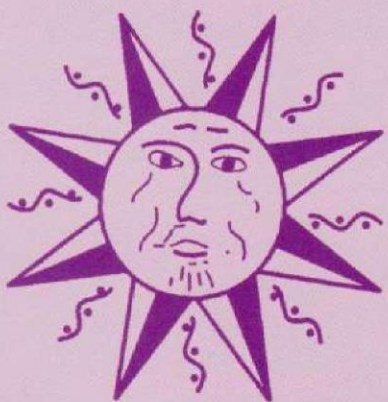




## Popular Tradition

### *Notes for The Identification of Images of The Passion of Christ in The Popular Guatemalan Ideology*

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No. 173

Año 2007

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## Introduction

The Imaged of the Passion in our country represent, at first glance the richest legacy of the Hispanic Culture period (1524-1821), given that in almost all churches, there are a rich number of sculptures, paintings, ceremony's manuals and other material works related to this specific cult that has reached our days with great shine.

However, few times we worry if those representations that we have before our eyes effectively answer to the didactic material that the Catholic church required and officially identified in the moment of its creation, to ensure the reproduction of the prevailing life system.

To unify the ideology in the ancient pre-Hispanic area known as Mesoamerica, through the Catholic religion, was turned since the Spanish invasion in the archdiocese of the New Spain, to which, the bishopric of Santiago of Guatemala, founded in 1532, was added to whose first local council took place in the city of Mexico in 1545 receiving the approval of its declarations in October, 27th 1589.<sup>1</sup>

In these conclaves, the local Catholic Church, whose archbishop was the direct representative from the Pope and acted independently from other councils like the one of Trent that reorganized the Church in Europe, organized according to other different circumstances of life coinciding in the fundamental issues of the Catholic Doctrine, but with huge differences in the techniques and material to use for the diffusion of the gospel, like the tithe and first fruits collection for its maintenance, given that the production of material goods relationship was totally different, so the ethnic composition of its population, because in this part of the New World missed to incorporate an ideological system to a great part of the indigenous natives of the region, having to use other ways of teaching, that at least on paper, were

familiar to the old Christian Catholics who came from Europe.

These circumstances made necessary an appropriate legislation to make the labor of teaching the gospel and the Castilian language to the indigenous effective whose identification allows us to comprehend and explain other factor present in the changes that the catholic religious icons have received answering to the life they have come thanks to the devotee's veneration.

The present essay pretends to contribute to the initial identification of this artistic creations and make evident the changes done in its material representation that alters the initial representation or current representation to the public the purpose of introducing the value of these works in the ideology of the popular community to achieve a better appreciation of this Material Heritage and identifying in a deeper way its ideological message and answer from the social conglomerate to obtain an outlook of its input to the Intangible Heritage.<sup>2</sup>

## *Art's Social Function in Relation to The Passion of Christ and Its Social Use*

It is convenient to remember that in this moment, that one of art's main functions was that of the diffusion or a dominant ideology in a social organization submitted by groups of more economic power, with the goal of unifying the criteria around one topic. This allows the works of art to be built in a bridge that communicates the ideas between the different groups they are made of. In this context,

<sup>1</sup> Pedro Moya de Contreras, Concilium Mexicanum Provinciale III. (1585) Tipografía de Joseph Antonio de Hoyal, Mexico, 1750.

<sup>2</sup> Bigger data about the referred concepts in this paragraph can be consulted in the *Ley del Patrimonio Nacional de Guatemala* and *Lista Indicativa del Patrimonio Inmaterial de Guatemala*. Fernando Urquizú, Celso Lara Figueroa. UNESCO. Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes, Guatemala 2003.

This allows the works of art to be built in a bridge that communicates the ideas between the different groups they are made of. In this context, the works that last are the ones that collect, to a great extent, the universality of these groups' ideas.

This situation easily explains the high profusion of Sacred Christian art in the West world during two millenia fulfilling as ideological scaffolding to hold the Feudal State organization and the mercantilists that are reigned by absolute monarchies. Where kings and monarchs were the ones in charge, through Catholicism and later through Protestantism, of reproducing their lifestyle and beliefs to legitimize their power, as well as to explain the social differences of the characters that have governed the world, given that in the last instance, they act by Divine Will. These groups of economic power also hold political representation that was amplified since 1789 in France by other social group identified as bourgeoisie, who cultivated their wealth in the production and exchange of good supported by the development of science and technique, something that moved the religious domain to a mediator role between the different groups in each society in a determined time and space, spreading as a power group all over the world.

The described behavior allows us to comprehend that the utility of religious art related with the Passion of Christ was not the same in the different historic periods, that in Guatemala's particular case, it appears in the Spanish Domination period in 1524 to the Liberal Reform of 1871, when the message of acceptance of an inevitable destiny for each individual and the hope to achieve eternal resurrection was reproduced.

This message changed with the development of the Liberal Reform that started our country's incorporation to global capitalism through coffee farming needing huge extensions of soil and capital and goods in hands of the Catholic Church that were confiscated, also limiting its role as a reproductive element of the life style, portrayed by the management of teaching.

The period comprehended between 1871 and 1892 is extremely important to the topic because

the Catholic belief system was severely affected, given that for one generation, there was not an specialized orientation in the management of their doctrine that went to the hands of the popular religiousness and a series of legends and interpretations of the people surrounding the topic came alive changing an organized system of teaching and therefore the didactic material represented in the own images of this process.

Later, during José María Reina Barrios's term (1892-1898) the reorganization of the official Catholic Church was tolerated but it did not count with the limiting of only having less than ten recognized priests to perform in the country, what restricted its evangelizer labor, but not the religiousness social practices that, because they acted independently from the ecclesial hierarchy and the State's surveillance, started to acquire certain capacity of convene popular action in each church, from where a new plot of national social organization was interweaved that soon was identified by the Cafeteras Dictatorships [dictatorships that favored coffee plantation's owners] of the 20th century to use it in favor of the State, keeping that relationship until 1944.

