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ABOUT SOME FORMS OF WITCHCRAFT IN GUATEMALA*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study of Guatemalan folklore is quite spacious, because include different practices not institutionalized, which are learning of a base of one oral or imitative transmission, such as the practice of common is called witchcraft".

The afterlife, the entire mystery halo that cover these practices, really catcher the attention and curiosity of the people of any social class. But it is not new, in the man of yesterday or now it always exists extrasensory this something" that frighten and sometime comfort.

In this work we wanted to enter a little in this custom, of witchcraft, as for as to the enchantments to make loved or hate for one person.

I picked up at the markets of capital one series of prayers that the people bought for several activities, as you can see below. However, according one witch the only positive in every (find the love, something loss, do wrong, etc.) it is the cigar's pray, prayed with several faith.

• Work presented by the author, within of course of **Introducción al estudio del folklore**, which is directed the folklorist Ida Bremmé de Santos in the Facultad de Humanidad of San Carlos de Guatemala University.

PRAYER OF THE BAT



PRAYER OF THE



Owl

II. The prayers

The follow prayers, which titles indicate after can obtain in different markets of capital and these has prices around of ten cent and Q.1.00 one quetzal¹ even. These may vary for the difference of price which consist in the quality of the pray. These has low cost, for example of Santa Elena, San Alejo, the Ruda, etc. and the most cost are the pray of wax doll, of cigar, of elf, of cheje, etc.

Usually, every pray has something in common which has most sales, we inform me that the cigar and wax doll. Of the first there are two version: one Guatemalan and other Salvadorian being most purchased the second version, because the second give the best results".

For the development of this job, I have divided these prayers in the follow groups:

1. Prayers to Saints of Catholic church.
2. Prayers to Guatemalan saints (San Simon, San Pascual)
3. Prayers to animals
4. Prayers to Evil and
5. Prayers to objects and plants.

1. Prayers to Saints of catholic church

Of these exist a quiet quantity and variety in the markets and also are purchase in the church atrium. The majority are to request for protection, well health, etc. However, there are here commented are a little most direct in its request, sometimes are almost one order. For example, the **Pray of lonely soul** explain in its sleeve that Only in this pray you can obtain that you wish" it is the unique that is compound in presence of the spirits". In part of its text said:

"... I request that you enter me in the hear of ... that you bring to my foot, tame and humble as the angel came in the foot of María. If you were in house of other person that my voice came to his ears to disturb,

¹ name of the official currency of Republic of Guatemala.

You do not let him have peace or tranquility, without friends or women, when he goes for a walk, eating or sleeping of any mood that he was and he came to my foot as our Father came to the world.

In this warn that must be pray in the presence of one cross, candle, rosary and pray three Our Father and three Hail Marys.

This is one of the good prayers" that are purchase. This same has other prayers and more recommendations: incense against spells. To have lucky and get rid of evil. Enchantment for she can know the husband that she will have. For infuse love. For the person asleep tell his secrets in high voice and for knows if the person is loyal.

Despite being cataloged between the good", the **pray of Santa Elena**, which also is to make love, it also contains between its pages the **spell by means a bat**, which within of it conjure said the follow:

"... I spell on you by the power of Luzbel, Belzebut and Astaroth for you do not see the sun or the moon in such as you married with me..."

Within these prayers to the Saints of the catholic church, also there are to request protection against spells, against the power of evil, fire, storms, etc.

San Alejo, Santa Barbara and San Cipriano, are the saints prefers to these players. The last contain until one pray **for exempt from military service**.

2. Prayers to Guatemalan Saints (San Simon and the Rey San Pascual)

Both saints have two aspects in common: they are Guatemalan and quite controversial. However, it exists a big difference between both: to San Simón you may be request, to provide in exchange for cigar, liquor, food, candles: lucky in the love, in the business, defense against evil spirit, danger, etc. invoke"... this to who sell by thirty coins and they were given to the most needs".

