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Introduction

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The topic explored in this volume has stirred up much debate in the last few decades. The idea that the sea can maintain a privileged relationship with human societies, that claims can be expressed and legitimated based on such non-normative elements as individual biographies and their trajectories, or knowledge of place names and their origins, has recently been taken up with a great deal of interest. There are many reasons for this surge in attention. Increasingly, indigenous minorities are staking claims as they seek to preserve or restore their rights on maritime environments to which they have close ties. State recognition of these claims entails political and legal translations. Inter-state disputes over maritime territorial expansion have proliferated. And finally, environmental crisis raises new issues, and calls for new types of practical response and negotiation. As an unprecedented climate emerges around maritime questions, the sea is, more than ever before, permeated by human affairs. Social anthropologists, whose attention to the sea was previously quite timorous, are becoming more keenly interested in the socialization of maritime space.

“Maritime anthropology,” as it was defined in North America and Europe at the turn of the 1970s-1980s, was, indeed, long defined by its marginal position in the intellectual and anthropological landscape. This belated interest seems to be rooted, at least in part, in the connotations of strangeness and ambivalence that Western thought attributed to the sea. Until recently, the concept of the sea as a human space, marked by cultural diversity, was stubbornly resisted. Perceived instead as a homogeneous space, as “*veuf de routes*,” (“widow of the ways”) (Detienne and Vernant, 1974: 275) and as “irremediably wild” (Corbin, 2010:75), the sea was viewed as refractory to any form of “domestication.” Such otherness could be made legible only through semantic or epistemological comparison with the more familiar terrestrial environment. This land/sea dialectic is omnipresent in early maritime anthropology; this emerges clearly through a close reading of its pioneering texts.¹ That said; the continental referent is mobilized in varying ways. Some authors emphasize continuities between land and sea. Others, conversely, introduce a radical break – one that is both ontological and epistemological – between these environments. In the first instance, the sea is defined as an extension of continental space; it thus also takes up its social structures. To think through and define maritime space, some scholars have projected the logics of peas-

ant communities onto the sea and seafarers (Breton, 1981:8) or made a connection between fishing and hunting activities (Pálsson, 1988; Barnes, 1996). Others, adopting a position of epistemological monism, reduce perceptions of the sea to replicas of continental schemata. By contrast, for the second group of authors, understanding the sea entails a revelation of its radical strangeness. In their work, the maritime environment, described as “hostile,” “unpredictable,” “dangerous” and “alien”,² gives rise to specific social, technical, economic and symbolic structures. Sharing key features across maritime societies, these differ significantly from the structures of other societies, thus calling for a specific common analytical framework.³

Until recently, the law also approached the sea through its radical otherness from the continent.⁴ In this respect, Grotius’ *Mare Liberum* (translated as *The Free Sea* or as *The Freedom of the Seas*) had a durable influence on Western representations. In it, the sea is defined as a “commons,” over which there can be no ownership or jurisdiction. Like the air we breathe, “unlimited in its substance and its uses”, the sea cannot, Grotius argued, become the exclusive possession of any nation. It should therefore remain a space of free transit. This principle was particularly hard to dislodge given the apparent impossibility of delimiting and defending maritime space due to its inherent qualities: “How can one take possession of waves and swell? How can one trace permanent borders on a liquid space, imprint palpable marks into it?” (Cauchy, 1862: 95).⁵

This distinction, between “lands which can become property and the ocean, which is not subjected to such rights” is a defining feature of what Ruddle and Akimichi (1984) call “Western philosophy.” Other human societies, however, relate to the sea on the basis of fundamentally different paradigms. Many perceive the sea not as a hostile world but as an open space, as made up of pathways and transmission. This is a sea to which fishers relate through embodied, sensory and affective ties, and which they can master only by reading its natural clues (fluctuation of the tide, water colour, motion of the stars).⁶ Surely, then, it is incongruous to view maritime space, and the relationships of non-Western societies with the sea, through the lens of property. By automatically resorting to this concept, interpretation risks obscuring ontologies that cannot be understood in terms of confrontation with, and domination over, the natural world. Indeed, most of the chapters in this volume describe ways of relating to the sea that diverge quite fundamentally from the concepts usually associated with “ownership.” Maritime space is not generally delimited in a fixed way; rarely is it marked by tangible boundaries, exclusivity of use, or any major alteration (Locke, 1984). Rather than refer to the concept of “property” – which cannot account for the wide variety of ties forged between societies and maritime environments – the contributors to this volume seek to describe these relationships in all their singularity. When needed, they develop new terms to adequately describe specific ethnographic situations. This volume thus heeds Bambridge’s call to engage in a reflection on the “fundamental nuance (...) in meaning to be given to the term “property” (...) total ‘cultural invention of the West.’” The chapter by Howard and Frances Morphy is perhaps the best illustration of such a