In this period, the social destiny acceptance message was the same but with the difference that it was leaning on other subtle means of reproduction of these ideas like writing, cinema and radio taking a ludic and pseudo-scientific role that allowed it to nest in a better way in the national ideology with great success, always very closed by controlled by the old power groups that allowed and supported the reorganization of the local Catholic Church, circumstances that modernized the presentations of the Passion imagery that enlarged its churches and processions.

During the Revolutionary period (1944-1954) the traditional values of the Catholic Church were respected but one of the primordial goal in the government terms was the development of science and counteract illiteracy what provoked a freedom of thought environment, the curiosity of the people in deepening in the field of materialistic philosophies which diffusion was supported by the State, what make a clash between the values and Christian principles, eventuality that induced a quick alliance between Catholics and Presbyterians to accompany groups of high economic power and transnational companies that were displaced to the politic scene and to start a crusade against the revolutionary process.



Like that, the fight against Revolution with Roman Catholic Church support was opened in 1951 in a massive concentration with the speech of the Pope Pius XII, broadcasted on radio live in Spanish language through *Radio Vaticano*<sup>3</sup>, with the reason of the declaration of the Eucharistic year in our country, counteracting the declaration of the Olympic Year by the government that promoted sport practices in the community and that oriented them to new distractions outside of the religious life.

The Guilds, Brotherhoods and Passion Associations were, in the decade of 1950, the more orderly constituted organizations that the Catholicism counted with, reason why they were politically taken advantage of by the old groups of power, situation that manifested in the incorporation of great lavishness in its processions that gradually were dominating the masses that approached them. [the processions]

This situation later fed in 1962 the developing of the Guatemalan Civil War that provoked a breach in the transmission of the knowledge of one generation that made that these commemorations distracted their attention in new messages diffused in movies of the biblical, epic and historic genre, situation that was tolerated by the church as long as they helped in the diffusion of this part of the gospel, because it also faced persecution and low priest availability problems.

In these conjunctions, the reproduction of the ideas went from the Churches and secular schools to the media, where religious messages are secondary or a complement to the notes or cultural news. There are religious channels, but they are produced by foreigners presenting a universal reality, that moves away from a practical local utility, strengthened by entertainment channels that do not present religious messages or knowledge of the local values, weakening the links of an ideological unit as the first encounter point of national identity.

In this sense, the cult to the Passion imagery in Guatemala went to constitute the last bastions where the one of the local society coexists, keeping the values that it has generated through the years. This essay is presented with the goal of contributing to correctly identifying its

images and explaining the changes that are present in our times.

### *The Organization between The Church and The First Teachers*

The ensemble of representations of material works that include paintings, sculptures, engravings and other plastic forms which didactic content is used to the teaching and diffusion of the gospel that is comprehended from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem until his Resurrection are recognized as Passion Imagery.<sup>4</sup>

For the application of teachings of this part of the gospel, in the particular case of the New Spain diocese, they appealed to a mnemonic didactic that presented two different modes cultivated by the two dominant religious orders in our mean from the 16th century, the Dominicans and Franciscans, that joined the local ideology conquest done by royal order of 1542, when Las Ordenanzas de Barcelona were instituted, also known as Leyes Nuevas [New Law].

In the case of the Dominicans, they counted with the Santo Rosario [Saint Rosary], spiritual exercise that in those times was constituted by short stories in a doctrinal way, called Misterios that in the number fifteen, were prayed in between ten Hail Mary and were organized chronologically for its reading to fix in the mind of the devotee the Birth, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, as well as relate this central character of the Church with its mother, the Holy Virgin Mary, that functions as queen, mother and co-redeemer of Humanity.<sup>5</sup>

The Franciscans counted with the Vía Crucis that was organized in 14 Stations the specifically alluded to Christ's passing through the Way of Suffering until his death where the figure of the Virgin Mary appears as a figure of a loyal mother to her son's suffering.

<sup>3</sup> The speech pronounced by the Pope Pius XII is available in a commemorative magazine, published under the auspices of the local Catholic Church with the date of 1950. According to Enrique Anleu Díaz of 66 years of age, well known philharmonic maestro, neighbor of the neighborhood of Verona, remembers that in 1950 attended a massive concentration of people that proclaimed the Eucharistic year, when he was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

<sup>4</sup> The four evangelists Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke and Saint John agree in many of their writings duly authorized and spread by the Catholic Church in the detailed description of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, that has fulfilled as starting point to the fundamental teaching of the Church, consisting of the acceptance of an inevitable destiny, that according to a Divine plan, it is reserved in every human's life and the ultimate example of acceptance of this destiny is the death of Christ whose resurrection is proof of a step of hope to achieve eternal life for the rest of humanity. The Catholic Church's detailed version can be factchecked in the work: *Varios Autores, Pasión y Resurrección de Jesucristo, Editorial Católica, Madrid, 1953.*

<sup>5</sup> To learn more about the ideological role that fulfilled the rosary pray in our county, you can consult: *El Rosario en el Arte Guatemalteco* by Fernando Urquiza, *Memoria del VI Congreso de Historia, 2004, pp. 223 a 240.*

The life of both characters was imposed through these and other spiritual exercises as perfect models of life, that still in our days, fulfill as an example of individual and social behavior in its followers, the Christians whose virtues are frequently amplified with other models with specific qualities that enrich the vast pantheon of Male and Female Saints in the Church and State through a loyal surrender of their similar.

In the last decade of the 16th century, the devotion to Our Lady of Solitude was introduced in the ancient Guatemala Kingdom, destined to the contemplation of the Holy Virgin in her ministry of suffering by the death of Christ in our Earth. VII Painful Ministries also organized that illustrate for the devotee about the pain a mother suffers in relation to the life of her children.

