

CHIBCHA LEGENDS IN COLOMBIAN LITERATURE

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We hereby recommend that the **thesis** prepared under
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PREFACE

La légende traduit les
sentiments réels des peuples.

Gustav Le Bon

For centuries the golden treasure of the pre-conquest inhabitants of Colombia, South America, has captured man's imagination. The various legends of El Dorado led to the exploration of half of the South American continent and the discovery of the Amazon River. It also lured Sir Walter Raleigh on the ill-fated expedition that finally cost him his head in the tower of London.

These legends have inspired Colombia's men of letters and interested such foreign writers as Milton, Voltaire, and Andrés Bello. Although it is true that the imaginative and psychological aspects of the legends are of particular interest to the student of a foreign culture, a legend may contain elements of historical truth also. Since these legends provide insight into the early history of Colombia, an effort to find and preserve them has been made. While doing research for this thesis I spent eight years in the land of the Chibcha Indians collecting the legends. In some cases I obtained on-the-spot interviews with survivors of the Chibcha people and recorded on tape the stories as they have been handed down

from generation to generation. The recording was done in the Chibcha homeland which today comprises the provinces of Cundinamarca and Boyacá. The National Library of Bogotá and the Angel Arango Library also provided me with valuable written material on the Chibcha legends.

Among the pre-conquest tribes of what is today the Republic of Colombia the most important was that of the Chibchas. One must search far into the history of any country before one encounters so varied and rich a folklore as that which exists among the descendants of these Indians.

In this thesis I shall present the legends which I collected in the manner described above, and then show how the stories have been used by various Colombian writers to enrich the national literature.

To understand more fully the legends of the Chibcha Indians it is necessary to know something of Chibcha history, religion, and cultural development. It is with this end in view that I have devoted the first chapter of the thesis to a brief study of the Chibcha nation as a particular pre-Colombian culture.

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LECCIÓN LÍRICA DE COLOMBIA

Abro este mapa de Colombia, y toco
su cuerpo como isla rodeada
por los mares eternos de Balboa y Colón
y por el mar inmóvil de los Llanos.
Su cuerpo que desciende de esas aguas
... como diques de roca y de verdura ...
Los cíclopes callados de los Andes.
Su cuerpo que semeja un barco cuya proa
es la Goajira, donde se confunden
el coral y la perla con la sal,
llanura y el bosque con el indio y la sed.

Aquí una raza oscura y misteriosa
esculpió la leyenda de El Dorado
al crear en sus manos el milagro
de su desnuda y clara orfebrería.
Aquí duerme su sueño de doncella
la esmeralda que piensa que es un mar sumergido.

Esta es Colombia, en medio de sus altas montañas
como joya esculpida por los indios
está Zipaquirá con su aire de égloga
y su iglesia brotada de la sal ...
... Surtidor invertido, el Tequendama
volando entre las menos de la brisa.¹

¹Oscar Echeverri Mejía, Viaje a la Niebla (Madrid: Ediciones Agora, 1958), pp. 29-30.

I. THE CHIBCHA NATION

Soy gajo de árbol caído
que no sé donde cayó.
¿Dónde estarán mis raíces?
¿De qué árbol soy gajo yo?

Yo no sé dónde nací
ni sé tampoco quién soy;
no sé de dónde he venido,
ni sé para dónde voy.

(Cantares de Boyacá)¹

The Chibcha people entered their region of the New World from the northwest and advanced southward remaining in different parts of the continent.² Some continued as far south as Colombia, but the majority of the Chibchas settled in the Eastern Cordillera in the departments of Cundinamarca and Boyacá. These valiant travelers climbed from the coast to an altitude of 9,000 feet in the Andes Mountains to make their homes.

The Indians called themselves Muyscas. The Spaniards called them Chibchas which means "people" in the Chibcha language. They were an important part of our American history for, as we shall see, they created a vital civilization

¹Quiñones O. Pardo, Interpretación de la poesía popular (Bogotá: Bibliografía de folklore colombiana, 1947), p. 40.

²Authorities differ in opinions but this one is widely accepted.

which was destroyed by the Spanish Conquest. The Chibcha Indians were progressing toward an advanced political organization, but their absorption in religion and the time they spent in paying tribute to their gods left them little time for the development of an effective military force capable of resisting the Spanish invaders. They were, on the whole, a peaceful group, seldom engaging even in ritual warfare against their neighbors. There was no army, and this is one of the reasons they were so easily subdued by the conquistadores.

Cundinamarca, which means "Land of the Condor," was the state of the Chibcha Indians. It included all the mountainous region of the present states of Cundinamarca and Boyacá. This territory is one hundred and fifty miles long and forty miles wide. To the north is the Sogamoso River, and to the south is the barrier formed by the range of mountains, Suma-Paz. To the west is the river Magdalena, and to the east are the vast llanos where the Chibchas almost never ventured because of the high mountain ranges which they would have had to cross.¹

The region in which the Chibchas chose to live is a green paradise the year round. The soil is fertile since most of the valleys had been lake bottoms. As Juan de

¹For Chibcha territory see Colombian map, Appendix A.

Castellanos, the first chronicler of the Indians, wrote:

¡Tierra buena! ¡Tierra buena!
 Tierra de oro, tierra abastecida.
 Tierra de bendición, clara y serena,
 Tierra que pone fin a nuestra pena.¹

And later, a Colombian writer, Martin García Mérou wrote his impressions:

. . . Aquel era el país de los chibchas, el más opulento y el más civilizado que habían encontrado hasta entonces, con sus verdes sementeras, sus poblaciones indígenas, los palacios de sus caciques, la fecundidad de sus campos y la abundancia de sus aguas.²

The Chibcha inhabitants of the area were short, sturdy, and strong people with large, brown, intelligent, slanting eyes, and high cheek bones.³ The males, like all American Indians, were virtually beardless. A Colombian poet, Elvira Lascarro, describes the physical appearance of the Chibcha in these words:

RETRATO DE UN COLOMBIANO

Es el símbolo vivo de la raza vencida,
 descendiente de aquellos que humilló el español,
 al mirar su tristeza en las aguas dormidas
 o en los Andes altivos, cuando ocúltase el sol.

¹José Pérez de Barradas, Los muisca antes de la conquista, Vol. II (Madrid: Instituto Investigaciones Científicas, 1950), p. 186.

²Juan Valera, Cartas americanas (Madrid: 1888), p. 173.

³For a modern look at the Indian read poem in Appendix B.

Siempre tranquilo y mudo y siempre pensativo,
 copió de sus paisajes la augusta soledad;
 y es triste su cielo, que está gris y cautivo
 entre las altas sierras que guardan su heredad.¹

Although the Chibchas, as a separate blood strain, have almost ceased to exist, one can distinguish Chibcha traits in members of the Colombian populace by two distinct characteristics: large, open nostrils, and wide mouths. Miguel Triana, who devoted many years to the study of the Indians, believes that these characteristics may be explained as follows:

En 16 aspiraciones por minuto, un adulto ingiere en su organismo para las funciones vitales 3425 gramos diarios de oxígeno al nivel del mar y solamente 2525 bajo la presión atmosférica de la altiplanicie; lo que representaría una merma alimenticia de 900 gramos diarios, con el consiguiente detrimento en las actividades cerebrales. Para restablecer el equilibrio funcional, la lucha de adaptación impone una modificación biológica a fin de aumentar el fuelle respiratorio y la capacidad torácica, así como el sistema circulatorio. Para que durante el mismo tiempo penetre al pulmón mayor cantidad de aire, se necesitan puertas de entrada de mayor magnitud: por este motivo las ventanillas de la nariz y la boca de los indios del altiplano deben ser más grandes que las de los hombres habituados a una presión atmosférica mayor.²

To protect themselves from the cold, damp climate at 8,000 to 9,000 feet above sea level, the Indians wore a covering of animal hides which covered their entire bodies

¹Elvira Lascarro, Roble y Clavel (Bogotá: Imprenta de la hora, 1952), p. 62.

²Miguel Triana, La civilización chibcha (Bogotá: Escuela Salesana, 1919), pp. 22-23.

to the feet. Shoes were unknown. For their fiestas the Chibchas adorned themselves with golden jewelry of great value: tiaras, large rings, coverings for the ears to defend them from the cold, bracelets, necklaces, pins, all of which reveal a high degree of artistic genius. There was an abundance of gold in the Chibcha realm. They covered the walls of their temples with golden objects and filled the graves with golden jewelry. From sheets of the metal the Indians made eating utensils, thread, concave bells, filigrees, pipes, and buckets. Moreover, they knew how to gild and veneer with gold. The technique used to manufacture objects of gold reveals the high development of their crafts and is a tribute to their delicate perception of beauty.

The Indians melted the gold with herbs in crucets which they heated in clay ovens. The mixture of gold with herbs eliminated the natural impurities of the metal. The liquid was poured into the desired mold made from rock. Other than the rock molds the Chibchas used a paste of coal dust mixed with pure white earth. Afterwards, the mold was baked for durability.¹

The Chibcha also had his domestic ceramics--clay jars in which to carry water and large vessels in which to wash. The rudimentary pottery was the beginning of an art

¹See Appendix C for an exposition of Colombian art in the United States.

that became beautiful as well as useful. Human figures, made of clay in which the facial features and the sex of the individual are clearly delineated, have excited the admiration of modern artists. (Figure 1, page 8.)

Besides pottery, the Indian made musical instruments from clay. The whistles the Chibchas blew during religious ceremonies and the short flutes they played at ceremonial dances were made from clay that the Indians obtained in northern Boyacá. Many of the objects of clay discussed here can be admired today in the museum in Bogotá.

The principal food staples were corn, potatoes, and beans; corn was also the base of the alcoholic drink with which the Indians celebrated their fiestas. They called the drink chicha, and to prepare the beverage the men and the women chewed the corn and then spit the juice into a large clay pot. Afterwards the liquid was cooked, allowed to ferment, and later mixed with the juice from the sugar cane. Quiñones Pardo, a poet of the province of Boyacá, describes the effect of the drink in the following lines:

La chicha y el aguardiente
se pusieron a bailar,
y después de que bailaron
se pusieron a cantar.¹

¹Pardo, p. 35.



Figure 1.--Human figure made of clay

Along with the chicha the Chibchas chewed coca¹ and smoked tobacco. During their meals the Chibchas would eat honey with bread made from corn. They obtained wild honey from the hollow of tree trunks.

Crops such as corn, potatoes, and beans were cultivated by hand because there were no domestic animals, and the Chibchas depended on their prowess as hunters to provide meat. The soil was rich and productive but, because of the mountainous terrain, commerce with other people was limited. Some products were exchanged, however, with neighboring Indians along the Magdalena River. The Chibchas possessed salt mines and this valuable commodity was traded to their neighbors, giving rise to a widespread commercial system which may have reached as far north as Mexico.

Although the mountains were rich with ore and building material easy to work, the Chibchas did not leave a single architectural monument.² Theirs was a civilization in wood, in clay, and in gold. They believed that in gold there was force. The Chibchas had money which consisted of disks cast in molds. Not long ago some of the Chibcha

¹Coca is an herb chewed by the natives to deaden hunger pains.

²Archeologists have discovered the site of the Templo del Sol which apparently was an impressive construction, but since it was of wood and was burned, only charred remains of the foundations were left which can be studied.

gold objects were found in Mexico. Were they visiting neighbors? Doctor W. S. Root, professor at Columbia University, New York, made a study of the possible Colombian origin of the objects found in Mexico, and his conclusions were as follows:

El profesor W. S. Root está empleando los modernos electrónicos para determinar el origen de antiquísimos objetos de metal encontrados por los arqueólogos. El Señor Root ha estado trabajando por más de veinte años en el establecimiento del origen de varios objetos que guarda el museo Peabody.

Todos esos artículos ... discos trabajados a martillo, pendientes en forma de águila y figurinas diversas ... están hechos de una aleación de cobre y oro que se encuentran en Colombia.

Pero durante muchos años después de esos descubrimientos los hombres de ciencia arguyeron que les parecía improbable que Colombia, a más de 2.550 kilómetros de distancia, fuese el origen de estos objetos.

El profesor Root puso fin recientemente a la controversia cuando se valió de un espectroscopio para analizar los elementos presentes en la aleación de cobre y oro. Root descubrió cierto porcentaje de plata que definitivamente indicó que la procedencia de los objetos era Colombia.

Root dice que la identificación de los objetos encontrados en Yucatán prueba que los aborígenes de Colombia, entre los siglos XII y XV recorrieron una ruta de 2.500 kilómetros por la costa suramericana hacia el norte y llevaron consigo mercancías e ideas que trocaron con los aborígenes de la península mexicana del Caribe.¹

The Chibchas' homes were round kiosks covered with straw and with walls of clay. These small huts were

¹ Periódico El Tiempo, domingo 10 de abril de 1960, Bogotá, Colombia; Indios colombianos estuvieron en México hacia el siglo XII, p. 4 de Brunswick, Maine, abril 9 (UPI).

surrounded by a larger wall made of trunks of trees. (See figure 2, page 12.) The Indians slept in hammocks hung by each end to posts.

The Chibcha Indians now speak Spanish, for they have forgotten the language of their ancestors. Several grammars have been written, however, two of which have been used as references in this work: Ezequiel Uricoechea's Gramática chibcha (1860) and Joaquín Acosta Ortega's El idioma chibcha.

The earliest piece of literature belongs to the 16th century. The Chibchas left no written literature,¹ although rocks with mysterious pre-Spanish markings, painted with a red liquid have been found throughout their territory. These enigmatic symbols still baffle the archeologist. (See figure 3, page 13.) Juan de Castellanos in the 16th century wrote of these Chibcha signs:

Carecen de letras y caracteres antiguos
según las hieroglíficas figuras.
Que solían tener otras naciones
que les representaban por señales
los pretéritos acontecimientos.²

Nevertheless, it is only with the coming of the Spanish and the written alphabet that the high attainments of this remarkable civilization were recorded for posterity. Colombian writers from the earliest period have been fascinated by the

¹See Appendix D.

²Juan de Castellanos, Historia del reino de Nueva Granada (Tunja: 1589), p. 22.



Figure 2.--Chibcha Indian homes



Figure 3.--Chibcha drawings on rocks

civilization of their indigenous ancestors and many have attempted to bring the story of the Chibcha to a wider audience by using their legends and their history in Spanish Colombian literature.

II. WRITERS CONCERNED WITH CHIBCHA THEMES

The first historian of the Spanish Conquest in Colombia and the first white man to see the great kingdom that the Chibchas had built was Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada (1499-1579), but almost all that he wrote has been lost. Subsequent historians still refer, however, to Quesada's only extant manuscript, Memoria sobre los descubridores y conquistadores que entraron conmigo a descubrir este Nuevo Reino de Granada (1576). The Chibcha realm which Quesada describes became an important region of the Nuevo Reino de Granada.¹

The Spanish Conquest became a literary topic for many writers--among whom the most outstanding in Colombia was Juan de Castellanos (1523-1607). He was the first poet of Nueva Granada, and his Elegías de varones ilustres de indias (1589), which consists of 145,000 lines, constitutes one of the longest poems ever written. It is an episodic narrative filled with vivid descriptions of the Chibchas. Juan de Castellanos went to Bogotá when he was young and became a humanist and a writer. He made his home in the

¹For a Colombian's viewpoint on the manner in which Quesada conducted his historical discovery see Appendix E.