reflection. They describe how, in aboriginal communities' representations of the sea, maritime territory is configured as a set of trajectories rather than as a delimited and concentric space. Here, any form of territorial control or belonging must be justified not by a human transformation of the environment, but on the basis of the wanderings of an ancestral being. This suggests that, with respect to how some human communities relate to maritime space, the concept of appropriation can only be made heuristically useful if it is rethought as a form of mutual belonging or co-substantiality.

If the concept of "property" is, as it seems, so inadequate to the task of defining relationships between maritime societies and their environments in non-Western cultures, then how can we account for the recent, unprecedented proliferation of claims staked on maritime "territories"? Do these claims not imply some form of territorial appropriation, in that demands are made, by indigenous communities, for some form of exclusivity of use to which only the notion of property can guarantee effective rights? This volume brings two elements to bear on these questions. Its chapters all point out, in some way or another, that over the last centuries, Western and non-Western paradigms have become inextricably linked and mutually defined. Through continuous interaction, they have grown interdependent. Identities are thus, very often, defined on the basis either of their fundamental opposition or of their complementarity. Only the attentive historical study of places and communities, through colonial and post-colonial times, can bring into view, as these chapters do, the dynamic interactions between these paradigms that shape representations of the sea – and the impossibility of addressing them separately. The globalization of economic and ecological problems is a second element accounting for the emergence of a shared lexicon of property-related concepts. Indeed, this process has a particularly heavy impact on coastal and island communities. They face economic and political pressures from both industrial firms and states seeking to impose nationwide development programs. This means that if they are to obtain any meaningful recognition of their claims, these must be formulated in normative legal terminology. In other words, a normative translation of qualitative relationships with the sea is necessary. Whether this translation is mediated by indigenous populations themselves (Martinez Mauri) or by the anthropologists they enrol (Morphy and Morphy, Guevara and Le bonniec), power over maritime space is clearly increasingly constructed and redefined through close interaction between paradigms.

Our intention in this volume is *not* to cover the entire range of debates and reflections that have placed maritime environments at the heart of geopolitical, environmental and sociological processes. Instead, it seeks to offer an illustrative sample of studies. In these, we take specific situations – those of given communities, themes or ecosystems – as collective our point of departure. Such local "entry points" in no way reduce this volume's scope of analysis, as is clearly shown by the rich diversity in its authors' terminology. Indeed, their concerns vary widely. Some attend to local representations of maritime space perceived as a "seascape" and on the idiosyncratic, symbolic or cognitive meanings that are invested in it. Others instead focus on how the sea

is approached as a resource generator and as a subject of “traditional management.” Moreover, they address a sea that is viewed in different ways, defined, for example, in relation to its terrestrial counterpart, as “marine-land tenure” (Calinaud, 1993 cited by Bambridge), or as a territory to be claimed (Le Bonniec and Guevara).

The themes addressed in this volume are crosscutting, making it difficult to divide its chapters into distinct headings. Instead, we opted for a flexible structure, from which a thread gradually unfolds. A first set of chapters (Morphy and Morphy, Artaud) illustrates how heterogeneous premises – cosmological, social, and epistemological – frame human societies’ relationships with the sea. Because these tenets are multiple and idiosyncratic, the challenge is to grasp their diversity but also how, at the same time, they address a shared contemporary goal: the “rational” management and use of fishery resources (Ruddle and Aswani). The second set of contributions (Bambridge, Boutry and Ivanoff, Cormier-Salem) explores, from social and legislative perspectives, the dialectic between maritime and terrestrial spaces. They reveal how these spaces are connected by dense human traffic, involving a large range of actors and resulting in remarkably flexible identities. The chapters in the last section (Doyon, Martinez Mauri, Le Bonniec and Guevara) point out how even highly singular ways of appropriating maritime space can be absorbed into – by surrendering to or mutually reinforcing – national policies.