### ***The First Teachers and Teaching Materials of The Passion of Christ in The Ancient Kingdom of Guatemala***

In this period, the organization of the teaching of the gospel was strictly monitored by the ecclesiastical hierarchy because, more than a religious doctrinal instruction, it represented the direct reproduction of a lifestyle that prescribed the obedience to almighty God and his earthly authorities represented in the Spanish crown. The concentration of the education process in hands of Catholicism also implied a process of acceptance of the position of everyone in society has that at the same time conditioned their social and individual reactions.

So that the teachings totally fulfilled their purpose, it was necessary to count with an army of literate mentors in the management of the most recent pedagogical techniques of the period what implied a careful selection of the first teachers that came to the New World that counted with an extensive experience already in the conversion of people of other religions and cultures to Christianity. Because let us remember that since the 15th century, Catholicism, more than a religion, was an ideological position against everything that was not European monarchy, that implied the Reformation that fractured the Church in the Old Continent.

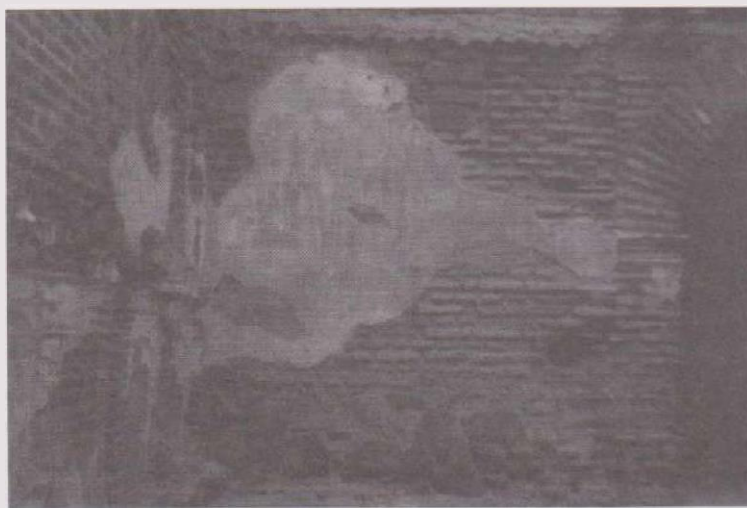
These first teachers were Catholic priests that were part of the religious Dominican and Franciscan orders. Their extensive experience put into practice in the so-called War of Castilian Succession that ended with the conquer of the city of Granada by the Catholic kings in 1492, it would have proven the efficiency of both in the process of universalization of religious type ideas oriented to political goals, work that was the fundamental base to inspire a new Ideological Crusade in the incorporation of new territories to the Spanish Crown.

In the ancient kingdom of Guatemala, the first ideological crusade was designed by Francisco Marroquín who acted as the first bishop of the Santiago diocese founded in the capital of the kingdom in 1532, along with Bartolomé de las Casas who took the same charge the diocese of Chiapas in 1545. These characters quickly learned the indigenous local languages and composed the first catechisms in their tongue. This implied an approach to the local people's customs and traditions.

Once the ecclesiastical authorities anchored, the first teachers came to their quoted religious orders, founding their own convents. The work groups had twelve people that resembled the first disciples of Christ, and they started to organize the cathedrae to achieve the qualifications of the first local teachers that included the obligatory learning of the indigenous languages of the people the religious orders managed, as well as their customs to incorporate them better in Christianity. The religious teaching also included vocational guidance with the goal of incorporating the indigenous people to the local productive system and better orient other activities such as agriculture and cattle raising.



1. First Franciscan frays founders of the San Miguel convent of Huejotzingo, Puebla, Mexico. Mural of the convent that shows similarities in the representation of the founders of the San Francisco convent in Guatemala. (Cecilia Vásquez Ahumada and Margarita Piña Loredo, Panfleto informativo, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. CONALCULTA, INAH, México, 2000.)



2.2. First Franciscan frays founders of the San Francisco convent in Guatemala. Mural of the convent in the current *Antigua Guatemala* that shows similarities in the representation with the one of the founders of the convent of San Miguel of Huejotzingo. (Photography Fernando Urquizú, 2003.)

The convents counted with many valuable didactical works composed specially for the teaching of the gospel. For the topic we can quote Fray Diego Valadés *Retórica Cristiana*<sup>6</sup> where he compiles his experiences in the field of the teaching process and learning of his activity that took place in various territories of the archbishopric of New Spain, reason that made his book in a bedside book for local priests.



3.3. Engrave of the book *Retórica Cristiana* by Fray Diego Valadés, Universidad Autónoma de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 1989, p 478. Where we can appreciate him giving a class on the teaching of the Passion of Christ

In Valadés's work it is noted already a logical didactical ordering in the creation of the religious speeches that would act according to the use of paintings that fulfilled the function of graphic didactical posters where the definition of other materials can also be appreciated such as the use of "pointers" as showers of the graphics, as well as it is recommended the organization of the audiences, according to the capacity of the students.<sup>7</sup>

In the creation of the referred materials, the use of color played a fundamental role in identifying the main characters portrayed in them and in the specific case of the Passion paintings, Jesus appears with dark brown or purple tunics while the Holy Virgin Mary wears a pink tunicle with a sky blue mantle, while the rest of the characters that intervene in these passages of the gospel also wore specific colors.



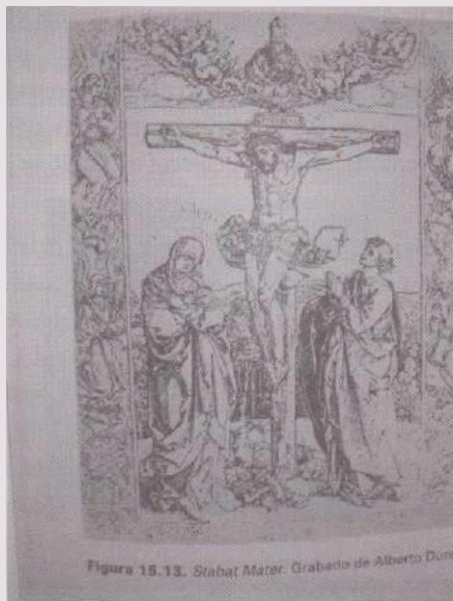
4. Painting of the Spanish conquest period where we can appreciate Christ's tunic worn by the angels represented in color brown while the Virgin Mary's clothing is a pink tunicle with a blue mantle. (Col. Particular. Fotografía anónima)

<sup>6</sup> Diego de Valadés, *La Retórica Cristiana*, (1579), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México.

