

CONTEXTS AND BACKGROUND

Geographical description

The Republic of Colombia is situated in the north-western corner of the continent of South America. Its northern and western confines are the Caribbean Sea (Atlantic Ocean) and the Pacific Ocean respectively. Countries with which it forms borders are Venezuela and Brazil in the east, and Peru and Ecuador to the south. The isolated town of Leticia in the south-east is a port on the Amazon river and the isthmus of Panama in the north-west, impenetrable due to dense jungle growth and swamps, unites Colombia with Panama.



Fig. 2-1 Colombia's location in the continent of South America (National Geographic Map). A detailed map of Colombia can be found in Appendix 3.

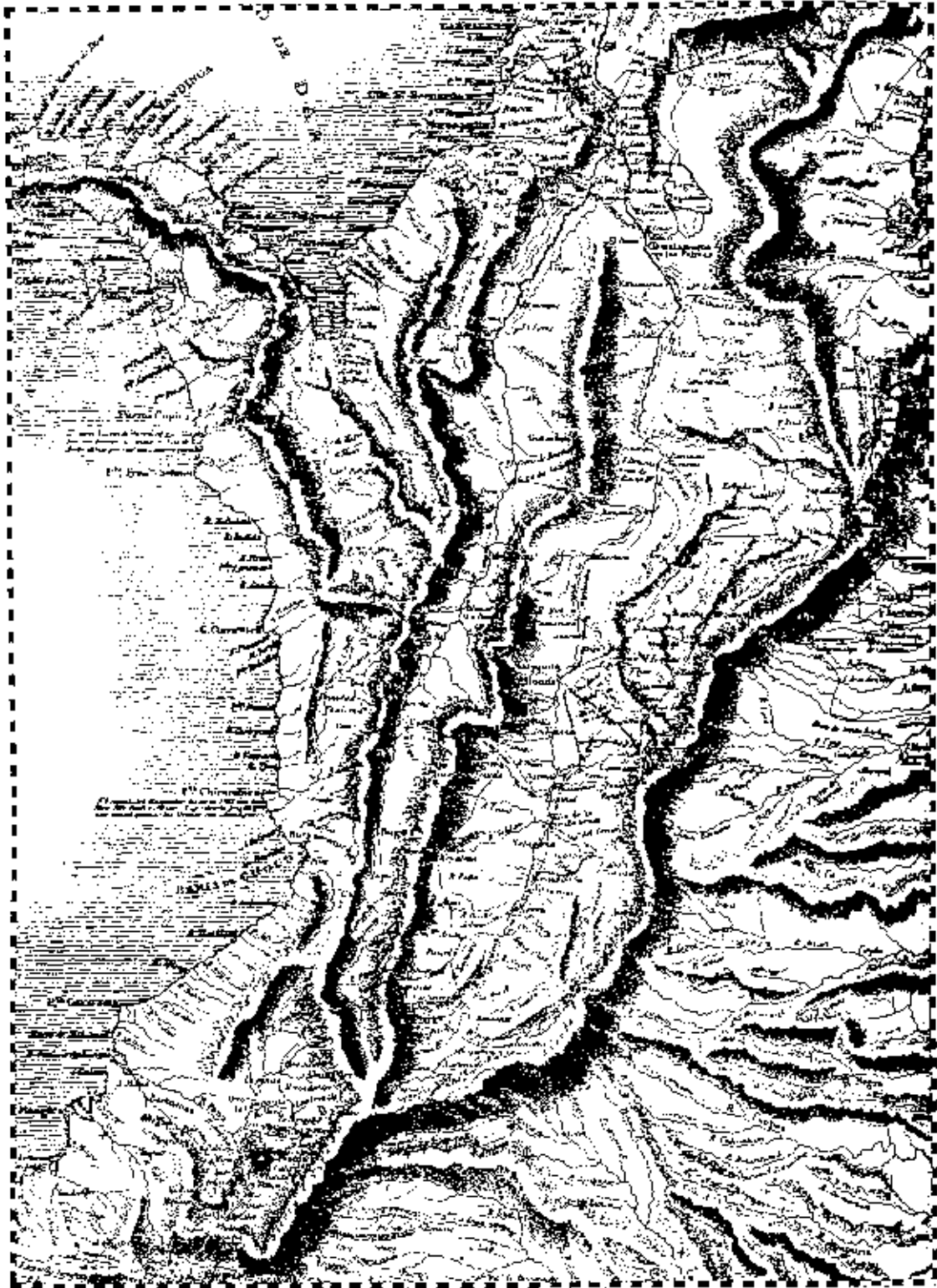


Fig. 2-2 Map of Colombia and environs displaying mountain chains which geographically divide the country (Miñana 1997, 3).

Colombia's most distinguishing topographical feature is the Andes mountain chain which divides into three chains north of the border with Ecuador. The westernmost chain, called the cordillera occidental, and the central chain, the cordillera central, extend as far north as the Isthmus of Panama, 240 km short of the Caribbean coast, at which point the terrain becomes one of jungle wetlands, while the cordillera oriental to the East stretches toward the Atlantic

Coast. To the west of the cordillera occidental the land descends through alluvial plains, undulating hills and mangroves to the Pacific coast. The central chain is the highest of the three, rising to heights of 5750 m at the Nevado del Huila and 5616 m at the Nevado del Tolima which forms part of the National Park of Los Nevados, a group of permafrost-covered quiescent volcanoes. The eastern chain, the cordillera oriental, forks into two branches of which one forms a natural border with Venezuela in the north while the other crosses the border marking the northern limit of Venezuela's llanos or plains. To the north west of the northern reaches of the cordillera oriental lies the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, an isolated mountain mass close to the Caribbean Sea 5800 metres above sea level. The land on the eastern side of the cordillera oriental consists predominantly of torrid lowlands which extend into Venezuela and Brazil to the east and into Peru in the south. The southern part is composed of thick forest and is drained by tributaries of the Amazon River, such as the Caquetá. The vast plains, or llanos (orientales), of the greater northern part are traversed by the Meta River and other tributaries of the Orinoco River. Between the three chains of the Colombian Andes are found fertile river valleys and high plateaux, called *altiplanos*. The nation's capital, Bogotá, is situated on one of these plateaux at 2610 metres. The country's longest river, the Magdalena, flows for 1555 kilometres separating the eastern and central chains, while the second longest river, the Cauca, runs between the western and central chains for about 965 kilometres joining the Magdalena about 320 kilometres before the latter flows into the Caribbean Sea close to Barranquilla. Although the coastline of Colombia extends for about 1610 km. along the Caribbean Sea, for about 1290 km. along the Pacific Ocean and many river mouths emerge from these coasts, access to the country is limited by the lack of good natural harbours.

The topography of Colombia has had a crucial role in determining its cultural development. Historically its Atlantic Coast has been relatively isolated from the interior by swamps and mountains and its only contact was by arduous travel upstream via the Cauca and Magdalena rivers. This caused the culture of the Atlantic Coast to develop in cultural relationship to the Caribbean islands with which it had constant contact by sea. The marshes which lie inland from the Atlantic Coast provided refuges for fugitive Black African slaves who set up their own *palenques* or fortified enclaves, such as San Basilio de Palenque which became an island of Black African culture within Colombia in the early seventeenth century (List 1983, 570). Movement inland from the Atlantic Coast was by river transport up the Cauca and Magdalena rivers and this permitted the establishment along these rivers of inland settlements which communicated with each other over relatively short distances. The conquest of the most powerful indigenous tribes such as the Chibcha in the locality called Bacatá (present day Santa Fé de Bogotá) was achieved only by travelling inland to the altiplanos where they resided. The extreme elevation of the Andes hindered communication across them and so the river valleys and altiplanos

developed independently, fortifying their local cultures in comparative isolation. The eastern plains communicated more easily with the western plains of Venezuela via river transport than with central Colombia and consequently there developed a *llanero* or plains culture which is shared between these two countries' adjoining territories. Colombia's Pacific Coast was colonised from the port city of Buenaventura. Its communication with the inland was limited to those parts accessible by overland travel to the Gran Cauca area in the south west of Colombia (close to the city of Cali in Fig. 2-5). Finally the indigenous culture of the largely impenetrable Amazon area in the south-east has remained relatively untouched because of the lack of communication with the rest of Colombia. This degree of separation between the different regions has led to the establishment and evolution of such independent cultural identities that the author José Luis Borges coined the expression: "Being Colombian is an act of faith" (Puerta 1987: 16).

