necks all the girls wore four or six *moquillos* of gold, weighing from 12 to 15 castellanos” (1882–92, 5: 191). Other Spanish documents mention eagles, parrots, birds, frogs, figures of *zemis*, devils made in gold (Friede 1951), and a jewel representing two men “in that diabolical and unspeakable act of Sodom” (Oviedo, cited in Bray 1978: 45). The archaeological bird and animal effigies have been studied by Anne Legast (1987), Ellen FitzSimmons (n.d.), and Juanita Sáenz Samper (2003).

War costumes and ceremonial costumes followed this same general pattern. Castellanos describes the Tairona warriors of the sierra: “their heads adorned with long feathers, golden diadems on the foreheads. On their chests were pectorals or disks that caught the rays of the sun, with other jewels . . . hanging from their ears and noses. They were painted with annatto [a red dye from *Bixa orellana*] . . . and had bows and arrows in their hands” (1955, 2: 539).

Simón describes Tairona fiesta costumes:

They had their appointed fiestas which they celebrated with dances, dressed in rich featherwork, and they did this especially at the times of the maize harvests, when the women also had theirs, dressed in white, with many necklaces and beads on their necks, legs and arms, and with golden jewels, according to what they had, at their necks and ears. (1882–92, 5: 218)

It is clear that both men and women wore gold, and the same is true of feather head-dresses. In 1739 Nicolás de la Rosa remarked that the Indians still wore gold ear ornaments, bracelets, and necklaces at their festivals, ceremonies, and dances, and that principales wore fine gold while lesser people, “de menor categoría,” used low-grade gold (de la Rosa 1975; Nicholas 1901: 613).

Several archaeologists have commented on the indicators of rank and wealth evident in the quality of domestic housing (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1954a; Cadavid and Herrera de Turbay 1985; Cadavid and Groot de Mahecha 1987; Serje 1987). In her comparative study of the architecture at Buritaca 200, Pueblito, and Frontera, Patricia Cardoso (n.d.: 202–216) points out that the largest and best-constructed house-rings tend to occupy privileged positions near the centers of the sites and also have richer contents. In particular, she identifies a number of large rings, located close to temples or ceremonial structures, whose contents include buried ritual paraphernalia. These buildings, she suggests, were the houses of important personages. Moving up the social hierarchy, the proportion of houses in each category becomes smaller. In Reichel-Dolmatoff’s typology for Pueblito, 60 percent of the structures fall within his lowest category, 38 percent within his middle grade, and only 2 percent fall into his highest group.

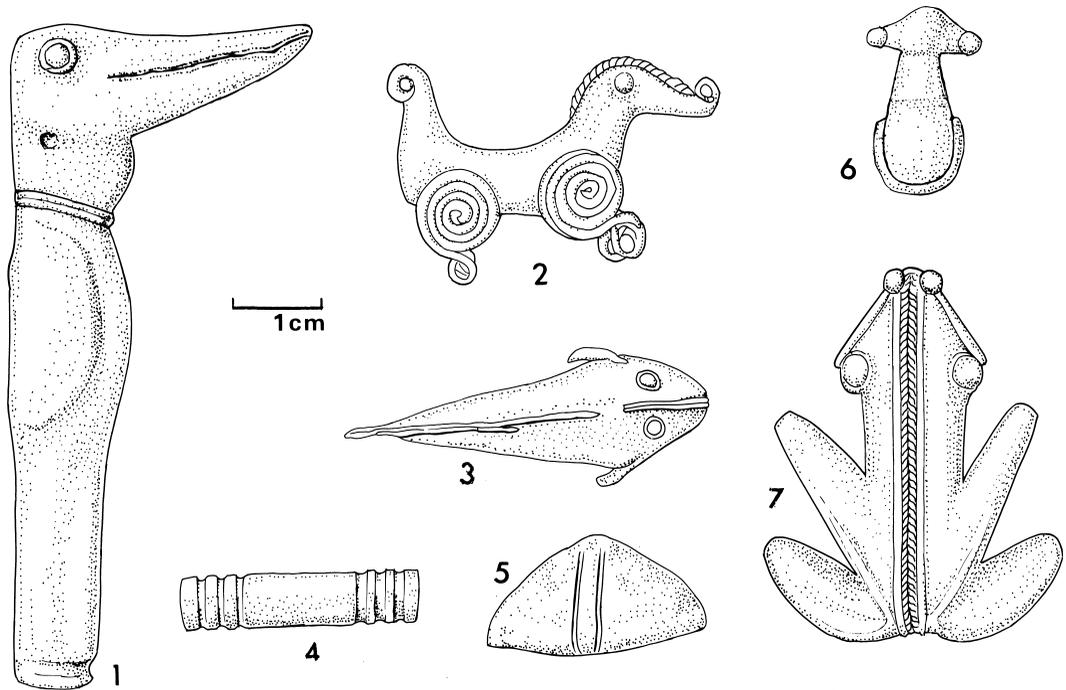


Fig. 2 Metal items from Herbert Huntingdon Smith's excavations at Gairaca (see appendix). Carnegie Museum of Natural History (nos. 2 and 3 redrawn from Benson 1997: figs. 2 and 89).

The funerary evidence, archaeological as well as documentary, confirms the existence of differences in wealth. The chroniclers describe several modes of Tairona burial (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1951: 92–93), including secondary burial in urns, dessication and burning, and the deposition in stone-lined vaults of trussed-up corpses “seated on stools [*dujos*], with bows and arrows in their hands, vessels with their drinks close by, and cakes and tortillas of their grain, their bodies dressed and adorned with golden jewels, beads and *cacona* [necklace beads?]” (Castellanos 1955, 2: 362). Rich and poor graves are recorded in Spanish accounts of a cemetery discovered in 1529 during excavation for building materials to construct the fortress of Santa Marta:

They found up to one hundred tombs . . . and in only three of them they found up to six thousand five hundred pesos of this low grade gold, and after that they excavated many others but found no gold, from which it is clear that the gold was found only in the tombs of principal caciques. (Gaspar de Espinosa, cited by Duque Gómez 1958: 301)

Other sources complain that Tairona jewelry was nearly always of low-grade alloy, and was full of valueless core material (Duque Gómez 1958: 306–308; Friede 1951).

The archaeological evidence broadly confirms Espinosa's account. At Gairaca, on the coast, J. Alden Mason (1931–39: 25–31) unearthed forty-seven urn burials that together held between four and eight metal items, and Roberto Lleras Pérez (1985) excavated four urns

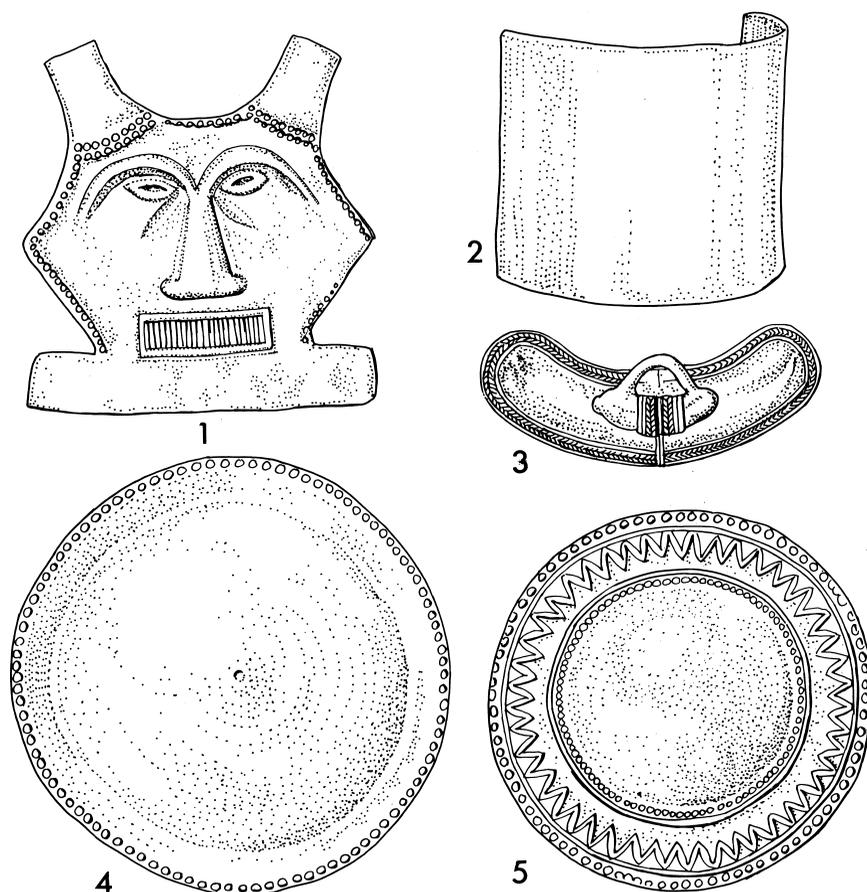


Fig. 3 Gilded *tumbaga* items found in a sealed pot at Jirosaca; Number 5 is one of a pair (see appendix). Not to scale (redrawn from Reichel-Dolmatoff 1958: pls. 1 and 3).

containing no gold at all. Herbert Huntingdon Smith, in the 1890s, excavated at least nineteen graves at this site, several with multiple burials, but only about six urns contained metal jewelry, with a few more items coming from loose soil (Fig. 2 and appendix; FitzSimmons n.d.). Reports on Buritaca 200 list two domestic complexes with tombs inside (or close to) the houses. On Terrace 49 one tomb out of six contained gold (Groot de Mahecha 1985: 68–76), and at the second locality the figure was one out of three (Lleras Pérez 1985).

Museum collections contain some 12,000 Tairona gold artifacts, but only a handful of these come from controlled excavations or other reliable contexts (Fig. 3). This strictly limits the conclusions one can draw. The appendix “Documented Finds of Tairona Metalwork,” details all the reasonably well-recorded discoveries. Combining all sources of evidence leads to the conclusion that the majority of people were buried without gold, though a substantial minority were interred with some personal jewelry—mainly nose pieces,

ear danglers, labrets, beads, and anchor ornaments—and that those individuals buried in stone-lined graves had rather more, though nothing resembling the rich colonial discovery from Santa Marta has yet been found by archaeologists. Children as well as adults were buried with jewelry, and most of the items had been used, or even broken, before deposition.

Comparing this inventory with the full typology of Tairona goldwork (Plazas 1987) demonstrates that the most elaborate items are missing. Presumably they belong with the still undiscovered tombs of the principal caciques or, for some reason, were considered inappropriate as burial goods. An impressionistic, nonstatistical survey of museum collections does, however, allow the reconstruction of a hierarchy of gold items that mirrors the kinds of hierarchies discussed above. Everyday items of personal jewelry (Fig. 1) are fairly numerous; they occur in nonelite tombs and are represented frequently on modeled ceramics, notably (but not exclusively) on the large burial urns from coastal Tairona sites (see, for example, Mason 1931–39; pls. CXLIV–CLXVIII). These items constitute the most basic outfit. Within each category of ornament (ear rings, nose pieces, and so on) a limited number of forms can be recognized. Like the small variations in clothing, carrying bags, and lime dippers among the present-day Kogi, the different subcategories in Tairona goldwork may have been visual indicators of rank and lineage. Unfortunately, for lack of good archaeological data, this idea remains speculative and untestable.

Plain gold breastplates and “eagles,” as described by Vázquez de Espinosa, are less frequent, but they too occur on some of the figurative pottery (Labbé 1998: fig. 106) and appear to supplement the basic outfit. Other items, in particular embossed plaques and cast figure-pendants, are few in numbers and are not represented on the pottery at all. Their relative scarcity, large size, fine workmanship, and iconographic detail suggest that these items were used by the highest ranks of Tairona society.

Gold, Stone, and Ritual Paraphernalia in the “Modern Tairona” World

Several writers have told the story of the transformation of the pre-Hispanic Tairona into the modern Kogi (Kággaba) and Ika (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1953; 1987: 77; Bischof 1971; 1982–83; Uribe Tobón n.d.; Oyuela-Caycedo 1998). It must be emphasized here that we are not simply looking at ethnographic analogies, but at ethnographic *continuities* (albeit with substantial changes) that the Indians themselves recognize, and that are fundamental to the way they define their cultural and ethnic identities.

The effects of the colonial experience and enforced changes in indigenous lifestyles are recorded in a series of documents that bridge the gap between the pre-Hispanic and contemporary Tairona. One of the earliest accounts, dated 1578 and transcribed by Carl Langebaek (1990), is a record of demographic collapse, with the abandonment of the coastal lands to the Spanish and the retreat of the remaining Indians to small settlements in the sierra. The gold mines were no longer exploited; the irrigation works were not maintained; the traditional civil authority, based on caciques, was already beginning to collapse, and the priests were emerging as the new leadership:

They are of good understanding, and are inclined to keep up their rites and ceremonies. In general they have no lord whom they obey, except for the mohan who cures their diseases. When one of these dies his son takes his place; and to be a mohan like his father he has to remain ten years fasting, without seeing the sun. (Langebaek 1990: 113)

A similar situation is described by Nicolás de la Rosa, and from him the sequence continues, by way of the first formal ethnographies (de Brettes 1903; Preuss 1993), to the more recent studies by Reichel-Dolmatoff on the Kogi and Donald Tayler on the Ika.

The Kogi Cosmos: The Mother and her Sons

A detailed study of Kogi cosmology is provided in several papers by Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975; 1985; 1987; 1990). The central figure of Kogi religion is the Universal Mother, creator at the beginning of time of the cosmic egg that encompasses the universe. This egg-shaped universe has nine superimposed levels, and humankind occupies the middle one of these. The four upper levels (*nyui-nulang*, sun worlds) each have their own suns. The sun of the third level is Teiku, who lives there with his “family” of celestial beings, planets, and constellations. The cosmic egg is supported on two beams held up by four of the Mother’s sons, who are also the lords of the four directions or corners of the world and of the sun’s extreme positions (the solstices and equinoxes).

