

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

-Arhuaco, Arhuaco, Chibchan

-The Arhuaco are often referred to as the Ika, Ica, or part of the Tairona group as well, and will be referred to as such in some of the following materials.

-Arhuaco Language-“Now, a majority of people in the tribe can speak the native language. A dictionary of Arhuaco is being completed. Indian stories, once passed on orally, are in written form. And in all 28 villages, children are taught in Arhuaco - an increase from just two villages in 1990...” (6)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

-ISO 639-3

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

-“...the Indians [Arhuaco] [live] in the Sierra Nevada between Santa Marta and Rio Hacha and those of San Sebastian on the southern side of the mountains.” (1p868)

1.4 Brief history:

-“The Arhuacos, while among the strongest, are the most traditional of all Colombian tribes.” (6)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

-“Unlike most South American civilizations, the Taironas lived in relative peace with the Spanish for the first seventy years following the Conquest until Spanish demands finally caused a rebellion which was ruthlessly crushed. Tairona survivors fled up into the mountain to reconstitute their society.” (6)

-The Arhuaco, along with the Kogi and Assario groups, are descendants of the Tairona group mentioned above.

-Missionaries-“The Arhuaco, or Ijka, culture was seriously affected by the Conquest due to the advance of Spanish colonization and the 80-year presence of the Capuchin mission. The Capuchins forbade the use of the Arhuaco language and the customs of the Arhuaco culture, creating a deep division in the community. Today two factions within the community exist: those who were able to retain their traditional customs and the mestizos who were separated from their culture and educated in the Western traditions.” (4)

-Modern Government Interaction-“The Arhuacos, who have learned the art of lobbying and political arm-twisting in their battles to keep non-Indians off their reservation, have sent delegations to Bogotá to meet with ministers, foreign ambassadors and human rights groups.” (6)

-“Gonavindua Tairona is the political organisation founded by the the Mamas (priests) of the three tribes in 1987 in order to represent their interests in the face of increasing Western pressures. The three tribes refer to themselves as 'The Elder Brothers', and to Westerners as 'The Younger Brother'.” (6)

-The three tribes mentioned above again refer to the Tairona group comprised of the Arhuaco, Kogi, and Assario groups.

1.6 Ecology:

-Concept of Mother Earth-“The Indians themselves say the earth is their mother, and that they do not take more from the earth than they can give back.” (2p47).

-“...[to the Arhuaco and surrounding tribes] the Sierra Nevada is "The Heart of the World." Their laws, based on the "Law of the Mother," refer to nature and man and to their harmonious relationship, which is defined by the movement of the stars in the sky throughout the course of the year.” (4)

-Environment-“Descriptions like that of Friar Pedro Simon describe what the Spaniards found: "If there is a paradise in this land of Indians it seems to be this one....It is crowned by high peaks, areas inhabited by big towns that are visible from everywhere....The different plants were a treat for the eyes...clean and tidy patios with huge bright stones...stone paths.... The most interesting things to see were the root plants and corn, potatoes, yucca, yam, pumpkins, peppers, cotton plantations, and trees of almost every fruit, some zapote trees, guamas, mamones, guava, apricot, curos, nuts, and many other fruit trees." (4)

-“At 19,000 feet, the Sierra is considered among the world's most biologically diverse mountain ranges - featuring eight separate climates, 35 rivers, 1,800 species of flowering plants and 635 species of birds, many of them found nowhere else.” (6)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

-500 living as of 1937 and 1941 (1p870)

-“The Sierra's population, and that of the surrounding communities, consists of many different cultural groups, including 30,000 members of the indigenous cultures of the Kogi, Arhuaco, and Wiwa groups.” (4)

-28 villages total (6)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

-“Arhuaco men work and socialize...The women spend much of their time weaving the men's woolen conical hats, colorful pouches and robes that most Arhuacos wear.” (6)

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

-“Some pottery is made by the Cdgaba and Ica, but among the latter the art has largely disappeared. For the most part, the ware is simple, undecorated, and without a glaze...Only the Ica priests make pottery, and the vessels are used exclusively in religious ceremonies.” (1p881)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

-“At the onset of the first menstruation, a girl is secluded in the regular dwelling house for 9 days, during which time no salt can be eaten and certain goods are prohibited. Formerly, at the end of the period of seclusion, Cdgaba and Ica girls were initiated into the sexual act by older, experienced men. It is said that this practice is no longer followed.” (1p883)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