Even though the above-mentioned divisions separate Colombia into several distinct cultural areas, the two river valleys, the mountainous areas accessible to them and the extreme south are usually grouped together due to cultural similarities, which distinguish them sufficiently from the areas which border on other countries or seas. This results in a separation into five cultural regions: Pacific Coast, Atlantic Coast, Andean Region, Eastern Plains and Amazon areas. These can be seen clearly in Fig. 2-3.

Historical Aspects of the Colombian Peoples and Andean Regional Societies

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the area which corresponds to present day Colombia, described as New Granada at the time of the conquest, the land was populated by various Amerindian tribes of which the Chibcha language group predominated. The cultures which were most advanced in their social and economic organisation were those of the Taironas on the Atlantic Coast and the Muisca in the central highlands. Both of these were undoubtedly Chibcha speakers (Bushnell 1993, 3). Other cultures, such as the Quimbaya show sufficient traits to relate them to Chibcha culture, whereas the Calima region had its own cultural evolution in which three distinct groups appear to have occupied the area between 1000 BC and the arrival of the Spanish in the 1530s. Although the arrival of Colombia's Amerindian population is assumed to be due to migration from Meso-America (Bushnell 1993, 1), there exists growing support for the idea that the Amazon Basin was their original home (Labbé 1986, 15). Early monumental art flourished in the San Agustín area and belongs to either a culture or a series of cultures which occupied the area in the period between about 4000 BC and 1600 AD (Labbé 1986, 127). Highly sophisticated goldwork was common to nearly all of Pre-Columbian Colombia, as even the cultures which did not mine gold could easily trade for it.

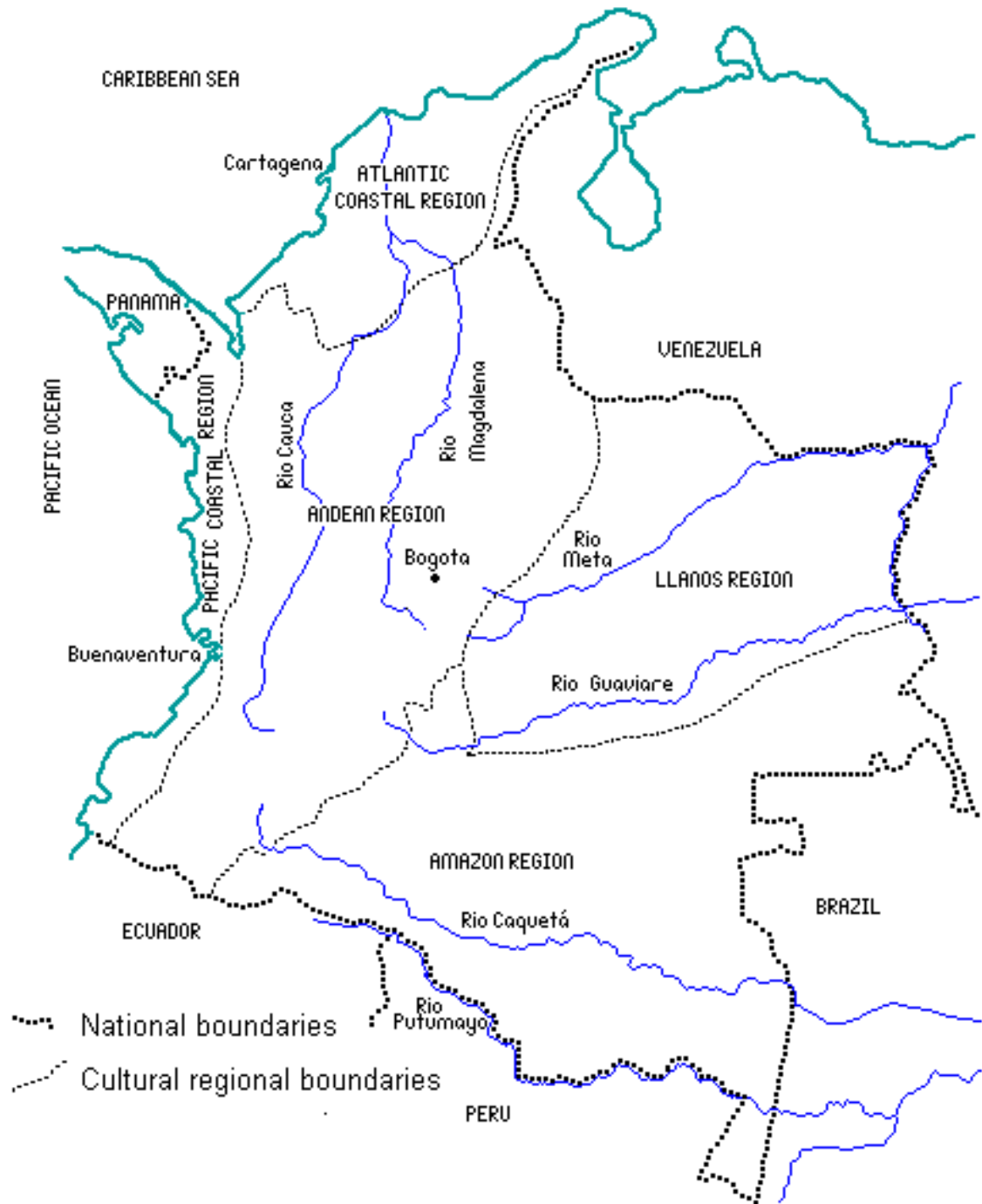


Fig. 2-3 Geographical regions according to areas of cultural similarity.

Trade was carried out with territories as far north as Meso-America and the Caribbean, evidenced by the presence of ceremonial conch shell trumpets among the Muisca in the central highlands (Labbé 1986, 153), and at least as far south as what was to become Inca territory. Llamas were not used in what is now Colombia, which means that all work and transport was carried out by human power (Bushnell 1993, 3). Spanish exploration of the land began very soon after the founding of the first settlements along the Gulf of Urabá in 1510. Following the founding of Santa Marta in 1526, tales began to reach the Spanish of a legendary El Dorado in

the central highlands. The Spanish must have had a fairly clear idea where the source of these tales lay as three independent expeditions - those of Jiménez de Quesada who set out from Santa Marta in 1536, Federmann from Maracaibo in 1535 (although his change of direction towards the central highlands took place in 1537) and Belalcázar from Peru (1538) - arrived at the same place within a relatively short time of each other (Fernández-Armesto 1991, 126-129). Their point of arrival at Bacatá, the approximate site of present day Santa Fé de Bogotá, was the heartland of the Muisca culture which was quickly conquered leading to the destruction of the culture. Access to these central highlands from the Atlantic Coast was always difficult, requiring arduous travel upstream by boat followed by overland travel up to the 3000 metre altitude of these highlands.

New Granada settled down to a slow development as one of Spanish America's less economically active colonies in which the Muisca became assimilated into the rural work force (Bushnell 1993, 15). In 1717 Bogotá became the seat of the Viceroyalty of New Granada to which Panama, Quito and Caracas were subordinate as Presidencies (the first two) and a Captaincy-General (the last) (Bushnell 1993,12).

