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# TRADICIONES DE GUATEMALA



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

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS DE GUATEMALA

**CENTER FOR FOLKLORE STUDIES**

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GUATEMALAN TRADITIONS

**11-12**

Guatemala, Central America

1979

ACTIVITIES AND NEWS

ACTIVITIES AND NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR FOLKLORE STUDIES

**1. Research work**

On 1978 the Center for Folklore Studies made some research in different places of the country, about popular arts and handicrafts, oral literature and ethnomusicology fields. In summary, the investigations were the following:

**1.1 Popular arts and handicrafts**

It followed the research about Totonicapán potters, concerning glazed ceramics, majolica and painted earthenware and all its kinds. The job is especially followed to establish traditional patterns and exalt the work of the artists and artisans from San Miguel and San Cristóbal Totonicapán. The results will be published in the next issue number of the journal.

On the other hand, the Center for Folklore Studies concluded the research about indigenous textiles of San Pedro Sacatépéquez in the department of Guatemala.

### **1.2 Oral literature:**

The first two steps of fieldwork research concluded about Guatemalan folkloric tales in the eastern regions and the southern coast of the country. The sample concludes with 1,026 tales.

Likewise, samples of literary folklore were gathered in the departments of Escuintla, Santa Rosa, and Zacapa. (coplas, romances, corridos and décimas- a literary genre not yet documented in Guatemala).

### **1.3 Ethnomusicology:**

The special ethnomusicology program has collected, archived, transcribed and disseminated music gathered in the eastern part of the country, the northern region, the central area and some places in the western region, such as El Quiché and San Marcos. The archive includes music performed on marimba, tun (Mayan slit drum), drums, chirimía (rustic oboe), pito (like a whistle, a traditional flute), and cajita (small wooden percussion), as well as tunes or songs accompanied by guitar.

### **1.4 Other investigations**

With an exploratory approach, the Center for Folklore Studies worked on the survey of the Santo Domingo Xenacoj festival in the department of Sacatépéquez, where specific aspects of the dances that accompany a procession and the social relationships generated by this festival were detailed.

A prospecting of musical, ergological, and literary folklore was also done in the municipality of San Pedro Sacatépéquez and in the city of San Marcos, in the department of San Marcos.

These investigations enrich all the archives of the Center for Folklore Studies and serve as raw material for dissemination and teaching efforts.

## **2. Editorial work**

In 1978, the Center for Folklore Studies published four issues of its bulletin "*La Tradición Popular*", which contain investigations titled:

*J. Manuel Juárez Toledo, "Una experiencia etnomusicológica". N. 16*

*Ofelia Columba Déleon Meléndez. "Tejidos indígenas del municipio de San Juan Sacatépéquez", N. 17.*

*Italo Morales Hidalgo, "Las jícaras de San Bernardino", N. 18*

Within its non-periodical bibliographic production, this Center for Research published its Catalog of publications, 1968-1977. The book of Ignacio Solís (with a foreword by Roberto Díaz Castillo), titled *Nuestras Artes industriales*, is still at the press.

The aim of all these publications is to widely disseminate the popular traditions of Guatemala.

### **3. Dissemination work**

#### **3.1 In Guatemala**

##### **3.1.1 Guided visits for students**

From the second half of June to the the first half of October 1978. Licenciada (a Guatemalan professional degree) Ofelia Columba Deleón Meléndez delivered several lectures on various folklore topics, during guided visits to the Center for Folklore Studies offered to students from various public and private schools of Guatemala City. There were five hundred ninety students who attended during this period.

##### **3.1.2 Participation in the first Huehueteca Folkloric Music Festival**

Researchers Licenciado J. Manuel Juárez Toledo and Professor Anantonia Reyes Prado, along with photographer Manuel Guerra Caravantes, attended as representatives of the Center for Folkloric Students and served as members of the judging panel at the 1st Huehueteca Folkloric Music Festival, held in the municipality of San Antonio Huista on June 11 and 12, 1978.

##### **3.1.3 Conference on Folklore and Folkloric Music at CUNOROC (University Center of the Northwest by its initials in Spanish).**

On June 13th, 1978. Researchers Licenciado J. Manuel Juárez Toledo and Professor Anantonia Reyes Prado delivered a lecture on Folklore theory and fundamental issues of Guatemalan ethnomusicology at the University Center of the Northwest (CUNOROC) from the University of San Carlos de Guatemala.

Authorities, professors and students at this university center showed a lot of interest in the work carried out by the Center for Folklore Studies.