The first part, entitled “Roots and Efficacy of Maritime Tenure”, begins with the text of Morphy and Morphy. It offers a revealing glimpse of how, in some societies, maritime space is imbued with subjectivities and thus inextricably connected to a collective mythological worldview. Perceptions of the sea such as those of Yolngu communities (northern Australia) would be, they show, impossible to understand in isolation from their underlying social, mythological and epistemological values. These values not only give meaning to the seascape. The seascape is also, in a way, their materialization. In its minute textures, in every reef and sandbar, the seascape bears the footprints of ancestral beings, whose original journeys distinguish one clan’s territory from another’s. The sharing out of tribal space thus does not proceed by subdivision into bounded zones. Rather, it operates as an interlinking of trajectories, between which some space is left vacant. The wanderings of these ancestral being cuts across terrestrial and maritime space, extending into the sea. These territorial configurations run counter to Western assumptions, perhaps in part because, for Yolngu communities, there is no real break between land and sea: “the coast seems to be an arbitrary boundary.” Indeed, the main heuristic distinction here is not between land and sea, but rather between fresh water and salt water, which interact in “dynamic interrelationship.” Thus the landscape is discerned, and expressed, as “bodies of water.” Each is associated with a specific clan. Allocation of space among clans is not the only function of this definition of the landscape. Its arrangements and crisscrossing trajectories also prescribe the ways in which social relations are to be initiated and strengthened. Just as the landscape bears witness to the journeys and encounters of ancestral beings, it also, as the authors

show, instructs communities as to how they should forge alliances, privileging links between clans whose mythic beings are joined together. The maritime landscape is thus both narration and injunction, which can be deciphered only through each clan's cosmology. This is what the Morphys call an "eco-mythology."

In Artaud's chapter, the sea as scape is associated, not, as above, with an origin myth, but rather with a shared perceptual and sensory relationship. The genesis and maintenance of this relationship can be understood through a careful analysis of local marine toponymy. The place-names of the Banc d'Arguin form a sophisticated apparatus, which is effective on two levels. Most obviously, it provides a set of detailed clues about the maritime environment, enabling those who pass through the sea to acquire some hold over it. Yet this toponymy also creates a space of shared memories and sensibilities among the communities who have elaborated its vocabulary. To understand how topological terms act on Imrâgen fisher communities' perceptions of the maritime environment, it is essential to move beyond their remarkable diversity in order to discern, through typological consistencies, their underlying logic. This is the analytical move this chapter aims to make. It thus offers an ethnographic illustration of how collective memory is preserved and reactivated through the specificities of the maritime environment. Echoing the Morphys' use of the term "eco-mythology" to describe how territory is manifested in mythical narratives, Artaud calls this foundation of Imrâgen communities' relationships with the maritime environment an "eco-aesthesia." By this she means a way of connecting self and environment by adjusting, through sensory and embodied mediations, to the singularities of its terrain and ecosystems. Far from being a fixed terminology, the Imrâgen toponymical system is, Artaud points out, highly flexible. She shows in particular how place names have been able to incorporate new referents that have arisen as a result of sociological and legislative changes, notably those initiated by the creation of Banc d'Arguin National Park.

A key question in contemporary debates is about how paradigms of nature coexist and interact. Two paradigms appear, today, as distinct. The first, founded on holistic tenets such as those briefly described above, is associated with local or "indigenous" peoples' representations of nature. The second, the "ecological" paradigm, is more normative, and adopts, by and large, the principles of Western Science. In their chapters, Ruddle and Aswani call for a more careful examination of this articulation. Indeed, they open pathways between a "local" sea, which can only be understood through its cultural, symbolic, embodied or affective underpinnings, and a "rational" sea, constructed as a space to be administered by global policies of resource conservation. Through these openings, the affective and sociological dimensions of communities' engagements with the sea are vested with potential ecological efficacy by taking the form of "traditional resource management systems."