-“At a discussion of the priest and elders in the temple, the suitability of the marriage is determined. This largely rests on whether the two are related. If no relationship comes to light and the girl’s father approves, the boy enters upon a year’s service to the prospective bride’s parents, carrying wood and assisting in the cultivation of their garden.” (1p882)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

-“Among the Ica, the couple is attended by an assistant to the priest, who is present during the first intercourse, and the bride must place one of the charm stones under her anus during the act in order to ward off the potentially evil spirits. After 2 nights, the couple returns to the priest, who delivers a lecture on their duties as husband and wife. Thereafter, the intercourse must take place outside the house, preferably in the cultivated fields...After the ceremony, the couple takes up residence apart from the parents, but they are regarded as belonging to the wife’s village.” (1p882)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

-Marriages are not arranged.-“When a boy comes of a marriageable age and selects a prospective mate, he makes his choice known to the priest (mama). At a discussion of the priest and elders in the temple, the suitability of the marriage is determined.” (1p882)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- 4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
 - “After the [wedding] ceremony, the couple takes up residence apart from the parents, but they are regarded as belonging to the wife’s village.” (1p882)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization:
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):
 - Kanzamaria-“...the mamma lives in a special group of sacred huts, known as the kanzamaria, and built differently from the ordinary huts. They are made, said my informant, entirely of thatch, and he describes the group as typically containing a large hut for meetings; a small one, which only the mamma may enter, for sacred masks and clothing; and other small ones for hearing confession... The kanzamaria is still located in some well-hidden place, but the secrecy seems even greater today, for Bolinder does not mention the guards, old men or boy, who now watch always on ridges or high places, and warn those at the huts, with a loud cry, of the approach of strangers.” (3p264)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade:
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?
 - [The Arhuaco] rulers are still the priests, or mamas, who are not only the spiritual but the temporal heads of the tribe, its doctors, judges and governors; and their power seems singularly unaffected by the groups twenty years’ exposure to Christianity,-although occasionally in some localities a Catholic priest now shares with the mamma the priestly offices of marriage and burial.” (3p264)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):
 - Mamos-“Spiritual leaders are called Mamos. The Mamo is charged with maintaining the natural order of the world through songs, meditations and ritual offerings. Mamo training begins at a young age and continues for around 18 years. The young male is taken high into the mountains where he is taught to meditate on the natural and spirit world.” (5)
- 6.2 Stimulants:
 - Coca/Shells-The coca leaf plays a central role in daily life and is used in offerings and ceremonies. Each man carries a bag of the leaves, which are chewed to create a mildly stimulating effect. When two men meet, a handful of leaves is exchanged as a sign of mutual respect. A hollowed-out gourd called a ‘poporo’ contains crushed seashells. A stick is used to transfer the powder to the wad of coca in the mouth – the highly alkaline shells react with the coca to stimulate its active ingredients.” (5)
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):
 - Death-“The Ica bury only the priests in a flexed position.” (1p883)
- 6.4 Other rituals:
 - [The Arhuacos] hold religious rituals in forest clearings, giving thanks to the creators of the divine mountains and rivers of the range where they live, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.” (6)
 - “...monthly rituals held simultaneously across the Arhuaco nation, families gather in forests or hillsides under the guidance of mamos. Holding little cotton threads, rocks or tree shavings, which the Arhuacos see as representations of the many facets of nature, the worshipers project their thoughts into the objects as a way of purifying and honoring nature. The items are later meticulously arranged and left to the mamos to give up as offerings.” (6)
 - Powruba Festivals-“...two great public festivals in Powruba, one held every year January 20-22 and the other June 24-26, with crowds and dancing and drinking and general gaiety. In these the mamma took no official part. There were also then the secret dances, already carefully guarded from the white men. Only Indian believers were allowed to take part in the dances, which were moved every year from place to place in the high hills, to avoid detection. These came in December after the harvests, and lasted for nine days.” (3)
 - These public festivals are no longer celebrated but the secret dances are. These dances seem to have taken on characteristics of the previous festivals and generally take the entire month of December to complete. The month long celebration consists of eating and drinking restricted foods, periods of sexual abstinence, separate dances for males and females, bathing, and confession to the mamas. (3)
- 6.5 Myths (Creation):