##### **3.1.4 Advisory on basketry and jarcia (cordage) to the Tikal Association.**

Researchers from the Center for Folklore Studies, Ofelia Columba Deleón Meléndez, Manuel Juárez Toledo and professor Anantonia Reyes Prado provided advisory to the Tikal Association regarding the origin, distribution, and production places of jarcia (a type of traditional cordage craft in Guatemala) and basketry items, with the aim of presenting an exhibition at the Tikal Association's headquarters.

##### **3.1.5 Advisory and guidance on folklore**

All researchers from the Center for Folklore Studies have provided guidance to students at different educational levels and schools on folklore-related matters.

For graduate and undergraduate thesis development. Additionally, they have assisted the general public with daily consultations in the institution's library.

### **3.2 In Mexico**

The director of the Center for Folklore Studies, Licenciado Roberto Díaz Castillo, participated as an expert representing Guatemala. He was invited by the Handicrafts Action Committee of the Latin American Economic System (SELA by its initials in Spanish), to the Research and Artisan Promotion Conference. This international event was held in Mexico City, from November 6 to 12, 1978. During this period, Díaz Castillo presented two works: a survey about the current state of handicrafts in Guatemala and a monograph about the same topic.

### **3.3 In Ecuador**

The researcher of the Center for Folklore Studies, Licenciado Celso A. Lara Figueroa, participated as the coordinator of the Folklorology project within the regional research program for the celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the founding of the Republic of Ecuador. This program was based at the Otavaleño Institute of Anthropology, from September 11 to October 27, 1978. He was invited by this institute along with the OAS, UNESCO, IADAP, and other national and international Ecuadorian organizations.

Taking advantage of his stay in Ecuador, Lara Figueroa also delivered a lecture at the headquarters of the Andean Institute of Popular Arts (IADAP by its initials in Spanish), the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, and the Central University of Ecuador.

### **3.4 In Peru**

As an honorary member, Licenciado Celso A. Lara Figueroa, researcher at the Center for Folklore Studies, participated in the First Pan-American Congress of Andean Mythology, sponsored by the National Federico Villareal University in Lima, from September 11 to 15, 1978.

### **3.5 In Venezuela**

As a visiting professor, Licenciado Celso A. Lara Figueroa delivered a short course on History of Folklorology and Folklore Theory at the School of Anthropology in the Faculty of Economics and Sociology at the Central University of Venezuela, from October 21 to 27, 1978.

### **3.6 In El Salvador**

The researcher Licenciado Celso A. Lara Figueroa, delivered two short courses on Folklore Theory and Literary Folklore Theory in the department of Cultural Heritage Administration of El Salvador, from June 11 to 18, 1978.



Roberto Díaz Castilo, Director of the Center for Folklore Studies at the University of San Carlos de Guatemala, participating in the Research and Artisan Promotion Conference. (Mexico, 1978), alongside the Secretary of the Handicrafts Action Committee (SELA), Dr. Germán Vásquez and the National Representative of Guatemala, Licenciado Antonio Carranza.



Celso A. Lara Figueroa, delivering a short course on Folklore Theory in Venezuela. (Caracas, 1978)

#### **4. Other activities**

##### **4.1 Specific Research Committee**

The researcher of the Center for Folklore Studies, Licenciado Celso A. Lara Figueroa, was appointed, along with Dr. Romeo Marínez and Dr. Jorge Solares A., by the University Superior Council (CSU by its initials in Spanish) to be part of a specific committee that evaluated research projects submitted by various academic units of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala during 1978 and determined the outcomes of the projects.

#### **5. Comments on the work of the Center for Folklore Studies**

##### **5.1 In Guatemala**

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the journal ***Folklore Americano***, the authorities from the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, a specialized body of the Organization of American States (OAS), gathered in Guatemala and formally recognized the work carried out by the Center for Folklore Studies.

*“Rector of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala*

*Members of the University Superior Council of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala.*

*Distinguished scholars:*

*The authorities of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), along with the History Committee of the same institute, gathered in Guatemala to commemorate the silver anniversary of the journal **Folklore Americano** (1953-1978), part of the PAIGH Folklore Committee and they wish to formally present the following acknowledgment to the highest authorities of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala:*

- 1. Who have been familiar for several years with the research, teaching and dissemination work carried out by the Center for Folklore Studies of said university, and have always considered it a well-conceived policy for the preservation of Guatemalan folklore, one of the richest countries in terms of traditional expressions in the Americas.*
- 2. That the work of the Center for Folklore Studies has a profound impact at a national level, as its publications are widely read by scholars and students in the fields of anthropology and folklore studies.*