Chibcha capital, Tunja, where he finally became a priest. Many times Quesada and Castellanos discussed together the conditions of the Chibchas, for both men were astute observers of their customs. Of the two, Castellanos was the more sympathetic interpreter of the Indians. In his descriptions of them he wrote:

Tienen disposición y gallardía;
y es gente blanca, limpia y curiosa;
los rostros aguileños y facciones
de linda y agraciada compostura ...
... las que sirven a los españoles
es de maravilla cuán brevemente
toman el idioma castellano,
tan bien articulados los vocablos
como si les viniera por herencia.¹

Fray Pedro Simón (1574-1630), who arrived in America in 1604, is another of the writers whose works have been preserved. His book Noticias historiales sobre el Reino Nueva Granada (1623) is a complete chronicle of events in Nueva Granada during the 16th century. Many critics feel the work too ponderous to read. Simón's descriptions of the tropical setting and glorious kings, nevertheless, give us an understanding of the Chibchas' ceremonies, wealth, and customs.

The chroniclers mentioned have been the first and most direct fountain of information because they associated themselves with the Indians and took their information

¹Castellanos, p. 308.

directly from the Indians themselves. The works of these historians have provided the basic information for Chapters I and III.

During the colonial period which followed the conquest several works appeared on Chibcha themes. Among the honored names in history at this time was Francisco José de Caldas (1771-1816), one of the earliest scientists in America.¹ Menéndez y Pelayo wrote that, "Caldas es el inmortal neogranadino a quien España debe un monumento expiatorio. Su descripción del Salto Tequendama no está emulada todavía."² José Nuñez Segura, author of Literatura Colombiana, also rated Caldas highly.

Cultiva pues Caldas diversos géneros: el didáctico, oratorio, epistolar, narrativo, descriptivo. Demuestra en ellos aciertos propios de no vulgares capacidades artísticas. Describe y siente la naturaleza con vigor poético. El Salto de Tequendama, los valles, selvas, plantas, montes, son pintados por su pluma con envidiable maestría. Sus planes, sus convicciones, tienen en sus discursos calor y fuerza que no desdicen de la vitalidad oratoria.³

Miguel Triana (1771-1834), an explorer and writer, wrote La civilización chibcha. He had first hand knowledge of the Chibcha territory, for he traveled extensively throughout Colombia. Other works of Triana are Revista de las

¹ See Appendix F, stanza m.

² Eduardo Posada, Obras de Caldas, IX (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1912), p. 3.

³ José A. Núñez Segura, Literatura Colombiana (Medellín: Editorial Bedout, 1959), p. 109.

riquezas naturales de Colombia and Mapa del río Magdalena.

He also helped the historian and grammarian Joaquín Acosta Ortega (1799-1851) with his valuable book El idioma chibcha. Ortega prepared a history entitled Compendio histórico del descubrimiento de la Nueva Granada en el siglo décima sexto which he completed in Paris in 1848.

Interest in Chibcha history continued unabated even after the close of the colonial period. In the early nineteenth century, Ezequiel Uricoechea (1834- ?) produced Memorias sobre las antigüedades neogranadinas. Uricoechea had studied Natural Sciences in the United States and in Germany, and when he returned to Bogotá he was named professor of chemistry and mineralogy at the National University. In 1860 he also published a Gramática chibcha in which he explained the pronunciation of Chibcha words, studied the verb system, and also provided a small dictionary.

Luis Vargas Tejada (1802-1829) educated himself by reading books from the library of his home. At a very early age he was named secretary to the vice-president, but he was involved in an anti-government plot and was obliged to flee the capital. The young fugitive hid in a cave on the savannah of Bogotá and during his thirteen months of confinement he finished the works he had previously begun. Of Tejada's five dramatic plays one was a tragedy on a Chibcha theme called Sugamuxi whose subject concerns the happenings

at the Templo del Sol which was situated in the small town of Sogamoso. Critics have commented on the romantic elements in such plays as this. Although the author's best known efforts were in the field of drama, he also wrote some lyrics and prose--Patria and Carta a su madre respectively. The poet in Tejada warred with the patriot dedicated to political action, and a premature death prevented the maturing of his literary gifts.

At the beginning of the epoch of Colombian Independence the full blooded Chibchas numbered only thirteen per cent of the 1,300,000 Colombian population.¹ But their history and legends remained, and literature continued to reflect the interest felt by its writers in the fabled inhabitants of the Chibcha nation. Colombian poets in particular have found a wealth of inspiration in Chibcha history. Such a poet was Joaquín José Ortiz (1814-1892) whose descriptions of the falls in Al Tequendama are excellent. His exuberant imagination reveals itself in the dramatic poem Sulma which is based on a Chibcha theme of love and excites admiration in the reader and historian alike. Besides these two works Ortiz wrote a volume of poetry, La bandera colombiana; a novel, María Dolores; and a didactic work entitled Historia eclesiástica.

¹Censo de población de la República de Colombia (1918), p. 442. U.S. Department of Commerce, Commerce Book of 1930.

Another outstanding figure of Colombian poetry is Alfredo Gómez Jaime (1874-1946). It is not mere chance that some of his best poems are on Indian subjects, for he was born in Tunja and knew much of its history. His historical poem Tunja describes the entrance of the conquistadores and the hiding of the treasure in the well, Pozo de Donato, by the Chibcha cacique. In addition to his work in literature Gómez also served his country in the diplomatic service and collaborated with Amado Nervo in the founding of Revista Latina.

One of the best descriptive poets in Colombian literature is Rafael Pombo (1833-1912); among his poems are Los Americanos en Broadway, En el Niágara, and Elvira Tracy. As one guesses from the titles of these poems, Pombo lived in New York and wrote while in the diplomatic service of his country. One of his descriptive poems, En el cercado de los Zipas, he dedicates to the Chibcha:

... Su gracia y su bendición
 Suele tender Dios clemente,
 Suscitando acaso enfrente
 De la turbadora Eva,
 Al buen Nenterequeteba
 Mesías del Occidente

Cuentan que en Bosa empezó
 Su predicación. De Bosa
 A Funza ... y tan numerosa
 La muchedumbre acudió,
 Que en hondo lago se aisló,
 Para dar aire a su celo:
 Más con insaciable anhelo

Pidiendo ojos y bocas
 Ya sobre una de estas rocas
 Veo su sombra honrando el Cielo.¹

Three poets who warrant mention in the late 1800's are Isaías Arciniegas, Max Grillo, and Antonio Gómez Restrepo. Arciniegas who ranks among the best Colombian poets served in the military and diplomatic service and was a congressman for several years. He was a prolific contributor to liberal newspapers. Some of his writings dealt with the Chibcha legends and bear such titles as Salto de Tequendama and Ley de Bochica.

One of the men fully or partly of Chibcha blood who became a writer of distinction was Max Grillo (1868-1949). He grew up in the Andes and came of an illustrious family which was a descendant of founders and liberators. Grillo first came to public notice as the author of such poems as A la Virgen María; he also wrote one drama, Vida nueva to his credit. This author had many occasions to observe the Indians and to meditate on their history since the conquest, and from this study he wrote a poem, Razas vencidas, dedicated to the conquered Chibchas. Living in the Andes he expressed his sympathy and admiration in the following lines:

Sus leyendas, como la de la formación de
 Tequendama, tienen encanto poético. Eran indígenas

¹Rafael Pombo, Antología Poética (Bogotá: Biblioteca de autores colombianos, Imprenta Editorial ABC, 1952), pp. 260-270.

de un temperamento plácido, resignado, sufrido, reconcentrado y temido ... en este carácter suave y delicado de sus mitos hállase el reflejo capaz de la belleza de sus paisajes.¹

Grillo also wrote a drama reworking the old theme of the burning of the Temple of the Sun by the Spaniards called El incendio del templo.

Antonio Gómez Restrepo (1869-1946) was a modern literary critic. He was a student of Victor E. Caro, a writer, and Rufino Cuervo, a philosopher. Men of letters throughout Colombia consider Gómez Restrepo as their outstanding literary critic. While in Spain he was a favorite disciple of Menéndez y Pelayo, and when he returned to Bogotá he became a senator, secretary to the Minister of Relations, and later ambassador to Peru and to Mexico. His kindness and simplicity won him many friends. His Historia de la literatura colombiana consists of four volumes and was edited in 1945. Gómez Restrepo describes the beauty of the Tequendama Falls in his poem Al Tequendama, and he mentions the great god of the Chibchas, Bochica. Other modern poets who found inspiration in Chibcha lore were Octavio Pardo and Julián Castillo. Pardo was born in 1909 and began to write in Boyacá. He wrote almost entirely about his native region in works such as Cantares de Boyacá and Los barbarones: the former treats the Chibcha theme

¹Max Grillo, Granada Entreabierto (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1946), p. 182.

in the form of short poems, some of which are of humorous nature.

In Colombian literature Indian subjects, old and new, are an almost inexhaustible source of inspiration. A highly regarded modern writer is Julián Castillo (1915-1953) who had not yet achieved full recognition of his gifts when death took him at the early age of thirty-eight years. He had finished, however, Los cien poemas de los Andes which relates legends in verse form. As a native of Boyacá who thought that his parents were Chibchas, he expresses authentically what his people feel and think. Few writers have given to Colombia such memorable evocations of Chibcha history.

Isaías Gamboa (1872- ?) was a member of the Literary Institute in Bogotá where he wrote Guatavita, a poem dedicated to the great golden chief of El Dorado.

In the survey of writers we have seen that many of the authors have come from Boyacá, concerning which region Samper Ortega wrote with great justification:

Tierra de poetas es Boyacá y de grandes poetas acaso porque la variedad de sus climas y paisajes estimula la fantasía, acaso por embrujo de sus riscos y barrancos que fuerza el ánimo a reconcentrarse y a sopesar y rumiar las impresiones.¹

Although relatively little known, a young woman poet, Elvira Lascarro Mendoza (1930-1950) deserves mention here.

¹Ramón Correa, Parnaso Boyacense (Tunja: Prólogo de Samper, Imprenta Departmental, 1936), p. 10.

She was an invalid confined to her bed, and when she died no one suspected she had written verses. Later, in going through her possessions, her father found the poem describing the conquered Indian, Retrato de un colombiano which I quoted in Chapter I.

The last two writers who are to be mentioned are Ramón Correa and Armando Solano. Ramón Correa (1927-) was born in the Chibcha's old capital town, Tunja, where he wrote Historia de Tunja and also Historia de la literatura Boyacense. The latter is a brief history of the men of letters living in Boyacá from the days of the discovery up to the present time, and is a valuable anthology of the writers from Boyacá.

Armando Solano (1909-) was born in Paipa, Boyacá. His life was full of misfortunes, and a vein of sadness permeates his writings. In 1935 Solano was elected Senator and did much of his writing while serving in that capacity. He wrote articles for many newspapers in Bogotá besides a short novel La melancolía de la raza chibcha. Solano was an impassioned apologist of the underdog, particularly the Indian, as is revealed in the following passage:

Triste ha sido nuestra raza, triste es y será hasta la muerte, porque el medio tropical en donde vive y de donde vino, le presenta un panorama avasallador.

Es curioso que, al menos en Colombia no hayamos tenido aún el poeta que traduzca en forma adecuada, con ritmo discreto y hondo, en estrofa

velada y penetrante las angustias de una raza desposeída de su tierra y de sus dioses, radicalmente incomprendida por sus dominadores, azotada y roída por el oscuro, por una aguda inconformidad, crucificada entre su instintiva predestinación de orgulloso señorío y la mezquina realidad de su vasallaje.¹

The writers discussed in the preceeding pages were the principal Colombian authors who concerned themselves with Chibcha themes. The impact of the Indianist theme is also noticeable, however, in foreign literatures and deserves mention here. The mother country, Spain, soon became accustomed to the idea of a new people of a new world. But the Indian was often considered an inferior being, "a savage living in a natural state in an age of innocence."² Had the Spaniards been more mindful of the Indians' mores and culture, some of the more drastic effects of the conquest might have been averted. But since this was not the case "the Indian occupied much less space in Spanish literature than might have been expected."³

Pedro Henríquez-Ureña says, "But in France the Indians were discussed with greater freedom."⁴ Many French

¹Armando Solano, La melancolía de la raza chibcha (Bogotá: Publicaciones de la revista "Universidad," n.d.).

²Pedro Henríquez-Ureña, Literary Currents in Hispanic America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 21.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 22.

writers followed the lead of Bartolomé de Las Casas, the great defender of the Indians, and wrote about the Indian with compassion; some condemned the conquest outright because it was easy for the French to be moralistic over a conquest from which they had been excluded. During the age of Romanticism the success of Chateaubriand's Atala (1800) in France gave impetus to Indian themes in literature since the Indian fitted nicely into the literary outlook on life.

Voltaire (1694-1778) also concerned himself with the New World and the Indian. In Europe exotic tales were told about the treasures of America, and in the imagination of the average European, America became the promised land of plenty. The fabulous legend of El Dorado¹ was widely

¹Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 8, p. 131, tells us that El Dorado means "the gilded one," a name applied first to the king or chief priest of a South American tribe, who was said to cover himself with gold dust, at a yearly religious festival near Santa Fe de Bogotá; ... and also that in literature frequent allusion is made to the legend, perhaps the best known reference being those in Milton's Paradise Lost and Voltaire's Candide.

For a very brief sketch of the legend and from the same source, Vol. 6, p. 35, I quote, "Gold was common in the Colombian region, and was enjoyed for divine offerings ... At certain ceremonies, practiced in common by the tribes of the Bogotá plateau, rich offerings of this metal were thrown into certain sacred lakes (especially Lake Guatavita) ... The particular rite of investiture of the ruler of Guatavita, in accordance with which, plastered with gold dust, he plunged into the lake, gave rise to the many stories of El Dorado ..."

believed and Voltaire mentioned it in The History of Candide. Candide's adventures included a voyage to the New World where he visited Paraguay and Peru. In Peru he met an old man of 172 years who was the first to tell him of the ever famous golden Indian chief. The old man speaks to Candide in these words:

The Spaniards had some confused notion of this country, to which they gave the name of El Dorado; Sir Walter Raleigh actually came very near it . . .: but the inaccessible rocks and precipices have hitherto secured us from the rapacious fury of the people of Europe, who have an unaccountable fondness for pebbles and dirt of our land, for the sake of which they would murder us all to the very last man.¹

An Englishman impressed with the stories and the wealth of the new country was the poet, John Milton. There is evidence that Milton's knowledge of America was based on Sir Walter Raleigh's Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana.² In Paradise Lost Milton used the new information about the strange, vast continent because it gave authority and background to what he had to say.

In this great epic, there are two passages in which Milton emphasized proper names of geography; the passage in Book XI is the one concerned with the New World. Here

¹Francois Marie Arouet De Voltaire, The History of Candide, translated by Lawrence Sterne (London: Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., n.d.), p. 75.

²Robert Ralston Crawley, Milton and the Literature of Travel (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 9.

Michael leads Adam to a high place where he shows him the world of the future and mentions an unusual number of distant places; from Cambalu to the seat of Motezume. From China Michael goes to India, westward to Persia then to the western coast of Africa and on up to North Africa and Algiers. From Europe Milton directs his thoughts toward the western world and Mexico. He finally glances down into South America and mentions Cusco, for he had heard that it had once been the royal seat of the Peruvian Kings. From Peru the poet moves Michael to Guiana and says:

... and yet unspoil'd
Guiana, where great Citie Geryons Sons
Call El Dorado ... ¹

Milton's words, " ... yet unspoil'd Guiana" suggests² the following passage in the narrative of Raleigh:

To conclude, Guiana is a countrey that hath yet her maydenhead, never sackt, turned, nor wrought: the face of the earth hath not bene torne, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance; the graves have not bene opened for golde ... ²

Milton's "Geryons Sons" have long been identified as the Spaniards.³

¹Ibid.

²Richard Hakluyt, The Principle Navigations of the English Nation, Vol. III (London: 1903), p. 661.