The Mother is not directly represented in Tairona goldwork or in present-day Kogi ritual costumes. After the Universal Mother, the principal divine personifications are her sons—Seokukui, Seizankwa, Kuncavitabueya, Aldahuiku, and Mulkuexe—and their innumerable descendants. Through their roles in various acts of creation, all these figures are also spirit-owners (Mothers, Fathers, *Dueños*) of different aspects of nature, rulers over the rituals, and “the appointed guardians of certain aspects of human behaviour—cultural and biological” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1977: 269). Many of these creator figures and *dueños* are the protagonists in today’s Kogi rituals and dances, and I believe there are references to these personages and concepts in prehistoric Tairona goldwork.

Ritual Artifacts of Gold

The modern Kogi use ancient gold artifacts in their rituals (though they keep these items well hidden), and they talk of the days when gold was plentiful (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1981; Ereira 1990). Gold also figures in their myths, in particular the narrative of Taiku (Teiku), recorded by Konrad Theodor Preuss in 1915 as told by a mama at Palomino. Other myths make it clear that Taiku is an aspect of the sun, especially in his image as the solstitial sun (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1987: 86), and he is also the Father of gold and of metallurgy in general.

In early times the younger brother Taiku used to make golden utensils for the mamas. After he had lived in the Sierra with the elder brothers, the younger brother

Taiku went to the Rio Lagarto [on the coast] and during his stay there he began to make things of gold for the elder brothers. He made little tubes of gold, pectorals and ear ornaments. On their arms and legs they wore all sorts of ornaments, made by the younger brother, Taiku. Everything had to be kept in the ceremonial houses. For the dance in the ceremonial house he made gold diadems, golden caps, golden adornos with feathers, and seats to support the feather headdresses. In those days the younger brother Taiku made golden belts for both men and women, golden shirts, caps, carrying bags, lime flasks and the dippers for eating lime. He also made gold trumpets, rattles, flutes, seats and ceremonial houses of gold. The younger brother made all these things so that the original families of the Kágaba could wear these golden jewels for the dance in the ceremonial house, so that the apprentices could wear them, to consecrate the harvest, call the rain and invoke drought. . . . He made other things of gold: catfish, snakes, crabs, birds, etc. He made all sorts of birds and four-legged animals in gold. Also a golden figure like a human being. This is what our fathers told us. (Preuss 1993, 2: 32–33)

The Taiku narrative describes, with some exaggeration but essential truth, the golden regalia and utensils once used by the *mamas*, and emphasizes the divine origin of these items. Kogi traditions also maintain that in ancient times the Sun was dressed in gold (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1981: 25) and that, before the Spanish stole them all, even the divining bowls were made of gold (Ereira 1990: 194).

As the Taiku myth indicates, gold ornaments were an essential component of the dance costumes worn by the *mamas*. The dances, which still punctuate the Kogi year, are to promote human welfare—to ensure harvests, control the elements, banish diseases, and so on—and to preserve harmony and balance within the cosmos and between mankind, the supernatural ancestors, and the forces of nature (Preuss 1993; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985: 130–143). As the Kogi explain it, “*Bailamos para no morir*” (we dance in order not to die) (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985: 135).

The ceremonies have three principal components: confession, dance, and offerings. For the dances the priests wear wooden masks representing various supernaturals—the sons of the Mother, Death, the *dueños*, etc.—and special costumes that closely resemble those of the contact period Tairona. Preuss and Reichel-Dolmatoff discuss these costumes in detail. A much-published photograph (Preuss 1993, 1: fig. 33; Looper 1996: fig. 13) illustrates a priest in the costume of Heisei (Death, the Master of diseases and of human sexuality), wearing a semicircular feather headdress, a kilt of dangling fibers, and a wooden mask. Joseph de Brettes (1903) also recorded these elements (Fig. 4), which are still in use today (Zuidema 1992: fig. 5). All three components—panache, kilt, and mask—appear on anthropomorphic clay ocarinas from pre-Hispanic Tairona sites (Fig. 5), and the mask of Heisei, with its protruding lower jaw and crossed fangs (sometimes sheathed with gold) can also be recognized on these whistles (Mayr 1986: 57).

The sacramental qualities of gold jewelry are illustrated by a nocturnal ritual witnessed by Reichel-Dolmatoff in a temple or ceremonial house:

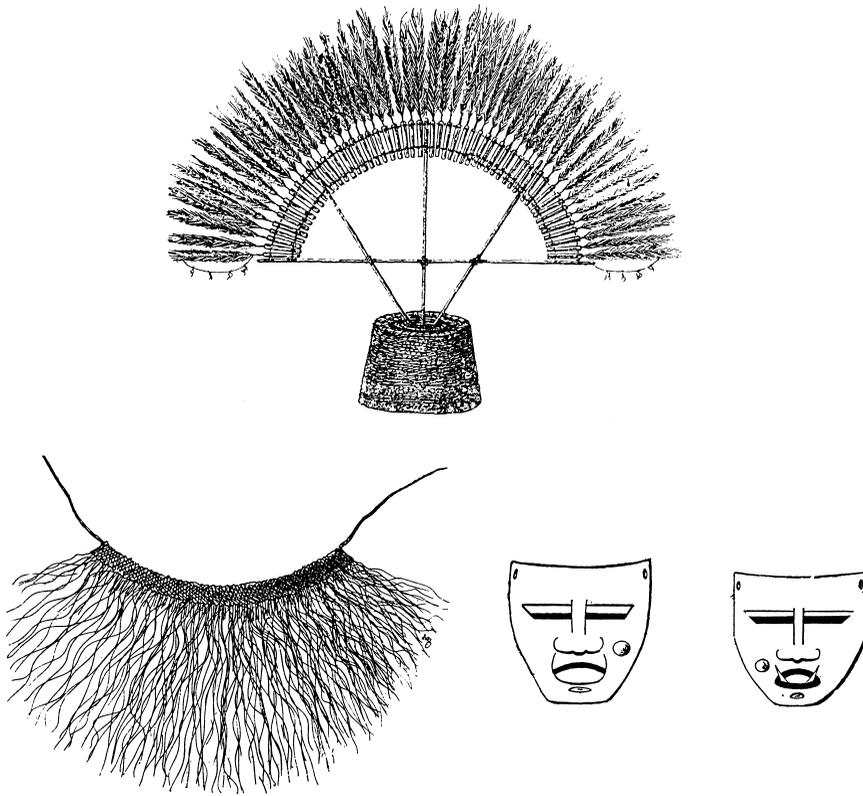


Fig. 4 Items of Kogi ritual costume (after De Brettes 1903)

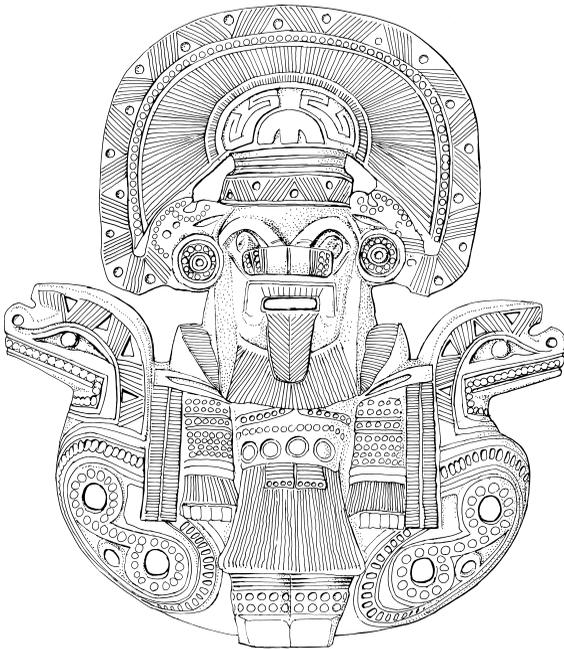


Fig. 5 Tairona clay ocarina depicting a masked figure in ritual costume. H. 11 cm.

a mama personified the Sun, and his wife the Moon. These personages wore carved wooden masks, his representing a jaguar and hers a black puma. The ritual finished when the participants in the ceremony had a resplendent internal vision. “The gold began to shine” and the brilliance of the masks, bracelets and ear-ornaments worn by the mama and his wife induced visions. After carrying out a part of the ceremony in silence, and waiting until dawn, the personages Sun and Moon took off their masks and jewels, and the mama lit a new fire in the four hearths of the building. (Dussán de Reichel: 2000: 93)

Mamas and all men of status (adults over the age of 40 or 50) take part in the dances. Their costumes incorporate pre-Hispanic gold ornaments, especially armbands and ligatures in which Tairona gold bells and spacer plates are combined with stone beads (Mason 1931–39, pls. CLIX–CLXIII). Little gold bells are sewn onto the shoulders of dance outfits (Mason 1931–39: 261), and sashes are decorated with gold or copper ornaments in the form of turtles, felines, and pelicans and other birds (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 142).

Masks and gold regalia also play a role in the training of apprentice priests, as the Teiku story indicates. The training is arduous and is carried out under the tutelage of experienced mamas, in seclusion and darkness, over two nine-year cycles. At the age of four or five, the child apprentice is given his first gold ornaments: bracelets, rings, and necklaces of gold and stone beads. A year or two later he receives his wooden dance mask and feather crown, and his gold ornaments are augmented with necklaces and pectorals. Dressed in this regalia, for hours on end, night after night, the children are taught the dance steps, the cosmological recitals, and the elements of the creation story that together constitute the Law of the Mother (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1977: 279; 1985, 2: 120; 1990). It is this knowledge that will give the boys status and power in the community when they become fully-fledged mamas.

Ritual Paraphernalia of Stone

As with pre-Hispanic gold items, ancient Tairona stone artifacts are also used during Kogi ceremonies today (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 142–143). Some of the principal types are shown in Figure 6. The winged plaques (nos. 4 and 5), often (and dubiously) called bat-wing pendants, hang in pairs from dancers’ elbows and chime together when they move. Ceremonial staffs (no. 1) made of stone are used only by the most important mamas (Guillermo Rodríguez, personal communication, 1999) and are carried during the solstice dances “to make the sun turn round” at the end of the dry and wet seasons. Archaeologically, staffs are represented, sometimes in the hands of masked figures, on Tairona ocarinas (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1986: fig. 166). Tairona monolithic axes (no. 3) are also carried by Kogi mamas during the solstice and equinox ceremonies; axes made of greenish stone are employed in rituals to call the rain, and those of reddish stone to call the summer (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 143). Stone bells (no. 7) may be the equivalents of the gold bells already mentioned.

To this list of ritual items must be added the miniature stone seats (no. 6). These miniatures, which have solar connotations (Looper 1996: 115–116), are used by Kogi mamas to

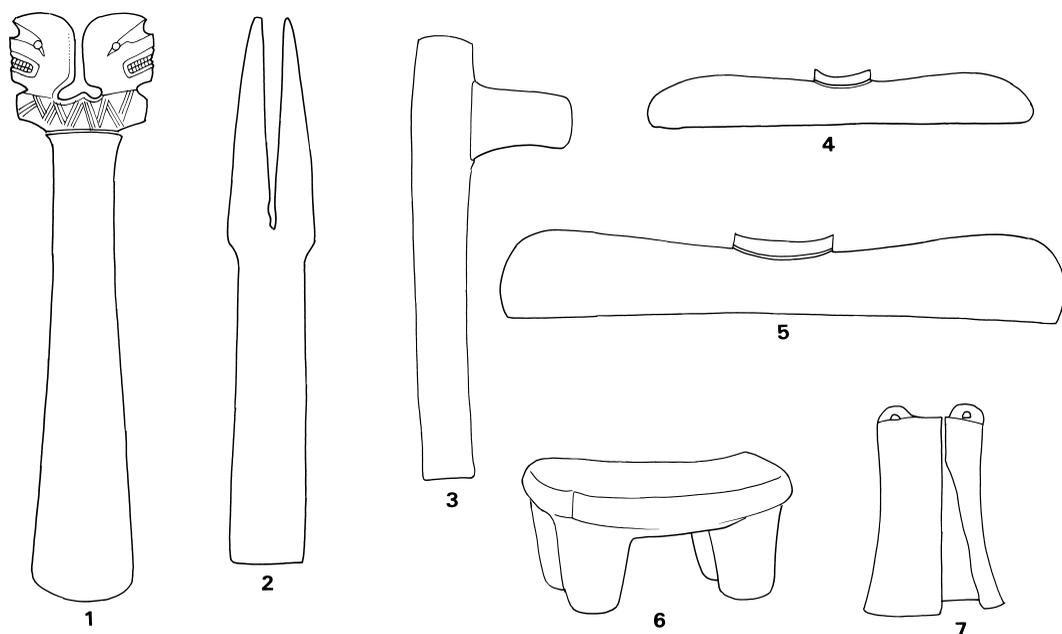


Fig. 6 Tairona stone items used in Kogi ceremonies, various scales (redrawn from Mason 1931–39)

pulverize stone for offerings, and they also play a role in divination, serving as the seats of visiting supernaturals and of the *mama*'s own essence of being (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1953: 43; 1967: 11).

Archaeologically these stone items are repeatedly found together, usually with beads, and constitute a distinct subassemblage within the Tairona repertoire. At Pueblito, the greatest concentrations occur in structures identified as ceremonial houses, where they were cached in pottery vessels, buried underneath stone markers, or found loose in the soil. They were also deposited in smaller quantities in ordinary houses, perhaps the houses of *mamas* or *mayores* who participated in the dances. Some of these items were eventually buried with their owners, especially those who were interred in the more elaborate stone-lined tombs (Mason 1931–39). This pattern of deposition seems to indicate individual ownership, and the presence of ritual paraphernalia in a small minority of graves may allow us to identify the burials of *naomas* and *mamas* and the elite of Tairona society.

Beads

Pre-Hispanic stone beads of various shapes, sizes, and colors, with or without perforations, are a ubiquitous feature of modern Kogi life and are used by everyone (Cardoso 1987; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 97–111; Dussán de Reichel 2000: 91–92). Women wear them, combined with modern glass beads, on multistrand necklaces in one of the few outward signs of wealth. Beads enter into all aspects of ritual. Whole or ground into powder, they are deposited as offerings in sacred places, and there is an elaborate code governing the type of

bead required for each occasion and each supernatural recipient. Offerings of beads are placed in the sockets for house posts and below the fireplaces of temples (Guillermo Rodríguez, personal communication, 1999). They are also deposited in the roof apexes of temples (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990: 25). Mamas use beads for healing and divination, and beads play an important role as *sewá*, symbolic “permissions” granted by the mamas, which are required for many everyday activities and also for participating in rituals or for holding office (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990: 11). Offerings of beads wrapped in maize leaves are placed in tombs to serve as food, drink, and firewood for the dead. When a house is built, a pottery vessel is buried in the foundations, and for each member of the family a bead or pebble is dropped in, varying in size, shape, and color according to the age, sex, and lineage of each person (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1965: 148). Similarly, during construction of a ceremonial house, each male user brings beads that represent his family and puts them in a pot that is buried within the building (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 106).