Current interest in the potential "ecological functionality" (Artaud, 2015) of traditional mechanisms emerged from two major, successive shifts in Western thought that took place in the past few decades. The first was a re-legitimation of "traditional" or "local"

representations of the environment, whose epistemological validity was, until recently, discredited. The generalization of this position is illustrated by the widespread use of acronyms such as TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge), LEK (Local EK)⁷ and FEK (Fishers' EK). The second shift was initiated by discussions that arose around the "tragedy of the commons," as Hardin entitled his landmark article (1968). Although serious attention was being paid to TEK, LEK and FEK, there was still a lack of evidence for the efficacy of traditional mechanisms in preserving and regulating natural resources. On this point, discussions about the "commons" seem to have made a significant impact. Refuting Hardin's thesis, according to which only private management could guarantee resource conservation, work by Johannes, Hviding and Ruddle instead demonstrated that common principles and responsibilities were, by and large, capable of restricting and containing overexploitation. Mechanisms such as reef and lagoon tenure are effective because of the limits they define. These can be spatial (delimiting between spaces where fishing is allowed and those where it is proscribed) or temporal (circumscribing the *times* when fishing is permitted). Both regulate the use and extraction of maritime resources. Ruddle's chapter, also reprinted here, describes the wide range of forms of "limitation" and "delimitation" found in traditional tenure systems, and which have a potential for significantly impact on resource management. Here, Ruddle aims, following Orstom, to identify invariable elements operating across traditional management systems. He finds that two principles, which he categorizes as "spatial boundaries" and "social boundaries," tend to consistently structure traditional maritime tenure systems. Within the first category, Ruddle discerns a typology of spaces such as fishing territories, sacred sea space, and integrated resource territories (held jointly by a kinship-based group). Though these spaces may overlap, a clear distinction is made between their respective functions. Ruddle also elucidates a typology among social boundaries, consisting of primary and secondary rights that define rules of access to the sea and guarantee its conservation. While showing how common principles subtend traditional mechanisms, Ruddle's main emphasis is on the permeability of the boundaries that structure these mechanisms and on the flexibility of the use rights they uphold. By emphasizing these systems' mutability, Ruddle also engages in a critical analysis of the concept of "property." In marine tenure systems, the concept of "property" applies not only to territorial wholes, but also, in some cases, to more specific parts and elements such as reef zones, spawning grounds, nursing areas, as well as fishing techniques and even species with which a group has a particular affinity. By pointing out the variety of objects that can be brought under some form of hold or control, Ruddle thus highlights the flexibility of "physical and biological boundaries [which] are not immutable," and the dynamic nature of fishing systems as they contend with a globalized economy.

If such codified modalities of access to fishery resources are indeed effective for ensuring their conservation and renewal, then there is little point in "reinvent[ing] the wheel and attempt[ing] to impose a state plan of command and control "(Aswani, 2012). Instead of imposing rules that populations are likely to perceive as authoritarian

and coercive, many managers of protected spaces have thus sought to maintain or to reinstate what they interpret to be traditional forms of management. Such processes of conciliation and hybridization between traditional and modern systems for managing protected spaces are the focus of Aswani's chapter. These, as he points out, are not always easy. Given the heterogeneous foundations of traditional mechanisms – which, as noted above, can be social, mythological or embodied – methodological obstacles tend to arise in their application to standardized contexts. R.E. Johannes and B. Neis (2007) found that such obstacles result not only from the internal structures of local knowledge. They also emerge from the sometimes trivial, often anecdotic, language with which this knowledge is communicated. Transferring knowledge is challenging because, essentially, it is anchored in radically different paradigms, which are, in turn, underpinned by explanatory systems that are just as heterogeneous. Because traditional mechanisms fuse ecological and mythical (eco-mythology), ecological and sensory (eco-aesthesia), or ecological and social dimensions, their manipulation and application is problematic. Yet, the very symbolic, religious and sociological foundations from which maritime tenure is so difficult to extricate are exactly what make it work, ensuring its respect and preservation. The destruction or displacement of a single element is enough to unbalance the whole system. Recently, however, a confluence of factors has worked to erode these traditions, from the impact of colonization to sociological changes such as urbanization and the arrival of new religions. As traditional power loses legitimacy, there is an inevitable weakening of mechanisms that once had a major, sometimes irreversible, role in structuring space. Although Aswani acknowledges these problems and sources of resistance, he also points to elements within traditional mechanisms that facilitate or even elicit connections between these and modern forms of management and knowledge. There are, he argues, several points of compatibility between traditional and modern systems. There are also qualities inherent to the first that are conducive to their successful association with modern management models. Among these, the most crucial is clearly a capacity for self-transformation in the face of the changing contexts and successive disruptions brought about by colonial and post-colonial jurisdiction.