³Professor Osgood (The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems), p. 37, associates Geryon, a mythical Spanish king with gold, citing Diodorous, who says Geryon was killed by Hercules because of his gold.

Juan Valera, Spaniard, remembered the Tequendama Falls in his Cartas Americanas. The 13th of August, 1881 Valera answered a letter from A. D. José Rivas Groot, Colombian, accepting the latter's invitation to give his, Valera's, opinion about the poets whose compositions were contained in a book written in Colombia called El parnaso colombiano, and to publish the letters in Valera's Cartas Americanas. Of all the descriptions of the natural beauty written in Parnaso colombiano, Valera chooses the Tequendama Falls for his subject.¹

Another important foreign writer who immortalized Chibcha legends in poetry was the well known Andrés Bello (1781-1865) of Venezuela. The Indian inhabitant and his traditions, as well as the forces of nature and the geological setting of the New World, were ever present in the writings of the author. In his Alocución a la poesía he wrote:

... Los valles va á buscar de Magdalena
 Con salto audaz el Bogotá espumoso
 Allí memorias de tempranos días
 Tu lira aguardan; cuando, en ocio dulce
 Y nativa inocencia venturosos,
 Sustento fácil dió á sus moradores,
 Primera probe de su fértil seno
 Cundinamarca ...

Todo era paz, contento y alegría;
 Cuando de dichas tantas envidiosa
 Huitaca bella, de las aguas diosa,
 Hinchando el Bogotá, sumerge el valle,
 De la gente infeliz, parte pequeña

¹See Appendix G.

Asilo halló en los montes:
 El abismo voraz sepulta el resto.
 Tu cantarás como indigno el funesto
 Estrago de su casi extinta raza
 A Bochica, hijo del Sol, que rompe
 Con su cetro divino la enriscada
 Montaña, y á las ondas abre calle,
 En Bogotá, que, inmenso lago un día,
 De cumbre á cumbre dilató su imperio;¹

The earliest of the writers who incorporated Chibcha legends into their works were conquistadores or members of the clergy who accompanied them. The primary interests of the conquistadores were lust for gold and riches coupled with a desire for personal and national glory. The clergy also, as did the conquerors, reported events of the conquest and prehistory of the Indians primarily as a matter of record. In the works of a group of Colombian writers such as Francisco José de Caldas, Antonio Gómez, and Ramón Correa we find a usage of legends in literature. These men had a profound interest in their predecessors and a deep feeling for and attraction to the prehistory of their environs. The fantastic and exotic tales of El Dorado and other legends found their way into the works of distant but important writers like Milton, Voltaire, and Andrés Bello because the fabulous tales stirred the minds of men of letters. Everywhere as we proceed we will study the legends which most interested the writers of Colombia as well as those outside of Colombia.

¹Miguel Antonio Caro, Poesías de Andrés Bello (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucoi, 1909), pp. 73-74.

III. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STORIES

Without the legends of the Chibcha Indians, the only door to the ideals and inner life of these primitive peoples and even to their historic past would be forever closed. These legendary tales were transmitted orally, undergoing changes as they passed from one storyteller to another. There is nothing that better reflects the inner personality of the Chibcha, explains his actions, and shows us the sources of his hopes and fears than do the stories that have been recorded. Legends are the religion, the science, and the literature of primitive people; religion because the stories tell what the gods do and what the people should do to please the gods; science because for them myth can explain the unknown forces of nature; literature because the stories in themselves contain their favorite tales.

In the study of folklore, psychology, and anthropology, many theories have been evolved in which an attempt is made to differentiate scientifically between the various types of myth and of legend. In this thesis, myth and legend are used in accordance with the Webster's Dictionary definitions which do not clearly distinguish between the two terms.¹ The term "myth," however, will be used arbitrarily to

¹Joseph H. Friend, Webster's New World Dictionary of American Language (New York: World Publishing Company, 1959),

designate those tales which are concerned primarily with supernatural beings and with creation and origin tales.

The following tales are characteristic of the people they represent. The stories were prized by the indigenous people in the same way that men of today cherish their faith. The effect upon the popular mind was incalculable. The stories gave them pride, security, religious holidays which required a respite from daily chores, unity for the Chibcha kingdom, and occasionally the loss of a child to an unseen god. The stories produced tears, smiles, fears, and wiles as will be evident later in this chapter. These are the characteristics that generated my interest in the Chibcha Indians' legends and myths.

In 1953 I went to Bogotá, Colombia, to reside and through a series of events became interested in the Chibcha nation which had existed there centuries before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors in the sixteenth century. As a recent arrival in Bogotá, one of the two ancient capitals of the Chibcha nation, I began to read books about this region; works such as Kathleen Romoli's Colombia, Gateway to

pp. 836 and 972. "LEGEND--a story of some wonderful event, handed down for generations among a people and popularly believed to have a historical basis, although not verifiable." "MYTH--a traditional story of unknown authorship, ostensibly with a historical basis, but serving usually to explain some phenomenon of nature, the origin of man, religious rites of a people; myths usually involve the exploits of gods and heroes."

South America, Los muisecas antes de la conquista by José Pérez de Barradas, and El pasado aborígen by Elvira Castro de Posada. Thus I became acquainted with the legendary history of the Chibcha civilization. Conversations with scholars whom I chanced to meet acquainted me more with the legends and myths of this ancient nation. Soon, without initially being aware of it, I determined to learn further tales of the exploits of the unusual people.

In my early studies conversations with gentlemen like Doctor Bernardo J. Caicedo who has held high offices in the Academia de Historia and the Academia de Lenguas; Doctor Hernando de Alba who is Jefatura de Resguardo Indígena; the historian and writer Juan C. Hernández who now heads the public library in Tunja, and many others were most rewarding. The discussions with these men led me to the archives of the National Library and the modern Angel Arango Library of Bogotá. The more I read, the greater the desire was to know the indigenous peoples and their culture. I traveled throughout the Chibcha territory by car, horseback, and on foot--always carrying a German-made battery powered tape recorder which weighed approximately five pounds, and occupied about one-third of a cubic foot of space. Thus as I interviewed the present day residents of the locale of the various legends, I was able to record the voices of Indians and their descendants as they told me the legends

that had been passed down from their predecessors. The recorded tapes accompany the various stories in the thesis.¹

¹The tapes are to be found in the Library at the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas.

IV. CHIBCHA LEGENDS AND THEIR USE IN COLOMBIAN LITERATURE

The Myth of the Tequendama Falls

The myth about the origin of the Tequendama Falls was the first Chibcha story to come to my attention. I found the outlines of the tale in the book Colombia--Gateway to South America, and in search of variations of the story I went to the two libraries mentioned and read portions of the following books, Eleqías de varones ilustres de indias, El pasado aborigen, and Los muisecas antes de la conquista. I was unable to find a variant of the myth since each author told essentially the same story. There were in every case, however, omissions of certain details, and I have compiled the information found in these sources to present the complete story.

THE SETTING

The great savannah of Bogotá which extends 135 miles north and south along the western slope in the eastern cordillera of Colombia with an average width of seven miles is completely surrounded by mountains whose streams drain toward the savannah from all directions except at the exit of the Bogotá River in the southwestern part. Driving southwest from Bogotá one gradually descends into the narrow

valley through which the Bogotá River plummets from the heights of the savannah. When the traveler follows the winding road which parallels the river, he discovers that the narrow valley abruptly gives way to a green amphitheater whose center is a sheer-walled crescent pit; here the river pours over the cliff in a vertical sheet of white water. The water is lost in upsurging clouds of spray mist which settles as a silent rain on everything. The air currents are so variable that one minute the river, falls, and canyon are visible, and the next minute this spectacle of nature is blotted out completely by the mist. Yet it takes but seconds for the opaque screen to dissipate and reveal the source of the sullen, thunderous roar which continues at all times during the rainy season. There are always natural murals as well as the ever present rainbow at the foot of the falls. The Tequendama Falls and the entire setting are a thrilling spectacle--a place of inspiration to many writers. (See figure 4, page 37.)

An early Colombian writer, Francisco José de Caldas, extolled the falls in this manner:

... Corrientes impetuosas, golpes contra las rocas, saltos, ruido majestuoso, suceden al silencio y a la tranquilidad. En la orilla del precipicio todo el Bogotá se lanza en masa sobre un banco de piedra; aquí se estrella, allí da golpes horrorosos, aquí forma hervores, borbollones, y se arroja, en forma de plumas divergentes, más blancas que la nieve, en el abismo que lo espera. En su fondo el golpe es terrible, y no se puede ver



Figure 4.--The Tequendama Falls

sin horror. Estas plumas vistosas que formaban las aguas en el aire, se convierten de repente en lluvias y en columnas de nubes que se levantan a los Andes, ha descendido, a pesar suyo, a esta profundidad, y quiere orgulloso elevarse otra vez en forma de vapores.

... Cuando se mira por primera vez la cascada del Tequendama, hace la más profunda impresión sobre el espíritu del observador. Todos quedan sorprendidos y como atónitos: los ojos fijos, los párpados extendidos, arrugado el entrecejo, y una ligera sonrisa, manifiestan claramente los semblantes. Parece que la naturaleza se ha complacido en mezclar la majestad y belleza con el espanto y con el miedo de esta obra maestra de sus manos.¹

Has the pass with its precipitous descent at the falls always existed? Legend, which indicates it has not, is partially supported by scientific observations. While driving on the savannah one observes abundant evidence of the fresh water lake that once covered the great plateau. The floor of the savannah is composed of horizontal layers of sedimentary deposits which lie unconformably on the older strata. Deposits containing fresh water snail fossils are easily identifiable. On the lower slopes of the surrounding mountains there are terraces which mark the location of the shoreland of the ancient lake. Scattered over the plain there are numerous inselbergs, a geological term denoting remnants of an old land mass exposed above younger, horizontal strata. Swamp gas generated by vegetation decaying under shallow water is produced from water wells.

¹Segura, p. 109.

Thus, that the lake existed is beyond doubt.¹

Since early man apparently reached the area before the lake existed, one wonders how the Indians reacted to this dramatic convulsion of nature which led to the appearance and later the disappearance of the lake. The various stories which attempt to explain the cataclysm follow the general outline below.²

MYTH

In the beginning only the Chibcha kingdom and its gods existed. Only the barren mountain tops protruded from the water that covered the land and the earth was dark and void. The Chibcha kingdom was the special creation of the Omnipotent, Chiminigagua, in whom were all things and from whom all things proceeded. At the beginning Chiminigagua took two very swift, strong black birds and bade them carry light to the land of the Chibchas. The beating of their giant wings broke the mists, and the darkness was dispelled. Then the deity ordered the waters to recede and created the sun that the world might be warmed. The moon he made to give comfort to his people.

¹I talked at length with Dr. Hans Tanner, University of Zurich, 1950, about the possibility of a lake in the savannah. I secured this information from him since he has studied the formations. Dr. Tanner is senior geologist for the Texaco Company in Bogotá.

²As reconstructed by the author from various myths which explain the formation of the lake and the presence of the Tequendama Falls.

To create human beings, Chiminigagua summoned forth Bachué, the Good Woman, from a lake. She emerged leading a young boy, and when the child reached manhood there were many children born to the couple. Multiple births, as many as six at a time, created the Chibcha people. Many years later these first parents returned to the lake where they assumed the form of snakes. Forever afterwards snakes were sacred to the Chibchas; as were lagoons, waterfalls, and the water that ran from them.¹

Then Chiminigagua appointed a lesser god, Chibchacum, to minister to the Chibchas. As time passed the Chibchas began to sin and became wicked, disrespectful, and licentious. They ignored the warnings and commands of Chibchacum. Therefore, to punish the people for their sinful and indifferent ways, this deity ordered two rivers, the Sopó and the Tivitó, to reverse their courses and flood the great savannah in which Bogotá is located today. Also in his anger against the wicked people, Chibchacum sent a flood of rain that caused the savannah to become a great lake. The lake was called Funzé as was the ancient Chibcha capital of Cundinamarca, now the site of the modern capital, Bogotá.

... Tal era el sitio en donde existía antiguamente la capital de Cundinamarca, en que los Zipas habían erigido su trono i recibían el homenaje de los

¹Teresa Arango Bueno, Precolombia (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1954), p. 30.

diversos pueblos que estaban bajo de su imperio. Si hubiésemos de creer una tradición recibida desde la antigüedad más remota, se vió algún día anegado el terreno por las inundaciones del Funza; i apoderándose de esta comarca la consternación i el espanto huían despavoridos sus moradores a buscar la sequedad ... no le quedaba al Mozo otro auxilio que el de una fuga precipitada, o buscar algún suelo que le ofreciese la hospitalidad. Entonces apareció un hombre divino, cuya memoria ha existido siempre en el espíritu de estas generaciones, llamado con el triple nombre de Zhué, Bochica i Netquezaba. Éste hirió con la punta de su cayado una de las más duras cerranías, les dió libre curso a las aguas, i precipitándose ellas con la mejor violencia formaron la Cascada del Tequendama, obra admirable de la naturaleza. ¿Qué diremos de ésta? Sería que conservaban algunos vestigios del diluvio del mundo, como ha sucedido en casi todas las naciones, que acomodando esta idea primitiva al sistema particular de su culto, le han dado infinitivas modificaciones, i confesando la existencia del hecho, han diferido en el modo de representarlo?¹

It rained so much that only the peaks of the mountains could be seen above the water as they had been in the beginning. The Indians' crops were lost, and they began to die of hunger. Consequently the people became even more angry at Chibchacum and they offered sacrifices to Bochica, another messenger of God, and begged him to save them. One afternoon as the sun was wavering in the air there was a great noise in the mountains around Bogotá. Suddenly there appeared a rainbow as is natural when the sun and rain come together. The legendary rainbow was commemorated by a modern poet in the following lines:

¹José J. Ortiz, Parnaso Boyacense (Tunja: Imprenta Departamental, 1936), pp. 35-36.

¡Oh! Ved Allá la antigua y noble villa
 Patria del Zaque ...
 ¡Qué luz de gloria en los antiguos días
 su angustia frente iluminó fugaz,
 Cual se mira entre nubes tormentosas
 el iris del Señor reverberar!¹

Bochica appeared on the rainbow with a golden staff in his hand. He called to the Indian chiefs and said to them from above,

He oído vuestros ruegos y condolido de ellos y de la razón que tenéis en las quejas que dais de Chibchacum, me doy por satisfecho en lo bien que me servís, y a pagároslo en remediar la necesidad en que estáis, pues tanto toca mi providencia, y así, aunque no os quitaré los dos ríos, porque algún tiempo de sequedad los habréis menester, abriré una sierra por donde salgan las aguas y queden libres vuestras tierras.²

Saying this Bochica struck his staff against the mountains and opened a pass through which rushed the water that had covered the savannah. This created a great waterfall which the Chibchas called Tequendama, a word that means precipitarse acá³ in Spanish and in English "the precipitous place."

Ismael E. Arciniegas summarized the preceding story in his poem El salto de Tequendama

Contra el Cielo pecó la raza impía
 Y el Cielo en sombras se cubrió irritado;
 Del bien, el pueblo continuó olvidado;
 Pero llegó de la venganza el día.

¹Ibid., pp. 35-36.

²Fray Pedro Simón, Noticias historiales sobre el Reino Nueva Granada (Tunja: 1623), p. 290.

³Ezequiel Uricoecha, Gramática chibcha (n.p.), p. 30.

Como castigo el agua descendía,
 Y en un lago profundo y dilatado
 Trocada fué, por obra del pecado,
 La llanura que en flores sonreía.

Mas Bochica aparece. Al Cielo invoca,
 Y rompe la montaña, envuelta en bruma,
 Con su áureo cetro de poder emblema.