The colonial development of the Cauca valley, which approximately corresponds to the Calima and Quimbaya cultural zones, was directed from Quito in present day Ecuador. Quito was settled in 1534 by Belalcázar, who also founded Cali in 1536 and refounded Popayán in 1537. This region retained closer ties to Quito than to Bogotá even after the establishment of the Viceroyalty (Bushnell 1993, 16). It will be recalled that Belalcázar was one of the three conquerors of the Muisca. His arrival in Bacatá (Bogotá) was distinguished from that of his rivals by the far better condition in which his forces reached their objective. Whereas Quesada lost 80% of his forces on the trek from Santa Marta, and Federmann, who departed from Maracaibo in Venezuela and crossed the Andes, arrived with few more than half of his forces clad only in skins, Belalcázar's forces arrived with all their equipment and armour intact (Fernández-Armesto 1991, 129). This would suggest that, considering the short time that had passed since the founding of Quito, Belalcázar's original point of departure, access to the Cauca area from Quito was far easier than that to Bogotá from the Atlantic Coast. This accessibility together with the natural fertility of the Cauca valley lent itself to the establishment of plantations. The finding of gold deposits in and around the Cauca river and its tributaries further added to its potential for development. The presence of a Spanish aristocratic upper class in Popayán which would have been aligned with the Spanish Crown would have made it more likely that Spanish laws protecting the rights of Amerindians would have been respected, and therefore their use as workers on plantations would have been relatively rare. As Black African

slaves were imported to work mines along the Pacific lowlands in the mid 16th century (Davidson 1970a, 177), they would gradually have found themselves working in the plantations also. The Black African slave trade reached its peak in the period 1680 to 1750 and the parallel growth of the mining and plantation industries led to the development of Black African slave plantations as a regional institution distinct from those worked mainly by mestizos and Amerindians in the rest of the country (Ulloa 1994, 14).

On Colombia's Atlantic Coast, 95% of the indigenous population was exterminated within the first century of colonisation, so the Black African population grew very quickly (Bushnell 1993, 14), predominating over the Amerindian as occurred also on the Pacific Coast. Limited transport between different regions led to the separate development of local cultures. A journey from the principal port of Cartagena to Bogotá took a month of travel upriver by pole boat to the river port of Honda followed by a few days overland and uphill to the capital (Davis 1993, 18). Even traffic between Bogotá and Popayán, which had been a relatively easy trek at the time of Belalcázar's expedition to the Muisca territories became disrupted in 1557 by a revolt by the Pijao tribe in the central chain of the Andes, which was not resolved until the President of the colony himself intervened in a campaign which lasted from 1605 to 1618 (Davis 1993, 9 and 396). Water transport remained the principal means of travel until it was complemented by the development of a series of isolated railway systems between 1855 and 1927 (Davis 1993, 423-4). These were not connected into a national system until 1961.

Education and social services during the colonial phase were carried out by the Roman Catholic church which also mediated between the state and indigenous communities through missions particularly in the Andean regions, as the church was less interested in the Black African communities than in the Amerindians and mestizos. The overall cultural development in New Granada was quite slow. The first printing press appeared in Bogotá in 1738 so communication and the dissemination of local information and culture would have been slow and restricted to a very limited area. The development of religious art and architecture was less active than in other colonial centres, but the colony's greatest architectural achievement was a military construction: that of the unconquered fort of San Felipe in Cartagena in the early eighteenth century (Bushnell 1993, 22). Formal education was available to few during the whole colonial period (16th to 18th centuries) and then only in urban centres while higher education was limited to the sons of the colonial elite who alone had access to two universities in Bogotá (Bushnell 1993, 22). The overall situation of the colony was that of a lethargic subsistence economy, ruled by a Spanish elite, predominantly peninsular but including a percentage of *criollos*.

The lack of a strong economical focal point comparable to, for example, the silver mines of Bolivia meant that development was spread over a large number of different places. The abundance of arable land gave exploited workers somewhere to flee to where they could set themselves up as independent landowners rather than remain in an exploitative situation in a city. These factors led to the evolution of a relatively federal urban development and lesser degree of oppression than in other colonies. Even the Black Africans, fiercely exploited in plantation economies elsewhere, were occupied panning gold which is still the occupation of many of their descendants on the Pacific Coast today. The eighteenth century saw the gradual development of an administrative middle class in many urban centres (Bushnell 1993, 24).

The achievement of independence in 1819 brought no great changes to Colombia's social profile. The higher positions previously held by loyalist and peninsular Spanish were taken over by republicans and Creoles, but the lower levels of society remained relatively unaffected (Lambert 1971, 56). Reaction against the Spanish Crown was so strong after independence that Simón Bolívar, the liberator of New Granada and subsequent president of the United States of Greater Colombia (Los Estados Unidos de la Gran Colombia) had sought alliances with the British since an English occupation of New Granada was considered to be more acceptable than a Spanish return. There followed a generally Anglophile cultural tendency in the ex-colony, encouraged by Bolívar, from which period certain English terms were adopted into the Colombian Spanish vocabulary such as *ponque* (pound cake) and *seibó* (side board) (El Tiempo, 1986).

The war of independence from Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century had left Colombia deeply in debt. By the latter half of the same century the enthusiasm created by the achieving of independence had waned, but the debt remained. The economic and consequential political instability led to a series of civil wars between followers of liberal and conservative ideologies, which in turn brought the nation to “economic paralysis and the apparition of inflation” (Época republicana, 1997). At the same time a struggle for the imposition of cultural values was being carried out by three rival groups. The first group, called ‘Classical’ or ‘Regenerative’ tried to establish classical values in the sense of the cultivation of classical studies, the Spanish language, Roman Catholic religious principles and political order. Opposed to these were the ‘Pragmatists’ or ‘Costumbrists’ who sought to realise national and practical values (Época republicana, 1997). The conflict between these parties led to continual conflict between 1894 and 1903 culminating in the ‘Guerra de mil días’ (the 1000-day war) (Colombia 1987, 354). The third group was born from the pragmatists and were denominated ‘Modernists’ or ‘Republicans.’ These sought the modernisation of the country and its inclusion in a universalist

perspective. Under their influence a taste was developed in Colombia for cosmopolitanism and dilettantism, introducing Colombia to new tendencies in poetry, novels and European theatre and creating a new aesthetic attitude at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The most important region in the development of Colombia following the gaining of independence was undoubtedly the Andean. This is easy to comprehend from a modern day perspective, as the Andean region contains 76.4% of the total population (Bushnell 1993, 5) and its three most important cities (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Medellín and Cali). How this came to be however is less clear given that the most densely populated sub-region, the Andean East, was, until the advent of air transport, the least accessible. Possible explanations include the fact that the Spanish usurped the seat of power of the most influential Indian tribe at the time of the conquest, that of the Muisca, and made it the seat of their administration. This region possesses a climate closest to that of Europe, and so European settlers who had the means (that is to say, the wealth or social standing) to choose where they would live would have tended to seek this as their objective. The heat of the proximity to the equator is mitigated by the altitude of the principal cities: Bogotá, at a height of 2,600 metres has an annual mean temperature of 14(C.

Though the Andean region can be considered as a whole it can also be subdivided into East, West and South because of the geographical barriers which still exist between these subdivisions. Apart from their historical importance as the administrative centre (East) and industrial centre (West), cultural differences also distinguish these regions from the rest of Colombia. The Atlantic Coast, with its primarily black and *mulato* population and proximity to the Caribbean cultures, is culturally different from Central Colombia, as is the Pacific Coast which though grouped as an Andean sub-region by Bushnell (1993, 5) is considered as a separate region by Puerta (1987, 15) and List (1980, 571) because of its predominantly *zambo* 'black culture' (Bermúdez 1987, 111). The musical culture of the llanos or Eastern Plains has a stronger stylistic link with Venezuela than with Colombia, though audible differences exist between the Colombian and Venezuelan interpretations of the same rhythmic styles. The southern tip of Colombia could even be considered as culturally separate, as it was the only region of Colombia to have been subject to Inca influence and during the colonial period was administered from Quito, in Ecuador. In discussing *bambucos* with a visiting Colombian musician, the author of this thesis found that the musician saw Caucan *bambucos* as having a distinct identity from those from the central Andean regions (Paniagua 1997). Therefore an impression arises that many consider the Central Andean region to represent a "real Colombia" (Bushnell 1993, 4).