Some traditional mechanisms are more suited than others to being applied within the framework fishery resources management policies. A good example is a "*rahui*," which refers to a restriction placed on the consumption of a good for a specified duration. Like all practices based on a traditional "taboo," this type of restriction works, directly or indirectly, to regulate anthropic pressures (sometimes through their temporary suspension) on the natural environment. It is thus very tempting to ascribe an ecological teleology to *rahui*. Indeed, many marine protected areas in the Pacific (Hoffman 2002) have chosen to maintain or to reintroduce *rahui* as a means of promoting stricter adherence to the legal restrictions adopted by administrations. It is not the intention of the Bambridge text that opens the second part of the volume entitled "The dialectic of land/sea spaces". His main goal is not to show how *rahui* have been newly appropri-

ated by conservation policies. Instead, he draws on the example of *rahui* to question the validity of the concept of “property” as deployed by the French administration. Indeed, he emphasizes just how inadequate the logic of appropriation is, still today, in describing the ways in which many Polynesian societies relate to the “land” and to the natural environment. Here, the individual is as much possessed by, as possessor of, “nature.” The land/sea binary, which also underpins French legislation, similarly lacks relevance at the local level. Like the concept of property, it diverges from the principles by which these communities govern their natural environment. Indeed, *rahui* can be applied to both terrestrial and maritime zones, mobilizing the same modalities (access rights, extractive rights, penalties for violations and relevant jurisdictions). In pointing this out, Bambridge exposes the contingency of the land/sea delimitation. He thus poses a key question – about how maritime and terrestrial spaces are connected in non-Western representations – in new ways, as part of a broader reflection on the compatibility, and the modes of articulation and integration of divergent paradigms over time. Legal pluralism – that is, a legislative order in which heterogeneous juridical entities are combined without being forced to fuse – is, he concludes, the only real solution to this problem of coexistence.

Connections between terrestrial and maritime spaces are also the focus of Boutry and Ivanoff’s contribution, but they explore these in light of complex sociological and symbolic stakes rather than legislative issues. Here, again, they describe sea that departs from Western representations of a closed and wild space that basically leans against terrestrial space. Instead, land and sea are interdependent. By exploring the deployment and renewal, within this land/sea relation, of local social, economic, matrimonial, ritual and symbolic interactions, they reveal how modes of sociality are intrinsically tied to this interdependence. This process of continuous interchange has, indeed, structured the very identity of those who inhabit this space nomadically – of which the iconic example is the Moken people. Their relationship with the sea cannot be understood in an autarchic way, that is, in isolation from the relationships they form with the land. On the contrary, it is through their close ties to the land, which are embedded in a symbiotic economy and system of alliances with its inhabitants, that they relate to the sea. The couples that form within this social dialectic are so intimately and “structurally linked” that they co-develop adaptation strategies. These are based on a segmental dynamism, anchored in structural dualism, which make up increasingly expansive wholes. Like all segmental logics, this interplay of opposites, which distinguishes Moken (“people of the islands”) from Moklen (“people of the interior”), or Moken (marine nomads) from Burmese fisher communities (a society of agriculturalists who only recently converted to fishing), is at once constitutive of fluid identities and a condition for maintaining the specificity by which they differentiate themselves.