-Creation-“When it comes to religion, the Arhuacos follow the teachings of wise men called mamos and believe in several "mothers and fathers" who created nature. A central tenet holds that the Sierra is the "heart of the world," which the Arhuacos, wiser than outsiders, must protect.” (6)

-Origin of Heavenly Bodies-“Their chief god and the girl India had a son, who was the most beautiful child on earth. The god told India to watch him day and night, and never to open the door of her hut lest he should escape. So she sat day and night, holding her son in her arms. The other Indians wondered why India never came out of her hut to dance, as before. Through a crack in the door they could see a shining light. They knocked and said, “Come out, India.” But she would not open the door. Then they planned to catch her through her great love of dancing. They came with flutes and played before her hut. But she would not open the door. Finally they played the most beautiful dance tune of all (a tune that is known by name and played today). India laid her son on the floor and opened the door. Immediately a strong light rushed out of the door and up into the sky. Her son had become the sun. India in desperation flew up after the light, and became the moon, which is always running after the sun, but never catches him.” (6)

-Mountains-“Prominent among the nature spirits are the mountains of the region. Figueroa, a 9,000 foot peak above San Sebastian, whose Arhuaco name is Buncata, is the father of the Indians. Atizuanura is their mother. The three-peaked mountain Djiuchuchu was once a man who was very bad and killed other Indians. He was turned to stone to remind people not to kill. But the round gentle mountain Cuacata was once a good old mamma. After his death the mountain appeared, to guard his people.” (3)

-Flood-“After the flood there was only one woman left. Then eight more women appeared and joined her. After a long time four men came to them, arriving from the four different points of the compass, and their descendants are the Arhuacos.” (3)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

“We see life here, not elsewhere. When we die, that spirit lives, the body dies. For us, no one dies, just changes places and people born come from one place. The spirits do not play for us, not born, exist and have always existed. When we die we have a snowy hill, where our spirits rest.” (7p4 English Translation)

“Vemos la vida aquí, no en otra parte. Cuando morimos, ese espíritu vive, muere el cuerpo. Para nosotros nadie muere, simplemente cambia de lugar y las personas que nacen vienen de un lugar. Los espíritus para nosotros no se reproducen, no nacen, existen y han existido siempre. Cuando morimos tenemos un cerro nevado, en donde nuestros espíritus descansan.” (7p4 Original Spanish Text)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

“A religious custom... is the use of prayer stones. They are small stones, like those formerly used by the women in necklaces, wrapped in leaves of maize and tied with a string, and are called simana. Behind the sacred huts of the kansamaria there is a tiny platform to receive the prayer stones.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

-None

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

“A few of the Arhuacos have modified their costumes in contact with the whites. The men of this group have donned shirts and trousers, and frequently sandals made from old automobile tires...on their heads the typical Ika agave-bark woven square crowned hats with ear-flaps.” “The costumes of women were also unchanged-the white cotton robes, of two pieces of cloth crossed at the shoulders, and the strings and strings of glass beads...necklaces sometimes weighed up to eight pounds, and the favorite color was black...” (3p263-64)

“We carry in our dresses is our worldview-white, why? because we are of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the snow is white and our dresses are always white. But men such as the bearing cap, which is called the tutosoma, a white cap tissue representing the snowy peaks of the Sierra.” (7p3 English Translation)

“Llevamos en nuestros vestidos -es nuestra cosmovisión- el blanco, ¿por qué? porque somos de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, los nevados son blancos y nuestros vestidos serán siempre blancos. Pero los hombres portan por ejemplo el gorro, que se llama el tutosoma, un gorro blanco tejido que representa los picos nevados de la Sierra.” (7p3 Original Spanish Text)

-Hats-“The larger flat-topped Ica hats are made either of cotton or of agave fiber...the Ica hat sometimes has a narrow brown line.” (1p879)

“Women do not wear hats.” (1p879)

-Shoes-“Ica are sometimes seen with cowhide sandals.” (1p879)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

-“There is only one difference in costume-the women’s cotton garments are no longer handwoven, but of manufactured stuff.”
(3p164)

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

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(Quotations included in Questionnaire are English translations followed by the original Spanish text.)