Y saltó el lago por la abierta roca;
 Y el arco-iris, en caudal de espuma,
 Sobre el torrente fulguró en diadema!¹

Afterwards, to show his power and to punish Chibchacum for sending the rains and flooding the savannah, Bochica placed him at the bottom of the falls to serve as a support for the world. Before this happened the Chibchas thought that the world was held up on four great poles. When there is an earthquake or a small movement of land, the Chibchas say that it has happened because Chibchacum is shifting the weight of the world from one shoulder to the other.

BOCHICA

There is an historical quality in the creation legend which suggests that the principal figure, Bochica, may have in reality existed.² He appeared at the savannah of Bogotá from the west and by-passed Tunja on his way to Sogamosa where he disappeared into the sky. Early writers tell us that Bochica was very old and that his body was bent above a

¹Ismael E. Arciniegas, Tres poetas colombianos (Quito: 1932), p. 33.

²See Appendix H.

shepherd's crook. His skin was light, his long white beard hung to his waist, and he always wore a long cape.¹ This much of the story, so similar to the Quezalcoatl legend, has led historians to speculate that an early traveler, possibly a Viking or a Polynesian, reached the shores of Latin America before 1492. Christian additions to the legend have it that Bochica wore the sign of the cross on his forehead and that he went into all the parts of the land preaching to the multitude, teaching them the resurrection of the body and of the Last Judgment, the immortality of the soul, and the power of God. The Spanish chroniclers also wrote that Bochica told the Indians about the death of Christ, the story of Nicodemus, and of Moses in the desert.²

The Chibchas said that Bochica came to them fourteen centuries before the coming of the white man. This is how the poet, J. B. Jaramillo Meza describes Bochica:

Surge de las montañas florecientes
 con su barba de grumos encrespados,
 a serenar las tribus maldicientes,
 cual los viejos Profetas olvidados.

Con el cayado en la nervuda mano
 y la túnica en pliegues ondulantes,
 la virtud evangélica del grano
 enseña a los indígenas errantes.

Hace a su paso florecer los montes
 y muestra los abiertos horizontes
 al oprimido que impaciente clama.

¹Castellanos, pp. 28-51.

²Simón, pp. 284-285.

y ante la tribu de marchita boca,
cuando golpea, cual Moisés, la roca,
salta, como un león, el Tequendama!¹

For other poems about the falls see Appendix I.

¹El Tiempo, Lecturas Dominicales (Bogotá; June 11, 1962), p. 7.

The Legend of the Pozo de Donato

LOCATION

The location of the legend about the Pozo de Donato is three kilometers north of Tunja on the central road that leads to Paipa. Today the site is the most photographed in the ancient capital. (See figure 5, page 47.)

The pozo is a pool of quiet water whose level does not increase or decrease either in the rainy season or in the dry season. Nor does this stagnant water emit an offensive smell. The bottom has never been found and the subterranean origin is unknown. This is the mysterious Pozo de Donato in which the Indians reportedly hid their treasure when they saw the Spaniards coming.

SOURCES

To study the legend of the Pozo de Donato, I drove to the Tunja museum which is in the city of the same name. As I browsed through the small library a man, short in stature, brown of skin, with rather slanting eyes and wide nose asked if he could assist me in any way. His name was Saúl Rincón Rozas, and he was head of the literary section of the museum. His solemn and serious expression changed to one of delight when I told him that I was searching for legends of the



Figure 5.--The Pozo de Donato

Chibcha Indian and someone of that group to tell the stories so that I might record them. Without hesitation he said that his great-great grandmother was the daughter of a Chibcha Indian chief. In him I had found a treasure house of information, for he was able to tell me two legends which I had wanted for my study. Furthermore, Señor Rincón introduced me to the famous historian and writer Juan C. Hernández, an eighty year old sambo whose father had been a negro from the coast and his mother an Indian. (See figure 6, page 49.) This deaf old man was an invaluable informant, for since early youth he had traveled extensively over the Chibcha territory gathering information for the numerous books he had written about the Chibchas and their legends.¹

Doctor Hernández and I sat in his office adjacent to the library of which he is director as I explained in handwriting that I wanted him to tell me the love story of Hunsahúa and the tale of the Pozo de Donato while I recorded his voice. Since this method of recording stories was new to Doctor Hernández, an explanation was necessary, but he eventually approved the method I planned to use, and his story is now recorded on tape number one.

¹Hunza, El Páramo, and articles for the Samper Collections and for the magazine Presencia de Boyacá as well as chapters upon chapters in history books.



Figure 6.--Señor Saul Rincón Rozas and
Doctor Juan C. Hernández

LEGEND

Bochica organizó un consejo de caciques para elegir el zaque. Y los chibchas nombraron a Hunzahúa, fundador de Hunza y tuvieron gobierno.¹

When Hunsahúa, Lord of Hunza,² came to the throne, he was too young for the cares and powers of rank. He might have ruled long and well but he was subdued by a forbidden love for his sister. The sister of Hunsahúa had always been so beautiful that their mother had guarded her carefully from the temptations of the world. Hunsahúa came to understand that he would have to pay a great price for his pretty sister. He struggled against his passion, but it proved stronger than reason.

At last, Hunsahúa thought of a daring solution. He would plan a trip to Chipatáes to buy cotton and his sister would accompany him. The mother saw no harm in this and she gave her consent after her son had promised to take good care of his sister. In Chipatáes they were secretly married and after several months they returned to Hunza, but they told no one what they had done. The sharp maternal eyes of their mother noticed signs of pregnancy and guessed their secret. She confronted her daughter with it one day in the courtyard as they were seated around the fire cooking chicha.

¹Simón, p. 30.

²Now Tunja.

The daughter told her mother the truth and she became inflamed with rage. The mother took the stick with which she was mixing the chicha and began to strike at the girl. The daughter quickly stepped behind the pot of chicha. The mother missed the girl, hit the pot, broke it into pieces, and the chicha spilled all over the ground. The earth opened to receive the chicha, thus forming a well. But the chicha was converted into water which formed the well, now known as "El Pozo de Donato."¹

Hunsahúa saw all that had happened. Furiously he ran to the top of the hill which overlooks the city of Tunja. With his trumpet of wood he called for his sweetheart. When his sister reached his side Hunsahúa shouted a million curses to that part of the valley saying, "estéril serás entre todas tierras chibchas!"² From that day to this the land remains sterile and very dry.

Then Hunsahúa and his sister-wife determined to leave the accursed land forever. Not knowing which way to start, Hunsahúa threw an arrow into the air which did not fall to earth but, ringing like a little bell, proceeded to guide the travelers on their way. The arrow led them to Susa, and here, one night in a small cave, Hunsahúa's wife gave birth to a little boy. But as soon as the moon beams

¹The well is called thus in memory of the first Spaniard who tried to drain it. He found nothing.

²Castro, p. 134.

struck the eyes of this child of incestuous marriage, he was turned into a rock. Saddened by their punishment, they continued their journey and passed through the village of Ciénega. In the late afternoon they arrived at the Tequendama Falls. Here they sat down to rest and again mourned the loss of their son. It seemed as if their misfortunes would be endless, and standing near the brink of the falls Hunsahúa once more took the hand of his beloved. The waters of Tequendama called the lovers and they jumped together. The two boulders at the abyss of the waterfalls were placed there by the pitying gods in memory of Hunsahúa and his wife.

HISTORY

Many years later, when the Indians saw the Spaniards coming with Quesada, they hid almost all their treasure in the only place available--the Pozo de Donato. It took one day and a half to move the treasure, for they had to do so in baskets lined with leather.¹

Although men have tried to reach the treasures, no one has been successful since the well is bottomless. The Indians say that if the treasure is ever recovered the cathedral in Bogotá will fall.

¹Ezequiel Uricoecha, Antigüedades reogravadinas Bogotá: Editorial Minerva, n.d.), p. 52.

LITERATURE

About the legend and the treasure wrote Alfredo Gómez Jaime who had lived in Tunja all his life:

... Tunja, la ciudad legendaria,
sobre el paisaje triste medita solitaria ...
Es un sitio famoso que aprestigia el encanto
de medrosas leyendas de terror y de espanto.
Como dijo el poeta que exaltó su blasón:
¡Es patria de los Zagues y tumba de Rondón!

.....

¡En sus predios se oculta fabuloso tesoro:
las riquezas del Zaque, las montañas de oro,
que juntaron los indios cuando entró el español
y cegaban los ojos cual si fuesen el Sol!

La sin par maravilla se recata en el fondo
de un extaño agujero, tan fatalmente hondo
que a su fin nadie llega ...
por las aguas cubierto.¹

In the most recent catalogue published during the reign of the now overthrown dictator Rojas Pinilla, and ordered to be published by him, there is mentioned in a short paragraph the Pozo de Donato. Doctor Rafael Aguilera wrote about the city of Tunja and mentioned important incidents. He said about the pool:

El Pozo de Donato guarda en el seno de sus aguas profundas todo lo bueno y lo malo, lo grande y lo pequeño, lo glorioso y lo trágico de la conquista. Su linfa en la tarde misma de la invasión abrióse para sepultar para la eternidad los fabulosos tesoros de los antiguos moradores de Hunza y es por esto que en su fondo vigila la atónita mirada del conquistador, turbia por la impotencia y la codicia.²

¹Ramón C. Correa, Parnaso Boyacense (Tunja: Imprenta Departmental, 1936), p. 130.

²Presencia de Boyacá, n.d., p. 14.

The Legend of Tota

LOCATION

Lake Tota, one of the largest in Colombia, is located twenty kilometers north of Bogotá. The name Tota is derived from the Chibcha language; To means "river" and ta means "tilled land." Lake Tota covers an area of fifty-five square kilometers and it contains four islands. (See figure 7, page 55.)

The isolation and feeling of solitude which the traveler encounters at Tota has been admirably expressed in the following lines of Julián Castillo:

La niebla, fina y blanca, se ha posado
sobre las aguas quietas.

Las cosas se perdieron.
El lago es una sabana de frío.
El lago es una triste y desierta
vastedad sola, inmensa.

La niebla, fina y blanca, se ha posado
sobre las aguas quietas.
Y las aguas nostálgicas, sin decir una sílaba,
van borrando su imagen
tras el manto de niebla.
Mientras que yo en la orilla,
viajero solitario,
siento que soy el último
Señor de la Tristeza ...¹

¹Julián Castillo, Los cien poemas de los Andes
(Bogotá: Colección Bochica, 1950), p. 53.



Figure 7.--Lake Tota

SOURCES

The lake has also figured prominently in Colombian folklore. Señor Saúl Rincón, who was born on the edge of Lake Tota, provided me with the following two legends. (Listen to tape number two.) I read accounts of the lake in Joaquín Molano Campuzano's book, El lago de Tota and in Guillermo Plazas Olarte's book Tota, paisaje y mito.¹ The legend of the origin of the lake is as follows according to my reconstruction of the story.

LEGEND

Once there was a family who had three children. The family lived quietly near the valley of Iraca, today Sogamosa, when a god chose them for the task of creating a large lake where Chía, the moon, would shine at night and Sué, the sun, could bathe its rays in the day. The god provided a jug of water for the chore, and each member of the family took turns carrying it as they searched for an appropriate site.

One day, however, curiosity swept over one of the little boys as he was carrying the jug, and he decided to discover its secret and its contents of crystal water. He turned the jug over, and as the water ran all over the countryside, it swept away everything in its path. The sacred water from the jug began to form a turbulent lake. One of the

¹For a poem written by a Chibcha descendant see Appendix J.

children ran toward the small town of Cuítiva, but the water surrounded him. The little girl remained behind with her mother, and the two were trapped by the torrent. As the father tried to escape, he was caught by a whirlpool and drowned. He was immediately converted into the Península of the Potrero, and when the mother drowned she became the Large Island. The little girl lay down at her mother's feet, and this became the small island between the peninsula and the large island. All this time the little boy was running, terrified at the thought that all this had been his fault. Far away from the four members of his family, this boy, with the empty jug, met his death and was converted into a very small island. That is the legend of how Lake Tota and its three islands and the peninsula were formed.

A romantic tale which has Tota as the setting concerns the hero Biachú and his beloved Anachué.

LEGEND

The hero Biachú dreamed of crossing the high mountains to the dominions of the chief Suamox where he had heard that there was a rolling and changing sea of water, bordered by high rushes where little birds played. One day he decided that the call of adventure could no longer be resisted, and after a difficult journey finally crossed the

blue mountains and arrived at a large lake. Here he rested, and falling asleep began to dream.

In his dream it was night, and his people were celebrating with dances and music the coming of a cacique from far off lands. This cacique was accompanied by his daughter, an Indian girl called Anachué. Biachú had been appointed to serve chicha to the highly honored guests. When he served Anachué the golden glass, he saw that she was in tears and that she was imploring his assistance. He fell in love with her.

When midnight passed, the tribe all slept on the ground, and Biachú crawled to the side of Anachué. When Biachú awoke he realized all had been a dream and only the lake appeared before his eyes. Biachú saw, however, the breaking of the waters caused by the coming of a boat. In the boat was a girl and as the boat came closer he noticed that in it was Anachué, her body gleaming like a statue of gold. The boat was followed by many canoes.

The morning was to be given over to a strange ceremony, for Anachué had been elected the wife of the Sun, and she was to be sacrificed. Afterwards, her golden body was to be given to the waters. From there she would undertake a voyage to a region where the gods dwell. There she would be the queen of all the worlds and would be able to see the face of Biachú through the waters of the lake.

Biachú jumped onto a raft and set out to rescue Anachué. He knew the fight would be very difficult but he was the strongest and bravest of all the men. With his courage, his love for her would be sufficient to win gloriously. He would rescue Anachué and take her to the banks of a river and there he would build a home for her.

When Biachú came close to the enemy he began to shout and finally threw an arrow into the midst of the warriors. They all began to flee, all but one. This warrior threw an arrow into the heart of Biachú, but even as he fell Anachué's arms enclosed him and together they descended into the depths of the lake, leaving above them a trail of gold and blood.

The Myth of Goranchacha

SOURCES

The source of the following myth is found in the account of Pedro Simón.¹ It is the only Chibcha myth concerned with a virgin birth. I also consulted modern writers, Max Guevara and Elvira Castro de Posada, who used Pedro Simón's original account in their retelling of the tale.

LOCATION

The story of Goranchacha took place in a small town called Guachetá which is one hundred miles north of Bogotá and just south of Fúquene lake.

MYTH

In Guachetá there had been a teacher who for many years had been explaining to the people the things he had remembered from the great deliverer, Bochica. When the teacher left the settlement, the devil came in and tried to do all things contrary to the teacher's doctrine. The devil told the people that the Sun was going to choose a girl from among them, and that she would conceive from the Sun's rays, but remain a virgin.

The cacique of Guachetá and his wife, Farquentá, had two pretty daughters, Checuta and Siratá, who decided to

¹Simón, pp. 320-321.

vie for this honor. Each morning at dawn the two girls, having removed their clothes, anxiously awaited at the top of the hill, Caguata. Here they prayed to the Sun. Not long afterwards one of the girls found herself to be pregnant. Soon the daughter of the cacique gave birth to a beautiful large emerald. She wrapped it in cotton and placed it on her chest. Some days later the emerald was converted into a male child by the order of the devil. They called the little boy Goranchacha. The cacique took him as his own and raised him in his home. They gave him the title of Hijo del Sol.

At the age of twenty-four the lad looked very much like the cacique, who, in the interest of his education, sent Goranchacha to the small town of Ramiriquí in order to observe all its grandeur. Goranchacha was very happy to go.