<sup>7</sup> Idem P.478

The use of color reached preponderance in the tangible representations of art given the language differences and the poor literacy of the indigenous audiences that were denominated as converted Christians, because recently, in those times, they started to join the body of Catholic militants. On the other hand, it is also important to comprehend that this situation was also a problem of the Spanish community because given that the ceremonies were in Latin language that was the official language of the universal Catholic Church, but not all the believers were fluent or even knew the language.

However, the creation of the art works that would be used for teaching the gospel was not free of the artist's interpretation. They must follow canons established by European artists like Albrecht Dürer whose engravings that portrayed the Passion of Christ's Mysteries or other themes were sent under Spanish crown sponsorship to the Archdiocese of The New World, where they were reproduced by the archbishops and sent to the bishoprics under its ecclesiastical jurisdiction, for their reproduction in different art branches, like we can appreciate in the one that shows and engrave called *Stabat Mater*<sup>8</sup> that we can link to the Black Christ of Esquipulas, venerated in Esquipulas, department of Chiquimula and the sculpture of the Virgin of Sorrows in the Jesus of Nazareth altarpiece in the Temple of La Merced in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción [Guatemala City].



5. 5. Engraving named *Stabat Mater* by Albrecht Dürer of great influence in the Black Christ of Esquipulas, department of Chiquimula and the Virgin of Sorrows located in the Jesus of Nazareth of the Merced in Nueva Guatemala [Guatemala City]. (Ignacio Cabel Pérez, *Los Símbolos Cristianos*. Editorial Trillas, México, 1995, p.195.)

<sup>8</sup> Ignacio Cabel Pérez, *Los Símbolos Cristianos*. Editorial Trillas, México, 1995, p. 195

In the specific case of the bishopric of Santiago of Guatemala, this circumstance helps explain the valuable *novo* Hispanic collections still present in churches and museums in the present Republic [of Guatemala], it could be quoted the canvas collection like the Mysteries of the Life of Our Lady by Pedro Ramírez, imported to the old Kingdom coming from Mexico City in the decade of 1760 and the collection of paintings of Cristobal de Villalpando of the Museum of Colonial Art in Antigua Guatemala.

This situation gave preponderance to mnemonic learning of the Mysteries and Stations previously referred, along with the Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary that produced doctrinal knowledge that were not comprehended in its essence, alongside the mechanical repetition of prayers that must be considered as absolute truths. These situations also strengthen the popular devotion to determined advocacies and in the particular case of the Passion of Christ to Our Lady of Solitude, that also counted with 7 Mysteries that the people set as part of the community ideology.

From the first years of the Spanish Conquest, they started to embed themselves in the commemorations of the General Roman Calendar to recapitulate the gospel teachings and, in the specific case of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, Lent and Holy Week were organized with proper religious services to the teaching that was strengthened by physical and spiritual exercises already described in a public or private way, expressed in the processions of this season.

### *The Physical Cult Spaces to The Passion of Christ in City Design*

The Catholic religion fulfilled a fundamental role in the reproduction of the lifestyle in the previous statements, now we are going to refer to the public and private spaces that fulfilled as the environment where this process of the teaching learning of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ took place.

We have quoted the importance of Catholicism as a mean of ideological unifying under the sponsorship of the Spanish crown that had the consequence that, from the design of them in the New World, apart from the administrative State buildings and the Church, the constructions of Processional lanes with chapels to the Way of the Cross prayer were foreseen and in some cities like Mexico, there were chapels in the access roads to special churches such as the one of Our Lady of Guadalupe



that were dedicated to the 15 Rosary Mysteries so that road took the name of Los Misterios [The Mysteries].

In the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala, the creation of a Road of Sorrows was taken in the design of the city for the pray of the Vía Crucis, in the city of Santiago as its capital, which blueprint radiated to the main settlements subsisting since those times in a complete manner in cities like Coban and in a partial manner in Xelajú.

The social use of the Vía Crucis chapels was that of fulfilling as a reference in the physical and spiritual exercise around its pray that that has 14 Stations that are: 1) Jesus is condemned to death, 2) Jesus takes up his Cross, 3) Jesus falls the first time, 4) Jesus meets his Mother, 5) Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross, 6) Veronica wipes the face of Jesus, 7) Jesus falls for the second time, 8) Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem, 9) Jesus falls for the third time, 10) Jesus is stripped of his garments (sometimes called the "Division of Robes"), 11) Jesus is nailed to the Cross, 12) Jesus dies on the Cross, 13) Jesus is taken down from the Cross, 14) Jesus is laid in the tomb<sup>9</sup> destined to the learning and recapitulation of the Passion and Death of Christ as we have quoted in a timely manner.

These chapels must have retables enriched with images that acted in a didactical manner to set in a better way the knowledge where the use of color to identify the characters that intervened in these encapsulated passages in Stations that the church taught as a fixed doctrine that could not be questioned nor judged played a fundamental role.

However, popular devotion added other parts that were taken on some occasions, like other Stations, tolerated by the Church if they did not damage the base of the learning or recapitulation of the rest of the Stations. This situation is also expressed in some ancient manuals where the Stations of Way of the Cross were also enriched by other passages of Christ's life that, undoubtedly, fulfilled to deepen in the teachings of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.



6. *Magnífica* of the 19th century that shows in a graphic manner: the life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ and amplifies the Way of the Cross. (Impreso anónimo)

The utility of the pray of the Way of Sorrows as a way to compel the public to accept their social position of obedience to God and his earthly authorities, survived even the Age of Enlightenment, materialized in the design of *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción* [Guatemala City] officially inaugurated on January 1st 1776, when it was also foreseen the transfer of the Way of Sorrows that was located, like in Antigua Guatemala, between the San Francisco Church and Church of el Calvario towards the south. In the present, between the 13th to 18th street on the 6th avenue in zona 1.



