STONE-ROOFED CHAMBERS IN CHIBCHA TERRITORY, COLOMBIA

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In both the archaeological and the ethnohistorical literature, the paucity of aboriginal stone architecture in Chibcha territory (central Colombia) has often been noted. Easily worked sandstone is available in quantity in the area, but all findings to date indicate remarkably little use of stone for building purposes. Although column-like stone objects have long been known in several locations, some in positions suggesting structural use, it has been denied that architectural remains of any kind have been found.[1] The recent discovery of stone-roofed chambers that justifiably can be called megalithic structures near Guatavita therefore assumes considerable interest.[2]

The Chibcha town of Guatavita was mentioned frequently by the early Spanish chroniclers, and was clearly one of the most important towns in the more southern of the two Chibcha kingdoms. In the summer of 1963, the valley in which the modern town lies was being flooded by a recently-built dam, and an attempt to find sites there was regarded as urgent. Local inquiries led to the discovery of the site reported here. While it lies above the water-level that will be reached by the reservoir, the site is endangered by a new road which is to be built in the vicinity, possibly actually across the site. In view of this fact and of the unusual character of the site, most of the limited time available was devoted to its investigation.

The site is located in the vereda (rural district) called Tominé de Indios or Tominé de Santa Bárbara, within the modern municipio of Guatavita (Cundinamarca), on two hills on the western side of the valley about 3 km. NNW of the town (see fig. 1). These hills are part of the first rise from the flat valley floor towards a minor chain of mountains separating the valley of the Tominé River from the Sabana de Bogotá. The Tominé is an affluent of the Bogotá or Funza River, and its valley appears to have been an arm of the Pleistocene lake that once occupied the Sabana.

On the more southern of the two hills, there are at least three structures; on the northern, four or possibly five (see fig. 2). The chambers are subterranean, and have been dug out of the yellow clay subsoil. In some cases, roofs were provided by taking advantage of a large natural float rock under which a chamber was excavated. However, at least two chambers were roofed by placing large flat stone slabs over them. Several also have vertical slabs framing the entrance or lining walls. At first glance, the structures resemble dolmens, especially where they have uprights and slab roofs. However, they differ from true dolmens in that the weight of the roof does not seem to rest on the uprights, which are too slender to carry such a burden and in some cases do not even touch the roof. Actual support seems to be provided by the compact clay beyond the limits of the chamber.

It is obvious that these chambers are deliberate constructions. Even where the roof-rock appears to be in its natural position, the

cavity under it has clearly been excavated by human agency, since the walls are nearly vertical and show no sign of erosion by water or wind, and in one case at least traces of tool marks can be seen in the clay. The vertical slabs could not have arrived in this position by any natural means. Another indication of human activity is the presence of a mixture of clay and stones filling gaps between some of the uprights and the roof.

All the stone used in these structures is the local yellowish or cream-colored sandstone, which splits readily in both horizontal and vertical planes (it can even be split into long prisms suitable for fenceposts, and is now commonly so used). The upright slabs appear to have been deliberately split off, but show no signs of further dressing either on the faces or on the edges, which are somewhat irregular. The large slabs used for roofing on two chambers are probably unmodified; similar slabs are found on the hillside nearby. The float rocks that serve as roofs have not been modified in any way, except for having a chamber dug out under them. Their upper surfaces are honeycombed by natural erosion; their lower surfaces are nearly flat, but the flatness seems to be due to lack of exposure rather than to deliberate dressing, since the rock shows no indication of anything but a natural break-surface.

The chambers are not dry. During rainy weather, pools of water tend to collect in them. When first visited, some contained water at least 25 cm. deep which later dried out during two months of near drought. Access to the chambers is provided by a roughly V-shaped channel or depression in front (i.e., on the downhill side). It is not known if the depression is part of the original construction or has been dug in recent years to get into the chambers. According to local residents, some Jesuits did some digging around them many years ago, and the owners of the site have recently dug two or three unproductive holes in front of other large rocks in the hopes of finding more chambers. However, one report indicates that at least some of them have been open for a long time. A very old woman living nearby said that they were used to hide fugitives during "las revoluciones," a term that in this area usually refers to the Thousand Days' War at the end of the last century. It is clear that the entrance channels have existed at least for a number of years, since they are choked with brush, which seems to thrive on the water that collects in the chambers. In fact, the easiest way to locate the structures is to look for a dense clump of brush on the downhill side of a large rock. They are otherwise easy to miss among the many rocks on the hillside.

Near the crest of the northern hill there is a large hollow rock known locally as "El Horno." Its cavity appears to be natural; the entrance is narrow enough so that entry presents some difficulty, but once inside it is possible to stand upright, since the floor level is considerably below that of the earth outside. When first visited, the cavity contained a quantity of loose stones and a type of metal scrap from the manufacture of crown corks that is used locally for poultry netting. This material has undoubtedly been thrown inside by local children, for whom this curious rock clearly has a considerable attraction. A slight polish on the rock surface around the entrance may well be due to the frequent passage of small bodies into and out of the cavity. The roof is blackened, possibly by smoke, but an attempt

to penetrate below the modern detritus produced nothing but the usual yellow clay subsoil, with no signs of burning, no scraps of charcoal, and no cultural remains.

Very few sherds or other artifacts appear on the surface in the area of the structures, but within a few hundred meters of them there are at least three small areas where sherds are present in appreciable numbers (see fig. 2). All are on the edges of the small dry quebrada that skirts the eastern and northern limits of the northern hill. Percussion-flaked stone artifacts have also been found in these sherd areas. They are generally similar to those reported by Haury and Cubillos from near Tocancipá, just over the mountains behind the present site.[3] Areas 1 and 3 are badly eroded, and in none of them do artifact-bearing deposits appear to be more than about 25 cm. deep. Owing to a shortage of labor and the drought-hardened condition of the earth, no excavations were possible.

