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TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA



**SAN CARLOS DE GUATEMALA UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR FOLKLORE STUDIES**

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DANCE OF THE LITTLE BLACKS*

Characters: Master, steward, female steward, *caporal* (traditional leader in a festive or ceremonial dance), *caporala* (female counterpart of the caporal), black man, black woman, old man, old woman, cowboy, person from *Partidén* (a region in Guatemala), little bull.

MASTER:	<p>May it be most auspicious this celebration now unfolding, in which we offer to God the fullness that love proclaims. For we applaud with surrender the Redeemer of these souls, and everywhere are offered songs of praise and palms. On this joyous day Holy Church celebrates to the divine</p>
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*Palín. Collected in 1961. Danced for the feast of Saint Teresa, October 15th.

and eternal God
 in the Holy Eucharist.
 So then, with joy
 on this present occasion,
 let us all dance with the delight
 that lives within the heart.
 Thus, my good steward,
 I order, wish, and desire
 that a great dance be performed
 with such a unique display.
 Let the best bull be brought
 so we may prepare a meal,
 and let the celebration continue
 until we all have had our turn to
 bullfight.

STEWARD: (THEY DANCE)
 I shall arrange, dear master,
 everything you have commanded,
 and all that you have decreed
 shall today itself be carried out.
 We shall dance with great delight
 just as you have envisioned,
 for your servants are made joyful
 knowing this brings you pleasure,
 and they shall continue zealously
 this sacred mystery.

MASTER: Steward, it seems to me that all has
 been well arranged.
 So continue now with fervor,
 increasing all your care,
 and let us joyfully celebrate
 Jesus in the Sacrament,
 and Mary, Our Blessed Mother,
 patroness of this place,

who blesses our celebration
with her angelic love.

FEMALE STEWARD: (DANCES AND SAYS)

Let us dance, my Lord, let us dance,
all together here as one,
applauding the bright splendors
of our holy religion,
celebrating the protection
of our Virgin Mary dear,
with all our heartfelt love,
let us dance on this day.

MASTER: With great pleasure I allow it,
my esteemed female steward,
that we dance a little now,
dedicating this grand day
in honor of the Redeemer
and of the Virgin Mary.

CAPORAL: I am the foreman here,
I greet you with respect,
and in such a noble task
I shall give God all my love.

MASTER: Oh, brave and noble foreman,
how gladly you appear,
celebrating with great care
the One who frees us from sorrow.

CAPORAL: I have heard all that was said,
and in due time I shall show
what to such rich prayers
my faith will humbly offer.

MASTER: Since you are now present
and wish to please me,

waste no time in doing so,
for God will surely thank you.

BLACK MAN: Now there is no doubt, I say,
we must applaud the splendors
of the God of all our love,
as a true profession of faith.
For His rare and wondrous grace
we all, as men, have gathered,
for this noble enterprise
is a duty we all share.

MASTER: All must now accompany you
in this brilliant act of praise,
and the one who comes most gladly
shall be the one I love the most.

BLACK WOMAN: I ask most fervently
that all of us as equals
praise the eternal Queen,
so full of royal majesty.

MASTER: And I am most pleased
that all are in agreement,
may the Virgin and Eternal Word
bless us through you, dear Black
lady.

OLD MAN: With the cane of absence
I fall and rise again,
and as the cane knows the way,
it carries me all alone.
And though I'm a poor old man
who can hardly move or sway,
to celebrate this holy feast
I shall jump and dance today.

- MASTER: Oh, good old man of my soul,
you shall serve as our example.
I assure you, if you dance,
heaven will grant you more life.
- OLD WOMAN: Ha, ha! Look at the poor old man,
how he wants to rejoice,
seeing my old man dance
so bold and full of strength.
I give thanks from my heart
to Jesus in the Sacrament.
- MASTER: That is just how I like it, madam,
that despite your age and mine,
you proclaim that God gives life
to those who love His majesty.
- PERSON FROM
PARTIDÉN: (DANCES WITH THE BULL)
I am a humble person from
Partidén, coming from *Ciudad Real*,
with my roasted corn cake,
my worn-out sandals, and my rope.
Here I bring this little bull
that the foreman asked me for,
and also because I heard
that in this joyful place
the devout ones are celebrating
the Patronage of the Virgin.
Let us celebrate at this hour
the Divine Lady,
and the Child who has been born
and whom she cradles in her arms,
may They both bless my steps,
since I've come with joy today.
And now, for playing with the bull,
let everyone give a whistle!