To Rey San Pascual only can request faith, charity, vertu, etc.



E EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF THE
LONELY SOUL

PRAYER

**OF
THE**

**SEVEN
COINS**

3. prayers to several animal

Among this group includes prayers to black Horse, owl, toad, bat, cheje, etc. Every are to plead that *so and so come to my plants...* invoke since soul of animal until Lucifer. The majority lead implicit diabolic spells mixed with Our Father and Hail Marys and another implement with pins and photographs, etc.

It is a little different the pray of cheje, that help to make invisible.

4. Prayers to Evil

Within this group also can include some with names of animal, for example, of the bat, toad, etc. However, in my opinion, these are the three most specific, no doubt that can exist more. These are:

a. Prayer of wax doll

Such the majority of them, also this is for:

...xx who represent this figure (of the wax doll) can not live in peace mores that my side and he/she love me for the eternity."

The spell brings with it a baptism of doll (made with virgin wax) nailed with 7 pins. Lighted candles while they pray the pray, that above I indicate is for: *the powerful Evil that rule and dominate the earth*".

Curiously within of the same pray there is other very interest for **win the lotto**, which is completely different of the above, thus, request the follow:

*Through secrets vagaries of the lotto, the prize that fortune will give me and with it happiness, well-being, and peace.
... Because my intentions are pure and noble and are directed toward my own good and benefit and that of humanity in general".*

b. Prayer to the enchanted elf

It has in sleeve a little man, with a big hat (this seems like Sombreron). In it they request to the elf who lives in the invisible, and also this called Diego: *"... enchant to defeat to my enemies, luck in business and love"*. This pray, according to the seller, it is special for the men.

c. Prayer of cigar

it is the piece most value of all the practices of witchcraft. The pray is a spill to Evil, and curious fact, within it text also, mentioned to Diego. This pray has the explication of how to smoke the cigar, meaning of ashes, fire, pins, smoke, etc.

As I said, this is one of the prayers most used for the people that made this type of work".

5. Prayers to objects and plants

Finally, I will mention the next prayers: of **horoscope** to win in the deck and the plays of the fair; of the **ruda**, for love and the joy; of the **Saint Cross** for to save in accidents and the fright of death; **the seven coins** lucky in business, against the jealousies; **to the very virtuous and powerful Stone of Ara** to obtain all that you wish; **Talisman and Piedra Iman**, lucky and fortune; **Stone Matías** to avoid the devil and have lucky with the money.

Some of these prayers -of the stones, for example- also contain the information of as these found. The last mentioned said that: *it was found in a secret chest of palace of Sultan Pardukis, in the city of Cachemira*".

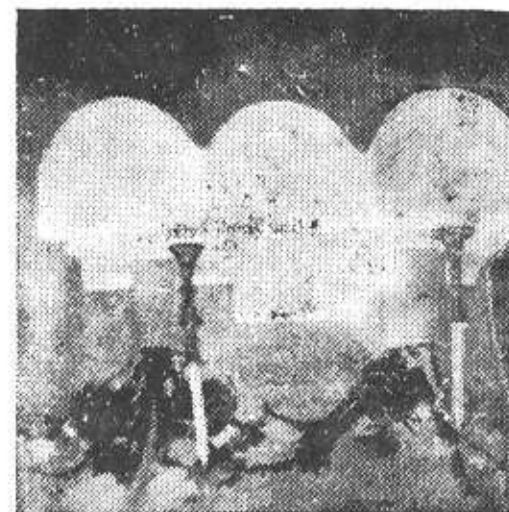
III. INTERVIEWS

In my eagerness to find out if the above prayers are used, I draw to three well-known witches. One of them, who give me more information, saw with certain contempt the collection, she indicates that the only these worth it were of the cigar and the wax doll and that another were *pure nonsense*" (Inf. 1).

Next, and after of a large conversation of conviction for the witch indicates me some of her practices, she allowed me that point some of them. (Inf. 1).



