

16th International Symposium on Boat and Ship Archaeology (ISBSA 16)

Paper and presentation abstract

Title: “The dugout canoe from São Tomé and Príncipe. The results of an archaeological mission.”

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Abstract:

The aim of the paper is to show the results of a research mission (in the scope of CONCHA³ project) carried out in early 2020 before the global pandemic covid-19. In a scenario far from our world, we went to collect the traces of wooden construction on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. A tradition to be ended either because the trees have retreated from the coast and it is increasingly difficult to find the right species, or because the youngest do not wish to learn this art, or even because fiberglass stands out as more durable, safe and stable material. The work carried out here deals with the study of Santomean canoes, seeking to document and understand their manufacturing process, from the cutting of the tree to its use over the water. It is, therefore, a work related to ethnography, maritime and nautical archaeology. This symbiosis resulted from the need to register traditions, lifestyles and vessels that are rapidly disappearing. It is in this context that this study appears: analytical and comparative of a forgotten island reality that struggles daily to survive and stay afloat.

³CONCHA Project, “The construction of early modern global Cities and oceanic networks in the Atlantic: An approach via Ocean’s Cultural Heritage”, <http://www.cham.fcs.unl.pt/ext/concha/project.html>