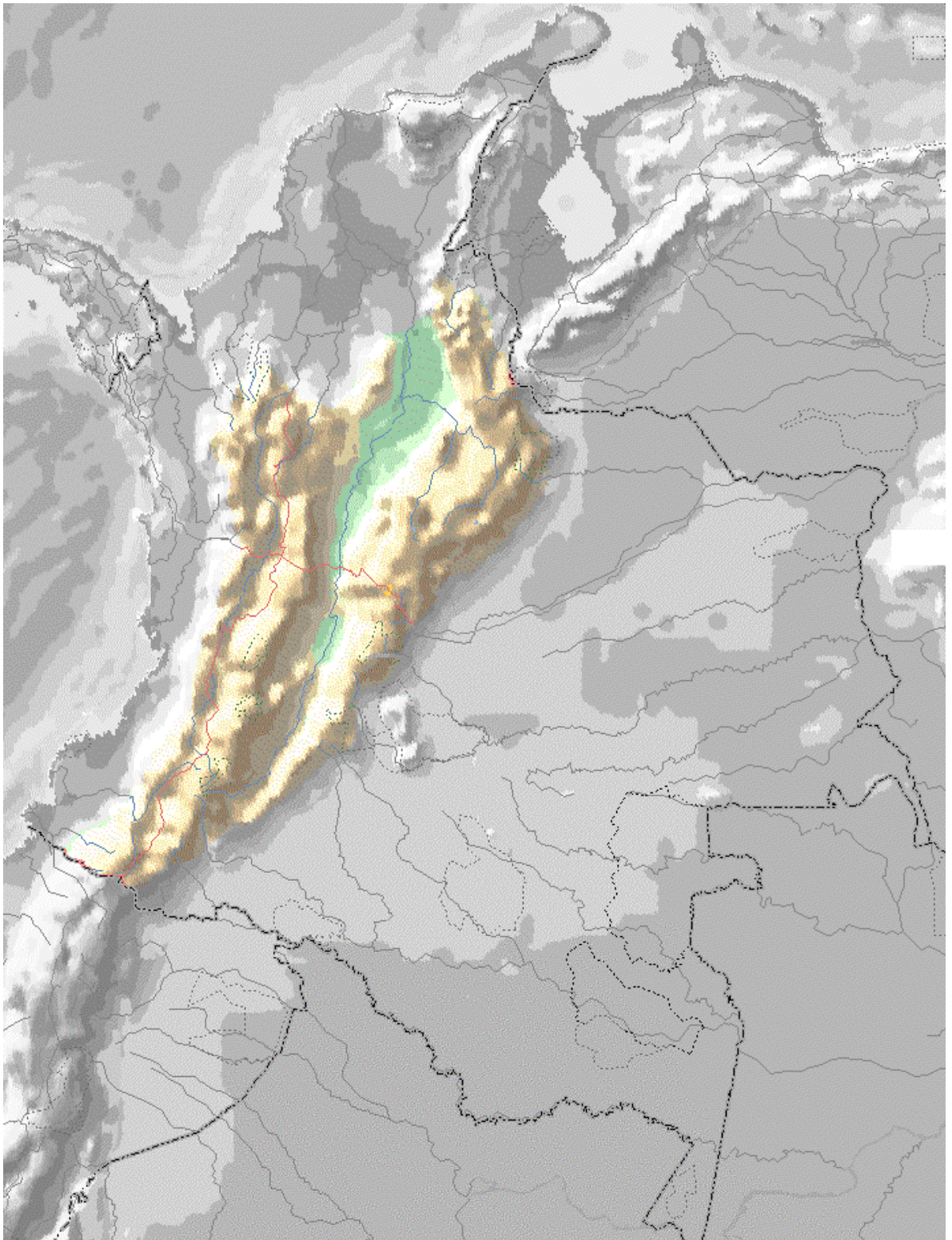


Fig. 2-4 The Andean region of Colombia (location) (Based on maps from Encarta '96 World Atlas)

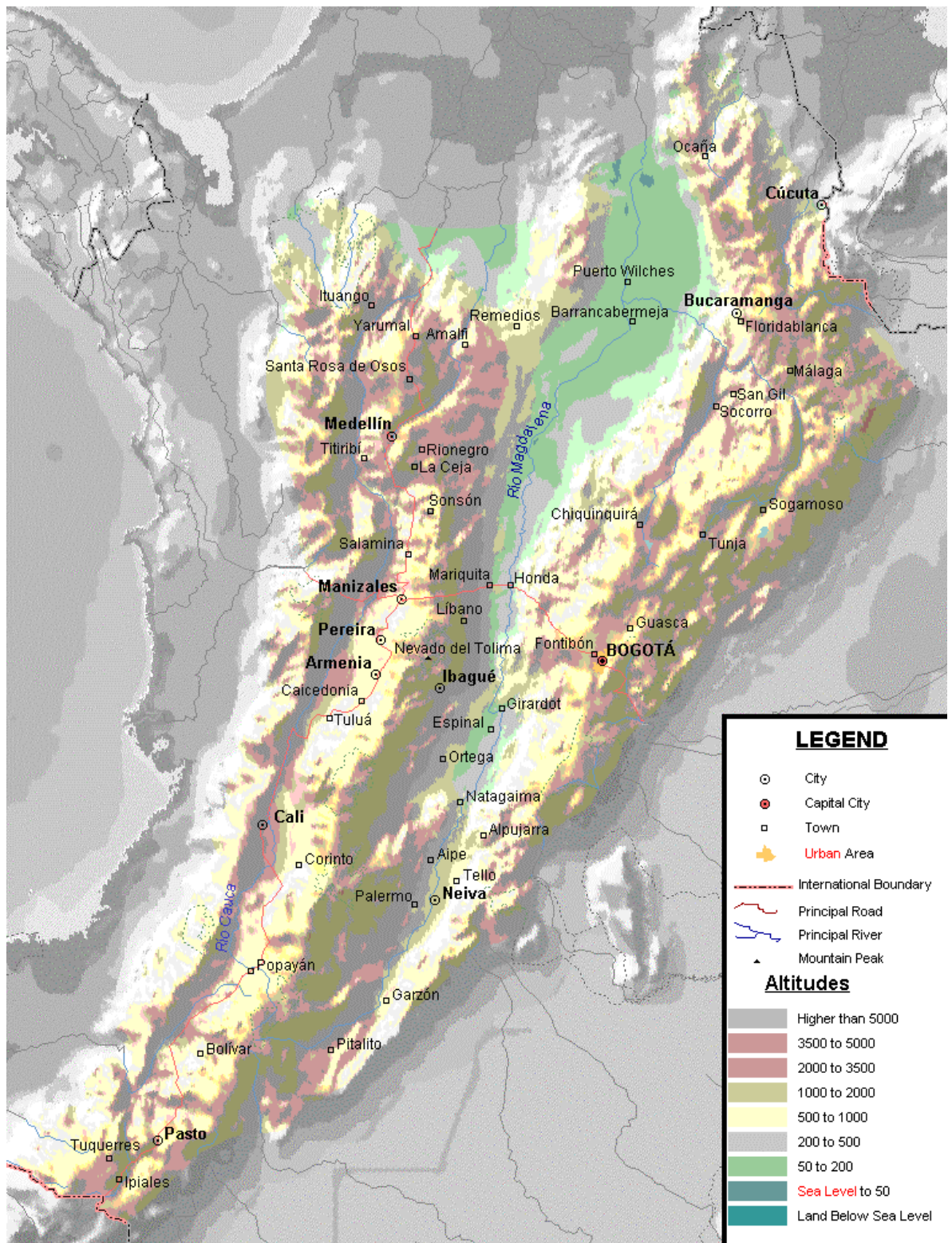


Fig. 2-5 The Andean Region of Colombia (detail) (Based on maps from Encarta '96 World Atlas)