Description of structures

Structure 1 (see fig. 3). This is one of the most elaborate, and most dolmen-like. The roof consists of three large flat slabs of stone, each about 35 to 40 cm. thick, 1.5 m. wide and 2 to 2.5 m. long, which have clearly been set in place over the chamber with their long axes approximately at right angles to that of the chamber. It will be noted in the plan that the roof slabs appear smaller than the chamber they cover. This effect is partly due to the fact that the walls slant in from the floor, making the floor in fact larger than the roof, and partly due to difficulties in establishing the full extent of the slabs. When first visited, only the slab over the entrance and part of the middle one were visible; the back slab was covered by 5 to 10 cm. of dirt and was only discovered when an attempt was made to clean off the middle slab to determine its limits. However, it was not possible to clean the roof completely, owing to the aforementioned hardness of the earth, and at some points the outlines shown are approximations only. Around the edges of the back slab, there is a series of smaller stones projecting from the ground; they do not appear to be in their natural positions, but their function is unknown. Between the middle and front slabs there is a gap that lets a little light into the chamber and through which one would be able to see that an underground chamber existed even if the entrance were blocked. If the structures have been opened in fairly recent years, it is likely that it was this gap that led to their discovery.

The chamber is about 3.5 m. long, 2 m. wide, and 1.5 m. high. The floor is mud. Small angular stones lying on it in no apparent order may have been thrown in recently by local children. On the first visit, the floor was almost entirely covered by a pool of water about 25 cm. deep; after about two months of drought it had dried out enough to enter, but the bottom was still muddy. The limiting walls of the chamber are natural subsoil, and rather irregular; under the northwest corner of the front roof slab there is a hollow or alcove, probably resulting from an erosional cave-in, leaving the slab poorly supported in this corner. The back wall includes some large unmodified stones which appear

to have been embedded in the clay matrix by natural means. Lining the long sides, however, there are upright slabs which must have been placed by human agency, five on the left looking in and two on the right. Two slabs lying on the floor have probably fallen from the right hand side. These slabs are about 15 cm. thick, .5 to 1 m. wide, and 1 to 1.5 m. long, with irregular edges; fig. 3 shows their dimensions and positions at floor level. Some are in contact with the dirt walls, or very close, while others are some distance out. Gaps between the tops of uprights S3, S4, S5, N2 and the roof (resulting from the irregular edges of the uprights) are filled with a mixture of clay and small stones; in addition, small flat stones have been wedged into the gap at the top of S3.

Structure 2 (see figs. 4 and 5). A striking feature of this structure is a slab-lined, roofless passageway leading to the entrance of the chamber proper. This passage has two vertical slabs on each side, about 50 cm. wide at present floor level but with a maximum width of 75 cm., and 12 to 15 cm. thick. Upright S1 is 91 cm. high from present floor level; S2, 1.24 m.; N1, 1.15 m.; and N2, 95 cm. The entry to the chamber is framed by two slabs (S3 and N3) at right angles to the axis of the passage; S3 is 78 cm. high, 40 cm. wide, and 24 cm. thick; N3 is 91 cm. high, 54 cm. wide, and 20 cm. thick. N2 and N3 are in close contact, but there is a gap between S2 and S3. In this gap there is a shallow recess above present floor level. The back wall of this recess gives the impression of having been built up of squarish stones and grey-brown earth, but it is still partly obscured by dirt, especially near the floor. Gaps at the tops of S3 and N3 are filled with a clay-and-stone mixture like that noted in Structure 1, and this material is also present filling the corner between the upper part of S3 and the back wall of the recess, sharply contrasting in color with the greyish earth on top of and between the rocks in the wall of the recess. A quantity of yellow clay is also piled on the surface above the recess; it appears to have been put there fairly recently, probably removed from the area below.

The roof of the chamber is a large float rock, 58 cm. thick over the entrance and extending 15 to 85 cm. outside uprights S3 and N3. The upper surface of the roof rock is highly irregular due to natural erosion. The lower surface is nearly flat but slopes up towards the back; the back wall of the chamber curves out to meet it at a height of 1.4 m. above the floor. The walls consist of natural yellow clay subsoil and include stones of various sizes; a large one extends into the floor on the left hand side near the entrance. At one point about halfway up the back wall there is a nearly square hole about 10 cm. across and 15 cm. deep, probably resulting from the removal of a stone. Although somewhat irregular, the walls are too nearly vertical to have been formed by natural agency. The floor consists of mud and loose stones. The owners have dug a shallow hole in it but report finding nothing, and no bone fragments, sherds, or other remains are to be seen in either the hole or the backdirt from it. The chamber is about 2.7 m. wide and 2 m. deep, and the height varies from 89 cm. at the entrance to 1.4 m. near the back.

When first visited, the entrance passage of Structure 2 was choked with fill and brush. The present writer started clearing it in the hopes of finding an original floor. In the process, a few sherds

were found in apparently undisturbed soil, but there was not time to finish the job, and several weeks went by before it was possible to go back to the site. It was then found that the owners of the site had done some further clearing themselves with the intention of allowing the muddy floor of the chamber to drain and dry out. They had also found sherds, and fortunately had saved them. The wares represented are described in a later section.

Structure 3. Although a number has been assigned to this feature, it is possible that it represents nothing more than an unsuccessful attempt on the part of treasure hunters to find a sealed chamber. It consists of an approximately circular hole, about 1.5 m. in diameter and a meter deep, in front of a large rock with an irregular surface. The hole extends about 50 cm. under the edge of the rock, and the wall of the hole at this point shows yellow clay similar to the chink-filling mixture used in Structures 1 and 2; other portions of the hole have grey-brown earth. It is possible that the clay is the seal of an unopened chamber, as the diggers of the hole evidently believed, but it may well be nothing more than the natural subsoil on which the rock rests. While small stones are present in the clay (and in the brown earth), there is no sign of any vertical slabs. The large rock is too thick and solid to reveal the presence of a chamber, if there is one, by echoing when struck. Judging by the vegetation in the hole, it was dug more than a year ago and could be several years old. At at least two other points on the hillside there have been recent, unsuccessful attempts to find more chambers by digging in front of large rocks; in one case, a hole more than a meter deep has failed to reach the lower edge of the rock.