The symbolism and usage of beads is a prime example of continuity between the pre-Hispanic Tairona and the modern Kogi. Beads have been found archaeologically in tombs, buried in pots below ceremonial and domestic structures, deposited with other ritual stone objects, scattered in the soil of cemetery areas, and beside roads, canals, and retaining walls of terraces.

Wealth, Status, and Esoteric Knowledge in Kogi Society

Soon after the final Spanish Conquest, the descendants of the Taironas ceased making fine-quality artifacts in gold, shell, stone, and wood, though much of their spiritual life remained intact (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990; Uribe Tobón n.d.). The present-day Kogi maintain that the gold ornaments, wooden masks, clay ocarinas, and stone items they use in rituals are inherited from “los Antiguos,” having been passed down, from generation to generation, in the families of priests, quite conceivably since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990: 12 and pls. XLIII–XLVIII). Today, the masks and ritual paraphernalia are stored in chests or baskets in temples and caves. The most sacred of these sites are at high altitude and are rarely shown to anthropologists; their pre-Hispanic counterparts have not been excavated. This raises the possibility that a whole assemblage of ritual goldwork—the “Teiku List”—is missing from the archaeological record.

In contrast to earlier times, when replacements were available, ritual objects today are curated and preserved. They are not considered personal property nor are they communally owned; rather, they belong directly to the deity (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 1: 128). They are symbols of power and status, but do not constitute “wealth” in the normal sense of the word. This pattern of ownership may well be a reaction to the circumstances of the Spanish Conquest but would, in any event, be archaeologically unrecognizable.

The accumulation of wealth is not a Kogi priority, though some Kogi are clearly richer than others. As Reichel-Dolmatoff (1985, 1: 209–213) notes, it is not wealth but *knowledge* (the esoteric knowledge that constitutes the Law of the Mother) that brings status in the community, though this apparent disdain for material goods is combined (even among the

mamas) with a keen awareness of rank and lineage (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990: 5, 29). Although most communities have a headman who claims to represent the civil powers, ultimate authority resides in the Law of the Mother and with the mamas who administer it. It is this law that governs correct moral behavior, and if the rites, ceremonies, and offerings are not performed, the harmony and balance of the cosmos are endangered. Knowledge, literally, is power. The superior knowledge of the mamas is what gives them the right to make decisions for others, but for the ordinary man, too, the objective of life is “to know,” to learn. To this end, men spend most of their spare time in the ceremonial house talking, discussing, and listening to the mamas as they explain the traditions. This, the Kogi believe, is how a man should spend his time; he should not waste it on working to accumulate riches.

We must not assume that the pre-Hispanic Tairona shared the attitudes of their marginalized descendants, but, in the present-day Kogi world, wealth and intellectual or moral status are not simply independent variables, but are in open conflict with each other. This, at least, is the ideal, though the everyday reality may be rather different. As Carlos Uribe Tobón (n.d.) discovered, some Kogi mamas are very much concerned with power politics, land ownership, and the commercial possibilities of the modern world.

The leadership role of the mamas seems to have intensified after the conquest, as secular leadership withered away. The data, however, force us to look again at the ethnohistorical claims for the dominance of naomas over caciques in the sixteenth century, and raise the question of who owned the finest Tairona goldwork: chiefs or priests?

Tairona Symbols of Power

Embossed plaques and cast figures represent the topmost tier in the hierarchy of Tairona goldwork. These are items of regalia in themselves, but at the same time they depict human or supernatural personages wearing clearly defined ritual outfits. Since the iconography of the goldwork is not self-explanatory, we must return to the present-day Kogi for ideas about who wore these artifacts and what the imagery may represent.

The Kogi and the Ika think through myth. Although all the Indian groups of the Sierra Nevada are closely related, there are differences in language, social organization, and belief systems between the Kogi and the Ika (Tayler 1997: 5, 173), between the Kogi of the northern slopes and the Kogi on the western slopes (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1987: 88), and—if conflicting versions of the myths are any indication—between the theological views of one mama and another. We are not, therefore, dealing with “received texts.”

The beliefs embodied in the myths are poetic truths; they are not to be explained by Western logic, nor do they yield classifications of a Linnaean type. Kogi thought operates mainly by metaphor or analogy, “and this creates chains of association, usually on a specific level of categories. . . . Practically all objects of material culture thus constitute configurations of meanings which have to be read at certain levels of interpretation” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1987: 78; see also Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 1: 224). These configurations of meanings, or clusters of symbols, interpenetrate, and are overlapping rather than discrete. Any individual element may appear in more than one cluster, and every important supernatural has a wide

range of responsibilities. Which role he plays at any particular moment depends on context. In this setting, the search for a single, definitive meaning is doomed to fail, and mythology becomes a dark pool in which each investigator sees only a reflection of himself. This view brings me closer than I would like to the postmodern position that “Truth” is both personal and context-dependent and that all interpretations have validity of a sort. This may well be the Kogi position too. To quote Reichel-Dolmatoff again, “the Kogi easily switch back and forth between levels of interpretation or images of different categories, and often enough the lack of, what we would call, consensus, and the little importance attached to it by the Kogi, is disconcerting” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990: 16).

Despite these difficulties, one can recognize certain configurations of symbolic meanings, even when names cannot be given to the principal figures. One of these configurations links gold, sun, light, a fertilizing (male) solar energy, and priestly control over these things. The Kogi refer to the Sun as *Mama Nyui*; and the same root is found in the word for gold, *nyuiba*. Gold objects placed at the center of the temple can be directly fertilized by the rays of the sun (Dussán de Reichel 2000: 92), and at certain times of the year Kogi priests gather their ritual artifacts of gold and *tumbaga*, place them outdoors on a special mat, and then expose them to the full light of the sun in order to recharge them with a fertilizing cosmic energy that will be transmitted to the priests and, through them, to all the participants in the rituals (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1981: 26). In the same vein, Matthew Looper (1996: 121, 124) notes that *Mama Nyui* is a male archetype and a source of fertility. The role of the priest is to harness *Mama Nyui*'s fertilizing rays for the good of the community, and to ensure that the sun follows its ordained course throughout the year. In the modern Kogi context (and quite possibly also in the prehistoric Tairona world), gold does not represent just economic wealth, but also *supernatural* capital, cosmic power, and the knowledge of how to make use of it.

Embossed Plaques

The finest objects of repoussé gold are plaques, often of high-quality gold (Fig. 7). The position of the holes suggests that some of them were probably suspended as breast ornaments, while others, with central holes, may have been sewn onto clothing or headbands.

The principal image on all these plaques—a male whenever the sex is clearly indicated—is a displayed figure wearing a feather headdress, a belt, ligatures, and a selection of jewelry: ear spools, a “butterfly” nose piece, and either a pectoral disc or a bird pendant. He is seated with his feet drawn up on a stool that has serpent head projections of the kind also depicted in clay and stone (Bray 1978: no. 138; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1986: fig. 162). Sometimes he is carried on a bar, or in a litter suspended from a bar, by smaller attendants. He may also hold a pair of box-shaped or bird-shaped rattles (Fig. 7, nos. 4, 5).

The central icon is usually identified as Father Sun. The basis for this identification (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1988: 149–158; Looper 1996: 113–114) is the Kogi belief that the sun is carried from one solstice position to another on the shoulders of two of the sons of the Universal Mother, *Seokukui* and *Seizankwa*, who represent the opposed and complementary principles of the Kogi universe: east, light, and life (*Seizankwa*), and west, darkness, and death (*Seokukui*) (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1987: 96). In the Kogi temple, itself a model of the

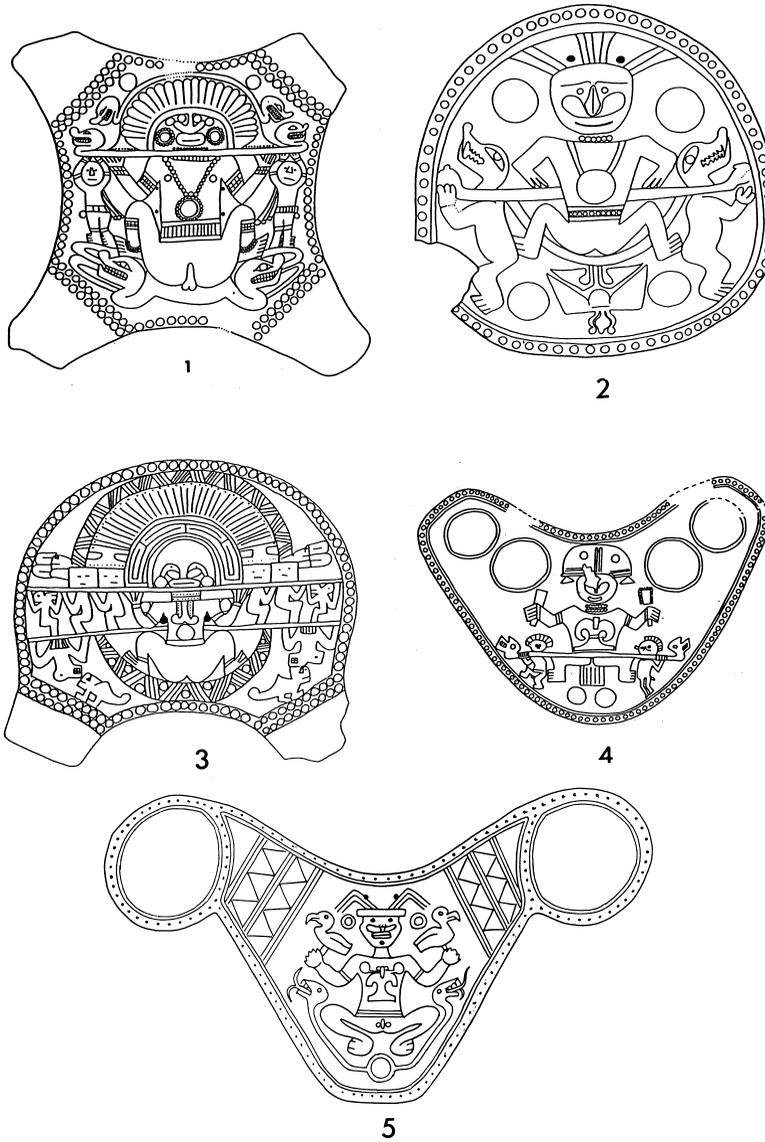


Fig. 7 Classic Tairona embossed plaques (nos. 1–3 after Looper 1996)

cosmos, Seokukui and Seizankwa are represented by two of the four posts that support the roof. The other two posts also represent sons of the Mother, the four creator figures together representing the ancestral founders of the senior Kogi lineages (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975).

In the Kogi pantheon, there are various suns and several solar figures. Some scholars (for example, Dussán de Reichel 2000: 93) believe the plaque figure represents Serankua or Hátei Nyui (personifications of Father Sun), but perhaps the strongest candidate is Mulkuexe, variously described as either the first or the fifth son of the Mother (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1987: 100). The five sons became the Lords of the World Quarters, with Mulkuexe occupying the central position, or axis mundi, the focal point of the quincunx that represents the

ground plan of the Earth and also of the temple (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975; 1981: 25). On certain ritual occasions, Kogi mamas sit on stools at the center of the temple, thus representing Mulkuexe's authority. Teiku is one of Mulkuexe's companions. His place is with Mulkuexe at the center of the temple, and Reichel-Dolmatoff suggests that the two may be one and the same deity. Mulkuexe is, above all, a lawgiver who promulgates the Law of the Mother. As Reichel-Dolmatoff (1987: 100) remarks, "The sun is essentially an administrator, a time-keeper, whose regular motions, from a geocentric point of view, constitute the model for human behavior throughout the year."

The root *mul* has a meaning related to brilliance, light, and the concept of energy, and, as the sun, Mulkuexe wears a gold mask and a huge golden pectoral disc (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1981: 25). Identification of the plaque figure as Mulkuexe may also explain the bats that hang beneath his litter (Fig. 7, no. 2) or from his carrying bar (Fig. 7, no. 3). The Kogi word for bat, *nyulzhi*, may be analyzed as *nyui* (sun) + *zhi* (worm, or penis) (Looper 1996: 118). The bat also has solar associations in the Kogi myth of Sintana and Mulkuexe (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 31–36; Legast 1989). Contradictory versions of this story exist, but one of them recounts that in early times, "when there was no sun," Mulkuexe and his brother Sintana were always quarreling with each other. Mulkuexe was a dangerous character and a seducer of women. He also had a great deal of gold and was like a malevolent sun who enjoyed burning the earth with his light. By a series of stratagems, Sintana tricked Mulkuexe into having an incestuous relationship with his own son, transformed into a woman, and from that union came the bat, Nurlitaba, the first animal in creation. Mulkuexe was eventually sent up to the heavens, where he became truly the Sun, contracted unsuccessful marriages to an adulterous toad "all of gold, who served the sun as a bench when he received visitors," and then to a snake, before finally settling down with Moon.

By selecting, or emphasizing, other elements from the Kogi belief system, it is possible to construct several different and often overlapping identities for the plaque figure (see, for example, Zuidema 1992), though all of them incorporate solar attributes. Following a slightly different path from the one here, Tom Zuidema sees Sun the lawgiver as the model for an earthly ruler, which leads him to identify the plaques as symbols of rulership. Whether these Tairona rulers were caciques or naomas or both can only be guessed at, but given the ways in which access to the divine and supernatural world legitimized the power of pre-Hispanic caciques, Zuidema may well be right.