Music is not the only focus in the Central Andean region and is only one manifestation of a culture which is notable for its wealth of cultural life and events which reflect its traditional or folkloric heritage. Aguirre (1987, 14-29) classifies these in categories of literary folklore, handicrafts, religious festivals, secular festivals, carnivals and regional dishes. Each of these categories includes a great variety of cultural expressions which represent the cultural

composition and traditions of different Andean sub-regions. Aguirre limits the domain of folkloric literature to include only anonymous and traditional material. Song texts constitute a sub-category of this literature, within which the author describes ballads, refrains, proverbs, sayings, guessing games and narrative folklore. This last group is represented by myths, legends, fables and tales in addition to folkloric dramatisations and sketches such as, for example, live Holy Week actuations. The different cultural manifestations reflect the traditions and techniques which have been used by local Amerindian populations since pre-Columbian times, as in the case of hand-crafts like the Pasto varnish and gold work, and others demonstrate how the traditions and cultural sources of the past evolve and produce new materialisations of traditional elements or events. This evolution can be seen in the transformation of the Feast of St. John, a celebration of Spanish origin, in the Tolima and Huila areas into the Folklore Festival and the Bambuco Festival respectively.

Alongside the development of folk culture, expansion of European culture has also taken place with the development of musical institutions which are represented such as symphony, chamber and youth orchestras in the Andean regions' principal cities and conservatoria in all the major regional centres.

Colombian music

Atlantic Coast

This region consists of the *departamentos* (states) of Guajira, Magdalena, Cesar, Atlántico, Bolívar, Sucre and Córdoba and the islands of the archipelago of San Andrés and Providencia. The music of this region is characterised by strong Black African influence in rhythms, melodies and instrumentation. The most characteristically identifiable style is the *cúmbia*, which has a $\frac{2}{4}$ rhythmic base and in its most traditional form is accompanied by an ensemble called the *conjunto de cúmbia* or the *conjunto de gaitas*. The former uses the *pito*, an ideoglottic clarinet (List 1983, 53), as a melody instrument with the accompaniment of a percussion ensemble which includes drums of African origin called *tambor mayor*, *llamador* and *bombo* in addition to a *guacharaca* (scraper), *guache* (shaker) and other hand percussion instruments. The *conjunto de gaitas* comprises a pair of *gaitas*, a ducted flute of Amerindian origin (List 1980, 573), a maraca, a *tambor mayor* and a *llamador*. The pair of *gaitas* consist of an *hembra* (female) instrument which is larger and plays the melody and a *macho* (male) which plays a simple accompaniment and whose player also plays the maraca ¹. Similar pairs of flutes are found in Amerindian tribes of the Atlantic Coast from

¹ In general, where a pair of instruments exists which are played together and are distinguished as male and female, the female instrument is larger and plays a more active role than the male.

Venezuela to Panama. Styles or rhythms which are related to the *cúmbia* include *porro*, *gaita*, *bullerengue* and *puya*. Among other independent forms found in this region are *chandé* and the *vallenato* rhythms of *paseo* and *merengue*. The *chandé* is a rhythm exclusive to the village of Talaigua on Colombia's Atlantic coast which was popularised in the 1940s as the *danza del garabato* by the noted musician Antonio María Peñalosa (Hollis 1993, 8). It became the signature dance of the carnival of Barranquilla and in more recent times has been commercialised within the salsa repertoire by Joe Arroyo. Of the rhythms of the Atlantic region almost all are in $\frac{2}{4}$ except for *bullerengue* and *puya*, which consist of a frenetic $\frac{6}{8}$ rhythm accompanying a $\frac{2}{4}$ melody and the *merengue vallenato*, which is in a clear triple metre, based on $\frac{3}{4}:\frac{6}{8}$ polyrhythms. The town of Valledupar, in north western Colombia gave its name to the *vallenato* genre which developed in the 1940s and 1950s from songs of solitary minstrels who carried news, gossip and stories from town to town (Triana 1987, 88). Its principal rhythms, in which the vocalist is accompanied by the button accordion, *guacharaca* (a scraper) and *caja* (a small drum of African origin) are the *paseo* and the *merengue*. In the latter half of the present century many of these styles, *cúmbia* and *paseo vallenato* in particular, have become extensively commercialised regionally, nationally and internationally.

The music of the islands of the archipelago of San Andrés and Providencia bears no stylistic relationship to the music of the Atlantic Coast, having developed from a mixture of Jamaican *mentos* and calypsos and quadrille dances like schottische, mazurka and polka. The first permanent inhabitants of these islands appeared in 1629 with the establishment of an English plantation company similar to those of other Antillean islands colonised by the British (Bermúdez 1987, 102). Culturally it bears more similarity to islands such as Jamaica than to mainland Colombia. In recent times a local version of reggae has developed as a logical imitative consequence of the supplanting of mento by reggae in Jamaica.

A piece which represents the culture of the Atlantic coast is the *porro corrido* 'El toche' by Gaiteros de San Jacinto (Colcultura 1985) - Audio Example No.1.

Pacific Coast

This region embraces the *departamento* of Chocó and the coastal strip from the south of Buenaventura to Tumaco which includes parts of the departamentos of Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño. Its cultural character is described as "*cultura negra*" (black culture) because of the concentration of people of Black African origin mixed with elements of Amerindian and European (Bermúdez 1987, 111). Its music is considered to be Afro-Hispanic despite strong and diverse indigenous Amerindian presence mainly because of the difficulty in quantifying the

musical influence of this presence (Bermúdez, 1987: 115). Even though divergence exists between the northern and southern sections of this region in aspects of instrumentation and musical forms, notable similarities exist in the musical content and vocal techniques (Bermúdez, 1987: 115). The characteristic syncretic music of the region is generally in triple metre based on $\frac{3}{8}$ polyrhythms. Examples of this are *aguabajos*, *currulaos* and *bambuco viejo*, while transculturated music of European colonial origin like *contradanza*, jota, mazurka and polka preserve their original time-signatures. The dance of the *currulao* can be related to Spanish sources by the fact that there is little movement of the torso (List 1980, 574). List (1980, 575) considers the *currulao* to be a dance which may be accompanied by genres such as *pango*, *bambuco viejo* and *bambuco moderno*. Bermúdez (1987, 118) appears to support this view as he classifies the *currulao* or *baile de marimba* (marimba dance) as a musical context which comprises rhythms such as *juga*, *patacoré*, *bambuco viejo*, *pango*, *caderona* and *berejúi*. Catholic hymns have remained in the folk repertoire as *alabaos* (*alabados*: songs of praise) and texts of some songs can be traced to Spanish romances (List 1980, 574). In the *departamento* of Chocó the predominant instrumental ensemble is the *chirimía* which takes its name from the Spanish word for shawm and can consist of flute, clarinet, tuba, cymbals, *tambora* (frame drum) and snare drum (Bermúdez, 1987: 118), while in the southern area the marimba ensemble, which includes marimba, *guasá* (shaker), *conunos* (membrane drum) and *bombo* (frame drum). The music of colonial origin (polkas, contredanses and the like) are characteristically played by the ensembles from the north while the Afro-Hispanic genres are associated with the southern ensembles (Bermúdez 1987, 118). In recent times instrumentation from the southern area has begun to be used in the north, creating a distinctly 'Pacific Coast' identity, as have percussion instruments normally associated with the Atlantic Coast (Bermúdez, 1987: 116). A example of a *currulao* from this region is 'La casa de la compañía' by Grupo Santa Barbara de Coteje (Colcultura 1985) (Audio Example No. 2).