Structure 4 (see figs. 6 and 7). This structure consists of a simple chamber under a large natural float rock with three vertical slabs at the entrance. The roof rock is about 3 m. thick, irregular on its upper surface and smoother underneath; it overhangs the uprights by 65 to 75 cm. The aperture of the chamber is approximately lens-shaped but is partly blocked by the uprights. An entrance has been left between uprights S1 and N1, so that there is one slab to the left of the entrance and two to the right. A slab lying on the floor just inside the chamber has probably fallen from a vertical position at the extreme right hand side. The surface level of the earth outside the uprights is about 20 cm. higher than inside, and a small slab has been placed just outside N1 and N2, blocking the gap between them and holding back the outside earth. The tops of the uprights touch the roof; gaps and chinks resulting from the irregular edges of the slabs are not clay-filled in the manner of Structures 1 and 2. The uprights are about 50 cm. wide, 60 cm. to 1 m. or more high, and 12 to 17 cm. thick. They are far too slender to support the weight of the roof rock, which must be many tons. Their function seems to be to provide a partial front wall and to keep the outside earth from slipping into the chamber.

The chamber is roughly circular, about 2.25 m. wide, 2.5 m. deep, and approximately a meter high. The walls, which are nearly vertical, have clearly been dug out of the yellow clay; at some points, what appear to be tool marks are visible. They suggest a pick-like instrument. At the back and on the right hand side looking in, the wall is blackened, perhaps by smoke, and a small area on the right

hand wall near the floor appears burned. The roof, however, shows little sign of smoke-blackening. A little clay still adheres to the underside of the roof, and there are possible indications of crack-filling with clay at the junction of the roof and the back wall. The floor is dry grey-brown earth. A hole about 1 m. in diameter and 50 cm. deep has been dug fairly recently on the left hand side; its walls show a layer of grey-brown earth about 10 to 25 cm. thick overlying yellow clay. Near it are two large irregular stones which probably came from the hole, but no bones, sherds, or other remains are visible in the hole or in the backdirt from it. A cavity on the right hand side near the opening may be the result of natural erosion and slippage or may have been dug by recent treasure hunters. An examination of the loose dirt in this cavity yielded no remains of any kind.

Structure 5. This feature consists of a simple small chamber under a large float rock (about 1.5 m. thick) with no uprights. The entrance is a mere lenticular opening about 1 m. wide and 50 cm. high. Owing to the narrowness of the opening, the small size of the chamber, and the presence of a pool of water inside, no attempt was made to go into it to take measurements, and estimates only are presented here. The maximum height of the chamber is about 1 m.; it is about 1.5 m. deep and 2 m. or more wide. The walls are earth, with a large unworked stone included in the back wall. The floor is mud and loose stones. There is a cavity to the left of the entrance, just inside; its extent could not be determined because of the lack of light, but it appeared to be at least 50 cm. deep. In this case, the chamber might be the result of natural erosion, but at least the back wall looks too nearly vertical to be anything but human work.

Structures 6, 7 and 8. These three structures are on the southern of the two hills, and have not yet been studied in detail. Structure 6 is similar to Structure 5, but larger; it is a simple cavity under a large rock, with no uprights. Structure 7 consists of a deep, water-filled hole partly under a rock but extending in front of it. The pool is currently used as a source of water for household purposes. Structure 8 is more complex. The rear of the chamber, which is quite large (about 1.5 m. high, 3 m. or more long and at least 2 m. wide), is under a large block of natural float rock; the front section is covered by a flat slab (similar to those roofing Structure 1) which appears to have been deliberately set in place. There are two uprights near the downhill edge of this slab, but one falls at least 10 cm. short of reaching the roof. The only present means of entry is by wriggling feet first through a narrow lenticular opening near the corner of the slab and between the two uprights. The orientation of this structure is different from that of the others, which all lie on the eastern slope of the hill with entrances facing approximately east. Structure 8 is on a more southerly slope and faces south.

Ceramics

Sherds of the wares described below were found in apparently undisturbed dirt fill in the passageway of Structure 2. All of the wares discussed here have also been found at other sites, but detailed descriptions of them have not previously been published. Color references are to Maerz and Paul (1950).

1. Guatavita Sherd-tempered Ware (Classic Chibcha; cf. Broadbent, 1962)

Defining characteristics: sherd temper; "crystalline" texture (fracture surfaces exhibit numerous small angular facets); vessel forms and decoration.

Paste

Color: light buff (10 D 5) to grey-brown (12 A 4) to dark brown (16 A 3, Phantom), depending on degree of reduction and smoke-blackening. Inner surface sometimes darker than core or outer surface; outer surface sometimes darker than remainder.

Texture: medium, moderately homogenous; "crystalline"; often noticeably laminar.

Hardness: moderately hard.

Fracture: irregular, due to "crystalline" and laminar characteristics.

Temper: includes particles of sherd, usually redder than paste, present in all sherds (in the lot being considered, more plentiful in rougher, darker sherds than in those from footed-cups). Other temper includes rounded particles of several unidentified minerals, dark red, black, or grey in color. Particle size fine to medium (up to 2 mm. diameter); moderately abundant to abundant.

Numerous fine bubbles and cracks parallel to surfaces, contributing to laminar and "crystalline" characteristics.

Thickness: 4 to 8 mm. Sherds from footed-cups have consistent thickness, norm ca. 4.5 mm.; other sherds, thickness variable, norm ca. 5.5 mm.