In these chapters, the sea thus appears far-removed from Corbin’s “space of emptiness,” (*territoire du vide*, 1989). It is instead a space pervaded with sociability, stakes and actors, whose coexistence and interdependence are crucial to its analysis. This

applies also to maritime spaces that were long dismissed as marginal. In her contribution, Cormier-Salem reveals the surprisingly dense relational network of an ecosystem that was, until recently, associated with deviance in Western thought. This seems to be linked to a blurring of the land/sea distinction in this space, often erasing the disjunctive categories that normally differentiate between the maritime and the terrestrial. Mangroves, which the Diola of Casamance describe as “the amphibian *terroir* of peasant-fishers,” have generally been portrayed in Western thought as a liminal space, defined by their inherently ambivalent nature and by the instability and versatility of their landscape. Menacing and unhealthy, they were to be eradicated or converted. Many peoples, as Cormier-Salem points out, have, however, approached mangroves as spaces of domestication. These lend themselves to specific usages, representations – oriented by complex beliefs and epistemologies – and a form of socialisation that she links to the concept of “grabbing” (Benett *et al*, 2005). By using a broad comparative framework of analysis, cutting across both time (extending from the colonial period to the recent past) and space (moving between Casamance and Vietnam, *via* Madagascar and South Carolina), Cormier-Salem manages to identify parallel transformations and drivers of change among mangrove ecosystems. Redefined from periphery to heritage, mangroves now count among the spaces to be conserved and protected. Reinvented as sources of both ecological and economic benefits, these maritime spaces are being refashioned amid a proliferation of sometimes convergent, sometimes conflicting stakes (environmental, economic and political), pursued by a wide range of actors as they seek to acquire or strengthen legitimacy.

The last part of this volume, entitled “Maritime Ontologies: From Erasure to Visibility in Public Policies”, highlights the remarkably wide range of issues (economic and patrimonial) that now characterize maritime space and which unequally benefit the “local” communities. Some continue to be marginalized, perhaps even increasingly so. Others, however, have instead gained new visibility and recognition by virtue of their longstanding ties to the sea. Doyon’s contribution describes how both economic and ecological policies shape how human communities relate to their natural environment, notably by constraining their fields of practice. She illustrates this impact through a comparative and diachronic analysis of three “emblematic” species: the beluga whale, the eel, and the Atlantic sturgeon. All three have been intensively fished in the Saint Lawrence Estuary, but this exploitation has been either restricted or stimulated under the influence of different interests. Economic stakes periodically redraw the contours of the maritime environment by directing fishing practices and anthropic pressures towards certain species, which are then, according to the same logic, excluded from conservation policies. Doyon thus questions the notion of a unified Western bloc by revealing its core contradictions, as well as the contingency and antagonism of the tenets on which it rests. Maritime spaces are thus caught up between economic policies that generate intensive environmental pressures and conservation policies that redraw the rules of access to resources on the basis of opaque principles; between the

environmental damage inflicted by industrial firms and the tourism industry's marketing of the landscape. In this process of continuous redefinition of the sea, its main users, namely fishers, most often feel dispossessed and excluded.

This is in striking contrast with the situations described in the following chapters by Martinez Mauri, and by Le Bonniec and Guevara. Here, sensory representations and "ontologies" of communities who were once discounted by national policies now occupy a central position in the political landscape. Each chapter examines the case of an indigenous people whose maritime territorial rights have been formally recognized, and enshrined in legislation, by their respective states of Panama and Chile. Martinez Mauri charts the interactions of the Gunas people with their maritime environment over time. She follows this history from a relatively recent settlement of the insular zone, prompted by new economic opportunities generated by the 19th century surge in demand for coconut, up to the official recognition of the Panamanian State. She thus describes the unfolding of a process of socialization of the environment, enacted through its tangible alteration and constant negotiations with the spiritual entities that inhabit it. Gradually, these interactions imbued the Gunas animist ontology with a maritime quality. Outlining the extensive scope of Gunas communities' knowledge of marine species, Martinez Mauri shows that this knowledge cannot be dissociated from the affective and inter-subjective relationships they cultivate with the non-human world. This is a universe that has been socialized by considerable effort, using multiple forms of competence and limitation. This is recognized in article 205 of the region's Basic Law, which gives the Gunas exclusive rights to the exploitation of their territory's resources. This sovereignty, however, may yet be jeopardized as new realities emerge, from the development of tourism to climate change.