Prayer of the
ENCHANTED ELF



PRAYER TO THE DIVINE
STONE OF ARA

She warns me though you have the recipes, if the act is not made with true faith, it is not have any effect. Also, she said that the only form to make that the man falls in love forever of one woman or vice versa, it is the **embroided**.

There is the recipe below:

- 1 Photograph of the person will be embroidered
- 9 cigars
- 81 pins (9 for every stitch)
- 1 splash of mercury
- 3 sprigs of *rue*
- 3 sprigs of rosemary
- 3 sprigs of white basil
- 3 sprigs of purple basil
- 3 sprigs of myrtle
- 1 splash of perfume
- ½ eighth of liquor
- ½ bottle of beer
- 1 large bottle, preferably dark

In addition of the pins for the cigars, to the photograph puts the pins of the next form: one pin in every ear (for she/he does not hear); one pin in every eye (for she/he does not see to another person); 2 pins in the mouth and one pin in the heart (seven pins).

The second step is the preparation of the bottle, for them it is not necessary that the interest person is here; enough that she/he provides the photograph and the money for the purchase of ingredients and the fees of the witch. This cost is different according to the economic condition of the people. The informer told me that sometimes, it made in a bottle *only made a favor*", which case only pay the minimum that is approximately eight quetzals even. Overall because the mercury is one of the ingredients most important (because influence in the attraction), it is very difficult to find and it is very expensive. However, when she looks that the person is interested and dress well, they charge quantities around fifty or one hundred quetzals even. Sometimes the quantity is more than.

As previously noted, although the presence of the interested in the preparation of the ceremony is not essential, if it is essential that participate other two persons more, in addition the teacher". The liquor used must be pass for three mouths, in form of rinse, then it is poured in the bottle.

The cigars are smoke one by one; previously the nine pins have been crossed spell it prays with faith the pray of the case²; it puts to the bottle the ashes, the pins, and used match. For end put the herbs, the photograph, and a little bit of witch's urine and the perfume because the bottle is not smell bad.

Once it is prepared wake it during nine nights. To 12 o'clock it touches three time the mouth of bottler and she/he called the embroidered person.

Finally, the interested person burry it in a pot of rue or some red geranium, seeking review sometimes for the lid not open and enter earth.

For one embroidered has effect, must be exist some relation between who made the spell and the embroidered person, and give best effect if both there is intercourse. The above means that can not made the work to someone only because he/she likes to another person.

The informer explains me that these forms are used when the husbands or lovers leave of them or some boyfriends backs out of their promise or when there is exist anything more that one courtship between the couple but the people do not know it.

Also, she informs me that when the person is very poor and they can not pay the made of a bottle, she advices them some remedies" to made at house. I do not believe necessary include within of this work, for some seem me very dirty and it is to give in the food. Seem, that these concoctions are used to reinforce the bottle.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR FORGETTING LOVE

Another of the informers told me that they not only are looking for made that the people fell in love, but, on the contrary:

2. I spell cigar, in the name of Satanas, Luzbel and Lucifer. Pin, pin for the virtues that you have and of your friend Diego do me that NN fell in love and desperation for me. That he does not peace, thinking, eating, or friends and women. Santa Maria queen of wonders that in the Mangle City there are not one gentleman that backs out. That dogs bark and cats howl, children cry, and thus, you won the heart of your parent and of your mother, thus, you will win to the NN for me. That I will go singing for every region until the seventh region and all of them prays that I prayed are recommended by the Evil, Satanas and Luzbel and although I give water to Evil he is desperate for me."

to Ward off an annoying or inconvenient love. I compile several procedures, and pointed the I seem more interested, although I made the warm that there is infinity of them. (Inf. 3).

a. Of the combs

It mixes a little of rue with red geranium and a splash of *florida* water, doing with these ingredients a type of Vaseline. The lover buys seven red or black combs and around 12 o'clock midnight or noon he/she combs back with the mix. While he/she is combing pray three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys, invoke to the love person and request that he/she left of their thoughts.