The cacique of Ramiriquí received the boy and gave him a great welcome. There were presents and fiestas that lasted for days. Finally, Goranchacha set out for home. On his way he met an Indian friend who told him that the cacique had hanged a boy back home who had served as a page to Goranchacha. Because Goranchacha had loved the page, he ran home burning with rage and killed the cacique. Goranchacha then became cacique in his grandfather's place. He was strict with his people; they could not even look upon his face, and no one dared break his commandments. Goranchacha made his

people keep even the commandments of Bochica; there was no lying, stealing, nor adultery in Guachetá. When the Spaniards came, however, Goranchacha wanted to leave, for the ruler was afraid of being killed. Another cacique was elected in his place and Goranchacha disappeared from history.

The myth of the conception and birth of Goranchacha is delicately told in the following verses of Julián Castillo:

Aquel fue, de todos,
el más puro y tierno
milagro.

La virgen yacía en el césped,
abiertos al cielo sus brazos.
Y Zué, desde el cielo, miraba, miraba ...

La virgen yacía ... de pronto,
un rayo del Sol en la carne
de la virgen trémula cayó del espacio.

Diez lunas más tarde, prodigio
del Sol de los Andes,
había en el seno de hondo esmeralda
la imagen de una
princesa, princesa temblando,
(La virgen tenía la gema
sobre su regazo.)

La pálida imagen, prisionera en esa
cárcel increíble, crecía, crecía, ...
Entonces la virgen, para libertarla,
la acercó a su pecho, la apretó en sus brazos,
y al calor intenso de su amor de madre
la gema translúcida volviose perfume
y sobre los aires se fue disipando ...

(Goranchacha, hijo
del Sol y la virgen,
tuvo siempre algo de gema y perfume
prendido en sus labios.)¹

¹Castillo, p. 10.

El Dorado

Until the year of 1953 Lake Guatavita was virtually unknown to the Americans residing in Bogotá, and it is safe to wager that more Colombians had seen the Empire State Building than had seen this enchanting lake. My attention was drawn to the lake by friends in the geological profession who had heard of the famous Chibcha chief, El Dorado, and when they set out to find the lake, I was invited to accompany the group.

LOCATION

We drove north from Bogotá for one and one-half hours to a small town called Guatavita. Once in the village of Guatavita we secured horses and began a climb in the direction given to us by the villagers. All along the way we were directed by friendly, rural Colombians, some of Chibcha descent. There were many confused paths leading off in every direction, but at last, at an altitude of 10,500 feet and after a two hour ride we came upon the conical summit of a nameless peak where, below us, Lake Guatavita was set like a cup to catch the rays of the sun.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Many months afterwards I read in the National Library Pedro Simón's account of Lake Guatavita, Eduardo Posada's El

Dorado, Kathleen Romoli's Colombia, Gateway to South America, and El Caballero de El Dorado by Germán Arciniegas. Aside from these accounts, fragments of the legend of El Dorado were picked up, as they may be today, in almost any Latin American history book.

Since 1953 hundreds of tourists have seen the lake, for now horses are provided by the natives for visitors who wish to ride instead of walk. On one of my thirty-three trips to the lake I met an eighty year old man, Señor Benito Rodríguez, who was born near the lake and was there when the lake was drained the last time. Señor Rodríguez told me about the golden snake he had seen in the year 1903. (Hear tape number three.) (See also figure 8, page 65.)

GEOLOGICAL FORMATION

Thousands of years ago a meteor fell, plowing the earth until it came to rest amid the Andean mountains in the Eastern Cordillera of Colombia. The crater thus formed began immediately to fill with water from subterranean sources.¹ Its remoteness is a part of the charm, and its silence seems to invite religious meditation.

The colors of the lake change with the weather. When the sun is shining, Guatavita is a silver disk, three miles around. On cloudy days, its color is emerald. At night, its

¹About the crater see Appendix K.



Figure 8.--Señor Benito Rodríguez, in hat,
telling the story of El Dorado on tape

black ripples are supposed to indicate the wrath of the dragon god who lives beneath the surface.

HISTORICAL VALUE

This lake was not to be left to its hidden peace, however, and the legend of Guatavita and its Golden Man, El Dorado, was to shape the course of history. Sir Walter Raleigh's execution was due in part to his failure to bring back the gold of El Dorado; the discovery and exploration of the great Amazon River was a direct consequence of the search for El Dorado; thousands of Spanish lives were lost in the pursuit of the golden gods of the Chibcha Indians which were supposed to be in the depths of the lake.

The ancient inhabitants of the high regions of the Andes Mountains built their temples in remote places protected by natural fortification from the designs of the impious. These places were often lakes or rivers situated in the raised cusps of the mountains. The Chibcha Indians looked upon the lakes and rivers with veneration because they believed that their first fathers had been born in them, and that their protecting gods still dwelt in the waters. From Lake Guatavita came a legend which is the story of the Gilded Man, El Dorado.

LEGEND

The legend is the story of an enchanted princess and the lord of Guatavita. Long ago this lord had had several

wives, but there was one so proud and beautiful that he loved her best of all. But the princess betrayed her lord and in punishment was made to eat her lover's flesh. She grieved so over the loss of her lover that she decided to take her life and that of her child. She threw herself into the lake. The lord had not realized her sufferings would be so great. He sent for the greatest sorcerer among the priests to bring back his beloved. After sacred rites, the priest dived into the water. He was gone for some time, and when he came to the surface, he said, "She is alive. She sits in a palace more beautiful than yours with a demon in the form of a small dragon. She will not return for she is happier there."¹ The grief-stricken lord asked the priest to return and bring back his daughter. The sorcerer dived in and brought back the child. But at the sight of the dead baby the lord decided to let her go back and live with her mother. So, once more, the little body was cast into the lake.

From then on the lake was to receive riches beyond human imagination because a princess had been lonely and faithless.

The lord, known to the Indians as a cacique, declared that once a year the subjects of the lord would gather around the lake while he would perform a ritual sacrifice to his

¹Simón, p. 45.

dead love. This ceremony, most important of all Chibcha rituals, consisted of an ablution that took place at sunrise. While thousands of Indians stood about the rim of the lake, they waited for the coming of the cacique, the Gilded One. As he approached, the Indians stamped their feet and chanted songs to the Sun King. The Gilded One, El Dorado, had rubbed himself with resin and then rolled in gold dust. Truly, he was the Golden Man as he stood before his people. His body was covered with emeralds and was supported by seven principal men, all adorned with precious stones, who helped him onto a raft made of cattails or soft rush. As the group paddled to the middle of the lake, they were accompanied by the rolling of muted drums. Then the drums fell silent when the raft reached its destination, and the Indians around the lake turned their backs that the rites might not be profaned.

As the sun arose above the horizon, the Gilded One submerged himself in the frigid water. This occurred in extraordinary silence. In the lake he shed all his golden adornments, and at the same time the people tossed in their golden gods. As soon as this was completed, Indian women hauntingly sang to the mixed sounds of clay whistles, drums, and flutes. The smoke of the bonfires ascended and wrapped its aroma around the multitude of Indians. The ceremony was described in the following verses of Ismael Arcieniegas, a 19th century poet:

Era el día ritual. Vibró en la orilla
De la laguna musical concierto.
El campo todo semejaba huerto;
Y doblegó la tribu la rodilla.

Sobre andas el cacique, en áurea silla,
De polvo de oro apareció cubierto:
Ante el alba, en el bosque ya despierto
Por trinos de aves; como un ascua brilla.

Relincho de un corcel se oyó distante:
La invasión que llegaba. En ese instante
Subía un canto virginal en coro;

Y cuando el sol despedazó la bruma,
¡Saltó el cacique a la dormida espuma
Y se abrió el agua en remolino de oro!¹

The princess and her dragon were undisturbed for the next 300 years. But with the coming of the Spaniards to the New World and their lust for gold, it was not long before the story of El Dorado became a subject of great curiosity. One of the first Spaniards to hear of El Dorado was Belacázar who, in 1534, heard of the tale in Quito, Ecuador, from an Indian who told of gold and green stones in a country to the north.² Liborio Zerda tells about this incident in the following poem:

Desde que con aquella gente vino
Anasco, Belacázar inquiría
Un indio forastero, peregrino
Que en la ciudad de Quito residía,
Y de Bocatá dijo ser vecino,
Allí venido no sé por qué vía;
El cual habló con él y certifica
Ser tierra de esmeraldas y oro rica.

¹Ismael Arciniegas, p. 280.

²For the song of El Dorado read Appendix L.

Y entre las cosas que les encamina
 Dijo de cierto rey que, sin vestido,
 En balsas iba por una piscina
 Á hacer ablución según él vido,
 Un giro todo bien de trementina
 Y encima cantidad de oro molido
 Desde los bajos piés hasta la frente,
 Como rayo de sol resplandeciente.

Dejó más las venidas ser cortinas,
 Allí para hacer ofrecimientos
 De joyas de oro y esmeraldas finas
 Con otras piezas de sus ornamentos;
 Y afirmando ser cosas fidelinas,
 Los soldados alegres y contentos
 Entonces le pusieron El Dorado
 Por infinitas vías derramado.¹

Belacázar set out at once from the south on a journey of exploration but at the same time there came Jiménez de Quesada from the north who had heard of the story of El Dorado which by now had become a Golden City and even a Land of Gold.² Quesada said that he was going where "emeralds lay on the ground like pebbles."³ When he arrived, he camped by the side of the lagoon. Under torture, the Indians could only tell the truth--that the gold was in the bottom of the lake. The Spaniards moved on.

A German expedition led by Nicolas Federmann also searched for El Dorado at this time. Federmann had heard of a king in the west who walked in a skin of gold, and they wandered for three and one-half years over high, cold mountains, over scorching llanos, and fighting Indians with

¹Liborio Zerda, El Dorado (Bogotá: Silvestre y Cia, 1883), p. 6.

²For a poem about the search see Appendix E.

³Simón, p. 150.

great brutality.¹ When they reached the lake at last, they did not recognize it. They expected shining towers and golden streets, not a deserted, unprepossessing lake.

In 1540 Francisco Pizarro heard of the Golden City where gold and precious stones were to be found in abundance. His was to be a most famous expedition. Pizarro's company lost its way in the jungle, but his companion, Francisco de Orellano, pushed on, bypassed El Dorado, and sailed down the Napo River into a great unknown river. In this way Orellano discovered the Amazon River and became the first European to travel its entire length. For many years the river was called the Orellano River.

In 1595 Sir Robert Dudley took news about El Dorado to Sir Walter Raleigh, and, since the name had come to be used metaphorically of any place where wealth could be rapidly acquired, Sir Walter convinced the queen he could find this place if she would finance the trip.

Once in South America, Sir Walter sent exaggerated reports to England about "this mighty and rich Empire of Guiana ... a country which hath more quantity of gold than the best parts of Peru."² Sir Walter was far from the Golden City, but he gave Guiana to the British Crown.³

¹Ibid., pp. 165-211.

²Natural History magazine, Editor Edward M. Weyer, Vol. LXI, No. 7 (1952), p. 31.

³Read poem in Appendix M.

During the sixteenth century these expeditions proved costly in terms of men and money. Many attempts were made to recover the treasure from the lake. The first endeavor was by Antonio Sepúlveda in 1580 with funds secured from the Spanish Crown. The Spaniards used Indian slaves who, with mattock and crowbar, cut a fifty foot trench into the rim of the mountain which is still visible today. (See figure 9, page 73.) The water rushed out, and some of the treasure came to light. Just as an emerald "as big as an egg"¹ and a high priest's mitre and staff in wrought gold were recovered, funds gave out. The treasure went to Spain, and poor Sepúlveda was left in a hospital to die.

Two hundred and fifty years later a bogotano, José Ignacio París, with financial backing from England, tried to uncover more treasure but was unsuccessful. In 1870 the Crowther-Urdaneta team fell victims of their own enthusiasm to recover the gold. They dug a cave into the sandstone, and, lacking only three meters from terminating the work, they were asphixiated by the gases of the combustion of their explosives.

In 1900 an English company decided to pump the water out of the lake. Natives were paid to drag huge wood burning boilers across the plains. At the lake the pumps were set up and soon were siphoning out the water. The water level

¹Ibid., p. 32.



Figure 9.--Lake Guatavita, the ancient
lake of El Dorado

fell, and excavations were begun at the shore line. But the laborers had to dig in the heat of the dry season, and it wasn't long before the sun turned the mud into cement. At the end of two years they had discovered just enough to prove that the riches were there.¹

The last time the lake was drained was in 1913. An English company began at the eastern end, just outside the lake near the cut, and began tunneling under the lake. When the tunnel was connected with the lake, the water rushed out and with it a snake made of gold a yard long.

The tunnel is still there, large enough for a man to walk in. The water continues to seep out, but the gold is at the other end. Various estimates of the value of the treasure hidden beneath the water have been made: Alexander von Humboldt thought the treasure worth \$300,000,000, and De la Kier of the Royal Institute of Paris puts it at \$5,600,000,000.²

Each trip to Lake Guatavita is a new experience and causes one to pray silently that the princess and her dragon be left to rest in peace.

¹Ibid., p. 35.

²Ibid.

The Legend of Iraca

Iraca es un valle tranquilo y ubérrimo
donde mora la villa de Suamóx.¹

The Temple of the Sun in the valley of what is known now as Sogamosa was the most celebrated religious place of the Chibcha civilization. The temple was made of straw and heavy wood called quayacán which grows only in the llanos of Colombia. (See figure 10, page 76.) The heavy wood was carried over the Andes from the llanos to Sogamosa along wide foot paths which still could be seen up to the end of the seventeenth century.² One writer has said that a trunk of one of these trees was so large that it took four men to reach around it. The Indians, as the writer observed, "wanted to build a temple that would last eternally."³

Pedro Simón described the temple thus:

Fué un bohío monumental lleno de oro y de historia,
que guardó las más nobles tradiciones indias.
Un bohío alegrado con los colores del metal ...
señala el espíritu estético de nuestros antepasados.⁴

The temple, like many other pre-Colombian monuments, did not survive the period of the conquest. In 1536 Jiménez

¹Germán Arciniegas, Roma de los chibchas (Sogamosa: J. M. Suarez, 1937), p. 2.

²Ibid., p. 54.

³Castellanos, p. 118.

⁴Simón, p. 35.



Figure 10.--Miniature replica of the Temple
of the Sun in Sogamosa

de Quesada led his army into the land of the caciques and discovered the valley of Iraca while in search of treasures. From the mountain tops he admired the magnificent valley, (see figure 11, page 78.) about which Rafael Elicoechea wrote:

AL VALLE DE IRACA

Atrás dejo montañas seculares,
Dejo llanuras que semejan mares
Pacíficos dominios del jaguar;
Se apodera del ánimo el hastío
Al trasmontar el páramo sombrío
Y huir paréceme región natal

· · · · ·
Modera el río su corriente loca
Cuando los lindes de este valle toca,
Y también en mansedumbre su altivez;
Perezoso sus aguas arrastrando
Va en caprichosas curvas retardando
Viaje que no le es dado retener.

· · · · ·
Todo pasó ... la raza heroica y fiera
Abatió para siempre su bandera;
Forzada, su creencia abandonó;
Y entre el desdén, la befa y el insulto,
Se fue cambiando por extraña culto
Más sumida quedó en superstición.¹

Quesada had heard about the rich Temple del Sol in Iraca, but he wanted to wait until there would not be so many men with him. He hoped for an Indian guide who would take him where "... según decían, a más de un templo lleno de riquezas, habían otros muchos señores principales circunvecinos, enriquecidos con mucho oro ..."² Quesada arrived at the sacred temple city at dawn. Some Indians in the city

¹Correa, pp. 61-64.

²Germán Arciniegas, Roma de los chibchas, p. 62.