Masked Human Figures

The rarest and finest cast objects, the most "elite" items of Tairona goldwork, are human figure pendants, either free standing (Figs. 8, 9) or attached to bird-shaped back plates (Mason 1931–39: pl. CL, left). Similar figures, with both human and bat faces, are represented on gold bells, presumably from dance costumes, and are seated on top of bird heads on certain eagle pendants (for example Reichel-Dolmatoff 1988: figs. 26, 47; Labbé 1998: fig. 95). As a group these humanoid figures are colloquially called caciques. In the professional literature they have been labeled bat men (Legast 1987: 85–99) or shamans (Reichel-Dolmatoff

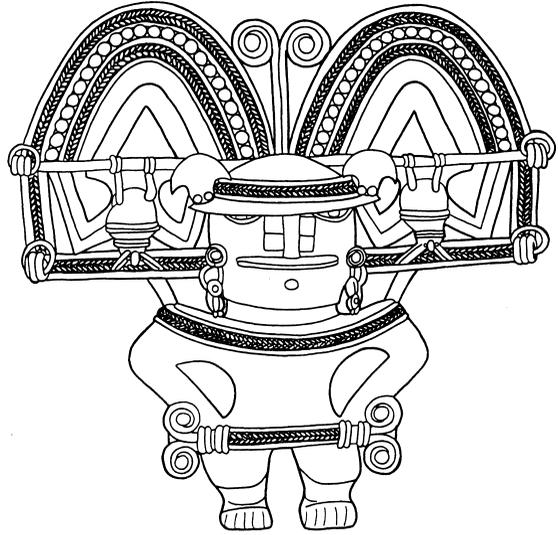
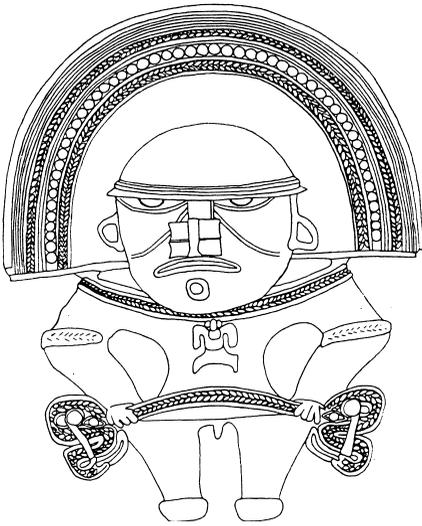


Fig. 8 Classic Tairona human figure pendants (after Looper 1996)

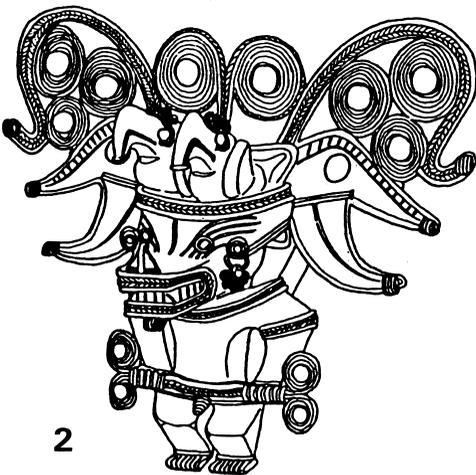
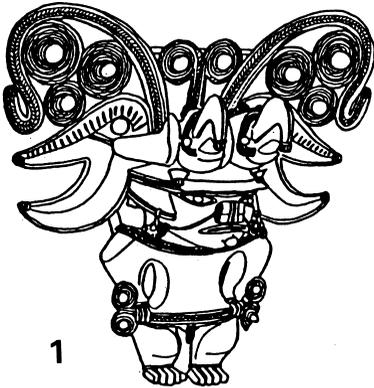


Fig. 9 Classic Tairona human figure pendants (after Plazas 1987)

1988: 144). The first of these two labels is simply a descriptive shorthand, and the second identification seems unlikely, since Reichel-Dolmatoff elsewhere insists that Kogi *mamas* are not shamans, but rather an institutional priesthood (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1990: 3).

On the basis of their headdresses, three variants of the figure can be identified. The most common and most basic form wears a crescentic head ornament (Fig. 8.1); the more elaborate versions have either a divided headdress (Fig. 8.2) or a complicated device incorporating birds and bird heads (Fig. 9). It is open to debate whether these variants represent different but closely related personages or three manifestations of the same one.

What unites them is a set of regalia not found on other icons or depicted on burial urns and ceramic vessels. These identifying items are a braided headband, a visor (usually with two or three mushroom-shaped protuberances), double bars through the nose (as opposed to the more usual rings, crescents, and “butterflies”), a labret, ear rods and/or dangles, a braided band across the shoulders, and a braided belt. Many of these figures also hold horizontal bars with double spirals, or occasionally serpent heads, at both ends. In some instances the “bar” is clearly a belt, and the double spiral elements are grasped separately in the hands. One of these figurines wears a bird pendant (Fig. 8.1), but this is the only example I know thus far. The find spot is reported as Jirosaca, and the archive of the Museo del Oro indicates that it may possibly have been associated with two more gold items—a bird pendant and a human figure wearing a divided headdress from which hang bats (Sáenz Samper 2003).

Anything made of organic materials has disappeared from the record, but the occurrence of full-sized nose bars and visors made of gold suggests that these are actual Tairona costumes worn by real people (see, for example, the grave lot from Minca in the appendix). Reichel-Dolmatoff (1987: 95) has suggested that the visors depicted on the pendants represent the tortoiseshell visor worn by Seizankwa, the Lord of the East, though Nicolás de la Rosa notes that rich Indians wore diadems of tortoiseshell, and poor ones of plaited palm “made in a semicircle and placed about the head to protect the eyes from the heat of the sun and to retain the hair” (Nicholas 1901: 612).

Whenever the sex is depicted, the figure pendant is male and wears a penis cover and a waist cord. Many of these personages—perhaps all of them—are masked. Anne Legast (1987; 1989) gives compelling reasons for identifying the nonhuman faces as bats and discusses the multiple role of bats in Kogi mythology, their links with menstruation and fertility and with Sun (Muluku), Death (Heisei), and various other supernatural personages. Bats also hang from the side pieces of the divided headdresses. Other masks represent big-beaked birds (Legast 1987: fig. 107) or a combination of bat and bird wearing the same regalia as the other figures (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1988: pl. 238; Mason 1931–39, pl. CL, left). The bat-bird mask is also represented on Tairona clay ocarinas (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1986: fig. 164).

The masked individuals in present-day Kogi ceremonies represent the sons of the Universal Mother (natural and cosmic forces, the Mothers, Fathers, and *Dueños*) and are her messengers or agents on Earth (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 255). Despite the enormous variety of masks and ritual costumes represented on the clay ocarinas (cf. the range of modern costumes described by Preuss and Reichel-Dolmatoff), Tairona goldsmiths made only a limited selection from them, and there is no way of knowing which individual, or individu-

als, is the icon of the figure pendants. Rather than trying to determine who the figure is, it may be more advantageous to look at the ideas behind the representations.

Kogi masked dancers do not simply “become,” or transform into the personages whose costumes they wear. The relationship is more complex and subtle (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 2: 94–95). By wearing the mask, the dancer becomes “in agreement with” the deity, or dueño, becoming his brother, or his equal, and, as a member of the deity’s “family,” is in a position to mediate between the community and the ancestral or supernatural world. In this context, one might guess, even if it cannot be proved, that gold pendants representing masked figures served to establish connections between humanity and the cosmic or supernatural forces, had a protective role, and at the same time reinforced the status of those members of society who had knowledge of the traditions and were allowed to wear the masks.

A Kogi View of Tairona Gold

Given the degree of continuity of ritual practices from pre-Hispanic times to the present, one way of resolving these ambiguities might be to ask the Kogi themselves who these images represent and what they mean. This has never been systematically attempted, though in conversations with Legast a Kogi mama identified one of these figures as a god (name unspecified), dancing and wearing a mask (Legast 1987: 96). Alan Ereira (1990) showed Mama Valencia, a respected Kogi priest, a series of original and replica gold objects and recorded his comments. The breastplates and wrist bands were explained as dance regalia:

These are *haga*. They wore them to dance with, they wore them around their necks and wrists, when they danced to call the rains and to bless the trees and rivers. When you want to speak to the ancestors you wear these *haga*. (Ereira 1990: 170)

The personage in Figure 8.1, was said to be a vampire bat, a costume worn by the mamas; other figures represent the sons of the Universal Mother. One of the most elaborate of all Tairona images (Fig. 9.2) was identified as Namsiko, one of the world-creating sons of the Mother. The whorls of his headdress symbolize eight of the nine “worlds” or levels of the Kogi cosmos, and the figure itself symbolizes the missing (middle) world—the one in which we live. Mama Valencia further explained,

Namsiko is a chief. The birds, the snakes, the jaguars [the ubiquitous animals of Tairona iconography], they’re all like the vassals of Namsiko. He was the chief of all the animals. First came the earth, then came Namsiko, and then he was in charge of everything. When they first started to make gold, Namsiko was there making the pots to house the gold. (Ereira 1990: 166)

The birds on the headdress were described as condors. In one version of Kogi cosmology, Namsiko and Sintana hold up the eastern ends of the two beams that support the cosmos (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 1: 225) and like any other Dueño or Father, Namsiko today has his own dance mask (ibid., 2: 132–133).

Namsiko's pots are part of a chain of associations that links the gold figurines with the golden animals, with the Tairona practice of caching ritual objects, and with the Kogi belief that, from the time of creation, everything has its Mother, Father, or spirit-owner:

All our gold pieces and stone beads should live in pots, but now they are all scattered. . . . Serankua said that all things should have their houses. We see them as pots but Serankua made them as houses; the Great Mother created all things in their pots. . . . The Mother of the birds was a little bird in gold kept in a jar, the Mother of the jaguar was a little jaguar. All of them lived in their pots, all of them have been taken. (Ereira 1990: 164–165)

The same idea of owners and houses appears also in Ika beliefs:

The fathers put gold in the mountain peaks.
 These peaks are like houses,
 And as a house is owned by someone,
 And has its occupants,
 So are each of the peaks. (Tayler 1997: 36)

As John Rowe (1946: 316) has remarked in another context, mythology is static only when people no longer believe in it. Today's Kogi and Ika mamas (like the anthropologists who study them) interpret ancient Tairona artifacts in the light of their own 20th-century experiences, and their Truths may be just as subjective, but it is interesting that Kogi comments on the goldwork pick up on certain aspects of the problem that barely figure in the archaeological literature.

Origins of the Tairona Tradition

In 1969 Henning Bischof described a collection of sherds from a pre-Tairona construction fill at Pueblito and linked them with the contents of an exceptional tomb excavated by J. Alden Mason at Nahuange (Bischof 1969a; 1969b). He dated this Nahuange (or Neguanje) phase to approximately A.D. 500–700 on the basis of ceramic cross-ties with Mina de Oro to the west and with the Red-on-Buff wares of the Ranchería to the east. He also recognized that many elements of the Nahuange assemblage were carried over into Classic Tairona. There is now general agreement that Nahuange defines an “early Tairona” or “proto-Tairona” phase.

Subsequent excavations by Jack Wynn (n.d.) at Buritaca, Langebaek (1987a) at Papare, and Augusto Oyuela Caycedo (1986; 1987a) at Cinto and Gaira have confirmed the stratigraphic position of the Nahuange phase—later than the incised and modeled Malamboid styles, earlier than Classic Tairona—and placed it between approximately A.D. 300 and 800–1000. This is in line with the C-14 dates for the earliest “proto-Tairona” goldwork.

In terms of distribution, a string of Nahuange sites is located along the coast, from Ciénega in the west to La Sierrecita, in the Guajira region well to the east of the Tairona

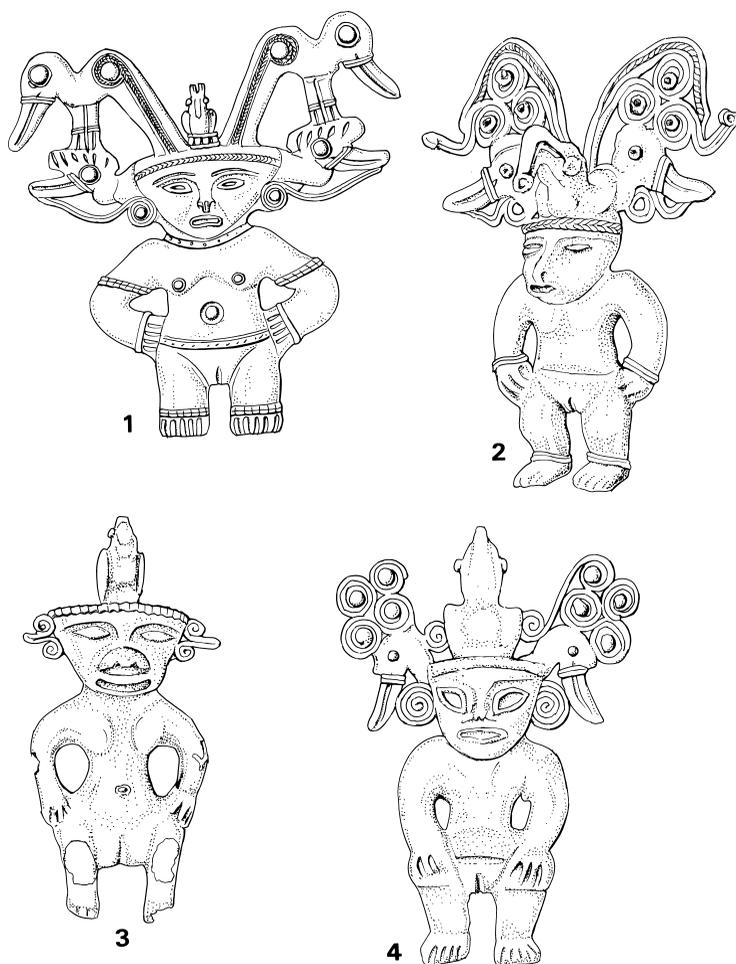


Fig. 10 Early Tairona figure pendants

homeland (Langebaek 1987b; Ardila 1996: 55 and personal communication, 1999). Red-painted sherds that may possibly belong to this period have been reported from Las Animas, 360 meters above sea level on the northern slope of the Sierra (Herrera de Turbay 1985: 100, 105), but on present evidence the Nahuange phase is a littoral phenomenon, occupying precisely the area that the modern Kogi regard as the cradle of their culture (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, 1: 254). By the eighth or tenth century, transitional Nahuange-Tairona pottery had appeared at Buritaca 200, at 900 to 1,300 meters above sea level (Oyuela Cacedo 1986a), and the mature Tairona tradition was becoming established.

