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CUANDO TU ESTUVE A TU LADO
TENÍAS PELO Y DINERO,
PERO AHORA QUE ESTÁS
PELADO
PARA QUÉ DIABLOS TE
QUIERO

AUNQUE MUY COLOCHAS
Y YO PELÓN, PELONETE,
LAS CAJACAS COMO VOS
A MÍ ME PELAN...
LOS DIENTES



TRADICIONES DE GUATEMALA

Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala

Facultad del Centro de Estudios Folklóricos

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UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN CARLOS DE GUATEMALA

Centro de Estudios Folklóricos

TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA

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Essays

THREE TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS OF GUATEMALA

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Photos: Manuel Guerra Caravantes.

The traditional festivals presented in the following paragraphs are part of a broader study on popular festivals in Guatemala City, whose purpose is to provide an overview of the traditional festivities celebrated in the city.

The Center for Folkloric Studies of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala considers the study of popular festivities to be of the utmost importance, because in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, as in other urban populations, the festivities acquire particular features due to numerous factors. The fundamental ones are: a) the greater influence of the mass media and of foreign and foreignizing cultures; and b) the greater degree of development (understanding as such, the advance of technology) of the urban populations with respect to the rural ones.

Therefore, it is presumed that in such areas, traditional popular culture is subject to change, or in the worst-case scenario, it could be replaced by the mass culture imposed by the consumer society.

For these reasons, it has been considered urgent to carry out a historical and ethnographic research that deals with the main popular festivities that take place in Guatemala City, its origins, its transformations, its validity and its function within the people.

Numerous anthropologists have established the role that festivals play in the social life of peoples. festivals play in the social life of the towns. Luis de Hoyos and Nieves de Hoyos Sancho affirm that “for the effective knowledge of a town, the study of its festivals is of utmost importance, since economic and social activities are present in them,

and this is the basis of their great value as a character of sociability". (Luis de Hoyos Sainz y Nieves de Hoyos Santo, 1947:390)

Mircea Eliade, who studies the structure of religious festivals, indicates that for this it is necessary to consider concepts such as "time of the origin of a reality", which refers to the time founded by its first appearance". The first manifestation of a reality refers to its creation by divine or semi-divine beings. Also adds that man strives to periodically re-actualize them by appropriate ritual means. Such "periodic actualization of the creative acts performed by the divine beings in illo tempore constitute the sacred calendar, the set of feasts" (Mircea Eliade, 1973:80)

Further on, points out that "a feast always takes place in the original time and it is precisely in this reintegration of the original and sacred time that differentiates human behavior during the feast before or after" (Mircea Eliade, 1973:80).

In a general way, Eliade indicates that festivals constitute a rupture of the everyday, a search for an original time in which the sacred dimension of life is fully rediscovered, the sanctity of human experience is experienced as a divine creation" (Mircea Eliade, 1973:80).

In contrast to Eliade's criterion, The Mexican anthropologist Néstor García Canclini, based on field research, affirms that, "The festival synthesizes the entire life of each community" economic organization and its cultural structures, its political relations and its projects to change them". He adds that "through the ritual of the fiesta the people impose an order of powers that they feel uncontrollable, try to transcend the coercion or frustration of limiting structures through their ceremonial reorganization, imagine other social practices that they sometimes get to exercise in the permissive time of the celebration". He points out that the celebration "continues the daily existence that reproduces in its development the contradictions of society". In addition, that "the celebration reaffirms social differences and social differences gives a new occasion for the internal and external exploitation of the people. At the same time that it possesses elements of collective solidarity, the festival exhibits the inequalities and differences (...). inequalities and differences (...)" (García Canclini, 1982:82).

García Canclini indicates that through the study of some festivals, the changes suffered by the people who celebrate them can be perceived. In this sense, he states that “as a global phenomenon, which includes all aspects of social life, the festival shows the role of the economic, the political, the religious, and the static in the process of continuous transformation of popular culture” (García Canclini, 1982:187).