Andean Region

Even though there are sufficient demographic and musical similarities to unite this region there remain sufficient local differences to sub-divide it into six localities. These, identified by their constituent departamentos are

1. Antioquia, Caldas, Risaralda and Quindío, inhabited by the *paisas*, an enterprising expansive population with a significant Palestinian component due to large scale migration from the Near East in the early 20th century ,
2. Cauca and Valle del Cauca, populated by dwellers of mountains and river-banks with a sizeable Black African population,

3. Nariño and Putumayo, the only area to be even partly colonised by the Incas, and therefore bearing greater similarity to the Andean cultures found to the south of Colombia,
4. Tolima and Huila, a combination of plains, rivers and mountains where Amerindian opposition to the Spanish was fiercest,
5. Cundinamarca and Boyacá, a mountainous area predominantly inhabited by *criollo* Spanish and mestizo culture characterised by its conservative attitudes and
6. Santander and Norte de Santander, an area known for initiative and originality in music and with a predominantly *criollo* Spanish population.

The uniting cultural elements in this region are the mestizo and *criollo* and among the musical forms which can be heard throughout it are *bambuco*, *pasillo*, *guabina*, *torbellino* and *danza*. Formerly many genres of European salon music were common, like mazurka and gavotte, but most examples of these disappeared early this century as Colombia began to establish its distinctive musical personality. The instrumental ensemble most readily associated with the Colombian Andean music is the string trio, comprising:

a *bandola*: a sixteen-stringed pear-shaped flat-backed lute descended from the 'ud and the *mandore* by way of the Spanish *bandurria*, which is played with a plectrum and which carries the melody,

a *triple*: a twelve string guitar shaped flat-backed lute evolved from the vihuela, which is normally strummed using *rasgueo* techniques of Spanish origin which involve striking and damping the strings and which provides a mid-range chordal accompaniment and

a guitar: the standard six-string Spanish guitar which plays a bass line while contributing a chordal pattern which complements that of the *triple*. It is played finger style.

This basic ensemble can be added to, built upon or modified in many ways without losing its distinctive character. Most of the musical forms associated with this region are in $\frac{3}{4}$ with some showing strong European influence and a moderate degree of syncopation, such as *pasillo* and *guabina*, while *bambuco* and *torbellino* demonstrate marked polyrhythmic character. A song from this area is the *bambuco* 'Cuatro Preguntas' by Abdulio y Julian (Audio Example No. 3).

The Llanos

The plains of Casanare and San Martín in eastern Colombia belong to a cultural area which is shared between Colombia and Venezuela. Its inhabitants are described simply as *llaneros* (plains-people). From the beginning of colonisation by mainly white settlers the Amerindian component of the population has always been quite high - 68% in 1780 (Bermúdez 1987b:40) - but their contribution to the music readily identified with this area is given no importance. The

music, which had already established its singular character by the middle of the nineteenth century and is generally considered as a result of white *criollo/mestizo* syncretism, also has strong Black African influence in its basic rhythms which are more clearly seen when it is compared with Black African music from Venezuela's Atlantic Coast, whence it came. It is almost exclusively in $\frac{3}{4}$ with marked polyrhythmic $\frac{6}{8}$ elements. Typical forms are *joropo*, *galerón*, *corrido* and *pasaje*. The *llanero* ensemble is usually composed of a melody instrument - which may be a diatonic harp, a *bandola llanera* (a four stringed, pear shaped flat-back lute, related to early models of the Spanish *bandurria*, which is played with a plectrum) or a violin, accompanied by a *cuatro* (a four stringed, small guitar-shaped flat-back lute, similar to the Portuguese *cavaquinho*, played using Spanish *rasgueado* strumming techniques) and a small pair of gourds containing seeds called *capachos* which are shaken. An example of music from this region is the untitled *seis por derecho* by Jaime Castro, Hernando Herrera and Hugo Devia (Audio Example No. 4).

Amazon Region

Geographically it is convenient to consider the fifth cultural region as the region corresponding to the largely inaccessible and therefore unknown Amazon area in the South East of Colombia. List (1980, 570-1) does so, whereas Ocampo Lopez (1970, 30-32) considers the various areas of indigenous Amerindian culture as one group, as they do not contribute significantly to the national musical identity and therefore occupy similar stations. The music of these different regions is generally ceremonial in character using simple instruments like cane flutes, shakers and drums. An example of music from the Amazon region is 'Jurecana Bitene' performed by Ramon Jierecudo and children (Audio Example No.5).

Each of the characteristic and identifying musical styles of the distinct regions of Colombia has evolved from the combination of musical elements present in the traditional cultures of its population together with genres and innovations introduced over the years. These regional styles are so distinctive that any Colombian or person with a minimal knowledge of Colombian music can immediately distinguish one from the other.

Very briefly, and generally, the distinguishing features of these regional styles could be summarised as follows:

REGION	INFLUENCES	MAIN INSTRUMENTS	TEXTS	STYLES	TIME SIGNATURES
Atlantic Coast	Strong Black African. Spanish/Caribbean in melodies.	African and Amerindian wind and percussion.	Social events and activities.	cúmbia, vallenato, mento (San Andrés).	$\frac{2}{4}$ common. $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ rare.
Pacific Coast	Strong Spanish and African influence in rhythms.	Marimbas and drums.	Social events.	currulao, aguabajo, alabao.	$\frac{3}{4}:\frac{6}{8}$
Andean	Notable Spanish. Amerindian varies according to districts. Black African less apparent.	<i>Bandola</i> , <i>tiple</i> , guitar. <i>Chirimías</i> and drums.	Generally romantic but may be descriptive.	<i>bambuco</i> , pasillo.	$\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}:\frac{6}{8}$
Llanos	Apparently strong Spanish, secondary Black African.	Harp, <i>cuatro</i> , <i>capachos</i> .	Social events and activities, may be romantic.	joropo.	$\frac{3}{4}:\frac{6}{8}$
Amazon	Amerindian music	Varieties of indigenous wind instruments and drums.	Principally ceremonial music.		$\frac{3}{4}$ or rhythm follows melody

Table 2-1 General distribution of musical styles and instruments in Colombian regional divisions.

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Fig. 2-6 Illustration which makes reference to Colombian popular dances, instruments and costumes (Escobar 1963, 337).

Amazonia	Antioquia	Arauca	Boyaca	Caldas
Cauca	Chocó	Costa Atlántica	Cundinamarca	Huila
Llanos Orientales	Nariño	Orinoquia	Santander	Valle/ Tolima

Table 2-2. Geographical areas listed in Aruñá's illustration in Fig. 2-6.

Andean regional music

The fact that the Andean region is described as a single zone would imply that there exists an apparent cultural homogeneity. This is perhaps true in an exclusive sense, in that it is the region where Caribbean music is not apparent as folk culture, nor *llanero* music, nor are *currulaos* danced nor marimbas played. It would appear that the members of Andean society see themselves as belonging to a culture which is defined in terms of its central position and national dominance in terms of population, industrial development and administrative centralism. This area is less influenced by Colombia's peripheral cultures while having access to each of them when these peripheral cultures do not have access to each other.