3. *That, at an international level, both the Americas and beyond, the Center for Folklore Studies is considered as the most important and prestigious institution of its kind, to the degree that it serves as an organizational model for the creation of similar research centers in many countries, such as Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, among others.*
4. *That the Pan American Institute of Geography and History is aware of the requests received at its headquarters, that researchers in the anthropological field wish to approach the Center for Folklore Studies of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala to observe the development of its academic, research and material processing activities, as well as to exchange experiences in this field.*
5. *That the Center for Folklore Studies has disseminated the popular culture of the Guatemalan people through journals, bulletins, and books of sober and excellent quality, with a regularity that astonishes countries that are members of the PAIGH, which demonstrates the high scientific, academic, and organizational capacity of its researchers and the university's deep commitment to presenting in a scientific manner, the study of Guatemala's oral traditional culture.*

*Therefore, the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, along with the History Committee, express their strong commendation to the highest authorities of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala for the creation, continued support, and backing they have provided to such a prestigious center for folkloric research. They also urge them to continue this important scientific effort, which, without a doubt, contributes to the understanding of Guatemalan popular culture and the cultural heritage of the Americas as a whole.*

*Eng. José A. Saénz  
General Secretary*

*Dr. Guillermo Morón  
President  
History Committee of the PAIGH*

*Guatemala, April 24, 1978*

*cc: Director of the Center for Folklore Studies  
President of the PAIGH Folklore Committee."*

## 5.2 In Cuba

The journal, *Casa de las Américas* (No. 111, November-December), Havana, Cuba, 1978, p. 158. Comments on the work of this academic unit as follows:

*“Center for Folklore Studies of Guatemala: By the time **Folklore y artes populares** (Folklore and popular arts) was published, exactly a decade ago by the Guatemalan professor Roberto Díaz Castillo. The Center for Folklore Studies of the University of San Marcos [sic] de Guatemala started what after ten years, has become a fundamental editorial work that transcends the national framework had been projected.*

*The importance of this remarkable editorial work, at the same time it is the result of constant effort and deepening study and research, which has been reinforced by titles such as **Lybro de Cocyna** (Cookbook), an anonymous work with a foreword by Luis Luján Muñoz; **Leyendas y casos de la tradición oral de la ciudad de Guatemala** (Legends and Cases of the Oral Tradition of Guatemala City), **Por los viejos barrios de la ciudad de Guatemala** (Through the Old Neighborhoods of Guatemala City), and **Contribución del folklore al estudio de la historia** (The Contribution of Folklore to the Study of History), by Celso A. Lara F; **Diseños en los tejidos indígenas de Guatemala** (Designs in Indigenous Textiles of Guatemala), by Carmen Neutze de Rugg; **Sobre la preservación de valores de uso de carácter folklórico** (On the Preservation of Folkloric Use Values), by Antonio Erazo Fuentes; **Artes y artesanías populares de Sacatepéquez** (Popular Arts and Handicrafts of Sacatepéquez), by Roberto Díaz Castillo; **Diccionario de teoría folklórica** (Dictionary of Folklore Theory), by Paulo de Carvalho-Neto; **El folklore aplicado a la educación guatemalteca** (Folklore Applied to Guatemalan Education), by Ofelia Columba Deleón Meléndez; and **Nuestras artes industriales** (Our Industrial Arts), by Ignacio Solís with a foreword by Roberto Díaz Castillo.*

*On the other hand, to this commendable editorial work is added the publication of “Tradiciones de Guatemala”, a biannual journal that first appeared in 1968 and “La Tradición Popular”, a bimonthly bulletin aimed at disseminate the folklore of one of the culturally rich countries in Latin America.*

*However, the work of the Center for Folklore Studies of Guatemala is not limited to editorial work.*

*Although it was established, under the sponsorship of the University Superior Council on July 8, 1967, it was not until July 1974, after being reorganized and transformed into a research institute that the Center was able to systematically carry out its academic activities: fieldwork, advising professors and students, creating*

*various archives (documentary, photographic, and phonographic), organizing a specialized library, exhibitions, recitals, and courses.*

*In the past year, this center, guided by Roberto Díaz Castillo, expanded its scope by incorporating a wide-ranging program dedicated to popular music into its existing research field on literary folklore (tales, legends, myths, theater) and traditional arts and handicrafts (ceramics, wrought iron, candlemaking, carpentry, cabinetmaking, tinwork, textiles, pyrography, pyrotechnics), among others.”*