The mentioned anthropologist is concerned with defining the meaning and function of the festivals. He considers, in disagreement with the phenomenologists, that the festivals do not speak of the Great Sacred Time, neither of hierophanies, but “of the sowings, of the harvests, of the rain, of the common needs: food and health; of the order that organizes their habits and hopes. He believes that the function of the festivities is to maintain that order, to restore it, to relocate it in a new one that may arise from economic practices: abundance or lack of harvests, sale of handicrafts, unemployment, migration, etc. They also serve to consolidate affective community relations, the belonging to the group of those who left and return for the festival” (García Canclini, 1982:188-189),

Taking into consideration the theoretical elements presented above and based on the observations made in the field research, it is possible to affirm that popular religious festivals constitute a set of economic, social and cultural activities (particularly spiritual) that the popular classes carry out on the occasion of a religious celebration. That is to say that all these activities revolve around a saint, an image (such as the numerous ones representing the Virgin Mary) or a cycle of the Catholic Church, with the purpose of obtaining or thanking favors and/or pleasing the one in whose honor they are celebrated through the observance of the ritual.

Popular religious festivals satisfy economic, social and spiritual needs of the people. In addition, they constitute a form of expression of popular sentiment, as do popular arts, music, literature, etc.

The festivities that constitute the subject of this study are those of a religious nature. Regarding these festivities, it is necessary to emphasize that their celebration in Hispanic America was imposed by the conquistadors during the colonial period. It is important to point out that, in spite of the imposition, the popular classes incorporated the festivities into their culture, mixing some elements of the religions of their own country.

The pre-Hispanic religions that they practiced, that is to say that at present they are presented reworked according to the particular conceptions of the people, but totally incorporated to their spiritual life, therefore in force and fulfilling a determined function. In this sense, we share Antonio Gramsci's affirmation that "there is a religion of the people, especially in Catholic and orthodox countries, very different from that of the (religious) intellectuals, and above all very different from the organization systematized by the ecclesiastical hierarchy (...)" (Antonio Gramsci, 1974:489).

L.M. Lombardi Satriani affirms that many elements of popular culture are taken over by the culture of profit (consumer society) and distorted according to its ends. But that, at a more general level, popular culture itself is subjected to a consumer operation. He also indicates that the "scandalous example of such an operation is the 'touristization of folkloric data'. Popular traditions become the visible aspect of an exotic world, towards which those who try to escape, even if only momentarily, from the constriction, monotony and predictability of contemporary urban societies are oriented. He adds that "popular festivals are naturally involved in this process of 'touristization' and function as an attraction for tourists eager for spontaneous and 'simple' events." (L.M.Lombardi Satriani, 1978:163)

The festivals contemplated in this study are, as already indicated, of a religious nature, which are celebrated every year in Guatemala City. For this study, the most important festivals held in the city were chosen. In the city were chosen for this study. This means that there are other (cantonal) festivals that were not investigated. The importance of these festivals was defined based on the criteria of tradition, popularity, validity and functionality. The most important festivals were considered to be those that, being traditional, have greater validity and perform functions of a social, economic and spiritual nature within the popular classes of Guatemala City.

The Center for Folkloric Studies considers the following to be the main festivities of Guatemala City:

1. The festivity of the Holy Kings or Epiphany, which is celebrated on January 6 in the parish of Divina Providencia (Guarda Viejo, zone 6). The Catholic Church considers it a first class feast.

2. The festivity of the Christ of Esquipulas, which takes place on January 15 in the parish of Esquipulas (Mariscal, zone 11).

3. The festivity of the Virgen de la Candelaria, which takes place on February 2 in the parish of Nuestra Señora de Candelaria (Barrio de Candelaria, zone 1). The Church classifies it as a second feast day.

4. The carnival, generally celebrated during the month of February, which is a movable feast. The popular festivity is celebrated in various parts of the city, but in the barrio of Santa Rosita (zone 16) it has particular characteristics.