This operation is repeat by seven day (one comb per day). Once ended the pray the comb is threw back. This meaning the follow: what I throw away, I never pick up or look again.

b. Of the scissors

It is used a bowl it is better this is new, it full of water; within you put one scissors and one lemon cut in cross; and you put under of bowl; you put the photograph of the person that you forget and turns over.

At 12 o'clock of day you take out the scissors and squeeze the lemon within of the bowl with water, and this you spill the water in front of the house and the sidewalk praying and requesting that the person leave and never return to the house. (this must be during seven days).

c. Of eighths of clan"

This form has several ingredients:

- 3 eighth of clandestine liquor
- 3 photographs (of the person that you wish forgetting)
- 3 white papers
- 12 needles
- 3 pieces of red ribbon
- 1 used black rag.

You take the pictures (1*1) and insert the needles, one needle in every eye, other in the nose and last needle in the mouth; then it cover with the paper, where previously you have written the name of the person for seven times, behind and

Forward, then you tie with the ribbon made two knots.

The eighths of clan" -clandestine liquor- then she/he adjusted with a little of urine from the person who made the operation (not necessarily the person interested). Then she/he introduces the rolls which contain the photographs while it does it, she/he smokes a cigar and pray the pray.

Finally, the three eighths prepared are collocate crossed and tie with the black rag, then the pack is thrown within of one drainage.

d. another variant

The next procedures according I inform, it was used by an elderly lady (her daughter was marriage of a man that has fell in lover of another woman).

The mother in low of the lover using who knows what means, she obtains a sample of the other woman's excrement. This sample was taken to the witch, who puts the sample to dry. Then, she grinds the sample, she mixes a little of creole mustard, a little of cemetery's earth (if you can find dust of bone of death, is better). Once the preparation is made, she/he gives to eat the mix without he does (lover) not realize among beans, to disguise the color. The inform assures me that pass some time, this man bored to the lover.

When it is not possible to give eating the above remedy" to the person, the mix burned and the smoke is applicate to the clothes, to who rescue. This labor has made at midnight.

This last procedure seem is used when the another practiced have not results.

As final point for this work, I want to refer that even though many people can think, these forms of witchcraft semi-sympathetic are practiced for a big percent of the population. In my visits to three persons that I interview them with purpose of this work; I can observe that the majority of the patients" are women of all social class. Between of them there are some that for their manner of dress and speak I can identify them as housework, nurses, secretaries, and housewives.

In the waiting room of the informer witch I can observe a big altar full of saints, decorate with plastic flowers and very clean.

I asked her if in her practices also these saints came into play. She responds me that she only has the saint as one decoration, but really, she does not believe in them. In my personal opinion that she has them to inspire confidence between the customers.

The days more frequented for these houses are the Monday and Friday, although the following days also are visited.

Worth noting that there are men that dedicate to witchcraft, according one informer the men have more success than the women. This I check for the quantity of people that I see waiting for a men witch of the Avenida Santa Cecilia. This is called Mr. Alfredito, told me that he was visited the President of Republic. Also, he shows me one ring according he the General Ydígoras give to him. (Inf. 4)

To the waiting of Mr. Alfredito in front of a house in pretty bad shape, there are latest model cars. This witch is very famous, because is quite accurate according some people who I ask them.

There is a lot to talk about this topic, but as far as to this small work, the above is short sample.

IV. INFORMERS

1. Mrs. Josefina (without surname). Residence: Colonia Monserrat, zona 19. Guatemala City.
2. Mrs. Doñita" mother of informer 1. Residence: Colonia Monserrat, zona 19. Guatemala City.
3. Estela Dávila. Residence: Zona tres, Guatemala City.
4. Mr. Alfredito (without surname). Residence: Avenida Santa Cecilia y 40 calle, zona 8. Guatemala City.