Gold and stonework of the period also reflect the Tairona elements identified in Nahuange pottery. Mamorón, near Gaira, has stone roads, house-rings of undressed boulders, urn burials, and shaft-and-chamber tombs (Oyuela Caycedo 1987a). From El Chicharrón, on the upper Río Córdoba, came a Nahuange-style offering pot containing a stone mask (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1986: 241, fig. 173). Ana Mariá Falchetti (1987; 1993) has identified a corpus of gold items that are stylistically intermediate between the earliest Caribbean-Isthmian goldwork (the Initial and International Groups of Bray 1999) and mature Tairona metalwork (see also Fig. 2, nos. 1–4, and Gairaca *d* in the appendix).



Fig. 11 Tumbaga figure pendant from the Nahuange Site 1 tomb. H. 9 cm (photos by Stuart Laidlaw).

Early, pan-Caribbean, categories of goldwork include eagles, double-spiral pectorals, and animals with recurved tails; other items—disks, winged nose pieces, embossed crescentic plaques, and figurine pendants—are prototypes of Classic Tairona forms. The figurine pendants (Figs. 10 and 11) have complex headdresses incorporating spirals, lateral projections, and big-beaked birds. They are clearly ancestral to Classic Tairona forms, though they are less detailed, have prognathous non-Tairona faces, and are consistently female, in contrast to the male-dominated Tairona iconography. On the basis of headdress shapes, these figurines can be arranged in a typological series (not yet supported by contextual evidence), beginning with simpler, more pan-Caribbean types (Fig. 10. 3) and progressing, by way of more elaborate ribbons and whorls (Fig. 10. 1–2, 4), into mature Tairona categories. Radiocarbon dates have been obtained from the cores of two of these figurines. The figurine from the Nahuange tomb (Fig. 11) was dated A.D. 310 \pm 70 (OxA-1577), a century or two earlier than Bischof's proposed date for the grave; the other pendant (Fig. 10. 1) is stylistically further down the road toward Classic Tairona and gave a date of A.D. 1035 \pm 90 (OxA-1528). Between them, these two C-14 dates approximately mark the beginning and end of the Nahuange period.

An early beginning for proto-Tairona metalwork is confirmed by three more C-14 dates on core material from items in the Museo del Oro (Plazas 1998: 51–53). A bird pendant, said to be from Rio Palomino and similar to those in the Nahuange tomb (cf. Fig. 12), was dated A.D. 480 \pm 40 (Beta 97375); a rather different form of bird pendant yielded A.D. 210 \pm 90 (Beta 108844); and a nose piece with lateral prolongations was dated A.D. 130 \pm 40 (Beta 108840). All dates

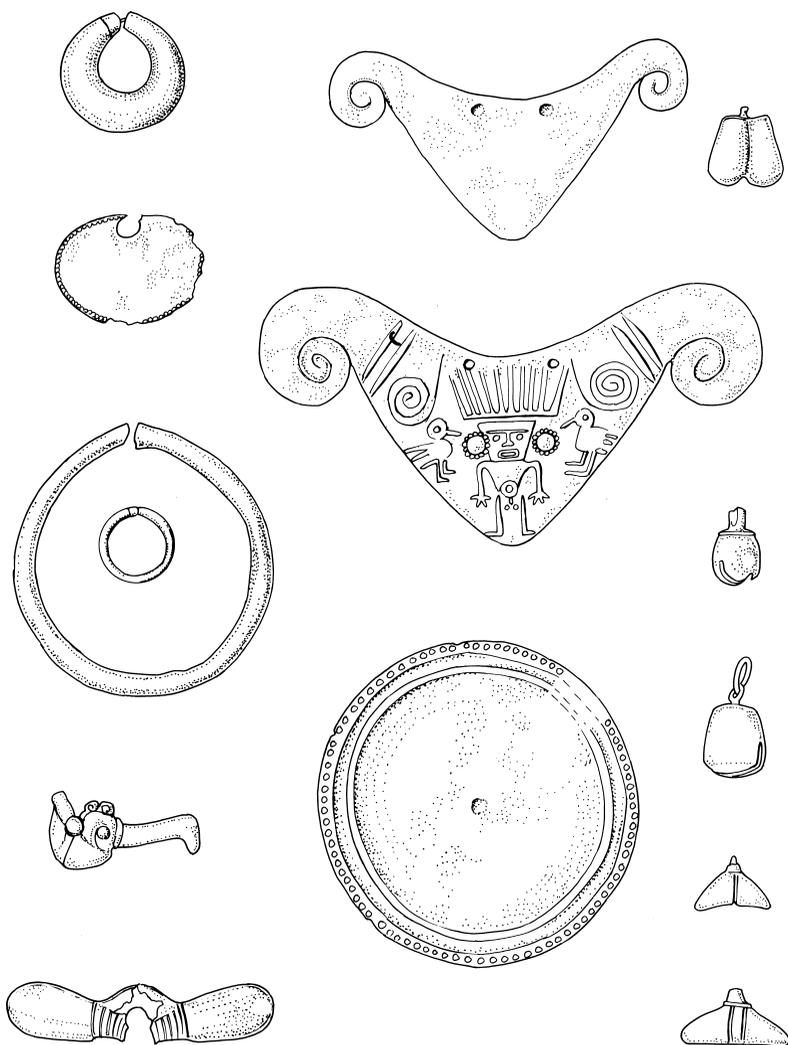


Fig. 12 Metal items from the Nahuange Site 1 tomb (redrawn from Mason 1931–39)

are uncalibrated. The earliest dates are a little older than expected, but the general fit is good. Current information on the Nahuange phase suggests that the Tairona-Kogi tradition emerged during the early centuries after Christ with roots in a cosmopolitan (and perhaps multiethnic), coast-oriented, and essentially “Caribbean” culture.

The Nahuange tomb

This grave, excavated by Mason (1931–39: 32–36) at Nahuange Site 1, is the type-site for the phase as a whole and is still the only locality where a range of artifacts in all media has been excavated by a professional archaeologist. The tomb consisted of a low circular mound,

14 to 15 meters in diameter, with a retaining wall and, in the center, a rectangular grave lined with stone slabs and sealed by capstones. The soil of the mound contained bones and offerings. Teeth and fragments of bone were found in the fill of the tomb and in some of the pottery vessels, but it proved impossible to establish how many individuals were interred there. Mason's descriptions indicate some kind of multiple burial, but it is not clear whether one corpse was more significant than the others.

In total, Mason found more than 8,000 stone beads of various colors, winged pendants, artifacts of nephrite and other jadelike stones, gold jewelry, shell objects, resin pendants, and more than 30 pots. These included 19 or 20 cache vessels, some with lids (there is an ambiguity in Mason's report). Of these, 3 vessels were empty, 3 contained only fragments of bone, 5 had only beads and stones, 1 contained three little pots, and the remaining 3 had gold and other artifacts. All categories of goldwork except the beads are illustrated in Figures 11 and 12, though some were represented by more than one example. Most of these gold objects (22 pieces of jewelry, 2 fragments of thin sheet, and a mass of beads) were found together in the largest vessel and may perhaps have belonged to a single elite individual. Other items were found in the loose soil of the grave. A similar pattern of cached items and loose artifacts was present in the mound. One lidded vessel from the mound held a gold ornament of thin metal and a gold ring. Several other pots with gold ornaments and beads were later excavated from the mound by a local cattleman, and one of these items is a typical early Tairona raised-tail animal (Mason 1931–39: pl. CXLVIII, 9). Because of the way Mason's report is structured, it is not always possible to reunite vessels with their contents or to match his listings with the artifact descriptions and illustrations.

The concentration of prestige items suggests that ranked, or chiefdom, societies had emerged in northern Colombia during the early centuries after Christ. In its form and construction, Nahuange is a Tairona tomb and belongs to the elite end of the range (compare, for example, Pueblito Site xxix in the appendix). More significant, Nahuange also reflects Tairona patterns of behavior and the philosophical concepts that lie behind them: caches in pots (some of them obvious prototypes for the Tairona treasure jars but decorated with non-Tairona incised motifs or with red-painted Ranchería designs), the symbolism of beads, and the deposition of offerings in the soil around burials.

As Bischof has demonstrated, the pottery from the tomb looks forward to Classic Tairona, but it also draws on earlier influences from all over Caribbean Colombia. The same is true of the gold and stone artifacts. The tubular rings and nose ornaments, disks, bells, and crescentic plaques are essentially Tairona, but the animal figure from the mound links this assemblage to the early goldwork from the Sinú region and the Caribbean lowlands in general (cf. Falchetti 1995: figs. 55, 59). The human figurine (Fig. 11) also has its roots in the same area, where the spiral ear ornaments and the heads of big-beaked birds occur on early Sinú eagle pendants and face bells (Falchetti 1995: figs. 35–36). In more developed forms, these bird motifs continue into Classic Tairona iconography (Fig. 9).

Mason also excavated a number of artifacts made of nephrite and other jadelike minerals. These pieces comprised several winged, or bar, pendants (Fig. 13), a bead, an object in the form of a jaguar tooth, and six human figure pendants (Fig. 14). Like the metal figures of the

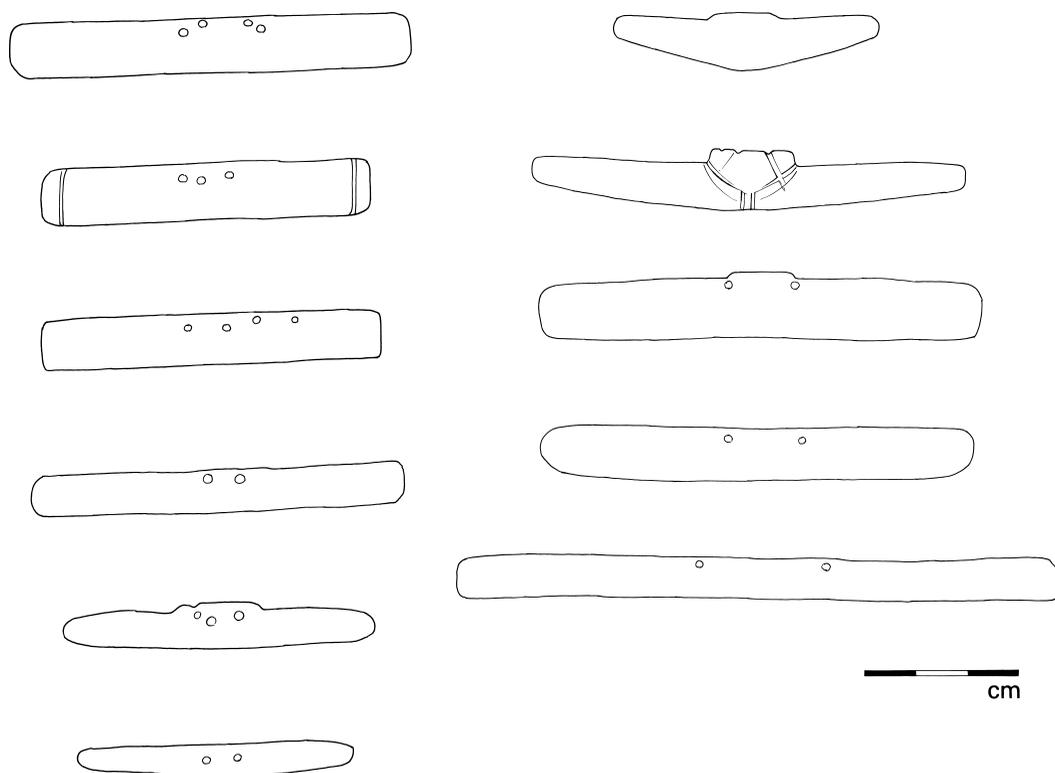


Fig. 13 Stone pendants from the Nahuange Site 1 tomb (redrawn from Mason 1931–39)

Nahuange period, whenever the sex is clearly indicated, it is female. Holes at the shoulders indicate that the figurines were originally designed to hang upright, but several of them have extra holes on one edge, allowing them also to hang horizontally; some have been split vertically to convert them into bar pendants. All had been well used before burial, and only half of each split figure was deposited in the tomb. Unprovenienced finds of this type (Mason 1931–39: 191; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1986: 176; Sáenz Samper and Lleras Pérez 1999; photo 60) show that the figures from Nahuange are not unique. A single split figure pendant (though made of softer slate) was excavated from one of the largest Classic Tairona structures at Pueblito (Fig. 14. 5, and Mason 1931–39: 191).