5. The festivity of Patriarch Saint Joseph, which takes place on March 19 in the church of Saint Joseph (Barrio de San José, zone 1) and in the parish of Divina Providencia (Guarda Viejo, zone 8). The Church considers it a first class festivity.

6. Holy Week, whose date of celebration varies, but is generally takes place between the months of March and April. Its The rituals are performed in all the churches of the city and there are numerous processions that leave from various temples.

7. The festivity of the Holy Cross, which is celebrated on May 3 in all the churches of the city.

8. The festivity of Corpus Christi, a movable feast, which takes place during the month of June (on a Thursday), especially in the Metropolitan Cathedral.

9. The festivity of the Virgen del Carmen, which takes place during the month of July, being the main day the 16th, in the Ermita del Cerrito del Carmen (Cerro del Carmen, zone 1). The Church considers this festivity as third class.

10. The festivity of the Virgen de la Asunción, which takes place on August 15 in the parish of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (Jocotenango, zone 2). The Church classifies this festivity as first class. This festivity is the most important in Guatemala City, because the Virgin of the Assumption is the patron saint of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción. This day is an official holiday in the city.

11. The festivity of the Virgin of the Rosary is celebrated during October, and the main day is the 7th. Basilica del Rosario (zone 1). The church considers it a third class festivity.

12. The feast of All Saints, which is celebrated on November 1st in all the churches of the city.

13. Christmas, which takes place during the month of December.

The Christmas cycle begins on December 7 with the “burning of the devil”; on the 8th the Immaculate Conception is celebrated, a feast considered by the Church as first class; on the 15th, approximately, the “posadas” and the elaboration of the “nativity scenes” begin; on the 24th Christmas Eve is celebrated and on the 25th Christmas is celebrated.

In general, the popular religious festivities that take place in Guatemala can be divided into cycles, as follows:

The Christmas cycle: It begins on December 7 with the “burning of the devil” and concludes on February 2, “day of the Virgin of Candelaria”.

The Holy Week cycle: It begins on Ash Wednesday (after Shrove Tuesday) and concludes on Easter Sunday. From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday there are 46 days.

The Corpus Christi festivities: The celebration of Corpus Christi begins in the month of June, one Sunday after the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, and concludes in the month of November, before the first Sunday of Advent.

Patron saint festivities: Each community or neighborhood has a patron saint, which may be one of the images representing the Virgin Mary or another saint of the Catholic Church.

Other religious festivals: Here are located all those religious festivals that, due to their peculiar characteristics, cannot be included in the previous categories, such as carnival, which is considered by many researchers as of pagan origin. Others conceive it as related to Lent.

Other festivities, such as those celebrated around San Simón or Maximón, are also located here.

The religious festivities celebrated in Guatemala City include numerous religious activities, among which the “rezados” of the Christmas cycle stand out, consisting of processions of the images, which go through the streets surrounding the temples where the celebrations are held. The “rezados” also take place for other celebrations that do not belong to the Christmas cycle. According to historian Miguel Alvarez Arevalo,

The “rezados” are nocturnal processions with the image of the Virgin that go through the villages during the Christmas cycle”. (Miguel Alvarez Arevalo, 1980:26)

He adds that the “rezados” are popular acts with a festive character and that the name “rezado” seems to originate from the fact that “in the past people prayed all along the road” (Miguel Alvarez Arevalo, 1980:26).

It is necessary to emphasize that the “rezados” are not exclusively religious acts, but they also play a very important social function within the popular classes, exclusively religious, but they also play a very important social function within the popular classes, since they are attended, in addition to the devotees of the Virgin, by many people who go to meet with their friends, lovers or sweethearts. When the “rezado” is over, the participants dedicate themselves to taste the traditional dishes, such as buñuelos, torrijas, etc. At the food stalls, socializing takes place.