Surface

Footed-cup sherds: surface smooth and regular; color, buff (9 D 5). Thick white (9 B 1-2) slip on inner, sometimes also outer surface; sometimes lightly polished over slip. Slip layer sometimes shows slight crackle effect similar to that often observed in glazed wares.

Other sherds: surfaces irregular; wiping marks prominent on inner surface; outer surface sometimes shows scars caused by dragging temper particles in smoothing. Inner surface possibly slipped with same color clay as paste, since surface temper particles are usually obscured by clay. Inner color grey-brown (12 A 4-6); outer color darker, probably due to use over fire (ca. 16 A 2, Smoke Brown). Inner surface shows crackle, especially around prominent temper particles.

Decoration

Present on footed-cup sherds only: bands and lines of dark red paint near rim on both surfaces (see fig. 8a).

Vessel Forms

(1) Footed-cups, frequently with a small lug projecting vertically from the rim on opposite sides. Vessels of this type have often been selected for illustration as representative of Chibcha ceramics.[4]

Rims: plain rounded, slightly out-turned, or very slightly thickened (see fig. 8b). Handles absent.

(2) Large ollas, wider than high, with narrow mouth, a wide, shallow groove a little below the rim, and a rounded base (see fig. 8c). Evidence for this vessel form in this paste has so far been found only at the site under consideration. A similar form, but with a slightly more squat profile and in a different paste, is now used by peasants throughout Cundinamarca; it usually has two handles of a characteristic ridged cross-section, located about halfway between the shoulder and the rim. Handles are absent in present collection.

Frequency

Footed-cup, 3 sherds; olla, 6 sherds.

2. Guatavita Grey-tempered Red Ware

Defining characteristics: soft grey mineral temper; fine, homogeneous red paste; clean straight-line fracture; smooth, regular surface.

Paste

Color: usually a light orange-red throughout (ca. 11 B 9), occasionally darker towards outer surface (to 16 A 10), presumably owing to use over fire. Usually appears fully oxidized throughout.

Texture: fine, homogeneous; sometimes slightly laminar.

Hardness: very soft (thumbnail will scratch), unless fire-darkened, when it is slightly harder.

Fracture: clean, approximately at right angles to the surface, in straight or gently curved lines. Fracture surfaces only slightly irregular.

Temper: rounded mineral particles, especially a light grey mineral so soft that it often fractures in the same plane as the clay matrix, exposing a cross-section of the mineral instead of projecting particles. Also present: a dark red mineral, occasional black particles. Particle size, fine (up to .7 mm. diameter); moderately abundant.

Fine lenticular bubbles rather common; most lie parallel to surface, but some are at an angle, giving an arched appearance to break-surfaces suggestive of coil manufacture.

Thickness: 3 to 6 mm.; norm about 4 mm. Thickness usually consistent throughout sherd.

Surface

Color: same as paste, unless smoke-blackened (to 40 A 5).

Regularity: outer surface smooth and regular; inner, very slightly irregular, but rarely shows smoothing marks or ridges.

Slip: outer surface may have a light slip of same clay as paste, since most temper particles are covered by clay. Although surface is quite smooth and compact, there are no polisher marks and no sheen. No crackle visible.

Decoration

One sherd shows traces of dark red paint (ca. 8 H 5) forming a squarish patch, perhaps at the base of a handle, and three fine lines parallel to shoulder plane (see fig. 9a).

Vessel Forms

Large jars with a well marked shoulder (see fig. 9b), possibly similar to those known as múcuras.[5] However, the body angle above the shoulder line is steeper than in classic múcuras. Diameter at shoulder, 23 to 27 cm. No rims or handles present. Absence of flat sherds suggests rounded bases.

Frequency

15 sherds, representing at least 2 vessels, judging by differences of arc at shoulder line.

3. Tunjuelo Laminar Ware

Defining characteristics: moderately coarse, laminar texture; irregular fracture; moderately abundant mineral temper including quartz. Ware named for site at Tunjuelito where it was first identified.[6] Two subtypes: non-erosionable and erosionable.

Non-erosionable subtype

Color: dark brown (ca. 16 A 7, Eagle) to black (16 A 1 or darker), generally reduced throughout.

Texture: medium coarse, laminar. Moderately homogeneous.

Hardness: hard.

Fracture: irregular; break surfaces show marked lamination.

Temper: rounded mineral particles, including quartz, and red, black, and rare grey particles; moderately abundant; particle size medium to coarse (up to 3 mm. diameter).

Cracks parallel to surface common; bubbles appear rare, but many temper impressions resemble bubbles.

Thickness: 3 to 5.5 mm.; norm, ca. 5 mm. Usually consistent throughout sherd.

Surface

Color: fire-blackened (8 A 2 or darker).

Regularity: outer surface smooth to touch but not polished; inner surface rougher but not very irregular. Smoothing marks not usually visible. Temper particles prominent on inner surface only; some crackle around temper particles on inner surface. No slip noted.

Decoration

None on available sherds.

Vessel Forms

All but two sherds appear to be from one rather large vessel, probably a jar; all are gently curved. No rims or handles present.

Frequency

9 sherds.

Erosionable subtype

Paste

Color: one or both surfaces usually oxidized, bright orange-red (ca. 11 A 9) to brown (ca. 14 A 5, Deauville Sand); core reduced, grey-brown (ca. 16 A 2, Smoke Brown).

Texture: as non-erosionable.

Hardness: very soft (thumbnail will scratch).

Fracture: as non-erosionable, but more crumbly.

Temper: as non-erosionable but somewhat more abundant.

Cracks and bubbles: as non-erosionable.

Thickness: 4.5 to 9 mm.; norm ca. 6 mm.

Surface

Color: as paste.

Regularity: usually eroded; otherwise, smooth but not polished; inside somewhat irregular. Temper particles prominent. Crackle present where original surface remains. Occasional, scattered glitter due to light reflection from quartz temper particles on surface. Otherwise, as non-erosionable.