The Tairona and the Macro-Chibchan World

In his earlier publications, Reichel-Dolmatoff (for example, 1965: 157–158) argued that the Kogi do not fit easily into any South American cultural pattern and that many of their cosmological and philosophical concepts indicate migration from Mesoamerica in pre-Hispanic times. Because of this conviction, he did not investigate the parallels (such as the layered universe of the Kuna) between Kogi beliefs and those of their Chibcha-speaking neighbors. In later publications, Reichel-Dolmatoff modified his diffusionist views, while continuing to accept the Mesoamerican and Costa Rican connections (Reichel-Dolmatoff

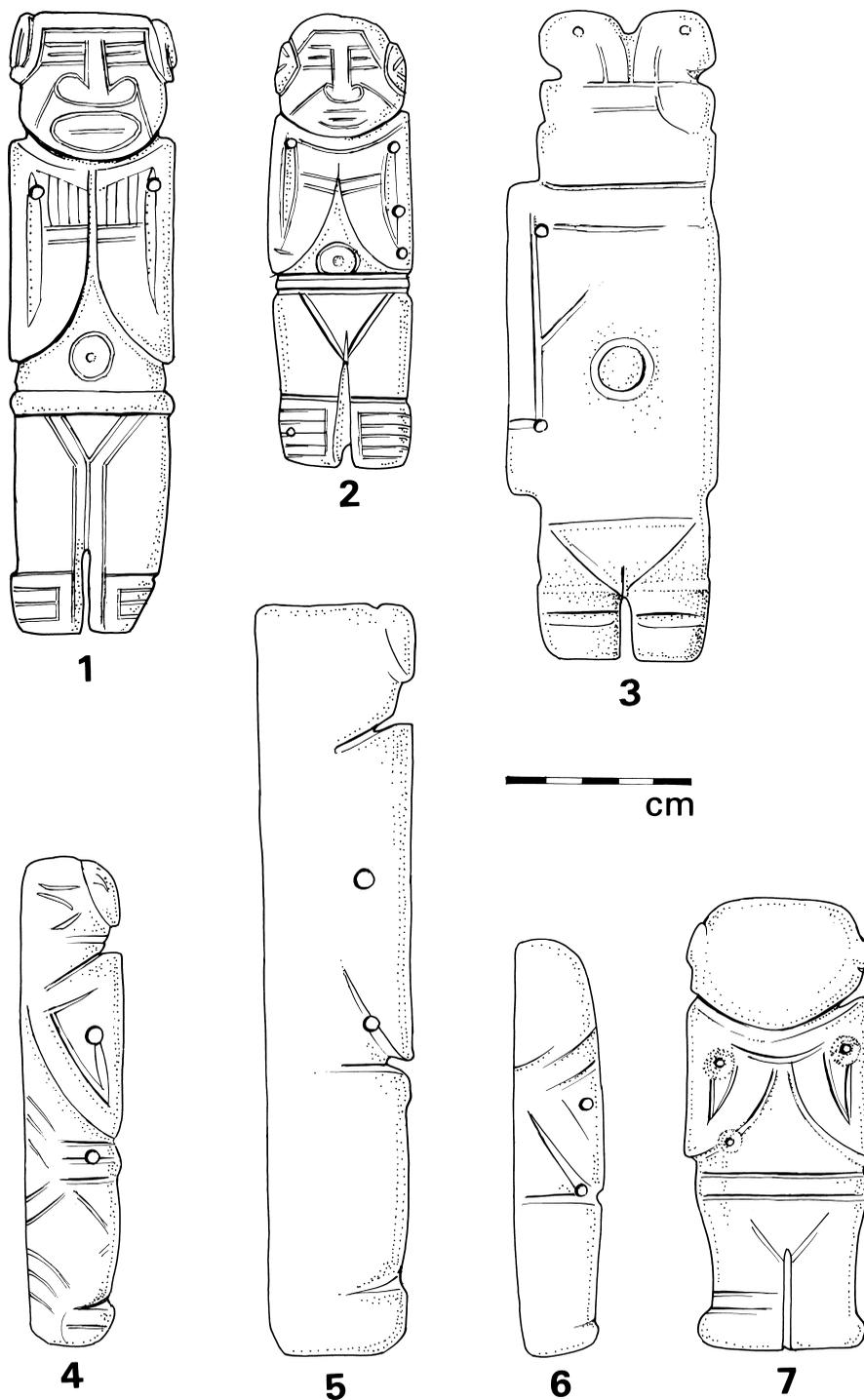


Fig. 14 Stone figure pendants from the Nahuange Site 1 tomb (nos 1–4, 6–7) and from Pueblito Site 31 (no. 5) (nos. 1–4 redrawn from photos in the archive of the Field Museum, Chicago, 1954, negatives A94874–94850; nos 5–7 redrawn from Mason 1931–39).

1986: 198). His more recent position, that close contacts and mutual influences linked the regional cultures of Costa Rica, Panama, and Caribbean Colombia, fits much better with the archaeological evidence (Bray 1984: 322–337). It can now be demonstrated that Classic Tairona culture developed in situ and did so at a time when the region was open to foreign influences from many parts of the Isthmus and northern South America (Bray 1984; Langebaek 1989–90; 1992).

Most of the peoples of the Isthmian–Colombian region spoke languages of the Chibchan family at the time of contact, and this has led some archaeologists (Bray 1999; Zamora and Hoopes, in this volume) to wonder whether the cultural similarities indicate not only inter-group contacts but also an underlying Chibchan “worldview” at the intellectual level. If so, many Tairona–Kogi beliefs and attitudes may have their equivalents elsewhere. There is still no conclusive evidence, but the origins of Tairona culture must be considered within the context of the Macro–Chibchan debate and with a focus on the centuries between A.D. 300 and 800.

Looking outwards from Colombia and toward the Isthmus, we can see a pattern that is not easy to explain. The Caribbean lowlands of Colombia (Sinú and Urabá) and the Chocó on the Pacific side have obvious cultural ties with adjacent areas of Panama (Bray 1984; Cooke 1998; Falchetti 1993; Sáenz Samper and Lleras Pérez 1999). In contrast, the closest archaeological parallels for Nahuange and for the Tairona assemblage in general are not with the southern Isthmus, but with the cultures of Atlantic Costa Rica. Perhaps, as Ifigenia Quintanilla has suggested (personal communication, 1999), connections by sea as well as by land should be investigated. In the words of one Costa Rican specialist:

After A.D. 500, drastic shifts began to occur in Costa Rican Precolumbian cultures. Circular houses became the norm and were indicative of a probable shift in cosmology or “world view.” New ceramic styles including resist painting proliferated; tomb forms and burial customs changed; cobble-paved roads within and between sites appeared; and metallurgy supplanted jade carving as the principal supplier of political and religious badges of power and authority. Gold replaced jade as the most symbolic material. All these traits appeared earlier in, and are typical of, northern South America, but the process by which these shifts to Costa Rica took place is not yet clear. (Snarskis 1998: 90)

This view starkly contradicts Reichel-Dolmatoff’s ideas about the main direction of flow, and many aspects are indeed far from clear.

While some specialists would be less dogmatic than Michael Snarskis about many of these “South American” traits, in one respect his argument is unassailable: The spread of metalworking from Colombia to the Isthmus (represented by the Initial and International Groups) is documented elsewhere (Bray 1992; 1999), and the distribution maps show a marked concentration of these early items in Atlantic Costa Rica. This area, too, is one of the points where the Mesoamerican and Chibchan worlds came into contact (Bray 1977: 390–392). At Guácimo, for example, Maya stonework, Initial and International gold objects in the Urabá substyle of Colombia (Uribe 1988), and locally made jadeite versions of these (espe-

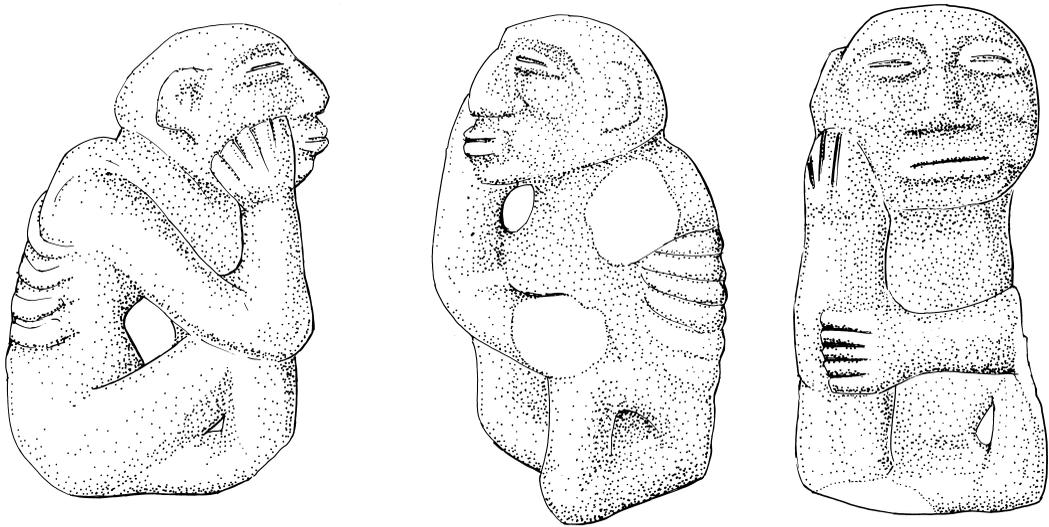


Fig. 15 Stone sculpture from the Quebrada de Valencia, between the Guachaca and Buritaco Rivers, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. H. 24.5 (redrawn from Dussán de Reichel 1967).

cially animals with raised tails), occur in the same cemetery with pottery dated circa A.D. 400–600 (Stone and Balsler 1965). In Costa Rican terms, this coincides with the few centuries during which gold and jade objects were used side by side (Guerrero 1998), as they were at Nahuange at more or less the same time.

Apart from metallurgy, most of the traits shared by Costa Rica and the Tairona zone are either general (circular stone house-rings, paved roads, cist tombs and mounds, jade carving) or have a wide distribution throughout the Isthmus (winged pendants, small anthropomorphic and zoomorphic carvings in colored stones, eagle pendants, masked human figures and composite creatures of gold [Bray 1999: 44]). The case for a special relationship would be stronger if Costa Rican export pieces could be indentified in Colombia, but there are very few items from the Tairona zone that may indicate direct links. An eagle pendant of gilded tumbaga from Minca is an undocumented find and could have come from anywhere in the Veraguas–Gran Chiriquí region of the Isthmus (Langebaek 1989–90, fig. 1xb; Sáenz Samper and Lleras Pérez 1999: photo 67). The stone sculpture in Figure 15 is another casual find, from the north slope of the Sierra Nevada, and, as Dussán de Reichel (1967) points out, has close similarities with the *sukia* figures of central and southeastern Costa Rica (though the coca bulge in the left cheek suggests manufacture in Colombia rather than the Isthmus).

There are, however, two very specific connections between the Tairona region and the Atlantic Watershed of Costa Rica, though the chronological control is so poor that we cannot say where these traits originated. The first of these similarities is the treatment accorded to jade figure pendants. Certain pendants from both areas have holes that allowed them to be hung vertically or horizontally (compare the Nahuange examples with, for example, the Costa Rican axe god from La Fortuna, another Atlantic cemetery with Maya connections [Stone and Balsler 1965: fig. 4b]). Still more evocative is the custom of splitting

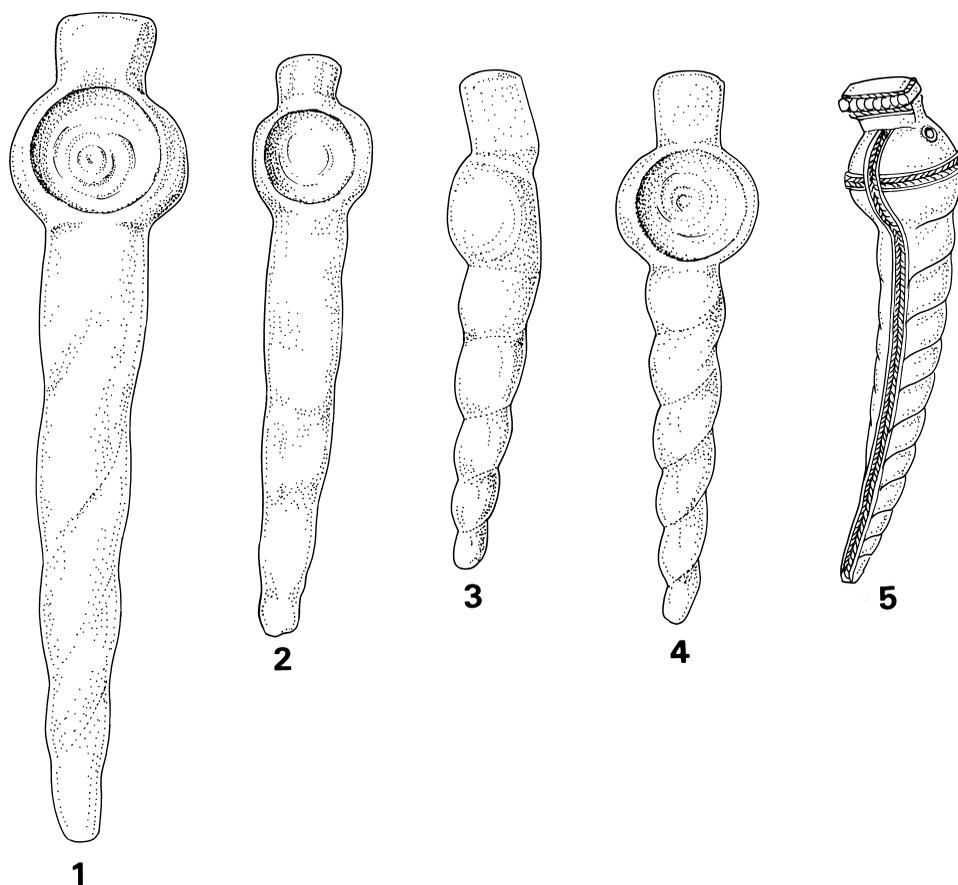


Fig. 16 Spoon-shaped objects: nos. 1–2, clay, from Atlantic Costa Rica (redrawn from Stone 1977: fig. 212b); nos. 3–4, stone, from Colombia; no. 5, gold, from the Tairona region (after Plazas 1987).

jade figures into two vertical halves, converting the halves into horizontal bar pendants, and eventually depositing just one portion of the figure in the tomb. Split-figure pendants occur at Nahuange and Pueblito (Fig. 14) and in the jadeworking zones of Costa Rica, but they are unknown elsewhere. The use of jade may simply reflect availability of the raw material, but this unusual pattern of behavior suggests shared beliefs or rituals and goes beyond mere typology.

Another artifact that could hardly have been invented twice is illustrated in Figure 16. These spoon pendants were made of pottery in Atlantic Costa Rica (nos. 1–2), where they are thought to belong to the Zoned Bichrome period (Stone 1977: 158). One example was found by a pothunter at La Fortuna, though its association with the Zoned Bichrome cemetery cannot be proved (Doris Stone, personal communication, 1981). In Colombia they were carved from stone (nos. 3–4), and their distribution appears to cluster around Dibulla, just beyond the eastern frontier of Classic Tairona territory (Mason 1931–39: 205–207). The Colombian items are casual finds, but none of these “spoons” has ever been excavated in a Classic Tairona context. It is possible, therefore, that they belong to the Nahuange period,

which would bring them into line with their Costa Rican counterparts. They may also be prototypes for later Tairona gold artifacts (Fig. 16.5).