In order to corroborate the above, a chronicle is written at the beginning of the 20th century that says Manscribes a chronicle of the beginning of the XX century that says:

“It arrives the turn to the prayed ones in which of one hundred assistants two pray; and then the animation goes from one to another direction of the capital: the arches, flamulas, thrones, etc., multiply; the rocketmen make their fortune and believe happy the concurring ones that do not return to their houses scorched in their person And suit by the rockets, lights, canchinflines and buscaniguas that by dozen throw the boys.

The expenditure on buñuelos, tamales and drinks is not easy to determine, but it can be guessed that it exceeds by a third and a fifth that of the alfajores and mazapanes of Lent (...)” (Diario de Centroamérica, December 22, 1900:1).

Of the aforementioned religious festivities that take place in Guatemala City, three little known festivities were chosen for this article, of which there is no further information.

These festivities are:

1. The Feast of the Holy Kings or Epiphany.

The Carnival

3. The Feast of the Holy Cross

1. THE FEAST OF THE HOLY KINGS OR EPIPHANY

As mentioned above, this feast is celebrated on January 6 in the church of Divina Providencia, located in zone 8 of Guatemala City, in the barrio called Guarda Viejo.

Christian meaning of the feast. According to the *Año Christiano*, Epiphany means “appearance or manifestation of the Savior in the world” (*Año Christiano*, 1784:72). This same book indicates that Epiphany has been considered one of the most important and solemn feasts of the Catholic Church. It explains that on this feast three mysteries are celebrated in one day: the adoration of the Kings; the baptism of Christ by St. John and the first miracle, performed by Jesus Christ at the Wedding at Cana. The manifestation of Christ is explained in the three mysteries as follows: to the Magi he manifested himself by means of the star that made them go to adore him; in the baptism his divinity was manifested, by means of a voice heard in heaven; in the first miracle, in which he turned water into wine, his omnipotence was manifested (*Año Christiano*, 1784:72). (*Año Christiano*, 1784:72).

The same source indicates that the fathers of the Church consider that the three events occurred on January 6, in different years, and that for this reason the Church celebrates the three mysteries on the same date. He also points out that the Adoration of the Kings is the main event celebrated on this date. (*Christiano Year*, 1784:72)

With respect to the Adoration of the Kings, the cited work indicates that in the East the doctors were called magi, just as the Hebrews called them scribes; the Egyptians, prophets; the Greeks, philosophers and the Latins, wise men. He adds that in the Persian language the word magician means priest. In addition, he states that the Catholic Church gives the name of Kings to “these three illustrious men” taking into account the words of David that say that: “the Kings of Tharsis; and of the Isles, the Kings of Arabia, and of Sheba will come to offer him gifts as a pledge of their veneration and obedience” (*Año Christiano*, 1784:73) He continues the reference to the arrival of the Kings by pointing out.

That the three monarchs, whom some called Gaspar, Balthasar and Melchior, observed on December 25 a star brighter than any other. They believed that it was the star of Jacob, announced by the prophet Balan, and that it was a sign that a king was to be born for the glory of mankind. The evangelist Saint Matthew indicates that they came from the East, that is to say from a country situated to the East of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The most accepted opinion is that they came from Arabia (*Año Christiano*, 1784:74).

Other authors point out that it is probable that they came from Babylon or Persia. In addition, it is pointed out that the number of kings varies in the different documents and traditions. They appear indistinctly, 2, 3, 4, 6, B, 12 and even 15, but that the most constant number is 3.

Some historical data about the barrio, and the church of the Guarda Viejo, as well as the feast day of January 6.

The barrio called Guarda Viejo is located in zone 8 of Guatemala City. The origin of this district dates back to the time of the transfer of the city to the Valle de la Ermita, de la Virgen or de las Vacas after the earthquakes of Santa Marta (1773).

At that time the authorities were concerned about the security of the city, trying to protect it from possible attacks by bandits. For this purpose, forts were erected flanking the city and guards were built in remote places, on the entrances and exits of the city; such is the case of the Guarda del Golfo and the Guarda Viejo. These Guarda soon became, soon, in small flourishing populations that lived of the transit of travelers.