7. Way of The Cross chapel in Nueva Guatemala seen from the church of el Calvario. (Fotografía de Edward Muybridge, 1875 Col. Museo Nacional de Historia.)

<sup>9</sup> Reference taken from the website  
<http://webcatolicodejavier.org/viacrucis2.html>



These chapels had valuable social use until the Liberal Reform of 1871 when they were confiscated from the Catholic Church and sold to the best bidder.

The complete representations of the 14 stations of the Way of the Cross were left to the interior of the temples, being one of the most valued the collection of paintings on copper sheets of the parish church of Saint John the Evangelist, Church of el Carmen of *Nueva Guatemala*, located in the 8th avenue and 10th street, zone 1. The 1917 to 1918 earthquake must have destroyed the other churches of the now *Centro Histórico* of *Nueva Guatemala*. When these temples were rebuilt, a fabricated series made in France, Germany, Italy and Spain were imported and sculptures in bulk or paper lithography, following old styles like the ones of the gothic sculptures in the Our Lady of the Rosary or the neoclassic of the parish church of Our Lady de *Candelaria*.

In so far as the reproductions in paper, we can mention that a series of the Way of Sorrows reproduced in lithography to be framed with the purpose of replacing the old paintings in the temples' interior, also to be used in the processions and to substitute the use of the old chapels of the Way of Sorrows or the entrance of these sacro parades for the visit of these houses, this prayers were substituted with improvised altars that are made now in front of the houses given that the increase in size of the biers and people in the processions had changes the customs.



8. Altar of the Way of the Cross in the old De La Candelaria Avenue, present 13th avenue of zone 1, made with the purpose of the Silence of Jesus of Nazareth Procession of the Church of the Lord Saint Joseph. (Fotografía Luisa Marison Urquizú, año 2005.)

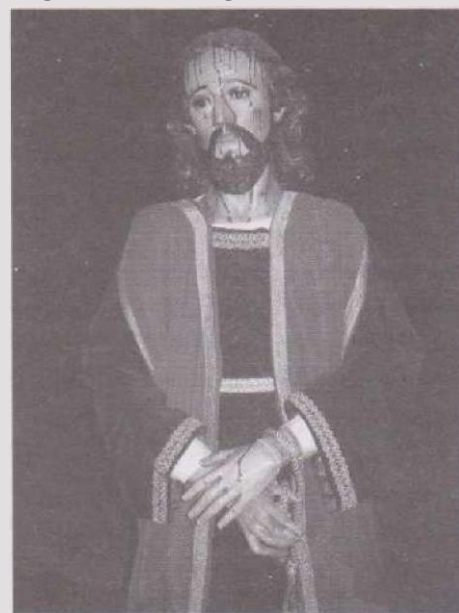
## *The Stations of The Way of The Cross and The Popular and Official Devotion*

As we have made evident, the Stations of the Way of the Cross were a complete series of teachings to the people but were also broken down in particular devotion to each one of these stations in a particular way. Guilds were organized for the cult of each station.

In this sense, we find in the popular Guatemalan ideology examples we can typify some of the Stations in a very shallow way to understand the origin and development of the changes in the imagery identification and its cult.

Let us start by analyzing the first Station, 1) Jesus is condemned to Death, the graphic representation in the religious ideology of the mean, was done by a lantern and a glove that allude to Christ's apprehension by Caiaphas soldiers, when he proclaimed himself as the son of God, what made public his death sentence, which was later endorsed by the roman governor Pontius Pilate.

In the branch of the Sculpture, we can quote two sculptures that come from the Spanish Conquest period, *Jesus de la Sentencia del templo de Santa Catalina de la Nueva Guatemala* and *Jesús de Trujillo de la parroquia de la Concepción Villa Nueva*.



9. Sculpture of Jesús de la Sentencia of the Santa Catalina temple of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción. (Fotografía Fernando Urquizú, año 2007.)

The second quoted sculpture has a religious organization in charge of its cult that comes alive throughout the year, fulfilling as a uniting mean in the town an generating art manifestations that are fundamental part of the tangible and intangible heritage of the region.

The second Station, 2) Jesus takes up his Cross. In our mean, the Station graphic representation is done by a cross over a crown of thorns, its presentation in the other plastic works is called Jesus of Nazareth that is represented by the presence of a man with Italian or Spanish characteristics that has scars and mistreatment on his face, with a slow pace that holds a cross over one of his shoulders, crowned with thorns, wearing a purple or red tunic with a rope around his neck and waist.

It is one of the most common representations in the local churches given that it was the most usual for the spiritual and physical exercise of the Way of the Cross. Two of the most venerated sculptures in the mean, *Jesús Nazareno de la Merced de la Antigua y la Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, could be associated to the tradition of the *Misterios Dolorosos* of the Rosary pray, reason as to why we refer to it later.

The development of the guilds around Jesus of Nazareth dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to our days, which have been kept in the popular taste remaining alive throughout our religious history, excelling for its continuity, the ones from the Church of *La Merced* and the one from *Candelaria* in *Nueva Guatemala*, that have fulfilled as a behavioral pattern to the rest of the existing guilds of the same advocacy in the rest of the country.

The organization of the ancient guilds was severely transformed after the Liberal Reform of 1871, being reorganized after 1892, when there was not that many priests in the mean, leaving their growth in the hands of the popular religiosity that, as the 20th century moved forward, started to be influenced by cinema, as result, the colors used in the clothing of the sculptures went to be free, eventually getting to the extreme of giving Jesus of Nazareth of *Candelaria* black clothes, situation that in the period of Spanish Conquest, would have been judged as disrespect, given that Jesus was thought of being a triumphant over death and should never wear mourning clothing.