Figure 11.--Valley of Iraca, today Sogamosa

had seen the Spaniards coming and most of them ran and hid themselves. One of the principal caciques, Suamóx, had escaped with his women, children, and slaves.¹

Upon entering the temple Quesada saw gold and emeralds encrusted in the walls of the palace. Here alone was treasure worth 80,000 ducats.² After packing all the treasure the Spaniards set fire to the temple to signify the domination of the Spaniards over all aspects of Chibcha life.

Castellanos affirms that this temple burned for five years in spite of the rainy season. Pedro Simón limits the time to a year, adding that "... la causa de durar tanto dicen haber sido la mucha paja que sobre si tenía, que conservaba el fuego después de quemada en los maderos gruesos que debajo de esta ceniza estaban."³ It is probable that Castellanos meant to say five days or five months.⁴

MODERN REDISCOVERY OF

THE TEMPLE SITE

While walking over the grounds of this ancient temple I asked the guard how they were sure that the temple had stood in this exact spot. He explained that in excavating

¹The development of the word Sogamoso, which came from the word Suamox, is thus: SU-A-MOX, SU-G-A-MUX-I, SOG-A-MOS-O. SUA meant "Sun God" and MOX meant victim or sacrifice.

²Germán Arciniegas, Roma de los chibchas, p. 65.

³Simón, p. 44.

⁴For a dramatic play about the burning of the Temple of the Sun see Appendix N.

they had found charred wood in a place where this type of wood was not naturally encountered. Members of the National Academy of History, from the results of this discovery and continuing excavations, now agree that the present location is where the Templo del Sol had stood.

There is another reason the valley of Iraca is interesting to the folklorist. The Chibchas saw Bochica ascend into the Heavens from this valley and for a long time the people of the valley wore a cloak which they called the mantle of Bochica in honor of the god who had ended his voyage and teachings on earth in this valley.

Enrique Muñoz Torres, a native poet of Sogamoso, laments the destruction of the Indian in the following desolate lines:

IRACA

No fueron los infantes altivos de Quesada
quienes por siempre hicieron el campo aridezido
los ínclitos recuerdos de la Ciudad Sagrada
borraron más que aquellos el tiempo y el olvido.

En aguas estancadas aquella raza abreva,
y va tras de los amos con estupor que
la estólida inconciencia que en pos de sí
por eso el alma chibcha perdió su savia rica;
por eso ya no torna ni el alma de Bochica,
ni Sugamuxi el grande, ni el viejo Nenqueteva.¹

And so the hurricane of the Spanish Conquest absorbed the famous Templo del Sol and carried away everything "entre las llamas del templo incendiado y el silencio de los indios que

¹Correa, p. 381.

VII. CONCLUSION

From the very beginning of the Spanish Conquest, European writers have been lured to that area of Colombia where the Chibcha Indians developed their civilization. The chroniclers, Juan de Castellanos and Fray Pedro Simón, were among the first to record the Indian legends which are representative of the religious and ethical ideas of a culture and society now nearly extinct.

We are indebted to the early chroniclers for their records of the ways of life of the Chibcha people as well as the preservation of their legends. But for the chroniclers, an insight into the mores and culture patterns of the Chibchas' society would be forever lost. Moreover, certain features of Chibcha mythology can be better understood if one has reference to the patterns of societal organization. With the exception of the cacique and his family, Chibcha society was basically matriarchal. The woman was the aggressor in marital relations, and she demanded obedience and fidelity of the husband with the right to divorce or deliver punishment if the husband was unfaithful. The woman worked in the fields while the husband cared for the home and children. Warring, hunting, and fishing, however, were considered manly duties.

In contrast to the ordinary tribesman, the cacique household was patriarchal. He had as many wives as he could support, and an unfaithful wife could be made to eat her lover's flesh. It will be remembered that this type of punishment was recorded in the legend of El Dorado.

The Chibcha nation was governed by two supreme rulers, the Zaque in Bogotá and the Zipa in Tunja.¹ Under the two rulers, there was a cacique for each community of the nation, and the principal men under the cacique were called jegues. The position of the cacique was a hereditary one. If there was no successor, a new cacique was elected, and his word was law to his subjects. He sat above the tribesmen, and special wooden planks, often encrusted with gold and emeralds, were placed in his path as he moved among his people. The laws of the tribes were few but stringent. Homicide, stealing, and unnatural sex crimes were punishable by law. The law was enforced by the cacique, and punishment often consisted of public whippings and severing of parts of the body. In many cases the humiliation and shame of such a punishment would drive the culprit to suicide. Thus, the beautiful princess in the legend of El Dorado killed herself rather than suffer the humiliation of public disgrace.

¹Read the poem "En el cercado de los Zipas" on page 20, the first poem on page 42, the poem on page 50, and Gomez Jaimes' poem on page 53.

The Chibcha people were not a warlike group. On the contrary, most of them, according to the chroniclers, were timid and cowardly. One must, however, remember that the Spanish conqueror was not an unbiased observer. The fighting which occurred was generally occasioned by rivalry among the caciques or by the necessity of defending the frontiers from other Indians. In battle, the Indians would hold a sacred golden god in one hand and fight with the other. A Chibcha victory resulted in the burning of the enemy town and the confiscation of the women and gold. Human sacrifice never reached the monstrous proportions which it had reached among the Aztecs, but it did occur. The small boys captured in war by the Chibchas were kept in the sacred temples and upon reaching the age of puberty they were sacrificed to the Sun. Very seldom was a young boy taken from a Chibcha group and offered to the gods.

The conquest of the Chibcha nation, nevertheless, was a relatively easy matter. There are some who believe that the matriarchal system of the Chibcha society was in part responsible for the ease of the conquest. The Chibcha women were attracted to the handsome, godlike Spanish invaders, and often openly preferred a Spanish conqueror to the defeated Chibcha male.

If the legends throw light on certain features of the society, so also do the tales explain aspects of the

Chibcha religion. The Chibcha had vague notions of a supreme creator or a first great mover, but the principal deities to be worshipped were the Sun, Sué, and the Moon, Chía. As Castellanos explains it:

No niegan haber Dios omnipotente
señor universal y siempre bueno
que todo lo crió; mas porque dicen
que el Sol es criatura más lúcida,
lo deben adorar, y así lo hacen,
y como a su mujer y compañera
adoran y engrandecen a la Luna.¹

This notion is reinforced by the lines of Bishop Piedrahita, also a chronicler:

Creían todos los indios que había un autor
de la naturaleza que hizo el cielo y la
tierra; mas no por eso dejaban de adorar
por dios al Sol, por su hermosura, y a la Luna,
porque la tenían por compañera; a ésta
llamaban Chía y al Sol Sué.

It will be remembered that the great temple at Sogamoso was dedicated to the worship of the Sun. But there were lesser deities also, whose wrath was to be feared. In the myth of the Tequendama Falls, the havoc wrought on earth by Chibchacum resulted from the transgressions of the Indians against the gods.

The culture hero who assumed godlike qualities, and who seemed of all the gods the one most intimately concerned with Chibcha affairs, was Bochica, who figures in the story

¹Castellanos, pp. 46-47.

²José Pérez de Barradas, p. 443.

of the Tequendama Falls. All the best elements in Chibcha culture were attributed to the sudden appearance of this divine individual. In studying this myth of the fair god who came to the American soil as a great teacher, one cannot help wondering if the story is to be dismissed as mere fantasy. But up to now the Bochica-Quetzalcoatl figure remains one of the great enigmas of pre-Columbian history.

Also important in Chibcha mythology is Bachué, the Biblical Eve of the Chibcha people. It was she who was responsible for the Chibchas' great veneration for bodies of water. After accomplishing her maternal duties to the people, she turned into a snake and disappeared into the lake, Iguaque, from which she had emerged. For this reason it was believed that great temples with gods actually existed in the lake bottoms.

Chibcha methods of burial attest to their belief in immortality. It was believed that to reach heaven, a long journey had to be made across an ocean. Some of the dead were buried in well-like holes and others in coffins of gold which were dropped into lakes. They made great preparations for this journey. In each case the personal belongings, treasures, and emeralds, and provisions of food were placed with the body to insure a comfortable trip.

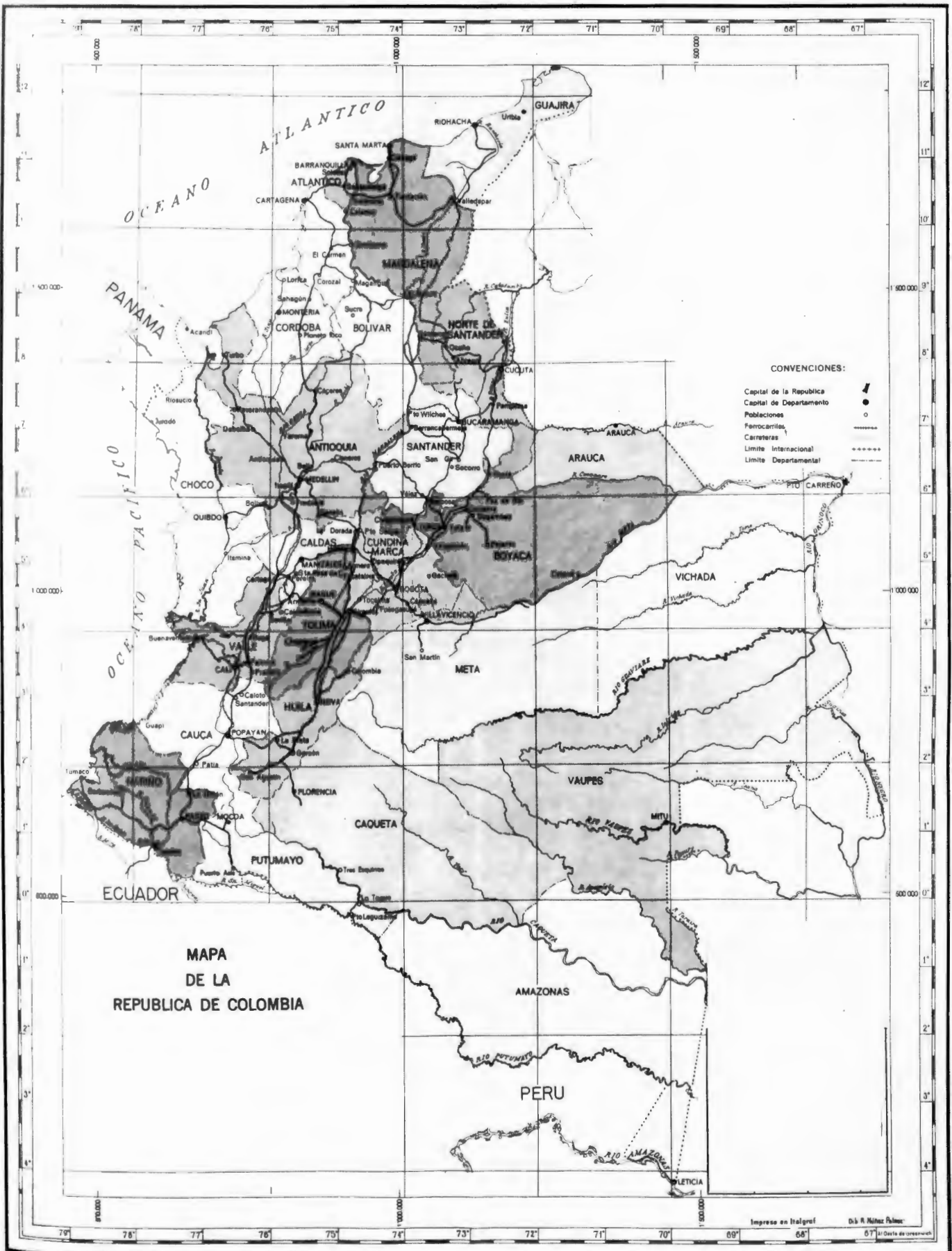
Through the chronicler's recordings of the ways of life of the Chibcha people, we see that the legends are an

intrinsic part of the Chibcha society. The tales were told and retold until in time they became treasures within themselves, repeated in prose and poetry. Indeed, men of letters used the legends as a literary quarry from which enduring monuments of Colombian literature have been conserved.

The world's interest in Chibcha folklore continues into the present time. The people of El Dorado are still celebrated in poetry and prose by distinguished modern Colombian writers, and through these writings the raza vencida will not be forgotten.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

EL INDIO

Hundida hasta las cejas, la corroscá;
ruana listada, de algodón; montera;
calzón de manta; abierta la pechera
de lienzo crudo; la epidermis hosca.

El guayacán en la muñeca tosca
siempre colgado; alega a la ventera
a tiempo de pagar, y urde quimera
cuando tras larga libación se amosca.

Con la ovalada jaula ya vacía
de vuelta del mercado, la alegría
del lucro humilde su semblante inunda.

Y ajeno de la suerte a los rigores,
al són del tiple canta sus amores
a la luz de la tarde moribunda.¹

por Don Julio de Francisco

HISTORIA DE UN INDIO

Soy José Resurreción
y mi apelativo es Ramos:
toy p'a servirle a mis amos
con toda satisfacción.

Yo no supe onde nací
pesque jice en Sutapelao,
y en después que taba criaio
me trujeron pa Monguí.

Mi agüelo era Luis Moncó
y dicen que era de Sora,
y mi mamita señora
créigo que era de Sopó.

Murieron en Usaquén
el año de la virgüela;
Ah humanidá de mi agüela
y de mi agüelo también!²

por Don Antonio Morales

¹Samper Ortega, Selecciones Samper Ortega de literature colombiana (Bogotá: Editorial Minerva S.A., n.d.), No. 84, p.98.

²Ibid., No. 87, p. 96.

APPENDIX C

COLOMBIAN ART

The most important South American art show ever staged in the United States was on view in July, 1960, in the huge Corinthian Hall of Washington's Pan American Union. It was entitled "3,500 Years of Colombian Art."

The show consisted of dazzling sculptured ornaments of gold, stone, and clay representing various animals, birds, gods, and humans made by the Chibcha Indians with skill unsurpassed in ancient or modern times.

The gold was worked by the "lost wax" method: a core of clay was coated with wax, which in turn was covered with more clay. The wax was then melted, allowed to drain out, and the empty space was filled with molten gold. When the metal hardened, the clay was chipped off.

The Chibcha tribe, says the article from Time Magazine in describing the show, was the largest pre-Colombian civilization in Colombia, numbering over 1,000,000, and living on the mountains some 7,000 feet above sea level. There was no form of government except the rule of district lords.¹

¹"3,500 Years of Colombian Art," Time Magazine, July 11, 1960, pp. 22-23.

APPENDIX D

Juan C. Hernández has made me a gift of a copy of one of his books, Hunza, which is a history of the folklore of the Chibcha Indians. In the book is this paragraph about Indian poetry:

Y la poesía? También los cronistas nos dicen que los chibchas cantaban sus historias en verso; estos dentro de un ritmo que llamaba la atención,. Nada absolutamente nada nos ha quedado de la poesía chibcha, si no es la facilidad con que el indio chibcha actual hace uso del octosílabo para expresar sus sentimientos y sobre todo su ironía mordaz.
Nada nos quedó de poesía ...¹

¹Juan C. Hernández, Hunza (Tunja: 1939), p. 82.

APPENDIX E

GONZALO JIMÉNEZ DE QUESADA¹

De altiva raza luchador pujante:
 yelmo, y espada, y reluciente cota
 ceñiste a tu figura de gigante,
 y tu barco, con alas de gaviota,
 burló las furias del soberbio Atlante.

.....

Sin conocer temores ni desmayos,
 miraste con pupila indiferente
 lo mismo fieras que plumajes gayos;
 ninguna tempestad dobló tu frente,
 que tostó el sol con sus quemantes rayos.