Decoration

None on available sherds.

Vessel Forms

One sherd includes part of a sharply flaring jar neck (inner throat diameter ca. 8 cm.); all other sherds are gently curved. At least two vessels represented, probably jars.

Frequency

9 sherds.

Discussion

The purpose of the structures is not known. Their low roofs would make them somewhat inconvenient habitations, and this function is in any case virtually eliminated by the absence of cultural remains in or around them, except in the passageway of Structure 2. The fact that the chambers collect water may be significant; it is possible that they were designed to do so. As noted, the deep pool in Structure 7 is now used by local peasants for household water supply. Farther down the quebrada there is a natural spring under a rock; the small cavity it has formed appears to have been slightly enlarged, although not to such an extent that it really resembles the chambers. This spring is also used as a source of water. However, the size, elaborateness, and number of the structures makes it hard to believe that they were nothing more than a simple source of drinking water, which is not now particularly scarce in the area.

Even in spite of the absence of bone, human or otherwise, perhaps the most likely possibility is that the structures were tombs. They do, in fact, recall the tombs of Chibcha caciques described rather vaguely by the chroniclers.[7] Burials might have been made in them either by interment under the floor or by simply placing the corpse and offerings (if any) inside the chamber. In the former case, it must be remembered that bone fares very badly in the damp climate and acid, calcium-poor soils of the area, and except in very dry locations (which the chambers emphatically are not) very little bone of any kind is found. However, simple placement of the remains inside the chamber is perhaps more likely in view of the chroniclers' remarks, and in that case it is probable that the chambers were looted early in the Colonial

period, when the Spaniards sought out and destroyed anything that could be construed as a pagan santuario, including the remains of former caciques.[8] As noted earlier, there is evidence that the chambers have been open and accessible for a considerable period.

The age of the structures is also difficult to determine. The best evidence is provided by the sherds found in the passageway of Structure 2. If they are contemporaneous with the fill, they presumably postdate the construction of the chamber and would provide a minimum age for it; how the fill was deposited and where it came from are not known, but it must have got there after the passageway and chamber were already in existence. The most serious difficulty lies in dating the sherds themselves, since there is as yet no well established ceramic chronology for the area. None of the wares represented are in current use. Guatavita Sherd-tempered includes sherds from vessels of a type that has always been identified with the historic Chibcha. At this site only, this ware also includes sherds from vessels similar in shape (but not in paste) to modern peasant ollas. These sherds are the first indication yet found of a connecting link between the Chibcha ware and modern wares, and it is tempting to regard them as probably of Colonial date. Guatavita Grey-tempered Red has been found with Sherd-tempered in surface collections from other sites in the Guatavita area and elsewhere in Chibcha territory, and in excavations near Chocontá; it thus appears to be of about the same age as Sherd-tempered. Findings at Tunjuelito, while not conclusive, suggest that Tunjuelo Laminar was in use before and after the introduction of Sherd-tempered Ware in that area. In summary, all three wares appear to be at least partly contemporaneous, and their dating depends basically on the identification of Sherd-tempered Ware with the historic Chibcha. If this identification is correct, the sherds would date from the period of the Spanish conquest (and possibly the early Colonial period), and the structure in which they were found would be somewhat older.

Notes

[1]Denial: Haury and Cubillos, 1953, p. 91; stone columns: Hernández de Alba, 1937; Andree, 1876, p. 23; Zerda, 1947 [1884], pp. 207-211.

[2]I wish to thank the Council for Research in the Social Sciences of Columbia University for providing research funds; the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, Bogotá, for hospitably placing its facilities at my disposal; and Rev. Miguel Luna, Rev. Dr. Carlos José Villate, and Sr. Joaquín Camacho and family of Guatavita for their many kindnesses during the field investigations. A briefer report on these stone-roofed chambers is in press in Bogotá (Broadbent, ms.).

[3]Haury and Cubillos, 1953, pp. 78-79.

[4]See, e.g., Seler, 1893, Tafel 52, fig. 21.

[5]Cf. Seler, 1893, Tafel 50, fig. 8.

[6]Broadbent, 1962.

[8]Broadbent, ms. There is documentary evidence that tombs in the Guatavita area were sacked in 1546: ... en Santafé, a primero de septiembre de mil i quinientos y cuarenta y seis años ... Diego Montañes ... ante Vuestra Merced parezco ... y digo: que los días pasados, con una licencia ... fui a cavar y cavé en los términos y repartamientos de Guatavita y en sus santuarios, los cuales tenía en guarda como jeque y santero mayor de ellos, su capitán en la población de Guatavita ... teniendo yo abiertas y para sacar tres sepulturas y aquel día se sacaron parte de ellas ... dijo el mismo cacique de Guasca ... [que] los santuarios donde [yo] cavaba y saqué el oro ... eran de Guatavita y de sus antepasados y capitanes suyos .... (Friede, 1962, pp. 202-203).

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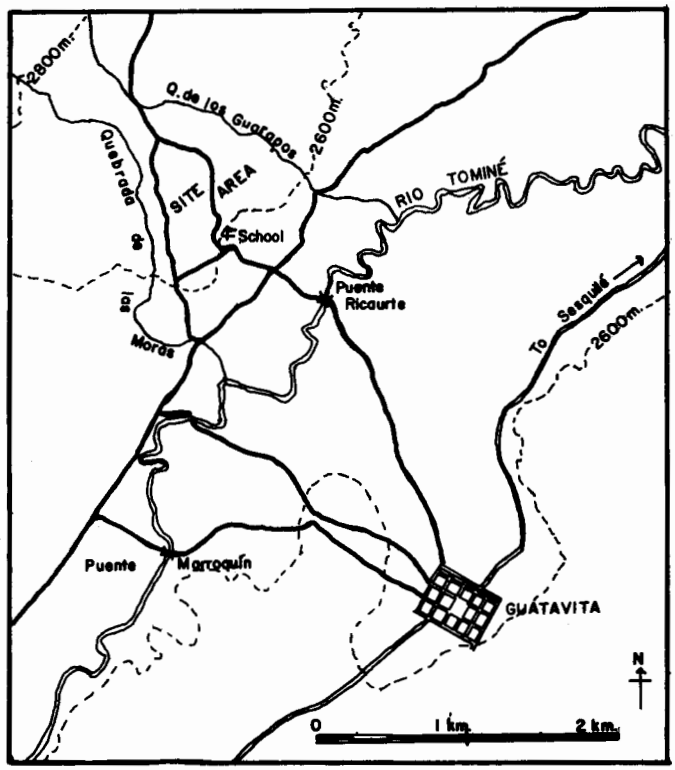


