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# GUATEMALA TRADITIONS

6

UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN CARLOS DE GUATEMALA  
REVISTA DEL CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS FOLKLORICOS



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**UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN CARLOS DE GUATEMALA**  
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### **EXPLANATION AND GRATITUDE**

The journal *Tradiciones de Guatemala* dedicates this entire volume to the work titled *Bibliography of Guatemalan Folklore*, authored by the researcher María A. Ramírez.

Our colleague Celso A. Lara F., who is also the President of the *Comité de Folklore de la Comisión de Historia del Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia*, under whose purview the mentioned work was assigned, kindly entrusted it to me for publication.

In recognition of the laudable intent of my colleague Lara F. and convinced that the effort undertaken by researcher María A. Ramírez will be of great value to scholars of our popular traditions, I decided to bring it to print under the editorial imprint of the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos*, a university institute. On its behalf, I extend gratitude to the author for her invaluable contribution and to Celso A. Lara F. for his timely and significant initiative.

*Roberto Díaz Castillo*  
Director



## BACKGROUND

**The bibliography of Guatemalan folklore** presented here is part of a special research project sponsored by the *Comité de Folklore de la Comisión de Historia del Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia*, has sponsored in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Peru during the period from November 1975 to October 1976.

The project, which encompasses both the Mesoamerican and Andean regions, has as its fundamental objectives the investigation of literary folklore in prose and verse from specific areas in member countries where research on popular literary traditions is scarce, on one hand, on the other hand, it aims to compile a bibliography of folklore in countries that do not yet have a comprehensive bibliographic collection related to popular traditions and their study. Such is the case for Guatemala, El Salvador, and Peru.

Regarding this latter objective, the Folklore Committee of the IPGH is convinced that compiling the folklore bibliographies of each country on the continent can serve as a means to spark interest in the research, preservation, and understanding of the people's culture. Hence, it is committed to

disseminating the results of the conducted research both internally and externally.

In terms of continental dissemination, the *Comité de Folklore* will be responsible for finding the most suitable vehicle to make the results known. Regarding the dissemination of research within the borders of each participating country in the project, the best channels have been sought to ensure that they are accessible to researchers and scholars of popular traditions.

In the case of Guatemala, the *Comité de Folklore* requested the direction of the Center for Folkloric Studies at the *Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala*, to publish the results of this bibliographic\* research through their means. The idea was enthusiastically embraced by its director, Roberto Díaz Castillo, who offered the pages of the *Tradiciones de Guatemala* journal, the scientific dissemination organ of that institute, to make this bibliography known to the scholars of Guatemalan folklore.

Without the determined collaboration of the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos*, the publication of this bibliography in Guatemala would not have been possible. Therefore, the *Comité de Folklore del IPGH* wishes to express its deep gratitude to the direction of the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF GUATEMALAN FOLKLORE

The bibliographical analyses of Guatemalan folklore have only recently begun. The first contributions are due to the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala*,\* like many others in the field of popular traditions.

However, the present Bibliography of Guatemalan Folklore is the first to use unpublished material, both bibliographic and hemerographic, and delves deeper in time, as the studied period spans from 1880, when the term and concept of folklore first appeared in Guatemala, to the first semester of 1976.

In relation to the documentary sources, not only was the bibliographic source consulted, but also the hemerographic heritage that had not yet been explored.

A detailed analysis was also made of the unpublished monographs that are typewritten in the archives of the *Instituto Indigenista Nacional*, from 1949 to 1965, and which provide important data for understanding the popular traditions of the country.

The presented bibliography allows us to observe the development of folklore studies in Guatemala. As can be verified, the concern to make known the customs and traditions of the country was an early preoccupation of Guatemalan journalists. It is enough to mention Diego de Día in 1880 and Víctor Miguel Díaz in the 1930s, who, through the pages of *Diario de Centroamérica*, made the country's popular traditions known. Although it is necessary to note that the references of these authors lack scientific rigor, they should be considered valuable antecedents for the history of folklore in our country.

On the other hand, starting in the 1940s, articles referring to our customs and traditions began to appear more regularly in newspapers and magazines, most of these articles were written by individuals not well-versed in the study of popular traditions.

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\* Celso A. Lara F, "Aportes para la bibliografía del folklore de Guatemala" in *Tradiciones de Guatemala* No. 3 (Guatemala: Centro de Estudios Folklóricos, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 1975), pp. 53-86.

Without forgetting the works of Adrián Recinos in 1916 and 1918, it can be stated that the first systematic and scientific folklore studies began to be carried out in Guatemala starting in 1965 with the creation of the *Departamento de Arte Folklórico Nacional*, a branch of the *Dirección General de Cultura y Bellas Artes*. This department was founded and directed by the Argentine folklorist Ida Bremme de Santos, a disciple of the masters Augusto Raúl Cortázar and Julián Cáceres Freyre. And later, with the establishment of the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala* in 1967, under the direction of the Guatemalan folklorist Roberto Díaz Castillo, a disciple of the Chilean master Tomás Lago. These dates mark the formal beginning of folklore research in Guatemala. A large portion of the publications that appear in the Bibliography starting from this date are due to the efforts of the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos*.

On the other hand, it is important to note that a considerable number of studies listed in this Bibliography are due to foreign researchers, especially Americans, whose contributions are almost unknown to Guatemalan researchers.

This Bibliography, therefore, shows us the historical development of folklore studies in Guatemala from its beginnings to the present: this is where its value lies.

## TECHNIQUES AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

For the creation of this bibliography, a six-month period was initially planned starting from November 1975. However, the abundance of material and other obstacles forced the researcher hired by the IPGH, María A. Ramírez M., to extend the research for an additional four months.

Two problems must be mentioned:

- a) Many studies conducted by foreign researchers on the popular traditions of Guatemala do not exist in any specialized library in the country, and it was only possible to learn about them through bibliographic indexes published abroad.
- b) The San Andrés earthquake on February 4, 1976, which devastated the country, destroyed many libraries and the few existing newspaper archives. As this research was underway, it was abruptly interrupted due to the impossibility of consulting books, magazines, and newspapers. Once the newspaper services were restored two months later, the situation became difficult because many books were in disarray and others had disappeared.

Nonetheless, the effort of the researcher Ramírez M. managed to overcome such difficulties and successfully complete this research.

On the other hand, the basic classification used in this bibliography is the tripartite system of traditional oral culture—ergological folklore, social folklore, and spiritual-mental folklore—as it was deemed the most suitable and easiest to consult. Undoubtedly, we are aware of its numerous limitations, but its advantages outweigh them, especially because it facilitates the handling of topics and allows them to be grouped according to their most prominent features.

María A. Ramírez, the researcher contracted by the *Comité de Folklore del IPGH* to carry out this investigation, specialized in folklorology during 1973 and 1974 at



the Instituto Interamericano de Etnomusicología y Folklore based in Caracas, Venezuela. Additionally, she was hired by INIDEF as a specialist in folklore applied to education to conduct specific studies in Venezuela during the second half of 1976.

Her preparation and enthusiasm are a guarantee of the scientific quality of this Bibliography.

Finally, I can only reiterate my gratitude, on behalf of *Comité de Folklore del IPGH*, to the *Centro de Estudios Folklóricos de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala* for publishing this work.

Celso A. Lara F.  
Director-Coordinator of the Proyecto  
Especial de Investigación Folklórica  
De IPGH

Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, october 1976