The population of Guarda Viejo took the Virgen de Concepción as its patron saint and built a temple in a main site. This population was suffragan of the parish of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios (Calvario) and after the Revolution of 1871 was attended by the Franciscan priests exclaustrated of the Convent of San Francisco.

The feast celebrated in Guarda Viejo was that of its patron saint, and was held on January 6, to close the month of festivities that the city held in honor of the Inmaculada Concepción (Immaculate Conception).

(Gonzalo Mejía Ruiz, 1981:189)

The image of the patron saint that is currently in the church of Divina Providencia, belonged to the Chapel of the Franciscan Third Order, which was located on the south side of the atrium of the temple of San Francisco, in front of the current building of the National Police, on the 6th avenue of zone 1. The Franciscan fathers who attended the church took this image to substitute it for the one that was there, which was of small dimensions. (Ramiro Araujo, 1981:20).

Ramiro Araujo, who was born in Guarda Viejo and for many years was also the altar server of this church, refers to the

refers to its construction. It indicates that this was carried out in 1923, when Father Vicente Aguilar Juárez was the parish priest and he suggested that it be named after Divina Providencia. He relates that a great celebration was held for its establishment. In addition, he indicates that years later a strong earthquake knocked down the towers. During the ministry of Father Eloy Suárez Cobián, the construction of the new walls began. Then Father Suárez was transferred to Calvario and the work came to a standstill. When Father Sicker arrived, the construction continued until it was finished. (Ramiro Araujo, 1981:208).

The celebration of the Feast of the Kings in the barrio del Guarda Viejo is very old, as can be seen in a journalistic chronicle written by Victor Miguel Díaz, published in the Diario de Centro America on January 7, 1905, which is transcribed below:

Three Kings Day

“Yesterday it was the turn of the Cantón del Guarda Viejo to celebrate its feast day and a multitude of people of all social classes went there for a stroll. The festivity of January 6 is there bustling and joyful?

There the party has its natural charms and the overflows of the popular enthusiasm rise of point as the king star of the firmament descends to a sunset mainly in the beautiful garden of the railroad station.

In the main street of the Canton to which we refer were placed the candy sellers. In the immediate vicinity of these stalls, a multitude of carriages were stopping, carrying distinguished women.

Víctor Miguel Díaz

(Diario de Centroamérica, January 7, 1900)

Mr. Araujo describes how the Three Kings Day festivity was celebrated in the church of El Guarda Viejo at the turn of the century:

“On the 28th the novena began in the church, with great solemnity and great solemnity and great concurrence...

On January 1st, the feast took place. At about nine o'clock in the morning the bells rang and rockets were burned announcing the beginning of the famous feast. Every year it was different, once the fierce ones, this is what they called the devils; another time the Conquest or the Deer, the Little Bull or Giants, every year the old men and the micos,



The Three Kings Day 'rezado' is led by a drum.



The Three The images of the three Wise Men continue: Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar.

in charge of collecting the alms and of scaring the children....

The convite followed the itinerary of the prayer and at about three or four o'clock in the afternoon returned to the Temple, where several women were waiting for them with food, refreshments and the usual liquor.....

On the 5th, eve of the festivity, at a quarter past eleven the first long ringing of the bells, the other at half past eleven, the third at forty-five past eleven, to give the Angelus at twelve o'clock when they burned an enormous quantity of rockets.

The trumpeting and peals were repeated at six o'clock in the afternoon. In the evening the image that had traveled for three months in collection was returned months, calling it 'El Rezadito', as it is still called today.

And the great day, In all the homes there was a everyone received visitors and some arrived two or three days in advance, from some town or village. There were compadres, cousins, godchildren, godparents and friends, making every house look like a guest house! They killed lots of chickens; in some houses, pigs. They made tamales for the midnight dinner, as if it were Christmas. In the courtyard, they erected boughs and on the ground, on mats, they ate lunch as in the days of the countryside, with great joy!