I have (Bray 1999) suggested that archaeological changes recognizable in several regions of Colombia around A.D. 600 might be linked with the arrival of Chibcha speakers from the Isthmus, among them the ancestors of the Tairona. Adolfo Costenla Umaña believes that the linguistic split between the Isthmian and Colombian branches of Chibchan occurred much earlier than this, in which case Chibcha-speaking groups were already well established in Caribbean Colombia, and the interactions described above took place between ethnic groups that at one time shared a common history (Costenla Umaña 1995; Sáenz Samper and Lleras Pérez 1999: 84–87). How much of the Tairona belief system goes back to that distant period is a matter for speculation and is a question that will not be answered by comparing artifact types. To complement the archaeological data, we need an extension to Colombia of the genetic and linguistic programs already carried out in the Isthmus (Barrantes et al. 1990), and more comparative work on the mythologies and cosmologies of the surviving Chibcha-speaking groups. Time for this is running out, and much of this information is already lost.

Acknowledgments I am grateful to the following colleagues for providing advice and information during the preparation of this paper: Gerardo Ardila, Marianne Cardale Schrimppff, Carole DeFord, Patricia Fernández, Manuela Fischer, Mary Helms, Julie Jones, Carl Langebaek, Matthew Looper, Clemencia Plazas, Ifigenia Quintanilla, James B. Richardson III, Guillermo Rodríguez, Juanita Sáenz Samper, Inés Sanmiguel, Michael Snarskis, Ellen FitzSimmons Steinberg, Donald Tayler, and María Alicia Uribe. I also received the fullest collaboration from the Museo del Oro (Bogotá), the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (Pittsburgh), Cranbrook Institute of Science (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.), and the Field Museum (Chicago). Most of the drawings are the work of Tessa Rickards. My intellectual debt to the works of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff (d. 1994) will be apparent on every page of this essay.

Appendix: Documented Finds of Tairona Metalwork

Pueblito

a. Site vi (Mason 1931–39: 70)

Buried inside a large house-ring were a black jar, a broken jar containing a gold “ornament,” a copper “whistle,” and many cornelian beads. Nearby, in loose soil, was another gold bracelet, more cornelian beads and a piece of thick bone. The nature of the entire deposit is unclear.

b. Site xxix (Mason 1931–39: 90–93)

A large, stone-lined grave with a capstone, located on a terrace. Contents: a jar with 15 winged plaques of stone; a jar containing many stone beads, 3 gold bracelets, and 1 copper bracelet; a jar with many stone beads, pottery ocarinas, and 3 “fine stone ornaments”; a vessel with bits of copper wire, perhaps bracelets; a vessel with shells, fish vertebrae, 2 small limestone images; a pot with stone beads; a vessel with red and green stone beads. Elsewhere Mason mentions a bird pendant of fine gold from this grave, though this does not appear in his excavation description (p. 262, pl. CXLVII, 6).

c. Site xxxii (Mason 1931–39: 103)

A small stone-lined grave with an empty olla. “Scattered through the soil” were stone beads, stone axe heads, and “several gold ornaments.” One of these is a broken frog (p. 260 and pl. CXLVII, 2); another is a penannular ring (p. 252). From Mason’s description, and from the objects found in the soil (but not in the grave itself), the round structure on the terrace may have been ceremonial rather than domestic. Miscellaneous finds in the soil included a pair of metal ear ornaments (pl. CXLIII, 3, 5) and what may be an anchor ornament (pl. CXLVI, 7).

d. No Number (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1958: 73)

From a stone ring already rummaged by treasure hunters was excavated a penannular tubular bracelet of rolled sheet metal, beside which were 2 little embossed disks of fine gold, 3 tubular beads of sheet metal, and a gold cap from a labret (Fig. 1.16). Associated with these were many sherds, and also stone items, including a monolithic axe.

Jirosaca (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1958: 72)

From a sealed offering vessel (context unknown) came the following items of “gilded copper”: a plaque with an embossed face, 18.5 cm high (Fig. 3.1); a large, plain hammered (?) armband 6.9 cm long (Fig. 3.2); a nose piece, 11.2 cms wide (Fig. 3.3); a large convex disk with a border of embossed dots, 14.5 cm in diameter (Fig. 3.4); 2 smaller discs with zigzag decoration, 9.4 cm in diameter (Fig. 3.5). Most of these items had holes for suspension or attachment. This deposit may have been a cache rather than a burial offering.

Gairaca

Items a–f derive from the Herbert Huntingdon Smith expedition of 1896–98. His finds are now in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh. Some of his specimens were illustrated by J. Alden Mason (1931–39). Ellen FitzSimmons (n.d.) has reconstituted several of Smith’s grave lots, and her study is supplemented here by reference to Smith’s field notes, the museum’s accession list, and museum photographs. I am grateful to Ellen FitzSimmons Steinberg and James B. Richardson III for providing this material. There are some inconsistencies between the documentary sources, but in general the fit is good. Smith notes that his graves were found in or close to house sites. In this appendix, Smith’s finds are listed by individual burial, that is, the content of a single urn. There were often several urns in a grave, and most of the ambiguities concern the positions of accessory vessels. At least three metal items were found loose in the earth of the graves, or came from rifled tombs. These are not included here. The remaining graves (items g–j) were excavated by Mason.

a. A small, covered burial urn

Contents: remains of a child under two years old, a fine brownware cup, and a tumbaga pendant or tinkler in the form of a seated frog (Fig. 2.6; acc. no. 2005/145). There is some ambiguity about whether a covered blackware bowl was inside or outside the urn.

b. A large, sealed burial urn in the same grave as the above

Smith believed the broken bones belonged to a single skeleton, accompanied by a tumbaga pendant in the form of a frog (Fig. 2.7; acc. no. 2005/158), a tumbaga bell, of “cowry shell” shape and with a greenstone pebble clapper (Fig. 2.5; acc. no. 2005/158a), 2 stone axe heads, and possibly a stone club. Three blackware bowls were either inside or outside the urn, and a jar cover was somewhere in the grave. In addition, Smith found a single small tumbaga batrachian somewhere in this general locality at a depth of 75 cm (Mason 1931–39: pl. CLIII, 7).

c. A sealed urn, among several other jars

Contained remains of a child ten years of age or younger, a tumbaga spread-wing bird pendant with a big beak (acc. no. 2005/122), a miniature stone axe, 2 birdlike shell ornaments, shell tinklers (on the cover of the jar), red stone beads, 2 carnelian pebbles, a cylinder of red stone, and an oxidized stone (?). Close to the urn were a sherd with a bird’s head and sherds from a fine, black, handled vessel.

d. Large, covered urn in a grave containing five urns in all

Contents: 3 adult males, 3 stone axes, 3 stone “clubs,” 4 unperforated red stone cylinders, shells, a stone (?), a shallow plate, “lime with a hole in it” (probably from the neck of a lime flask), 4 cylindrical tumbaga beads of rolled sheet (Fig. 2.4; acc. no. 2005/153d–g), a broken tumbaga spread-wing bird pendant (Mason 1931–39 pl. CLIII, 1; acc. no. 2005/153a), an unusual tumbaga bird pendant (Fig. 2.1; acc. no. 2005/153), a tumbaga “anteater” pendant (Fig. 2.2; acc. no. 2005/153c), and a fish pendant (Fig. 2.3; acc. no. 2005/153b). None of the metal items is typical of Classic Tairona. The fish is a Sinú, or possibly Isthmian, piece (Falchetti

1995: 127). The quadruped, too, was probably made in the Sinú area (cf. Falchetti 1995: 127–129), though an identical animal, with no precise provenience, came to the Museo del Oro in a mixed Tairona lot (Legast 1987: fig. 15; Juanita Sáenz, personal communication, 1999). Whatever the place of manufacture, this entire group seems typologically early and may well belong to the Nahuange Period rather than to Classic Tairona.

e. Large burial pot with cover

Smith's notes describe a covered urn (acc. no. 2005/301) containing bones, a stone axe (acc. no. 2005/160), and a "gold bell in the shape of a cowry shell" (acc. no. 2005/161). In the museum's accession list, item 301 is a bead from Las Cruces. The other artifacts are missing and undescribed.

f. Urn

Contained at least 2 adult males, a stone club, a stone axe, 1 unperforated red stone cylinder, 19 carnelian pebbles, a tumbaga anchor ornament (Mason 1931–39: pl. CLIII, 2; acc. no. 2005/279), and a tumbaga feline bell (Mason 1931–39: pl. CLIII, 5; acc. no. 2005/279a).

g. Urn burial (Mason 1931–39: 28)

A child with 5 pots, 5 black pottery whistles, cornelian beads, bones of a small animal, and a broken frog of copper or low grade tumbaga.

h. Urn burial (Mason 1931–39: 271)

"In an urn at Gairaca were found many shell objects encrusted with, and held together by, copper."

i. Urn burial (Mason 1931–39: 263)

A thin cast gold item, (?) part of an eagle pendant (Mason 1931–39: pl. CXLVI, 4). It is not clear what else was in the urn.

j. Group of 7 burial urns (Mason 1931–39: 30)

Around the base of the central urn were several stone axe heads and beads. Beneath it were human bones and a copper animal figure.

Bonda (Angell Collection) (Mason 1931–39: 253)

A stone-lined grave the contents of which included a pottery ocarina and a black pot with penannular metal ear ornaments.

Chocuenca (Angell Collection, Cranbrook Institute of Science/Angell Archive, and Mason 1931–39: 256–258; information courtesy of Carole DeFord)

A small stone-lined tomb with "bones." Contents (not necessarily a complete listing): more than 20 broken stone axes, shell ornaments in the shape of nose rings, rock crystal beads, 1 cornelian toucan head, 1 quartz polishing stone. Of gold or tumbaga were half of a simple

butterfly nose piece (similar to Fig. 1.5), 1 complete nose ornament (Mason 1931–39: pl. CLVI, 1), a broken gold disc (Mason 1931–39: pl. CLIV, 4) and possibly “a piece of gold” (the archive is ambiguous).

Nahuange

a. Site 2 (Mason 1931–39: 36, 253–254)

Miscellaneous burials in “free soil,” rather than in urns or burial deposits. The finds included shell crocodile heads, tinklers and pendants, cornelian beads, 2 tumbaga plaques, and “a few other gold objects.” Somewhere on the site Mason excavated a pair of tumbaga penannular ear ornaments.

b. Site 3 (Mason 1931–39: 37, 254–256)

Many poorly described interments and one urn burial. Loose finds were distributed through the soil; other items were contained in pots. One fragmentary vessel contained small gold beads, small tubular carnelian beads, and large tubular beads of shell. “Other small vessels contained carnelian beads and [unspecified] ornaments of gold-copper alloy.” Somewhere on the site (exactly where is not mentioned) Mason excavated a pair of metal bracelets or cuffs (pl. CLV, 3) a “pectoral acoronizado” (pl. CXLV, 1) and 2 “butterfly” nose pieces (pl. CXLVI, 1–2).

Buritaca 200 (Ciudad Perdida)

a. Terrace 49, Tomb 2 (Groot de Mahecha 1985)

Shaft tomb (in a house-ring) with a side chamber sealed by a grinding stone. Contents: 2 anchor ornaments (cf. Fig. 1.7), 2 penannular ear ornaments (cf. Fig. 1.11), 1 round cornelian bead, and 1 small carnelian owl effigy. Charcoal provided a C-14 date of A.D. 1385 +/- 45 (GrN-9247).

b. Terrace 25 (Groot de Mahecha 1985)

A damaged shaft tomb with a side chamber containing 4 tubular carnelian beads, 2 tumbaga anchor ornaments (cf. Fig. 1.10), 1 tumbaga nose piece (cf. Fig. 1.6), and 80 little square plaques of tumbaga, each with two holes for sewing to a textile backing,

c. (Lleras Pérez 1985: 121–127)

A shaft tomb within a house-ring. Contents: 39 tubular beads of green and red stone, 1 fragmented bead of sheet gold.

San Jose de Minca (Museo del Oro archive; Sáenz Samper n.d.)

The archive refers to 68 gold pieces from 8 (undifferentiated) tombs and to one nose piece (MO acc. no. 8648) found in place on a skull in a burial in a rock cleft.

Minca (Museo del Oro archive; Sáenz Samper 2003)

Report of a number of urns, each containing one or two metal frogs.

Minca (Museo del Oro archive; Sáenz Samper 2003)

From a single deep tomb with no pottery came 15 gold items (MO acc. nos. 8975–8991): an “eagle” pendant, various hollow semicircular ear pieces, a double-bar nose ornament, a chisel, 2 circular nose pieces, and a set of small plaques for sewing onto textiles (cf. Plazas 1987: fig. 16a).

San Pedro de la Sierra (Museo del Oro archive; Sáenz Samper 2003)

A shaft-and-chamber tomb containing a bird pectoral with three big-beaked heads (MO acc. no. 8974). There was no pottery.

San Pedro (Museo del Oro archive; Sáenz Samper 2003)

a. From a tomb of unknown form came 9 reportedly associated items: an eagle pendant, 2 penannular hollow ear ornaments, 2 penannular ear ornaments with wirework decoration, a cylindrical nariguera, 2 triangular necklace pieces with prolongations, and a collection of broken fragments.

b. Report of an eagle pendant alone in a tomb. From the same place, bird pendants with “batmen” figures seated on top are said to occur singly in tombs.

Finca La Esmeralda, Bonda (Museo del Oro archive, Sáenz Samper 2003)

A report of “buttons,” and fragments of labrets and of narigueras in little offering pots.

Bibliography

ARDILA CALDERÓN, GERARDO I.

- 1996 *Los tiempos de las conchas: Investigaciones arqueológicas en la costa de la península de la Guajira*. Universidad Nacional, Bogotá.

BARRANTES, RAMIRO, P. E. SMOUSE, H. W. MOHRENWEISER, H. GERSHOWITZ, J. AZOFEIFA, T. ARIAS, and J. V. NEEL

- 1990 Microevolution in Lower Central America: Genetic Characterization of the Chibcha-Speaking Groups of Costa Rica and Panama, and a Taxonomy Based on Genetics, Linguistics and Geography. *American Journal of Human Genetics* 46: 63–84.