This attribute of having access to peripheral cultures while conserving its own can be seen in various instances. It has been pointed out that while in the *departamento* of Valle del Cauca one of the principal folkloric festivals dedicated to Andean music is held, the 'Mono Núñez' festival held in Ginebra, the nearby city of Cali is also one of the principal centres in Latin America for salsa dance music (Puerta 1987, 17). In the same context List (1983, 91) reports how in 1965 the vallenato genre had all but disappeared around Valledupar but was kept alive in Bogotá where he was able to record a *vallenato* ensemble. By the early 1980s *vallenato* was a national phenomenon, more popular than any other style of dance music and most of the cities and towns on the Atlantic Coast had their own *vallenato* ensembles and competitions among young accordionists which were fiercely contested. The present author was in the town of Valledupar in 1986 when the latest recording of Diomedes Diaz, a popular *vallenato* vocalist, was released and one could not avoid hearing it anywhere in the town. These recordings were just as popular in the Andean region, but one could not hear Andean music on the Atlantic Coast, nor anything except *costeño* (Atlantic Coast) music. In this sense Andean culture is exclusive, in that while it is able to conserve, develop and promote music from other Colombian regions, at the same time it also has its own music which is found exclusively in this region.

The concept of the existence of a category of music described as 'Andean' appears to be relatively recent. The writings of Escobar (1963) and Añez (1952) make no mention of such a cultural identity. Escobar (1963, 263) describes the *bambuco* as "*canto montañés*" (mountain songs) and on page 337 of the same book is found a detailed map, compiled by Luis Alberto Acuña, which associates music, dance and some musical instruments with the regions in which they are found (see Fig. 2-6). The map is followed by a table listing the cultural areas distinguished by Aruña (see Table 2-2).

According to this map, the wide distribution of the *bambuco* is shown by the fact that it is found in Amazonia, Boyacá, Caldas, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Huila, Nariño, Santander and Valle Tolima.

The idea of identifying a separate Andean region within Colombia appears to have taken root with a classification made by Pablo Vila in 1944, cited in Puerta (1987, 15). This classification, based on the association of three sub-regions with their proximity to the Cauca river, the Magdalena river and the high plain around and to the north of Bogotá results in the names:

- a) *andino-caucano*: the western-southern Andean region, associated with the valley of the river Cauca,
- b) *andino-magdalense*: the central-southern Andean region, associated with the Valley of the river Magdalena and
- c) *andino-reinoso*: the eastern-northern Andean region, associated with the Bogotá high plain and the Santanderes (Puerta 1987, 15).

Ocampo Lopez (1970, 31) divides the Andean region into six areas: Antioqueño, Caucano, Tolimense, Nariñense, Santandereano and Altiplano. These merely divide Vila's groupings into northern and southern halves as Vila's *andino-caucano* corresponds to Ocampo's Antioqueño and Caucano, its northern and southern components, as Vila's *andino-magdalense* corresponds to Ocampo's Tolimense and Nariñense and Vila's *andino-reinoso* are Ocampo's Santandereano and Altiplano. A slightly different classification by Bushnell (1993, 5) results in the Andean West, the Andean South and the Andean East which is also a combining of the northern and southern pairs of Ocampo's divisions. Although the repertoire and ensembles found in these sub-regions vary very little, there are some differences. The standard ensembles which execute Colombian Andean music are the string trio, *chirimía*, wind band and *estudiantina*. This in no way precludes the possibility that this genre may be played on other combinations of instruments and remain equally authentic as Colombian folk music. The versatility of instrumentation in the Andean repertoire contributes to its vitality and ability to retain some popularity in spite of the continuous challenges of commercialism. In the 1980s some makers of popular electronic organs included Andean rhythms such as *guabina*, *pasillo* and *bambuco* among its preset incorporated rhythms. The increased communication between the different Andean regions minimises the necessity to distinguish between sub regions, however when distinctions are required Ocampo's divisions will allow greater detail and therefore will be adopted for the present thesis.

It is logical to consider that given the enormous extension of the Andean region and the geographical barriers that have existed between its extremities, that there will exist local variations in the general Andean identity of the territory in question. For example the *chirimía* ensemble is only found in the Caucano and Nariñense (southern) regions and this type of ensemble generally plays *bambucos* in preference to other Andean rhythms. The *torbellino* rhythm is generally found only in the Eastern sub-region, particularly in the departamentos of Santander and Tolima, while the *sanjuanero* rhythm is usually only found as regional music in the latter of these. Contexts of performance of this music can also vary enormously. It may accompany local festivities played by country folk in their usual attire or it can be presented by classically trained

musicians dressed in dinner suits and played in concert salons. Neither of these contexts would be considered more or less authentic than the other.

Why the *bambuco* is singled out for study.

Within the context of Colombian Andean music the *bambuco* is distinguished for many reasons. Some of them will be briefly discussed to illustrate its standing within the Andean repertoire, prior to their more detailed treatment in later chapters. Among these differentiating features are the facts that:

1. the *bambuco* can be found throughout the Andean region,
2. it appears equally characteristic of urban and rural contexts,
3. it exists independently as a musical genre and as a dance which may be accompanied by music that is not a *bambuco*,
4. it has a chronology that can be traced back to the colonial period, and
5. an enormous amount of attention has been dedicated to it in written articles and books.

Regional distribution

The graphic representation of the Central Andean region's cultural division appearing in Fig. 2-6 associates those regions with their principal musical genres in the following way, without being a definitive classification of distribution:

Region	Genres
Boyacá	<i>bambuco, pasillo, torbellino</i>
Caldas	<i>bambuco, currulao, pasillo, porro</i>
Cauca	<i>bambuco, pasillo, torbellino</i>
Cundinamarca	<i>bambuco, pasillo, torbellino</i>
Antioquia	<i>danza, guabina, las vueltas, pasillo</i>
Huila	<i>bambuco, bunde, pasillo, sanjuanero</i>
Nariño	<i>bambuco, pasillo, sanjuanito</i>
Santander	<i>bambuco, guabina</i>
Valle/Tolima	<i>bunde, currulao, pasillo, torbellino</i>

Table 2-3 Regions in which the *bambuco* was found in Fig. 2-6

Even though the *pasillo* might appear to have just as wide an incidence as the *bambuco*, Perdomo (1963, 337) lists a number of regional variants of the *bambuco*: *bambuco antioqueño* (of Antioquia), *bambuco negrero* (of the blacks), *bambuco caqueceño* (from eastern Cundinamarca), *bambuco calentano* or *tolimense* (of Tolima), *bambuco caucano* (of Cauca), *bambuco del litoral* (of the Pacific Coast), *bambuco de plaza* (a hybrid between the *bambuco del litoral* and the *bambuco andino*), *bambuco fiestero* (festive *bambuco* from Tolima), and *bambuco santafereño* (of Santa Fé de Bogotá). It can be seen that variants of the *bambuco* exist in Tolima and Antioquia but it would appear that they were considered less characteristic of their regions than other genres by the compiler of the drawing. Harry Davidson (1970a, 313) indicates that the *bambuco* never achieved popularity in

Antioquia. Although some authors (Isaacs n.d., 83 and A. J. Restrepo n.d., 63) suggested that *las vueltas* which were immensely popular in Antioquia consisted of extracts from the choreography of the *bambuco*, Davidson was not of this opinion (1970a, 314). No other Andean (nor, in fact, Colombian) musical genre comprehends so many regional variations as the *bambuco*.

Local distribution

Although all Andean genres are found in both rural and urban contexts most tend to have a closer association with one or the other. The *guabina* is defined as popular (belonging to the people) by Perdomo (1963, 359) and its Antioquian variant, the *guabina antioqueña*, as “coming from the mountains” (Perdomo 1963, 360). The *pasillo* is generally considered to be a derivation of the Viennese waltz (Gradante 1984, 126) and therefore its introduction to Colombian popular music was through urban culture. It is relatively uncommon to find a rural interpretation of a *pasillo*, just as it is to find a *torbellino* in an urban concert setting. The recording of Jorge Ariza, a specialist in *torbellinos*, cited in the discography (Buda CD 92538-2) includes a *bambuco* which blends perfectly with his unsophisticated interpretations of various *torbellinos*, but includes no *pasillos*. At the same time only one very refined sounding *torbellino* is found amongst the polished programme of mainly *pasillos* and *bambucos* of the Trio Morales Pino (Buda CD 92538-2). Notated published pieces from the Central Andean repertoire include principally *pasillos* and *bambucos*, as do pieces arranged for concert band such as those on the recording by the Banda Departamental del Tolima (Independent LP 1975). Therefore the impression is obtained that the *bambuco* is probably the most widespread genre within the Central Andean context.