Le Bonniec and Guevara's chapter addresses the lengthy process that led to the promulgation, in 2008, of the "Lakfenche Law," which gives the "original peoples" of Chile legal rights to marine coastal space. Here, perhaps even more than in previous chapters, the authors show how deeply politics and ontology have become entangled and trace the making of these connections. Obtaining recognition of the Lakfenche communities' territorial rights did not happen without struggle. As is often the case, their claims were staked in response to abusive exploitation of the territory; in this instance, they were prompted by the Celulosa Arauco y Constitución (CELCO) firm's plans to construct a pipeline. As they sought to legitimate their sovereignty, the Lakfenche updated an entire field of values, rituals and representations pertaining to the maritime landscape, which, in the past, had been passed down from one generation to the next. This is a particularly striking example of how power relations can shift, sometimes to the advantage of indigenous peoples. It also shows that conflict between antagonistic models of nature – one oriented towards short-term profit and economic development, and the other forged as part of an affective relationship with nature, from which "permission" for any form of extraction must be obtained via dedicated entities – can in fact be resolved in favour of the latter, more singular one. Like all the contributors to this

volume, Lebonniec and Guevara underline the dynamic, flexible and resilient nature of traditions, their openness to renewal and reconfiguration. In this example, these dynamics compelled a state that was formerly defined by its staunch monoculturalism to surrender to new principles.

Until quite recently, Western models dominated ideas about the sea. In parallel, they contributed to a gradual dissolution of the forms of domestication cultivated by the communities who inhabit maritime space. In the past few decades, however, a striking reversal seems to have taken place. This does not necessarily entail a “return” to original principles, for these have been buried deeply by a series of disruptions (colonialism, independence, developmental or conservationist policies). Rather, this shift seems to be opening up a middle path: a new space of reflection that is both scientific and political, and in which singular ways of relating to nature, and specifically to the sea, can acquire legitimacy without necessitating translation into extraneous normative categories. This is what the unprecedented scholarly interest in TEK seems to suggest, as does the emergence of the concept of cosmopolitics in the political and legal fields. To define this new paradigm, innovative conceptual and methodological tools are needed. This, clearly, is the emerging challenge for maritime anthropology. ○

Notes

- 1 Smith, 1977; Mollat, 1979; Poggie 1980; Acheson, 1981; Breton, 1981 ; Palsson, 1989; Geistdoerfer, 2007.
- 2 “The sea is a dangerous and alien environment” (Acheson, 1981 :175)
- 3 Following Malinowski, who accounted for a widespread use of magic and rituals by pointing to the fear generated by maritime environments (1948:30-31), Acheson (1981: 278) and McGoodwin approach the economic structures of fisher communities as a response to the fluctuations and unpredictability of catches, while Poggie and Pollnac (1988) locate the slow process by which the maritime environment alters humans at the level of individual psychologies, in the fashioning of common features.
- 4 Maritime law was thus long limited to this principle of freedom of the seas, which was open to all and directly owned by no one, except for a band of three nautical miles (equal to the range of a cannonball at the time) of shoreline over which coastal states exercised their full sovereignty. It is only much later, with the Geneva Convention (1958) and the Montego Bay Convention (1982), that spaces were defined in which common and differentiated rules applied.
- 5 In the original French: “Comment prendre possession des vagues et des flots ? Comment tracer des frontières permanentes sur l’élément liquide, y imprimer des traces sensibles (...) ?”
- 6 “When a Puluwatan speaks of the ocean the words he uses refer not to an amorphous expanse of water but rather to the assemblage of seaways which lie between the various islands. Together these seaways constitute the ocean he knows and understands. Seen in this way Puluwat ceases to be a solitary spot of dry land; it takes its place in a familiar constellation of islands linked together by pathways on the ocean” (Gladwin, 1970: 33-34).
- 7 “(...) a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment. Further, TEK is an attribute of societies with historical continuity in resource use practices; by and large, these are non-industrial or less technologically advanced societies, many of them indigenous or tribal” (Berkes, 1993).

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