.....

Del Funza en la corriente sosegada
 encontró tu Gentil la fantasía,
 y abrieron a tu mente fatigada
 su hermoso firmamento Andalucía,
 su fértil vega la gentil Granada.

Y te aprestaste a dominar en guerra
 de los chibchas la raza misteriosa,
 que dejó las labores de la tierra
 por defender con alma belicosa
 los duros flancos de su inculta sierra.

Y al romper con tus músculos triunfales
 la dulce paz de su vivir sencillo,
 vibraron como músicas marciales
 los acordes del triste caramillo
 y el agreste rumor de los maizales.

Y con denuedo de feroces pumas
 volaron a oponer filas estrechas,
 henchida el alma de invernales bumás,
 lleno el carcax de voladoras flechas,
 la sien ceñida de brillantes plumas.

¹The poem, written by Joaquín Maldonado Plata (1877-1936) who was a professor of literature in Colegio Concordia, merits attention, for it is one of his best.

Ardiendo el chibcha en varonil coraje,
 quiso salvar de extraño poderío
 su religión, su patria, su lenguaje,
 la silente quietud de su bohío
 y el dulce objeto de su amor salvaje.

.

Y en el rudo combate en que se empeña,
 la tradición de Nenqueteva invoca,
 que con su vara, del poder enseña,
 vino a romper la formidable roca
 por donde el Funza su raudal despeña.

Todo fue inútil: del feral estruendo
 huyó invadido del terror y el pasmo,
 pues de tu alfanje al ímpetu tremendo,
 su valor, y su fuerza, y su entusiasmo,
 al pie de tu pendón fueron cayendo.

Y el santo misionero de alma grande
 dió al vencido su amparo generoso;
 y bajo el cielo donde el sol se expande
 enclavó con su brazo poderoso
 la excelsa cruz en el altar del Ande.

Y apoyadas en muros de granito,
 contemplaron con íntimos temores
 que bajo el dombo azul del infinito
 retumbaba en un templo de colores
 del Salto audaz el fragoroso grito.

Y enamorado les brindó el coloso
 cuanto diamante en su corriente brilla,
 sus espumas por manto esplendoroso,
 por cetro los laureles de su orilla
 y por turbante un iris vaporoso.

.

¡Oh luchador invictol Tu memoria,
 con el lauro triunfal de la conquista,
 se destaca en el bronce de la Historia,
 y cualquier nube que en tu espacio exista
 se desvanece al brillo de tu gloria.

.

Y hoy te arrulla en los brazos de la fama
 del trueno bronco el atambor violento,
 con su clarín la tempestad te aclama,
 y es el himno triunfal de tu ardimiento
 la omnipotente voz del Tequendama.¹

¹Ortega, No. 87, pp. 44-50.

APPENDIX F

These poems are selections from Raimundo Rivas,
Historia de Colombia narrada en verso a los niños (Bogotá:
 Camacho Roldan & Cía., Ltd., 1944), pp. 9-57.

a.

En pos del Descubridor
 muchos audaces marinos
 quisieron hallar caminos
 al Oriente seductor;
 luego, aclarado el error,
 de Europa pasó la gente
 a ese nuevo Continente
 que prometió, con el oro,
 el magnífico tesoro
 de una natura esplendente.

.

b.

Lucen en ella guerreros
 que vencieron en Pavía,
 y otros que en la mar sombría
 hizo el infiel prisioneros;
 entre tantos caballeros
 que embarcaron en la armada,
 el Licenciado Quesada
 fue el de mayor nombradía
 en la nación que sería
 Nuevo Reino de Granada

.

c.

Avanzando al interior
 hallaron verdes llanuras
 corrientes de aguas puras,
 verdes campos de labor;
 el chibcha, buen labrador,
 muchos frutos cultivaba:
 junto a la papa se alzaba
 el maíz, "jefe altanero"
 que un tributo lisonjero
 en todo tiempo le daba.

.

d. Arredró al chibcha sufrido
 el trueno del arcabuz,
 y así aceptó la cruz
 y se declaró vencido,
 el blanco fue preferido
 al panche vecino cruel,
 juró a su amistad ser fiel
 pues pensó era invencible
 quien cabalgaba temible
 en monstruo alado: el corcel.

.

e. Al Zaque, varón severo,
 que en Hunsa tuvo su Corte,
 en nueva campaña el Norte
 Quesada hizo prisionero:
 recogió tanto dinero
 en oro, el mejor metal,
 que resultó natural
 que sus alegres soldados
 gritaron entusiasmados:
 "Perú, señor General".

f. Los jinetes a gran trote
 ocuparon cierto día
 el lugar do residía
 el Supremo Sacerdote;
 atusándose el bigote,
 al recinto religioso
 Rodríguez Parra, curioso,
 entró de codicia ciego,
 y sin querer puso fuego
 al Templo de Sogamoso.

g. ("Era muy rico e inmenso",
 afirma ingenuo el cronista
 que en verso de la conquista
 esbozó notable lienzo,
 tal fue el general concenso
 mas buscada en bosque umbrío
 su huella, se halló un bohío
 casi igual a los demás:
 no tuvo en verdad jamás:
 tal riqueza y poderío).

.

h.

Quesada había mostrado
 en su admirable campaña
 ser noble hijo de España,
 magnánimo y esforzado,
 pero incurrió en el pecado,
 en deplorable momento,
 de dar al Zipa tormento,
 y por ello su conciencia
 amargóle la existencia
 con tenaz remordimiento.

.

i.

Mas antes huella esplendente
 dejó de su recorrido
 el que nunca fue vencido
 por el natural valiente:
 fundó a Quito floreciente,
 a Cali y a Popayán,
 y avanzó tras el inmán
 de ver al Indio dorado
 que le dijo haber hallado
 un indígena truhán.

j.

Por un mito fascinado
 Quesada, cual buen español,
 fue hasta la Casa del Sol
 y salió decepcionado;
 buscó de nuevo El Dorado
 con potente expedición
 pleno de loca ambición,
 mas después de mil azares
 y de inauditos pesares
 vio marchita su ilusión.

.

k.

Al natural amparar
 era el objeto buscado:
 gemía desamparado
 el indio en su propio hogar;
 era preciso evitar
 que audaz el Encomendero
 se resistiese altanero
 a obedecer lo mandado,
 pues estaba acostumbrado
 a obtener siempre dinero.

.

l.
Maltrecho y casi arruinado
salió el General Quesada
de la difícil jornada
que hizo en busca del Dorado:
no halló el Tesoro soñado
en la llanura infinita;
como jefe se ejercita
los gualíes en domar,
y luego va a reposar
su vejez en Mariquita.

.

m.
Un relieve muy notorio
tiene Caldas a su lado,
con justicia, proclamado
Jefe del Observatorio;
se yergue cual promontorio
en la Colonia su ciencia,
modesta era su apariencia
y su talento, genial,
fue la libertad su ideal
y le ofrendó la existencia.

APPENDIX G

Fragments from Juan Valera's Cartas Americanas

"... Y no crea Ud. que lo que más me encantaría ahí, aunque soy muy apasionado á la hermosura y sublimidad de la naturaleza sería ... la misma catarata, vencedora del Niágara y una de las maravillas que hay que ver en este planeta, catarata en que se derrumban las aguas del Bogotá desde una altura de 180 metros, y pasan por el aire, desde la tierra fría desde un clima como el del centro de España, á la tierra caliente, poblada de naranjoles y de palmas, y donde revolotean los loros y guacamayas. Todo esto, con un poco de imaginación, se ve en espíritu, leyendo las descripciones de los viajeros, casi como si se viese materialmente con los ojos del cuerpo y se tocase con las manos ...

El prodigioso salto del Tequendama debió ser y ha sido también asunto adecuado y frecuente de la poesía, compitiendo con el Niágara. Ya los indios habían poetizado el Tequendama en su mitología. Bochica trajo la civilización a los chibchas, apareciendo entre ellos, estableciendo religión y vida política, y enseñándoles á tejer, á labrar la tierra y á fundir y esculpir el oro, aunque no el hierro, que desconocían.

El río Funza o Bogotá se desbordó y cubrió la llanura toda. Los hombres, para no morir ahogados, tuvieron que encaramarse y refugiarse en lo alto de las montañas. Y

entonces fué cuando Bochica, hiriendo con su báculo una finísima roca, abrió paso al agua, que se precipitó por allí con estruendo y como en un abismo. Tal origen tuvo el salto de Tequendama, en la imaginación de los chibchas. Los modernos colombianos le celebran y describen en hermosos versos.

Uno de los cantores del Tequendama es Don José Joaquín Ortiz, de quien tengo que decir lo mismo que de Madiedo, y que de casi todos. Es autor de multitud de obras ...

Sus versos al Tequendama son buenos, pero no los citaré para citar otros que me parecen mucho mejores ...

... En cambio, la ilustre poetisa antioqueña Agripina Montes siente y refleja con gran viveza y vigor la hermosura y sublimidad de los seres inanimados ó inferiores al hombre.

El sentimiento de la naturaleza es en su alma todo lo profundo que puede ser en un alma católica y española; ...

... Heredia, poeta de Cuba; Pérez Bonalde, poeta de Venezuela, han compuesto versos hermosísimos al Niágara ... no hay oda, ni himno, que haga concebir mejor la grandeza del Niágara ...

... Con el Tequendama ocurre lo mismo que con el Niágara. Cualquiera descripción en prosa, la de Humboldt, la antemático Caldas, la del barón de Japurá, dan más cumplida idea que los mejores versos. La masa de agua que

se precipita es muy inferior, pero cae un lugar cerca de cuatro veces más alto. El agua además choca primero contra un banco de piedra, y allí revienta; hierve y se lanza de nuevo en plumas divergentes hacia el abismo. En el fondo es más terrible el choque y no puede mirarse sin horror. Las plumas de agua, las puntas de lanzas, que tal parecen, se despeñan con increíble rapidez y se suceden unas á otras. Al llegar al fondo, cuando no antes, en virtud de su vertiginoso descenso, se desmenuza el agua y se pulveriza, y asciende luego en forma de nubes, que el sol dora y adorna con el iris. Se diría que el Bogotá acostumbrado á correr por las regiones elevadas de los Andes, baja á pesar suyo á aquella profundidad y quiere otra vez elevarse orgulloso en difusos vapores. Estos vapores asegura Humboldt que se ven desde la ciudad de Bogotá a cinco leguas de distancia.

Después de esto, ¿qué podrá añadir la poetisa; qué ponderación realizará en sus versos la pintura de la catarata? La impresión propia, el vuelo de su espíritu su humano pensamiento y su elevada fantasía, que entrevé á Dios en el horrendo arco que forma el agua.

... La planicie de Bogotá fué, pues, desde que los españoles la descubrieron, centro y foco de civilización. Los chibchas ó muiscas de entonces no eran inferiores en cultura á los súbditos de Atahualpa y de Moctezuma, así como los bogotanos de ahora son el pueblo más aficionado

á las letras, ciencias y artes, de todo la América española.

Desde que el Nuevo Reino de Granada se cristianizó y se españolizó han abundado en él poetas é historiadores, que algo nos han descubierto de su antigua manera de ser, de su mitología, leyendas y vida anterior á la conquista.¹

¹Valera, pp. 167-211.

APPENDIX H

BOCHICA

Huyeron o se ahogaron las tribus. La sabana
 trocó Huitaca en lago que, pérfido y tenaz,
 despedazó del chibcha la fuerza soberana
 al revolver sus ondas contra la mies feraz.

Llegó Bochica entonces--el de la barba cana--
 y con el áureo cetro para volver la paz
 abrió gigante brecha por donde el agua vana
 precipitóse al fondo de flagetón voraz.

De nuevo el lago enorme se convirtió en pradera.
 Surgió de sus entrañas la fértil sementera.
 Giraron los maizales del horizonte en pos.

Y el indio vió en las rocas, entre iris de colores,
 rodar el Tequendama cubierto de blancos
 como las luengas barbas de su benigno dios! ...¹

Nicolás B. Posada (1902-)

¹Ortega, Vol. 87, p. 41. Nicolás B. Posada studied literature in Colegio de San Bartolomé. He received his doctorate in letras y filosofía and was professor of literature in prominent schools in Bogotá.

APPENDIX I

The sublime and terrifying picture of the Tequendama Falls overcomes the poet and touches writers of first order such as don Antonio Gómez Restrepo:

Atrás el verde prado,
rico en plantíos y ganados queda,
atrás el Funza turbio y sosegado
que entre juncales y lagunas rueda.
... ¡Cuán pequeño me siento
ante ese cuadro aterrador, sublime!
Quiero cantar, y el pasmo que me oprime
agaga de mis labios el acento ...
... La vara del Señor en las montañas
tocó, y al punto mismo
Con estruendo se abrieron las entrañas,
apareció el abismo;
y en él labró para su gloria su templo.
... Adiós, Oh, Tequendama. Cuando bajan
mis despojos al seno de la fosa,
suba mi alma a la región del canto,
como tu blanca nube silenciosa
sabe del sol a entretejer el manto.¹

Many of the poems written about the falls do not refer to the Chibcha legend but are worth mentioning. The best known woman poet of Colombia is Agripina Montes del Valle (1844-1915). About her and the poem Al Tequendama, Alfred Coester says:

The superiority of her lines arises not alone from the wealth of color and the minuteness of the description but from the fact that at the background of the picture the reader sees the poetess herself. The depression which possesses her spirit in the presence of such a grand scene makes one form a better conception of its magnificence.²

¹Antonio Gómez Restrepo, Los poetas (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1936), pp. 139-144.

²Alfred Coester, A Literary History of Spanish America (New York: 1928), p. 299.

Gómez Restrepo himself admired his fellow poet's ode on Tequendama:

La más ilustre de las poetisas Colombianas es Agripina Montes. Con su oda Al Tequendama no dudamos arrancará un grito unánime de admiración. Es profundo el sentimiento de esta oda. Debemos mandar elevar esta oda a la primera fila de la lírica castellana. A ella se ha llamado Musa del Tequendama.¹

The ode of Agripina Montes is a very long one but some idea of its style may be gained from the following lines:

Tequendama grandioso:
deslumbra ante el séquito asombroso
de tu prisma riquísimo atavío,
la atropellada fuga persiguiendo
de su flotante mole en el vacío ...

.

... ¡A morir! al abismo te provoca
algo a la mente del mortal estreño; ...
... ¿Qué buscas en lo ignoto?
¿Cómo, a dónde, por quién vas empujado ...?
Miro a lo alto. En la sien de la mañana
su penacho imperial gozosa baña
la noble águila fiera,
y espejándose en tu arco de topacio
que adereza la luz de cien colores, ...

¡Adiós! ¡Adiós! Ya a reflejar no alcanza
del alma la centella fugitiva,
ni tu ideal, fastuosa perspectiva,
ni el prodigioso ritmo de tu danza; ...
Canto y cantor sepultará el olvido.²

¹ Restrepo, Los poetas, p. 144.

² Ibid.

APPENDIX J

Mr. Jesús Rincón, a descendant of the Chibcha tribe, had one of his poems published, and, although it has nothing to do with the legend about the lake, it does demonstrate the ability of a man of Chibcha descent without education.¹

Yo soy campesino
Muy pobre de esta región
De Puebloviejo, vecino
Del campo, trabajador.

Y para labrar los surcos
No tengo sino un bueysito
Que lo mantengo con juncos
Porque no tengo pastico

Yo me llamo Peregrino
Y mi apellido Riveros
De Luis Gonzales soy vecino
El patrón de los pesqueros.