Fig. 1

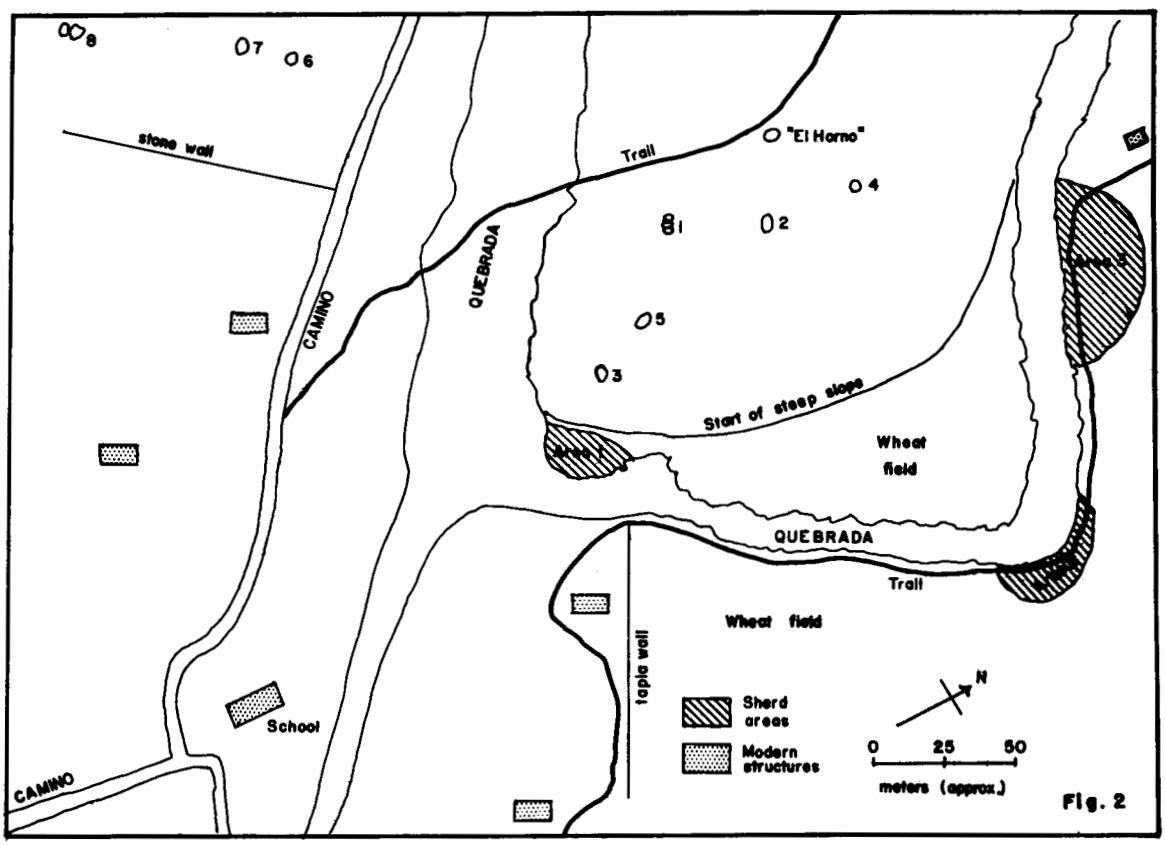


Fig. 2

Plate I. Location map; base: Instituto Geográfico 1:25,000 series, plancha 228-I-B (fig. 1); sketch map of site area (fig. 2).

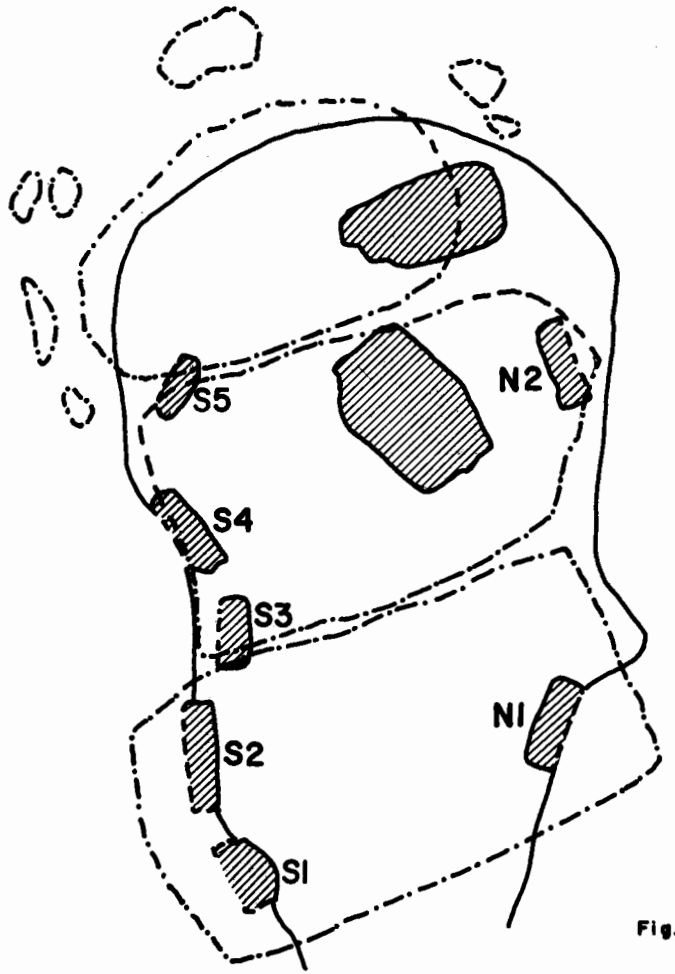
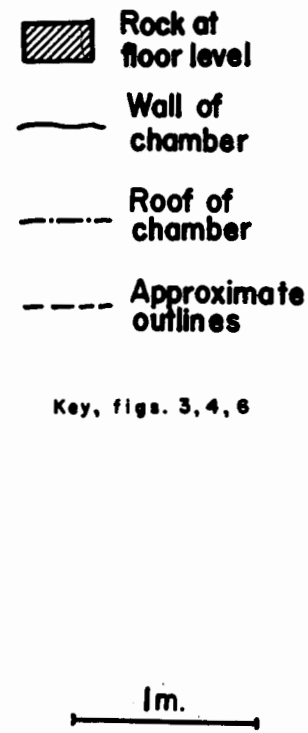