MASTER:

Oh, dear person from *Partidén*,
 I'm pleased by your devotion,
 the Virgin will surely remember
 how gladly you have come,
 climbing through the mountains
 in search of my great desire:
 to judge a noble animal
 in this unmatched celebration.
 The little bull you have brought,
 I shall now put to the test,
 and if it happens to catch me,
 you must help me free myself!
 (THE MASTER DANCES)

All the sacred court
 of the sovereign palace
 gathers here today
 to praise Immaculate Mary,
 for from this day and forevermore,
 She is the True Mother
 of a God who, in body and soul,
 is given to us in the Sacrament
 of the consecrated Host.
 As He is in heaven above,
 what joy and what great comfort,
 God Himself has given us
 this gift to make us love Him more
 in the blessed sacramental bread.
 Long live our Redeemer,
 who is Mary Immaculate!
 Long live Our Lady
 on this day of celebration!
 (COUPLES DANCE)

STEWARD:

All the saints and martyrs
 were clothed in Jesus Christ,
 with invincible palms

they give thanks to God, my Lord,
 for He redeems us
 and frees us mortals
 from that fierce yoke
 of the proud Lucifer,
 who cast souls into bondage
 and infernal torment.
 Long live forever
 the pure and gentle Lamb,
 long live always in Heaven,
 for He is the true God.

FEMALE STEWARD: At the right hand of God the Father,
 I confess that Jesus Christ,
 Our Lord, is seated
 and is the sacramental bread.
 Oh, what great amazement,
 for words cannot fully grasp it,
 Jesus is our only hope
 and the light within our hearts!
 Let all creation praise Him
 with deep and joyful song,
 and let all glory be given
 to the Patronage of Mary.
 (THE *CAPORAL* AND *CAPORALA*
 DANCE)

CAPORAL: All the holy patriarchs
 and all the confessors,
 with the old man of my love,
 a fandango I shall dance.

OLD MAN: Bomb, bomb,
 I have a little golden ball
 inside a jar,
 only the little beak is missing
 for it to be a white dove.

OLD WOMAN: The bomb you've thrown at me,
no one had ever heard it.
Don't lose hope,
for someday, with time,
you'll be rewarded.

OLD MAN: Bomb, bomb, the girls
of this time,
are lovely and pretty,
but they are more beggarly
than the blessed souls.

OLD WOMAN: The boys of this time
are few and conceited,
as soon as you ask them for half,
they turn pale.

(THEY DANCE THE PERSON FROM
PARTIDÉN AND THE LITTLE BULL)

PERSON FROM
PARTIDÉN: I am a poor person from *Partidén*
who has come very tired
to worship Mary
on this celebrated day.

LITTLE BULL: From my pasture I've been dragged
by force and cruel command,
where I was much better off,
enjoying my free will.
These black folks, in a frenzy,
have stirred up in me a fury
so fierce, that if I strike,
my fortune is to kill,
and it'll be the one who dares
to jump, I'll catch him by the rear.
All these ungrateful black folks,
not one shall get away,

they'll spin like cats in circles
when I start to charge and sway.

MASTER: Ah! my gallant little bull,
so bold you come to trample
my black folks with such fervor
and to free us from our troubles.
Go now to your corral,
to rest and be content,
I shall calm down your fury
for we must celebrate
our Almighty God today.

PERSON FROM
PARTIDÉN: Well then, little bull,
I'm going to take you back,
but just because I take you,
don't you dare knock me flat.

STEWARD: (WITHOUT DANCING)
To all the stewards,
and to the other stewards who gave
their devotion to Jesus, may
congratulations be given to them,
for it is clearly seen
that with full willingness
they spend for the Majesty,
celebrating this function.
I do not doubt that the reward
of glory will be granted to them.

FEMALE STEWARD: And to all who have contributed
to this celebration,
may they count on the blessing
of the Sacramental Lord.
He moved us to devotion
at the best of times,
and He will surely respond

with greater benefit,
for He will grant us salvation.

MASTER: Now that I see you all steadfast,
fulfilling my deepest wishes,
let the celebration begin
as the soul so desires.

STEWARD: I am ready to serve you
with all love and joy,
for Sacramental Jesus
is celebrated on this day.
Let the instruments play,
let us call for the marimba,
and to the beat of the drums
we black folk shall dance.