Representative categories

As has been previously stated the *bambuco* may exist as a song and it is probably best known in this form. Generally the form of these songs is a simple A-B structure with varying amounts of instrumental embellishment. Many of these songs could be considered significant primarily for their poetry as the music is reduced to a simple and at times passive accompaniment to the most beautiful and evocative texts. In fact the *bambuco* can be found as a poem in its own right. The Cauca poet Rafael Pombo wrote many examples of poems which carried the word ‘*bambuco*’ in their title as well as texts to *bambuco* songs. The *bambuco* also appears as an instrumental variant, sometimes identified as a *bambuco fiestero* (lit. festive *bambuco*), which is extremely boisterous and energetic. The form of these Instrumental *bambucos* centres on a rondo form with A-B-C sections which intercalate in different ways, such as A-A-B-B-C-C-A-B-C-A in ‘San Pedro en el Espinal’ or A-A-B-B-A-C-C-A-B in ‘El Natagaimuno’. However a *bambuco* song may also be played instrumentally, in which case it is played slowly and with the sentimentalism typical of the song form. There also exist some hybrid sung *bambucos fiesteros* which though being vocal pieces in their original conception, feature the modified rondo form and boisterousness of the instrumental variant, such as the song ‘Ontabas.’ In addition the *bambuco* exists separately as a set of distinctive dance steps which may be accompanied by music which is not specifically a

bambuco, though similar to some *bambucos*. In the festival of the *bambuco* held every June in the city of Neiva in the Department of Huila the contestants in the festival's beauty contest are required to dance the *bambuco* to the accompaniment of 'El sanjuanero' which is a *sanjuanero*, originally a song, but played as an instrumental piece in this context. In three places in the song text this particular *sanjuanero* describes itself as a *joropo* (a genre usually associated with the Llanos [Eastern Plains]).

En mi tierra todo es gloria cuando se canta el joropo. Y vamos a bailar al son de este joropo . . . No hay guayabo que resista este joropo caliente. (50 canciones n.d., 90-91)	In my territory all is glory when the joropo is sung. And lets dance to the sound of this joropo . . . No hangover can resist this hot joropo. (Translation: J. Varney, as are all translated passages in this thesis)
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This would suggest that the *sanjuanero* may have developed from the *joropo*, which at some stage may have extended its popularity from the Eastern Plains to the Greater Tolima region, which comprises present day Tolima and Huila. In summary, it can be seen that the *bambuco* may be a song or a poem or an instrumental piece. It may also be a dance which can be accompanied by a song or by instrumental music which may or may not itself be a *bambuco*.

Chronological Documentation

Even though one can not associate a specific date with the appearance of the *bambuco*, its progressive development within Colombian society and culture has been abundantly documented. Its first rigorously documented appearance was in 1819 (Restrepo 1987, 87), though authors have attempted to ascribe or extrapolate earlier dates (Añez 1952). This was long before the growing consciousness of national culture in Colombia lead to the definition of various Andean genres including the *pasillo* and the *guabina* toward the end of the nineteenth century (Puerta 1987, 21).

Associated Literature

More words have been dedicated to the *bambuco* than to any other Colombian music genre. Even before Restrepo's relatively recently published book *A mí cánteme un bambuco* (1987) dedicated exclusively to the *bambuco*, there were others by Jorge Añez (1952) and Harry Davidson (1970a) where the *bambuco* was a central focus of the publication. There exists an abundance of articles and papers by authors such as Ulloa (1994), Pardo Tovar (1964), Uribe Bueno (1987) and Peñaloza (1952) which concern aspects of the *bambuco*.

The presence of these different factors distinguish the *bambuco* within the Colombian Andean repertoire in a way which justifies its study as the most significant Andean genre. Much has been written concerning the *bambuco* in publications referred to above. However these publications contradict one another in many ways. All those the present author has been able to read look at

the *bambuco* as a finished product rather than in terms of its musical, literary or choreographic elements and then in an exclusively Colombian context relating it only to internal factors. For this reason the present author feels that there is space in the literature for a study which analyses the *bambuco* in terms of its composition and in a broader international context.

Musical Description of the *bambuco*

To illustrate the fundamental identifying musical traits of the *bambuco*, four bars of the song 'Agáchate el sombrero' are used to demonstrate the melodic style and represent the relationship between the melody and its accompanying rhythm, shown here as the latter would be played on a *tiple* and a guitar playing together.

The figure shows a musical score for four bars of the song 'Agáchate el sombrero'. It features three staves: voice, tiple, and guitar. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The voice part has lyrics: 'A-ga-cha-te'l som-bre-ri-to y por de-ba-jo mi-ra-me'. The tiple and guitar parts provide accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Fig.2-7 How the melody combines with the tiple and guitar accompaniments in a bambuco (Arrangement by J. Varney).

This brief example may be broken down into the following elements:

- (1) A melody which appears to fluctuate between $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ in both note groupings and phrasing:

The figure shows the first four bars of the bambuco melody. It is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are: 'A-ga-cha-te'l som-bre-ri-to y por de-ba-jo mi-ra-me'.

Fig. 2-8 The first four bars of the bambuco 'Agáchate el Sombrero' by Pablo Valderrama.

- (2) A chordal pattern in evident $\frac{3}{4}$ time based on either of the following formulas:

- (a) bass/chord/rest/chord/bass/chord on successive quaver beats,

The figure shows the bambuco rhythm pattern on the guitar. It is a single staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The pattern consists of bass notes and chords on successive quaver beats.

Fig. 2-9 Bambuco rhythm in the configuration described as 'a tiempo,' or 'in time,' as be played on the guitar.

or

(b) rest/chord/bass/chord/bass/chord,



Fig. 2-10 Bambuco rhythm in the configuration described as ‘a destiempo,’ or ‘about time,’ as played on the guitar.

according to the transcription or characteristics of the individual piece.

(3) A percussive or rhythmic pattern which features accented beats on the third and sixth quavers of 1(a) above:

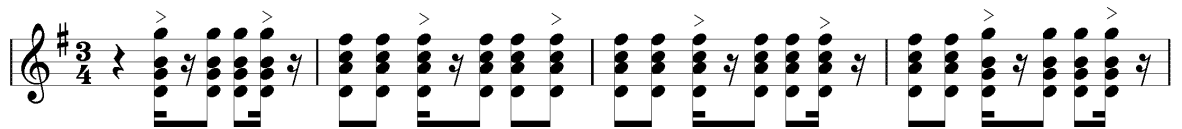


Fig. 2-11 Rhythmic pattern as played on the tiple corresponding to the guitar pattern Fig. 2-9.

and on the first and fourth of 1(b), strongly suggesting a $\frac{6}{8}$ metre:

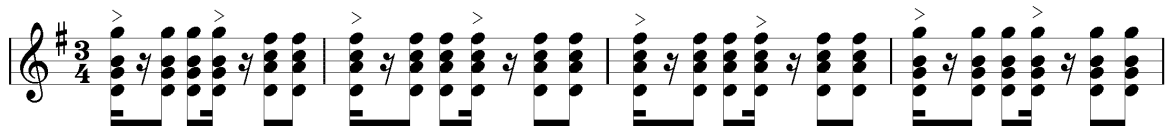


Fig. 2-12 Rhythmic pattern as played on the tiple corresponding to the guitar pattern of Fig. 2-10

These rhythmic and stylistic features will be discussed in much greater detail in later chapters but this superficial description is simply given as a preliminary orientation towards the musical structure of the *bambuco*.