Fig. 3



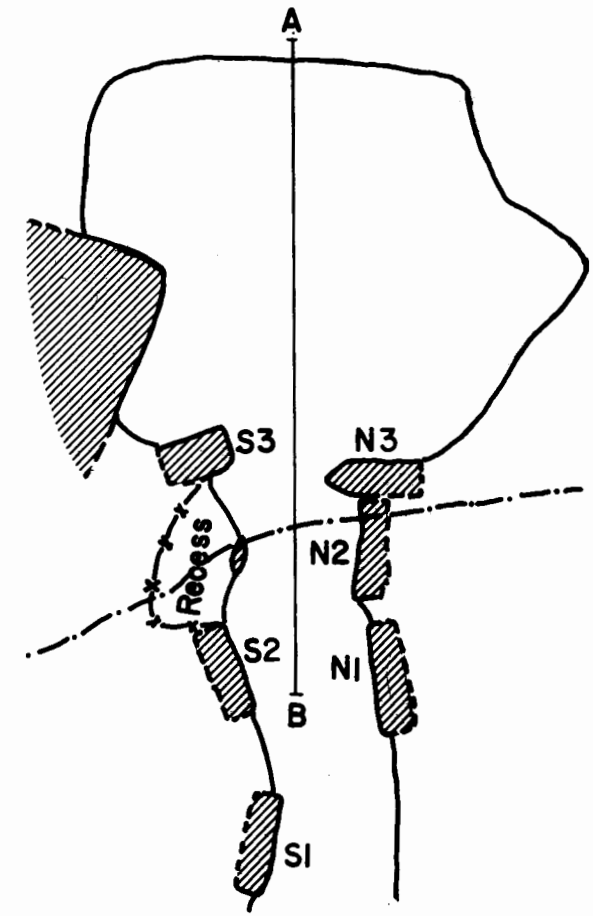


Fig. 4

Plate II. Structure 1 (fig. 3); Structure 2 (fig. 4); key to figs. 3, 4, and 6.