These variations of thought are reproduced towards other guilds, brotherhoods and religious associations that reproduce the same ideas that are considered elegant and appropriate in the presentation of its imagery because the popular devotion grows without a knowledge orientation in those details, that are not important either in an ever-changing world.

However, the cinematographic influence also has given a positive input in the sculpture's presentation in the Guatemalan popular ideology. This can be appreciated occasionally in the sculpture of *Jesús Nazareno del Consuelo* of the *La Recolectión* temple in *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, when Jesus is presented with an ochre-colored tunic and a red mantle, without embroidering, carrying a rustic cross. The grade of perfection in the sculpture of pale skin and brown hair, allows to associate it with the beauty standards, in some movies like in 1973 *Jesus of Nazareth*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli and starred by Robert Power,<sup>10</sup> what makes the sculpture come to life in a new didactic function supported by the cinema achieving to keep the modern updated image of Jesus of Nazareth advocacy.

Stations 4, 7 and 9, The three falls of Christ. The graphic representation of these Stations is done with a cross tilted to the left over a thorn crown. In the plastic representations directed to the sense of sight and touch like paintings and sculpture, Jesus is represented with the same iconography as the Jesus of Nazareth, with the difference that in each station he appears fallen in different positions on the floor, almost crushed by the weight of the cross.

In the Spanish conquest period, there were guilds dedicated to this devotion that had counted with appropriate paintings and sculptures like *Jesús Nazareno de las Tres Caídas* of the *Belén de la Nueva Guatemala* Church and *el Señor de las Tres Caídas de Ayutla*.

However, this advocacy must not be confused with the representations of *Jesús de la Caída*, that allude to an extension of 2nd Rosary Mystery. The whiplashes that Jesus Christ suffered when he was tied to a column, that is represented with the fall of Jesus after being whipped.

<sup>10</sup> Major data to comprehend the expressed relation can be obtained when consulting Fernando Urquizú "*Fotografía, radio y Cinematografía en las relaciones de Cuaresma y Semana Santa en Guatemala*" Revista Tradiciones de Guatemala N° 63. Centro de Estudios Folklóricos, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 2004, pp 123 a 148.

This representation is also known as *Jesús de la Buena Muerte* because it alludes to the moment when Jesus accepts his inevitable destiny, being an example of the obedience to God to humanity.<sup>11</sup>

The Renaissance of the Lent and Holy Week representations, started in 1892 under the restoration of the liberal democratic system posed by José María Reina Barrios, allowed a favorable growth of the Guilds, Brotherhoods and religious associations quoted previously, but with the difference that its function to collect funds with the help of the State was totally prohibited. This provoked a reorganization from the bases and its social furtherance that was made with the people, willing to be part of them, gave alms to be allowed to carry the sculptures that were in the processions also provoking their quick growth.

However, some churches did not count with Passion sculptures, what provoked that some processions got reorganized adapting sculptures from other churches and advocations like *Jesús de la Caída de San Bartolomé Becerra* owned by the Jesus of Nazareth of San Jerónimo as part of the devotion to the *Misterios Dolorosos* of the Rosary and that, represented, in the Spanish Conquest period, *Jesús de la Caída* after being whipped, reason that explains its huge similarity to the other sculptures that represent these Mysteries and still make company to the *Nazareno Mercedario* on Good Day.

To this evidence, we must add other consistent proof that the incarnated portrayed in the sculpture, now covered using tunics that transform its advocacy to the referred Stations of the Way of The Cross and that in any case, transformed it into a representation of *Jesús de Nazareno de las Tres Caídas*. As if that were not enough, to this representation, the use of colored clothing was added as a product of the influence of the presentation of Christ in North American movies, with the difference that it was not about abandoning the colorful embroideries in gold and silver to give more ostentation to said sculpture that thanks to these, achieved a unique place in the representations of *Jesús de Nazareno de las Tres Caídas* in the Antigua Guatemala ideology, from where it got projected to the rest of the country, currently being one of the axis of pilgrimage and faith the 5<sup>th</sup> Friday and Sunday of Lent in its wake and later procession the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, also known as Passion Sunday or Lazarus Sunday.



10. Sculpture of *Jesús de la Caída* in the town of San Bartolomé Becerra in Antigua Guatemala. (Fotografía Hugo Omar Pineda, año 2007.)

One of the widest-spread Stations of the Way of The Cross in the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala was 12) Jesus dies on the Cross that is graphically represented and a way of an oval anagram that encases the Five Holy Wounds that Christ suffered when they put him on the Cross. In the rest of the plastic branches directed to the sense of sight, it was done with the figured of crucified Christ with the Holy Mary, Saint John and a kneeling Mary Magdalene crying at the foot of the Cross.



11. Sculpture of *Cristo de la Penitencia* in the *La Recolección* temple of *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*. (Fotografía Hugo Omar Pineda, año 2007)

<sup>11</sup> You can read more about this in *La Semana Católica*, twice a month published magazine that circulated Guatemala between 1892 and 1910 and *El Pabellón del Rosario* monthly publication that circulated Guatemala between 1896 and 1992, that refer in their chronicles the Lent and Holy Week.



The official and popular devotion got to consider the division of this Station from particular others given that the Death of Christ on the Cross is considered the fundamental element to redeem the world's sins. In function of this consideration, we can explain the presence of a Christ as head of the crosier that the Pope carries as his highest representative on Earth, the figure of a Christ leading the Tribunal of the Holy Office and the attributes of his Passion ornamenting the central headquarters of his Palace in Mexico City or simply a Christ opening a sacred space in any sacred parade escorted by two candles. This just to mention the generalities of the message that the meditation of the referred Station carries.