BENSON, ELIZABETH P.

- 1997 *Birds and Beasts of Ancient Latin America*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

BISCHOF, HENNING

- 1969a Contribuciones a la cronología de la Cultura Tairona (Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia). In *Verhandlungen des 38 Internationalen Amerikanistenkongresses* (Stuttgart–München 1968), vol 1: 259–269.
- 1969b La Cultura Tairona en el Área Intermedio. In *Verhandlungen des 38 Internationalen Amerikanistenkongresses* (Stuttgart–München 1968), vol. 1: 271–280.
- 1971 *Die Spanisch-Indianische Auseinandersetzung in der nördlichen Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (1501–1600)*. Bonner Amerikanistische Studien 1, Bonn.
- 1982–83 Indígenas y españoles en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, siglo XVI. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 24: 75–124.

BRAY, WARWICK

- 1977 Maya Metalwork and its External Connections. In *Social Process in Maya Prehistory* (N. Hammond, ed.): 365–403. Academic Press, London.
- 1978 *The Gold of El Dorado*. Times Books, London.
- 1984 Across the Darien Gap: A Colombian View of Isthmian Archaeology. In *The Archaeology of Lower Central America* (Frederick W. Lange and Doris Z. Stone, eds.): 305–338. School of American Research and University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.
- 1992 Sitio Conte Metalwork in Its Pan-American Context. In *River of Gold: Precolumbian Treasures from Sitio Conte* (Pamela Hearne and Robert J. Sharer eds.): 33–46. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- 1999 Metallurgy and Anthropology: Two Studies from Prehispanic America. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 42 (1997): 37–55.

CADAVID CAMARGO, GILBERTO, and ANA MARÍA GROOT DE MAHECHA

- 1987 Buritaca 200: Arqueología y conservación de una población precolombina (Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia). *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 19: 57–81.

CADAVID, GILBERTO, and LUISA FERNANDA HERRERA DE TURBAY

- 1985 Manifestaciones culturales en el área tairona. *Informes Antropológicos* 1: 5–55. Instituto Colombiano de Antropología.

CARDOSO, PATRICIA

- 1987 Uso y significado de las cuentas tairona. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 19: 117–123.
n.d. *Aproximación arqueológica al conocimiento de un asentamiento tairona*. Graduate thesis, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, 1986.

CASTELLANOS, JUAN DE

- 1955 *Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias*. Biblioteca de la Presidencia de Colombia. Editorial ABC, Bogotá.

COOKE, RICHARD

- 1998 Cupica (Chocó): A Reassessment of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff's Fieldwork in a Poorly Studied Region of the American Tropics. In *Recent Advances in the Archaeology of the Northern Andes: In Memory of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff* (Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo and J. Scott Raymond, eds.): 91–106. Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.

COSTENLA UMAÑA, ADOLFO

- 1995 Sobre el estudio diacrónico de las lenguas chibchenses y su contribución al conocimiento del pasado de sus hablantes. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 38–39: 13–55.

DE BRETTESS, JOSEPH

- 1903 Les Indiens Arhouaques–Kaggabas. *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 4, ser. 5: 318–357.

DE LA ROSA, NICOLÁS

- 1975 *Floresta de la Santa Iglesia catedral de la ciudad y provincia de Santa Marta*. Biblioteca del Banco Popular, Bogotá.

DUQUE GÓMEZ, LUIS

- 1958 Notas históricas sobre la orfebrería indígena de Colombia. In *Homenaje al Profesor Paul Rivet*: 271–335. Academia Colombiana de Historia, Bogotá.

DUSSÁN DE REICHEL, ALICIA

- 1967 Una escultura lítica de tipología costarricense de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. *Razón y Fábula* 2: 39–42.
2000 Continuité culturelle Tairona–Kogui. In *Les esprits, l'or et le chamane*: 87–95. Exh. cat. Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris.

EREIRA, ALAN

- 1990 *The Heart of the World*. Jonathan Cape, London. Published in the U.S.A. as *The Elder Brothers*, Knopf, New York, 1992.

FALCHETTI, ANA MARÍA

- 1987 Desarrollo de la orfebrería Tairona en la provincia metalúrgica del norte colombiano. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 19: 3–23.
- 1993 La tierra del oro y del cobre: Parentesco y intercambio entre comunidades orfebres del norte de Colombia y áreas relacionadas. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 34–35: 3–75.
- 1995 *El oro del Gran Zenú: Metalurgia prehispánica en las llanuras del Caribe colombiano*. Museo del Oro, Banco de la República, Bogotá.

FITZSIMMONS, ELLEN M.

- n.d. Animals, Territories and Totems among the Prehistoric Tairona (Colombia). Manuscript in the possession of the author, 1998.

FRIEDE, JUAN

- 1951 Breves informaciones sobre la metalurgia de los Indios de Santa Marta según documentos encontrados en el Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla. *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, n.s. 40: 198–202.

GROOT DE MAHECHA, ANA MARÍA

- 1985 Arqueología y conservación de la localidad precolombina de Buritaca 200 en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (1976–1977). *Informes Arqueológicas* 1: 55–102. Instituto Colombiano de Antropología.

GUERRERO, JUAN VICENTE

- 1998 The Archaeological Context of Jade in Costa Rica. In *Jade in Ancient Costa Rica* (Julie Jones, ed.): 23–37. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

HERRERA DE TURBAY, LUISA FERNANDA

- 1985 *Agricultura aborígen y cambios de vegetación en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta*. Banco de la República, Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales, Bogotá.

LABBÉ, ARMAND J.

- 1998 *Shamans, Gods, and Mythic Beasts: Colombian Gold and Ceramics in Antiquity*. American Federation of Arts and University of Washington Press, New York.

LANGENBAEK RUEDA, CARL HENRIK

- 1987a La cronología de la región tairona vista desde Papare, Municipio de Ciénega. *Boletín de Arqueología* 2 (1): 83–101.
- 1987b Relaciones de los desarrollos del área tairona y el intercambio. *Boletín de Arqueología* 2 (2): 32–41.
- 1989–90 Aguilas y caricurries: Venezuela y su coparticipación en el área orfebre de Colombia y el Istmo en el siglo xvi. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 27: 199–235.
- 1990 Documento sobre los tribus de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla. Relación de Nueva Salamanca de la Ramada de 1578. *Revista de Antropología y Arqueología* 6 (2): 107–124.
- 1992 *Noticias de caciques muy mayores: Orígen y desarrollo de sociedades complejas en el nororiente de Colombia y norte de Venezuela*. Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá.

LEGAST, ANNE

- 1987 *El animal en el mundo mítico tairona*. Banco de la República, Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas Nacionales, Bogotá.
- 1989 The Bat in Tairona Art: An Under-recognized Species. In *Animals into Art* (H. Morphy, ed.): 270–286. Unwin Hyman, London.

LLERAS PÉREZ, ROBERTO

- 1985 Excavaciones de salvamento en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. *Informes Antropológicos* 1: 103–132. Instituto Colombiano de Antropología.

LOOPER, MATTHEW G.

- 1996 The Iconography and Social Context of Tairona Gold Pectorals. *Journal of Latin America Lore* 19: 101–128.

MASON, J. ALDEN

- 1931–39 *Archaeology of Santa Marta, Colombia: The Tairona Culture*, 3 vols. Anthropological series, 20 (1–3). Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

MAYR MALDONALDO, JUAN

- 1986 Geschichtliche Überlieferung und Ruinenstätten im Gebiet der Tairona-Kultur-Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In *Tairona-Goldschmiede der Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Kolumbien* (Corinna Raddatz, ed.): 56–61. Hamburgischen Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.

NICHOLAS, FRANCIS C.

- 1901 The Aborigines of the Province of Santa Marta, Colombia. *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 3: 606–649.

OLIVER, JOSÉ R.

- 2000 Gold Symbolism among Caribbean Chiefdoms: Of Feathers, Cibas, and Guanín Power among Taíno Elites. In *Precolumbian Gold: Technology, Style and Iconography* (Colin McEwan, ed.): 196–219. British Museum, London.

OYUELA CAYCEDO, AUGUSTO

- 1986a Excavación de un basurero en Ciudad Perdida, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. *Boletín de Arqueología* 1(1): 28–34.
- 1986b Contribución a la periodización cultural en el Litoral del Parque Tairona. *Boletín de Arqueología* 1 (2): 24–28.
- 1987a “Gaira”: Una introducción a la ecología y arqueología del litoral de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 19: 34–55.
- 1987b Implicaciones de las secuencias locales y regionales en los aspectos culturales de los Tairona. In *Chiefdoms in the Americas* (Robert A. Drennan and Carlos A. Uribe, eds.): 213–228. University Press of America, Lanham, Md.
- 1998 Ideology, Temples and Priests: Change and Continuity in House Societies in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In *Recent Advances in the Archaeology of the Northern Andes: In Memory of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff* (Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo and J. Scott Raymond, eds.): 39–53. Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.

PLAZAS, CLEMENCIA

- 1987 Forma y función en el oro tairona. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 19: 25–33.
 1998 Cronología de la metalurgia colombiana. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 44–45: 3–72.

PREUSS, KONRAD THEODOR

- 1993 *Visita a los indígenas Kagaba de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta: Observaciones, Recopilación de Textos y Estudios Lingüísticos*. Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, Bogotá.

REICHEL-DOLMATOFF, GERARDO

- 1951 *Datos histórico-culturales sobre las tribus de la Antigua Gobernación de Santa Marta*. Instituto Etnológico del Magdalena, Santa Marta.
 1953 Contactos y cambios culturales en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 1 (1): 15–122.
 1954a Investigaciones arqueológicas en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, pts. 1–2. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 2 (2): 145–206.
 1954b Investigaciones arqueológicas en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, pt. 3. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 3: 139–170.
 1958 Notas sobre la metalurgia prehistórica en el litoral Caribe de Colombia. In *Homenaje al Profesor Paul Rivet*: 69–94. Academia Colombiana de Historia, Bogotá.
 1965 *Colombia*. Thames and Hudson, London.
 1967 Notas sobre el simbolismo religioso de los Indios de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. *Razón y Fábula* 1: 55–72.
 1975 Templos Kogi: Introducción al simbolismo y a la astronomía del espacio sagrado. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 19: 199–245.
 1977 Training for the Priesthood among the Kogi of Colombia. In *Enculturation in Latin America: An Anthology* (Johannes Wilbert, ed.): 265–288. University of California at Los Angeles, Latin American Center, Los Angeles.
 1981 Things of Beauty Replete with Meaning: Metals and Crystals in Colombian Indian Cosmology. In *Sweat of the Sun, Tears of the Moon: Gold and Emerald Treasures of Colombia* (Peter T. Furst et al., eds.): 17–33. Natural History Museum Alliance of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles.
 1985 *Los Kogi: Una tribu de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia* (2nd edition). Procultura, Nueva Biblioteca Colombiana de Cultura, Bogotá.
 1986 *Arqueología de Colombia: Un Texto introductorio*. Presidencia de la República, Litografía Arco, Bogotá.
 1987 The Great Mother and the Kogi Universe: A Concise Overview. *Journal of Latin American Lore* 13 (1): 73–113.
 1988 *Orfebrería y chamanismo: Un Estudio iconográfico del Museo del Oro*. Colina, Medellín.
 1990 *The Sacred Mountain of Colombia's Kogi Indians*. Iconography of Religions, sec. 9, South America, fasc. 2. Institute of Religious Iconography, Leiden, and State University, Groningen.

REICHEL-DOLMATOFF, GERARDO, and ALICIA REICHEL-DOLMATOFF

- 1955 Investigaciones en la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, pt. 4. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 4: 189–245.

ROWE, JOHN HOWLAND

- 1946 Inca culture at the time of the Spanish Conquest. In *Handbook of South American Indians*, vol. 5 (Julian H. Steward, ed.): 183–330. Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 143, Washington, D.C.

SÁENZ SAMPER, JUANITA

- 2003 El vuelo de las águilas doradas: Aves con alas desplegadas en la orfebrería Tairona. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 48 (enero-junio 2001).

SÁENZ SAMPER, JUANITA, and ROBERTO LLERAS PÉREZ

- 1999 Las relaciones pre-hispánicas entre los territorios de Costa Rica y Colombia. In *Oro y jade: Emblemas de poder en Costa Rica* (Roberto Lleras and Juanita Sáenz, eds.): 67–89. Museo Nacional de Costa Rica.

SAUNDERS, NICHOLAS J.

- 1998 *Stealers of Light, Traders in Brilliance: Amerindian Metaphysics in the Mirror of Conquest*. *RES* 33: 225–252.

SERJE, MARGARITA

- 1987 Arquitectura y Urbanismo en la Cultura Tairona. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 19: 87–96.

SIMÓN, FRAY PEDRO

- 1882–92 *Noticias históricas de las conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales*. Medardo Rivas, Bogotá.

SNARSKIS, MICHAEL J.

- 1998 The Imagery and Symbolism of Precolumbian Jade in Costa Rica. In *Jade in Ancient Costa Rica* (Julie Jones, ed.): 59–91. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

STONE, DORIS

- 1977 *Pre-Columbian Man in Costa Rica*. Peabody Museum Press, Cambridge.

STONE, DORIS Z., and CARLOS BALSER

- 1965 Incised Slate Disks from the Atlantic Watershed of Costa Rica. *American Antiquity* 30 (3): 310–329.

TAYLER, DONALD

- 1997 *The Coming of the Sun: A Prologue to Ika Sacred Narrative*. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

URIBE, MARÍA ALICIA

- 1988 Introducción a la orfebrería de San Pedro de Urabá, una región del noroccidente colombiano. *Boletín del Museo del Oro* 20: 35–53.

URIBE TOBÓN, CARLOS A.

- n.d. We, the Elder Brothers: Continuity and Change among the Kággaba of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1990.

VÁZQUEZ DE ESPINOSA, ANTONIO

- 1942 *Compendium and Description of the West Indies*. Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, 102, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

WYNN, JACK THOMAS

- n.d. Buritaca Ceramic Chronology: A Seriation from the Tairona Area, Colombia. Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1975.

ZUIDEMA, TOM

- 1992 The Tairona of Ancient Colombia. In *The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes* (Richard F. Townsend, ed.): 245–257. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.