CAPORAL: Let the *zarabanda* (a traditional
dance and music style) go on,
and let all be filled with cheer,
for today we are rejoicing
in the Patronage of Mary.

CAPORALA: At your feet we bow,
Mary, Mother of God,
may that little bull not catch us,
by the Divine Savior.
(THEY BULLFIGHT)

MASTER: Come to me, my little bull, come
as if you were a bouquet;
don't you dare strike me,
for I am your lord and master.

STEWARD: Charge straight, little bull,
as if you were made of lead;
don't you butt me now,
for I am your steward.

- FEMALE STEWARD: Come to me, speckled bull,
as gently as a dove,
don't you butt me now,
for I am your female steward.
- CAPORAL: Little bull from the baths,
that came into my corral,
don't you butt me now,
for I am the foreman.
- CAPORALA: They say you close your eyes
and charge like a bullet,
don't you catch me now,
for I am your forewoman.
- BLACK MAN: Come, little bull of my life,
don't charge so wildly,
you must show me respect,
for I'm the Black bullfighter.
- BLACK WOMAN: I brought you your *aguachigua* (a
traditional fish dish from the coastal
regions), and you ran off in a flash;
don't you dare hit me,
for I am the grinder woman.
- OLD MAN: I'm going to bullfight you, little bull,
but please spare my skin;
don't you go and kill me,
for I'm just a poor old man.
- OLD WOMAN: Let's be friends, little bull,
and behave like a lamb,
for there's nothing you'd gain
from knocking over an old woman.
- PERSON FROM
PARTIDÉN: I'm the last little bull
to join in this performance;

act with grace and shine bright,
 for I am the person from *Partidén*.
 (THE PERSON FROM *PARTIDÉN*
 AND THE LITTLE BULL DANCE AND
 GO TO THE MASTER)

LITTLE BULL: Now I am left exhausted,
 full of fury and boldness,
 so I'll best take my leave
 to go find my humble pasture.
 Now I bid you farewell, sir,
 with joy and satisfaction,
 for I helped celebrate
 the Virgin at the Altar
 and the Divine Sacrament.

MASTER: Oh, my dear little Black folk,
 we may now take our leave,
 to go in search of Blessed God,
 so we may celebrate.
 We are all left joyful,
 for it fills us with delight
 to make this feast so beautiful
 for the Holy Eucharist.
 Now let that little bull go,
 let him return to graze in peace,
 and bring him back in a year,
 so he can knock us down again.

STEWARD: This humble steward
 prays to the Holy Spirit
 that the Virgin may protect us
 and cover us with her mantle.

FEMALE STEWARD: Farewell, Divine Lady,
 we say to you with affection;
 grant us your blessing,
 Oh Virgin of the Patronage.

- COWBOY: I, who came on horseback
to celebrate this day,
say may devotion to Mary
reign forever and always.
- OLD WOMAN: I leave with my old man,
asking you for forgiveness.
Farewell, Divine Lady,
bless this whole community.
- OLD MAN: And I too bid farewell,
this poor old man departs,
asking for the blessing
of the Virgin and the Little Child.
- CAPORAL: Oh, Divine Protector,
in whom I fervently believe,
may this jubilee
be celebrated eternally.
- CAPORALA: Oh, Pure Virgin Lady,
mistress of my heart,
through the Holy Scriptures,
may your religion triumph.
- BLACK WOMAN 3: Farewell, Divine Lady,
sweet Patroness of *Palín*,
may the lights of your crown
guide us at every hour.
- BLACK MAN 3: We are all the little Black folks
who danced to the song,
and we hope that Mary
will send us her blessing.
- PERSON FROM
PARTIDÉN: Well then, little bull,
now I'm going to take you

to the gate of the pasture
 where I'll set you free.
 (THE MASTER DANCES)

Oh, Divine Sacrament,
 sweet pledge of glory,
 may Your name be praised
 in heaven and on earth.
 Mary of the Patronage,
 Mary full of grace,
 conceived without sin,
 forever may you be celebrated.
 The little Black folks now take their
 leave, having sung to Mary,
 and next year, God willing,
 we'll dance again on this day.

LITTLE BULL: And let us say all around,
 with great joy and jubilation,
 that the greatest feast of all
 is the Patronage of Mary.

EVERYONE: And let us say with affection:
 Long live, for eternal ages,
 the Virgin of the Patronage,
 patroness of our village.