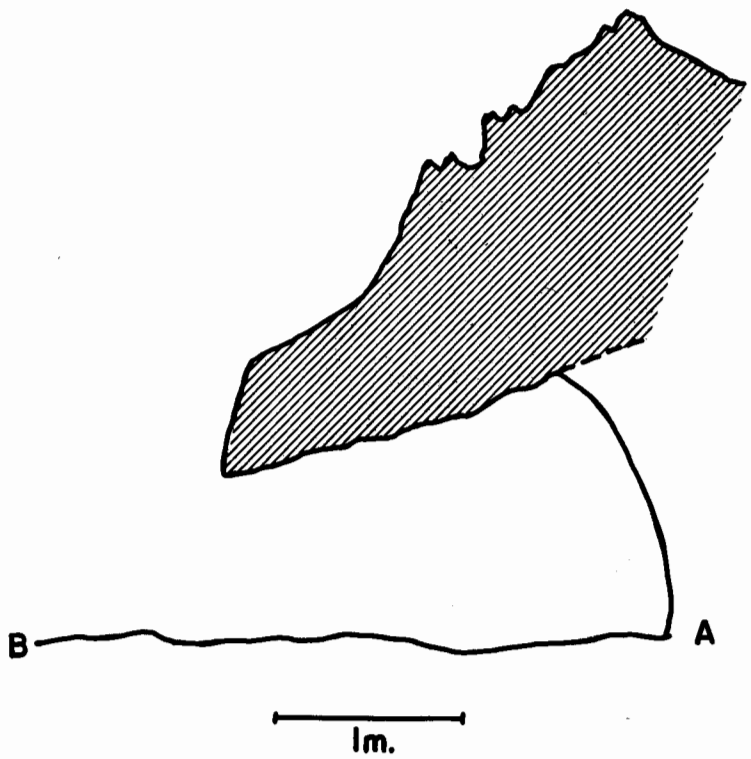


Fig.5

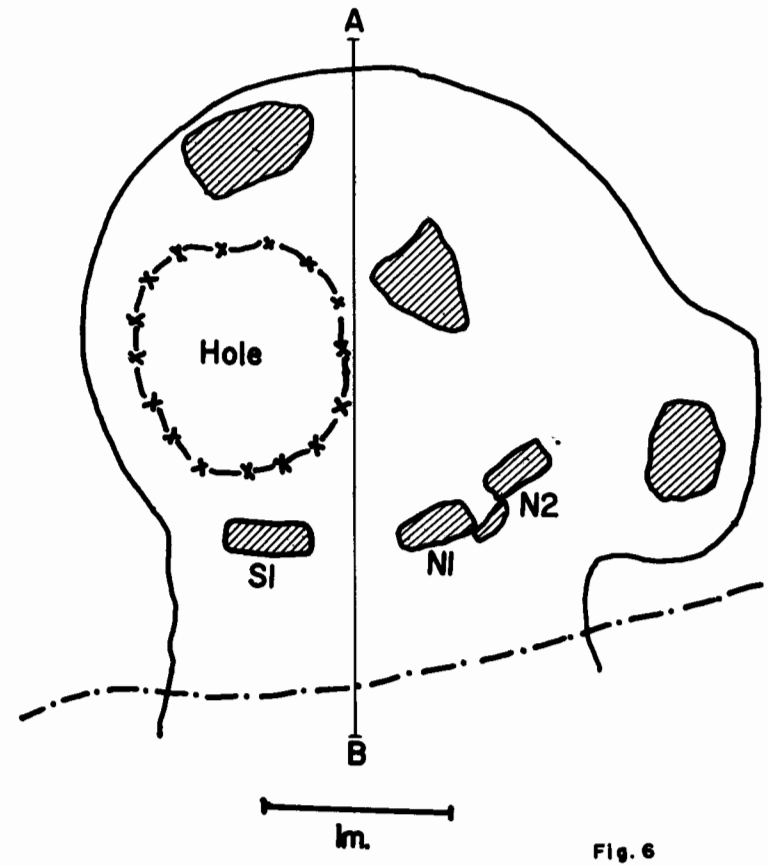


Fig. 6

Plate III. Structure 2, profile on line A-B (fig. 5); Structure 4 (fig. 6).

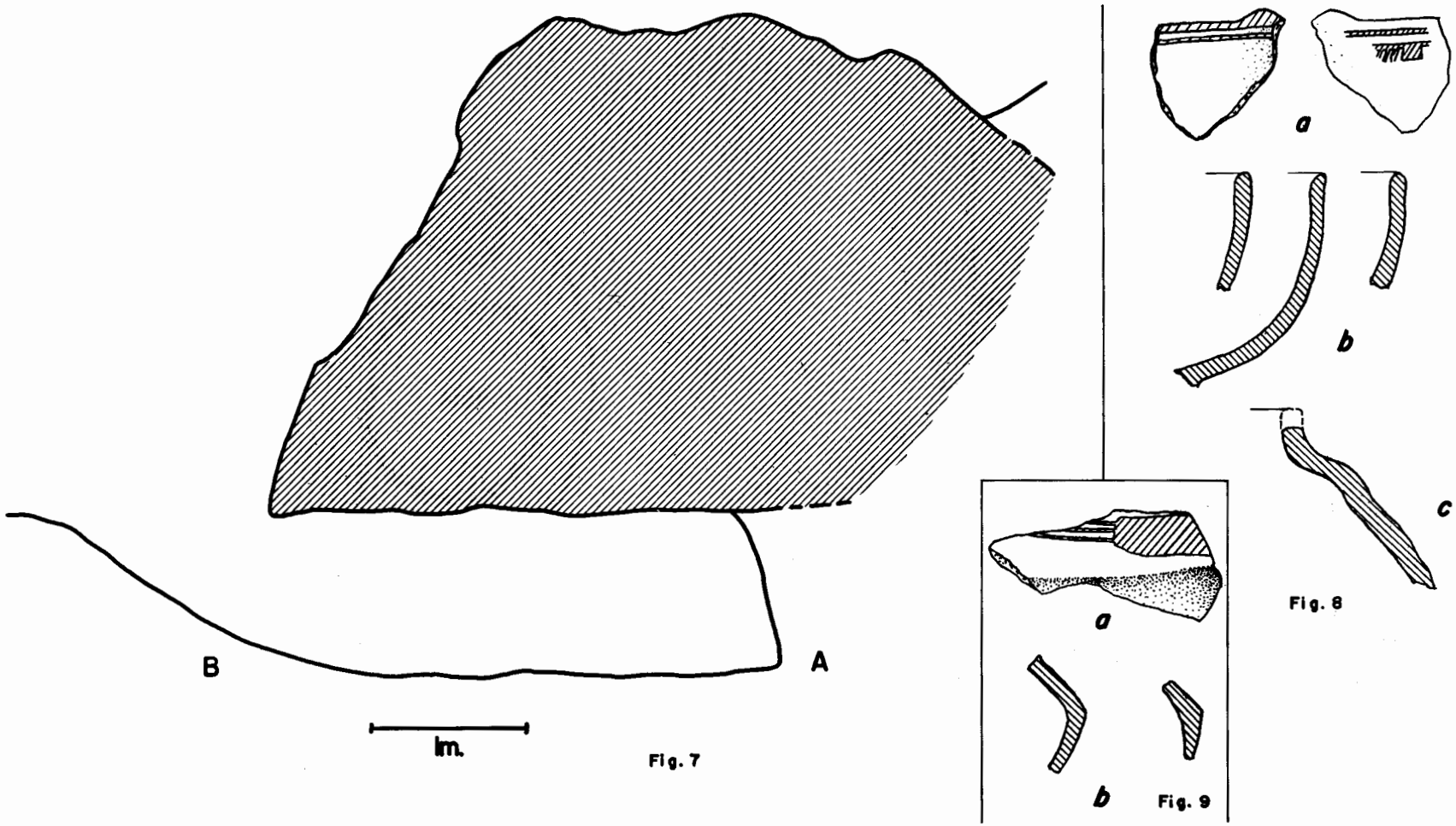


Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Plate IV. Structure 4, profile on line A-B (fig. 7); Guatavita Sherd-tempered Ware; a, painted decoration; b, footed cup rims; c, olla form (fig. 8); Guatavita Grey-tempered Red Ware; a, painted decoration; b, shoulder profiles (fig. 9).