Carecemos de herramientas
Y también de orientación
Con ser que con nuestras rentas
Ayudamos la Nación

Mi mujer es mucha buena
Porque gobierna en mi casa,
Cumple años en Nochebuena
Se llama Herminda Pedraza

Tenemos buena confianza
En nuestro gobierno actual
Contento con la esperanza
De una escuelita rural

Cinco hijos ya me ha dado
Orgullo de nuestro hogar
Todos cinco a nuestro lado
Que obedecen mi mandar.

Sería un gran tesoro
Que tendríamos que admirar
De valioso con el oro
Bello como el manantial

Pa sostener mi familia
Trabajo en agricultura
Con mi china Blanca Lilia
Junto a la piscicultura

Se acabaría la pobreza
Que existe en esta región
Sería fuente de riqueza
De todo el trabajador²

¹Mr. Rincón's voice may be heard on tape number 3.

²Ministro de Educación Nacional, Colombia Campesina (Bogotá: Revista Mensual, No. 5, February 18, 1953), p. 35.



Figure 12.--Señor Jesús Rincón with Lake
Tota in the background

APPENDIX K

GUATAVITA¹

Es un cráter anegado. Sus paredes son silencio.
 En lo alto de los Andes, se diría que es un
 punto del espacio donde está petrificado,
 sin correr jamás, el Tiempo.

Es un cráter anegado, Sus paredes son silencio.

Yo bajé por las paredes de aquel cráter, y sentía
 que muy lenta, lentamente,
 me sumía,
 paso a paso
 en el misterio.

Y bajaba,
 temeroso,
 hechizado,
 Hechizado por las aguas que en el fondo me decían:
 "Ven ...
 Desciende ...
 Ven y cae, cual nosotros,
 en la historia ...
 Ven y vuélvete
 recuerdo ..."

Y bajaba,
 temeroso
 Temeroso y hechizado por aquel lugar umbroso
 donde está petrificado,
 sin correr jamás, el Tiempo.

Y por fin llegué hasta el fondo, y en la orilla
 de las aguas verdeoscuroas,
 al alzar la vista al cielo
 lo ví lejos,
 lo ví lejos, no, mi cielo.
 Y grité. Grité tan fuerte como pude.
 Y mi grito dió tres vueltas por el cráter,
 y al volver a mis oídos
 ¡Oh, el recuerdo!
 Al volver a mis oídos dijo algo,
 Dijo algo que era eterno,
 Dijo algo que me ha hecho como el lago misterioso,
 Porque en mí se petrifica,
 sin correr jamás, el Tiempo.²

¹Significa "Cumbre del Cerro."

²Por Julián Castillo, Los cien poemas de los Andes
 (Bogotá: Colección Bochica, 1950), p. 50.

APPENDIX L

Victor W. von Hagen said that the Indian "picked up his lute and transcribed as a troubador the song of El Dorado."

An alien Indian,
 hailing from afar,
 Who then in Quito resided
 Claimed to be from Bogotá.
 He gave talk to Belacázar
 and announced
 Things of his country, rich in
 emeralds and gold.

Also among the golden things
 Was a certain king who dismantled,
 Went aboard a raft so as to make
 Ablutions to himself.

 On his regal form (as he had seen)
 A fragrant resin
 And upon it, a coat of powdered gold
 Golden form foot to highest brow
 So that there he was,
 as replendent
 As the beaming sun.

People without end,
 the Indians said,
 Came there to make rich offerings
 Of golden ornaments and of emeralds
 And diverse other trinkets.
 All this he affirmed with worthy
 credence,
 So that Belacázar's men, then
 light of heart
 Called this king, El Dorado.

And so, by that name
 and by countless ways
 El Dorado spread all over the world.¹

¹Nature Magazine, p. 34.

APPENDIX M

EL DORADO

Un gallardo caballero,
valiente como un cruzado,
alegre, joven y fiero,
por un áspero sendero
marcha en busca de El Dorado.

Ya está ahora jadeante,
siente el corazón pesado,
y aunque prosigue adelante
el férvido caminante
no encuentra nunca El Dorado.

La fuerza le ha abandonado;
cae al fin y alcanza a ver
fúnebre sombra a su lado;
Sombra le dice al caer
¿En dónde se halla El Dorado?

En un astro muy distante
se encuentra el valle encantado
del Ensueño, caminante....
llega a esa estrella radiante
si estás buscando El Dorado.¹

por Don Carlos Arturo Torres
(1867-1911)

¹Ortega, pp. 128-129. Torres was minister of the treasury under President Marroquín and the Consul of Colombia in Liverpool.

APPENDIX N

EL INCENDIO DEL TEMPLO

por Max Grillo

(Interior del templo de Iraca. Suamós aparece en una silla de madera guarnecida de esmeraldas, colocada en el centro del recinto sagrado. A derecha e izquierda del Pontífice se extienden teorías de jeques y de vestales. Los braseros arden alimentados con maderas aromáticas de las cuales surgen llamas azules. Los muros del templo están cubiertos a trechos de láminas de oro bruñido, delgadas y musicales. Sobre trípodas sencillas resplandecen las aves hieráticas, con sus plumajes verdes, azules y rojos.)

Es la hora del crepúsculo. Por las puertas laterales entran purpúreos fulgores del cielo encendido por la agonía de la tarde.)

ESCENA I

Neuza, sacerdotisa de Tundama, llega por una de las puertas laterales y se dirige a Suamós.

(Profundo es el oráculo, Pontífice de Iraca, Sus reconditas voces queman el corazón; Zuhé con sangre virgen sus coleras no aplaca....)

Suamós.

¡Hablad!

Neuza.

¡Temed! Los dioses inescrutables son!

Suamós.

Mas oyen de sus hijos el amoroso ruego.
Decidnos las palabras profundas....

Neuza.

¡Oh, profundas!....

El coro de jeques y vestales.

¡Zuhé! ¡Zuhe!

Neuza.

Severas...."AGAY QUANDOLA IU!"

(Sorpresa en el concurso)

¡Vi las aves divinas, como flechas de fuego

Pasar ensangrentadas!

El coro.

Agay quandola iu!

Suamós.

¿Y los buhos? ¿las sombras de las nubes errantes?

Neuza.

Los buhos extasiados declinaban el vuelo
Hacia el bosque. Sus ojos de amarillo fulgor
Y sus trémulas alas predecían el duelo;
Las nubes eran monstruos de lívidos semblantes.

Coro de Vestales.

Agay, agay, horror!

Suamós.

Consultaré yo mismo de las aves divinas
El sentido medroso. Por mí la tempestad
En lluvia se convierte. Los montes y colinas
De Nompanim esclavos, siguen mi voluntad.
Desataré las nubes sobre los campos yermos;
Las fuentes extinguidas tornarán a bullir;
Oye Zuhé mis votos. Sanaré los enfermos;
Hago brotar las flores; descubro el porvenir.

Coro de Jeques.

¡Es el ungido santo!

Suamós.

(Se levanta majestuoso y se encamina
hacia el brasero que despide chispas
azules. Los mancebos, que rodean los
braseros, le presentan la urna, que con-
tiene resinas aromáticas. El Pontífice
con una espátula de oro toma el MOQUE
y lo arroja en el fuego acompañando
su acción de signos misteriosos. Entre
las espirales blancas del humo se ini-
cian cabezas de lagartos de reflejos
metálicos.

La selva se agita con violencia y la
sombra de TOMAGATA pasa por el bosque
vecino al templo.

Tomagata.

Tristes dioses vencidos

Por la fatalidad.

(Señala hacia Hunza, de donde ha venido
su sombra errante y ligera.)

Otro dios inhumano

Tras vosotros vendrá....

(Las palabras se entreverán con el rui-
do de las hojas que caen. Hay momentos
en que la figura de Tomagata se confunde
con los troncos y simula un vegetal
viviente, una mandrágo a animada.

Se oyen truenos lejanos. Todos ex-
presan inquietud. Algunos jeques tratan
de explicarse porque sucede mirando
por las puertas laterales. El espacio per-
manece tranquilo. El sol enrojecido se
oculta pomposamente. La tempestad que
creen oír ochies es inusitada: no se
advierten los relámpagos. La fiesta
religiosa continúa.)

Suamós (Conmovido).

¡Padre Soll que tus rayos fecundicen la tierra
de Idacanzas gloriosa. Suenen himnos de paz
En los úberos campos, y por siempre la guerra
Encadenada aguarde, cual oso montaraz.

Las aves que las galas tienen de Cuchaviba
Te llevarán los votos de nuestra ardiente fe.

(Los augures dan tres golpes en los trípodes de los guacamayos.
Uno de éstos canta:)

¡Zuhé, luz viva,
Zuhé, Zuhé!

(Los jeques toman el ave que ha deseado
ser portadora del mensaje selestial y la
dejan escapar libremente hacia el espacio
donde ahora desciende el astro-dios.)

La ceremonia ha sido feliz. Las deidades se muestran propicios a los chibchas. Resuena una música selvática y sencilla. TOMAGATA desaparece, las vestales coronadas de rosas de Isabuco y lirios acuáticos, danzan alrededor de los trípodes en que se hallan las aves.

Uno de los mancebos que rodea los braseros ofrece a Suamós una caña de maíz con el fruto abierto. El Pontífice la incienza con el turibulo.)

Suamós.

Chaquén amable diónos tu [sic] perfumada espiga,
tus senos rebosantes de leche virginal,
Cuando su estirpe huyendo de la raza enemiga
Llegó vencida y débil al valle maternal.

(Las vestales toman del ara vasos rebo-
santes de esmeraldas.)

El coro de Vestales.

Son luz, del bosque verde. Son almas de las hojas
De un árbol misterioso labrado por Chaquén.

Codo de augures.

Recíbelas bañadas en sangre de los mojas ...

EXCENA II

(Los mismos y un HERALDO. Este aparece en la floresta que principia en la escalinata del templo. Es un chibcha que avanza hacia el recinto sagrado. Viene jadeante como si hubiera recorrido una larga distancia. Trae arco y carcaj con cendales blancos y los muestra desde el vestíbulo al concurso religioso.

Palabras confusas se escapan de todos los labios.

Un jeque. ¡Un heraldo!

Todos. ¡Un heraldo!

Suamós. (Siempre agosto.)

¿Mensajero de quién?

(El heraldo con la vista baja hace humilde reverencia al Pontífice y aguarda un signo de éste para contestar.)

Suamós.

¡Hablad!....

El Heraldo.

¡Pontífice de Iraca! Por áspero camino
 Los dioses me trajeron a cumplir mi destino.
 El gran Quimuinchatecha su mensaje te envía:
 El Zaque a Suamós dice:
 Por la selva bravía
 Han surgido unos hombres de países lejanos,
 Como Bochica rubios, cual panches inhumanos,
 No vierten de sus labios, cual vertió Nenquethevo
 Las enseñanzas puras y la palabra neuva.
 Conducen en sus armas los rayos de la muerte
 Y rugen unos monstruos que aterran al mas fuerte.
 El pueblo los admira cual seres inmortales;
 Son criaturas débiles a merced de los males
 Que a todos nos asedian. En su brazo pujante
 Al huir con la punta de una caña vibrante.

(El asombro aumenta en Suamós y sus
 compañeros.)

En sus pechos rebotan nuestros dardos de piedra,
 Y nada les conmueve, ni nadie les arredra.
 Es su deidad el oro. Combaten ellos mismos
 Entre sí por amarlo; bajarían abismos
 Y al fondo de la tierra donde en su tumba clama
 El que tajó las rocas del fiero Tequendama.
 Opúsole sus huéstes en Busongote el Zipa
 Thisquesusa. Cual humo fue deshecho Zajipa;
 Y al fulgor de sus rayos en oscura jornada
 El Bacatá fue muerto. La nación consternada
 Implora a sus deidades....y los dioses ceñudos
 Se ocultan en los cielos y permanecen mudos.
 El cetro ensangrentado que llevó Thisquesusa
 Recogiólo Zajipa; mas el pueblo rehusa
 Obediencia a las órdenes del uzaque guerrero....
 Despareció el zipazgo cual flor de algodonoero.
 Despareció la patria del digno Nemequene;
 Es un oso cobarde que ya ni fuerza tiene,
 Huellan nuestros santuarios con su planta extranjera,
 Y el dios, celeste llama, prosigue su carrera.
 Que aplaques con tus ruegos la cólera de Chía,
 Así el mensaje que mi señor te envía.

El Coro.

¡Oh, gran dolor!

Suamós.

¡Fatalidad suprema!
 ¡Oh! sálvanos Zuhé, ¡Danos tu fuego
 Que con sus rayos las entrañas quema
 Del que osa profanarte en el sosiego
 Del Santuario de Iraca!

(La angustia crece por momentos en el concurso.)

ESCENA III

(Otro HERALDO que llega apresuradamente.

El Coro.

Otro heraldo....

Suamós.

¿Qué nuevos infortunios pregona.
 Decid....La suerte adversa los males amontona?

Heraldo 2.

Los hombres fabulosos de los suaves cabellos,
 Que lanzan con sus manos de Zuhé los destellos....

Suamos.

Abreviad. Ya conozco los hombres iracundos
 Que bajan a las tumbas cual los topes inmundos.

Heraldo 2.

Los duros invasores al poderoso Zaque
 Vilmente despojaron. Sus monstruos al ataque
 Del Tundama se aprestan....
 Los esperó el anciano
 Quimuinchatecha, grave, cual digno soberano,
 Porque confió en lo noble del enemigo fiero,
 Y hoy muere de tristeza, sin gloria, prisionero.

(Se oyen cerca detonaciones de arcabuces.
 Las primeras sombras de la noche caen sobre
 la tierra; pero aún las nubes incendiadas
 envían sobre el templo resplandores
 purpurinos.)

Heraldo 2.

¡Son ellos!

El Coro.

¡En Iraca!

Los jeques.

¿Sucumbió su grandeza?

El Herald.

Va vencido el Tundama....

Un jeque.

Sus ondas todavía
Lanzan dardos vibrantes....

(Suamós a los jeques que toman los
vasos rebozantes de esmeraldas:)

Neuza.

¡Oh belleza!
Del crepúsculo es digna del más trágico día!

Suamos.

Ya vienen hacia los tiranos no las hallen abiertas.

ESCENA IV

(Por los senderos de las colinas aparecen
rápidamente en desorden, los soldados
indígenas. TUNDAMA dice en el atrio:)

Morir?...oh, no...vivir es necesario
Por la patria y los dioses....Quizá la estirpe
mía....
(Desaparece en el bosque.)

ESCENA V

(Los soldados españoles; al frente de ellos
JIMÉNEZ DE QUESADA Pasan 20 a 30 lanceros
por el atrio en persecución de los tundamas.
En el bosque se oye el combate. Jiménez de
Quesada y Anton de Olaya detiéndose a
admirar el exterior de Iraca.)

Gonzalo Jiménez.

Feliz fué la jornada. De Suamós el Santuario
Esplendoroso es éste; lo consagro a María,
Al Señor Jesucristo y a su madre gloriosa.

ESCENA VI

(Los mismos. UN SOLDADO que sale por una de las puertas laterales del Santuario. Su expresión es de asombro. Se dirige al Adelantado.)

Señor, los perros viles, incendiaron su templo,
Mas una lección dadles de que no exista ejemplo.

Gonzalo Jiménez.

¡Se consumió el tesoro del templo de Bochical!

(Las llamas asoman por las puertas al quemarse el esparto de los tapices.)

Un oficial piadoso.

El Dios de los Ejércitos la tierra purifica!

(Las sombras de la noche se condensan. Se han extinguido los fulgores de la tarde. Sólo la luz del incendio ilumina el escenario.)¹

¹Germán Arciniegas, Roma de los chibchas, pp. 206-217.

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