The devotion inspired in the Stations 12) Jesus dies on the Cross, 13) ) Jesus is taken down from the Cross, 14) Jesus is laid in the tomb of the Way of the Cross lead to the foundation of the *Santa Veracruz* guild in the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala on March 9<sup>th</sup> 1533.<sup>12</sup> The devotion coincides with the contemplation of the 5<sup>th</sup> *Misterio Doloroso* of the *La Crucifixión* Rosary and Death of our Lord included in the *Misterios del Rosario* which guild was founded on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1559.<sup>13</sup>

The acknowledgment of the legal status of both religious institutions carries the authorization of the collection of contributions, the acceptance of donations, the sell and rent of burial niches in the churches' chapels and a series of prebends that explain its soon rivalry expressed already since 1595 as the ones in charge of the official *Santo Entierro* procession on Good Friday.<sup>14</sup>

The prescribed spiritual and physical exercises in mediations of the Stations of the Way of The Cross and the *Misterios del Santo Rosario*, always were common practices in both guilds that, counted on all type of didactical material to teach, recapitulate them and, at the same time, generated the devotions we have broken down, where the company of other arts such as music, vocal or instrumental, plays a fundamental role for reinforcing the messages that were followed by the implied ritual smells in the combination of aromas unique to each season.

The Rosary chapels had its own imagery that we are going to refer to soon, for now we are going to focus on quoting the convergence of the cult in its functions on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, because these guilds were in charge, for a good part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century of the *Adoración de la Cruz* ceremonies, the night of Maundy Thursday, ritual that was comprehended by the contemplation of the Cross as throne of the Death of Christ but at the same time was the instrument symbol of his resurrection that identified his followers that received the name of Christians. For that purpose, there was a reliquary with the shape of a cross, in the churches of *Santo Domingo* and *San Francisco*, named *Igniun Crucis* that had original splinters from the Cross of Christ in its center part encaged in a crystal that took the shape of a box, which remains were found in Jerusalem by Saint Helena.

This ceremony extended from the first hours of Holy Week, and when 12 pm arrived, another ceremony started called *Crucifixión* [Crucifixion], to continue with the *Sermón de las Siete Palabras* [The Seven Last Words of Christ], followed by the *Descendimiento* ritual at 3 pm, after that, the *Presentación del Cuerpo de Cristo a la Santísima Virgen* [Presentation of the Body of Christ to the Blessed Virgin], before placing the Body of Christ, represented by a sculpture, in an urn, to continue with the *Santo Entierro* [Burial of Christ] procession which official sponsorship was gotten by the Rosary guild from which the *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad* guild detached around 1598.<sup>15</sup>

Even with the rivalries between guilds, the cult that the Franciscans observed in the contemplation of the Stations of the Way of the Cross, already quoted, found an encounter point in the Rosary *Misterios Dolorosos*. This implied that the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday ceremonies, and as the Easter Sunday ceremonies were very similar. This eventuality was accentuated by the approval of the cult bylaws from the Mexical Council whose accords were already approved by the Holy See in 1589. This implied the certain standardization in the cult of all the archdiocese of the New Spain [Spanish colonies in Guatemala], which had as consequence that the descriptions made by chroniclers like the Dominican Fray Agustín Dávila Padilla<sup>16</sup>, could be amplified in the knowledge of the observed rituals in the bishopric of Santiago of Guatemala that was joined, in those times to the one of New Spain.

<sup>12</sup> Domingo Juarros, *Compendio de la historia del Reino de Guatemala*, 1500—1800 Editorial Piedra Santa, 1981, Guatemala, p, 113.

<sup>13</sup> Idem.

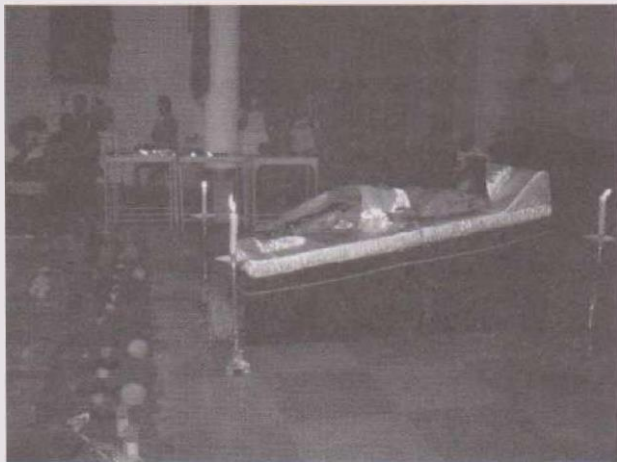
<sup>14</sup> To learn more about these controversies, it is recommended to consult Miguel Álvarez Arévalo *Ángeles Llorones*, Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo, Guatemala 1988, p. 15

<sup>15</sup> To verify these data, it is convenient to examine the documents about it exposed by Fernando Urquizú in the book *Nuevas notas para el estudio de marchas fúnebres*, Cebtro de Estudios Folklóricos, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 2003, pp 120 y 121.

<sup>16</sup> Agustín Dávila Padilla. *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la provincia de Santiago de México por las vidas de sus varones insignes de la orden de predicadores*. Impresora Litográfica Azteca, S.A. 1953.

This circumstances brought as consequence that a special sculpture was needed for the Crucifixion, the Seven Last Words of Christ, the Descent, and the Burial of Christ procession ceremonies. These were called *Cristos de la Penitencia* and consisted of a Christ without his cross that has the special characteristic of movement in the limbs that has perforations for him to be crucified and taken down from the cross, also it has head movements to simulate the expiration from the cross in the Sermon [of the Seven Last Words of Christ] and later take the attitude of a deceased to be placed in an urn and procede with the Burrial of Christ procession.

The most representative sculptures of this advocation that have lasted to our days, and that we can quote now are the ones from *Cristo de la Penitencia* from San Francisco from *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, the one from the *Escuela de Cristo de la Antigua* and the one from *La Recolectión* from Guatemala City, coming from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century respectively and that offer an interesting succession of mixed styles. The first presents the Renaissance characteristics with gothic reminiscences, the second Barroque and the third one Ultrabarroque.



12. Spulture of a Buriel Christ of the temple of *Santa Catalina* in *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*. (Fotografía de Fernando Urquizú, año 2007.)

When the guilds in charge of the cults to the Stations and *Ministerios* related to the Passion of Christ did not count with enough funds to [ask for an own sculpture for these described ceremonies](#), they adapted Christs from other guilds, the more common for various reasons were the *Animas* that also had as protector patron one Christ that, different from the ones referred in this statement, had representations of men and women plunged in the flames of the purgatory or hell from which hope to be redeemed by the Death of Christ.

A giant painting that terrorizes the devotee's thought and that expresses this devotion, presides the gospel nave in the San Francisco Church in Antigua Guatemala and, helps us to deeply think about the power the Animas guilds reached in all the Ancient Kingdom because the devotees, whether they had considerable heritage or not, they preferred to get better heath and bequeath to the guilds of this advocation all the possible revenues and rents so that when they died, they would pray for their eternal rest in the Eternal Glory, eventuality that also reached *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, where the *Animas* chappels were not missing, with their beautiful Christs as the chappels of this advocation witness it with the Churches of *San Francisco*, *La Recolectión* and *El Señor de las Misericordias*.

In the particular case of the San Francisco Church, it is interesting that other change of advocation regarding what we can make evident, when checking all the old descriptions of the temple, that refer to a *Jesús Crucificado* <sup>17</sup>[Crucified Jesus] chapel, now associated to other devotion known as: *Preciosa Sangre de Cristo* [The Precious Blood of Christ] that would not have counted with a representation of the mere advocation, because this is a representation that corresponds to a Christ over a bowl that receives the blood that emanates from the wound on Christ's left side at his heart height, after being injured with a spear. The iconography is completed with other attributes proper of this advocation, from which, a painting that probably was in a retablo exists and is currently found in the superior part of the screen of the lateral exit of said temple, painting that makes evident the perfect comprehension of two different advocations in different times, the one of *La Preciosa Sangre* [the Precious Blood] and the one of a *Cristo de Animas* that must have been in different guilds and spaces.

The devotion to *La Preciosa Sangre de Cristo* must have been very diffused in the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala, being another overwhelming evidence a large painting that is found in the *Museo de Arte Colonial* [Museum of Colonial Art] located in Antigua Guatemala.

The station 12) Jesus dies on the Cross and the 5th Ministerio Doloroso of the Rosary of the Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord, also had awesome sculptures known by the people as *Calvarios* being renown for its quality

<sup>17</sup> Haroldo Rodas Estrada. *Arte e historia del templo y convento de San Francisco de Guatemala*. Dirección de Antropología e Historia. Maxi-impresos, Guatemala 1981, pp 133 y 134. Refers to the existence of a chapel dedicated to a Christ, currently known as Christ of the Precious Blood.

and size, the ones found in the churches of *Santo Domingo* and *el Calvario* in the capital city.

The first sculptural ensemble that we quoted has a Christ and the sculptures of the Virgin and Saint John, but they are spread in different atmospheres in the Santo Domingo Church, what makes the complete appreciation of them nearly impossible, situation that amplifies the second sculptural ensemble from El Calvario temple, that also has the sculptures of the Penitent thief, Dismas, and the Impenitent thief, Gestas, characters crucified along with Christ. These representations must have been very popular in the mean because in towns like San Juan Sacatepéquez, there is a *Cristo del Calvario*, now also named *La Preciosa Sangre* [The Precious Blood], and there also exist the sculptures of the Penitent thief and the Impenitent thief, what makes us think that they originally represented, in an ensemble, the 11<sup>th</sup> Station, Jesus Dies on the Cross or the 5<sup>th</sup> *Ministerio Doloroso* of the Rosary The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord. The changes in the popular devotion provoked by the collective ideology were evident where other events that were not taken into account played a very important role, like the changes in the atmosphere in the Churches provoked by the Churches' transfer from one place to another, from Antigua to *Nueva Guatemala*, because of the 1773 earthquake.

The devotion to the 13<sup>th</sup> Station Jesus is taken down from the Cross is graphically represented with a cross with a cloth in its arms, this individual devotion generated extraordinary works of art in different plastic branches addressed to the sense of sight and touch as valuable sculptural works that we can still contemplate in the *El Calvario* Church in Antigua and in *Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*. The last one had with some devotion until halfway through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it escorted the Burial of Christ from said church, but it disappeared from this sacred procession reducing the devotion to this advocacy.

The devotion to the 14th Station the Burial of Christ, also keeps certain relation with the 5th *Ministerio Doloroso* of the Rosary, The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord is graphically represented with representation of three nails buried in a crown of thorns over a cloth. In the rest of expression forms addressed to the senses of sight and touch, our country has special sculptures that receive different names, from we can quote El Cristo Morto [The Dead Christ], el Señor Sepultado [The Buried Lord] and Cristo Yacente [Recumbent Christ], that represent Jesus in a death attitude laying down.

The sculptures that do not go on big processions anymore are used in special ceremonies like Good Friday wakes.

The physical and spiritual exercises and enlargement derived from the contemplation and pray of the Stations of the Way of the Cross are an essential component for the understanding of the transformations that the popular Guatemalan ideology gave them where they still have a special place, given that in some measure they collect a behavior form in front of a changing society that finds itself severely affected by the prehispanic, Hispanic and local Republican culture, where they are a nuisance to the progress of buying and selling standardized products.

### *Final Thoughts*

As we have demonstrated in this essay, the alterations in the teaching of the 14 Stations of the Passion and Death of Christ have not disappeared entirely from the national ideology, given its utility as a moralizing entity for mediating the social fights, in this sense we have to take into account the advances in the angry fundamentalist cults that support the destruction of such images and traditions of Catholicism but, on the other part, promote the biblical readings that boost the servility and social oppression from a rational point of view, supported by readings that take them to a vicious circle and mnemonic knowledge, that are only different from traditions, in the conviction to the use of didactic materials made towards the five senses, because the reading of the Bible results fundamental to displace the scientific reading, while the confrontation with other religious groups displaces the social class's fight.



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