In the Calle Real, in front of the little garden, they set up the chinamas for all the usual business at the fairs; on the side of the Comandancia, the horse races. Bullfights, in front of the church, where today stands the school of the School of Engineering, in the people were the waves and wheels of little horses.

The church was adorned by a renowned altar maker, as well as

the platform where the image of the patron saint would go out. From four o'clock in the morning they made another ringing of bells and burning of rockets, exposing at six o'clock in the morning the Blessed Sacrament, / then celebrated many masses prayed ...

In the afternoon they prayed the rosary, covered the Blessed Sacrament and went out the the rosary, they would cover the Blessed Sacrament and the prayer would go out, burning countless rockets. It was the most of all and an incredible number of faithful, today! It went all along the Avenida de Santa Cecilia and returned along the Calle Real. In its route they presented many praises, some very beautiful and others very ugly. It was met by the so-called challenges, which represented encounters between Moors and Christians,

all mounted on horses, crossing the swords that produced their natural noise and in each house, they burned the usual rockets and bombs; the rockets were almost unknown, those that existed came from China, so the price was quite high". (Ramiro Araujo, 1981:209-212)

Description of the festivity

The festivity of the Holy Kings or Epiphany, as well as the conclusion of the festivities dedicated to the Inmaculada Concepción, has as its day January 6.

The preparations for the feast begin on December 28, with the placement of the adornment on the altar, the elaboration of the processional platform of the Virgin and the placement of the draperies of the church. This task is entrusted to the aforementioned Mr. Ramiro Araujo.

The first religious activity consists of the celebration of a preparatory novena, which concludes on January 5. This novena is prayed every day from 5:30 to 6:00 pm. At 6:00 p.m. there is exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, biblical readings, blessing and reservation.

On the 5th at noon and at sunset the bells are rung and the bells are rung and rockets and bombs are burned announcing the festivity. At 7:00 p.m. a "rezado" leaves the temple with the image of the Inmaculada Concepción, which has previously visited some homes in order to raise funds. The procession returns to the church at 21:00 hours.

On January 6, the main day, the religious services begin at 7:00 a.m., with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. At 8:00 a.m. a special mass is celebrated with an orchestra.

At 2:00 p.m. of the same day, a sung rosary takes place, followed by the traditional prayer of the Kings, which is integrated in the following way: it is led by a drum: (photo No. 1) then the images of the three Kings: Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar (photo No. 2); then (photo No. 3) the three virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity; then the three heroines of Israel: Esther, Judith and Rachel; then the archangels: St. Raphael, St. Michael and St. Gabriel. At the end, the image of the Inmaculada Concepción accompanied by a band and groups of devotees (Photo No. 4). The prayer goes through the main streets and avenues of zones 8, 3 and 7 of the city.

At 6:00 p.m. a rosary is prayed prior to the celebration of Eucharist. At 11:00 p.m. the prayer returns to the temple, while fireworks are burned and the Salve is sung. In addition, a marimba plays popular melodies.

On the 8th there is an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, at 8:00 a.m. a Jubilee mass is celebrated and at 6:00 p.m. a sung rosary is prayed, altars are seen, blessed and reserved at the end of the mass. This concludes the actual religious celebration.

In the surroundings of the church of Divina Providencia, "champas" (sale tents) are placed with sales of "panitos de feria (small fair breads). from Chimaltenango; sweets from Comalapa (Chimaltenango); "maxtate" bread from Totonicapán; "crystallized" sweets from Guatemala; and in the "comedores populares" (popular dining halls) sell traditional dishes, such as "buñuelos", "torrejas", "molletes" and chocolate, "batido" of spices; fruit punch, milk punch, "ponche de fruit punch, milk punch, tostadas (fried tortillas) with beans, salsa or avocado, breads with chicken. There are also "peddlers" of "chupetes" tamborcitos" (little drums) paper flowers.

On some occasions, according to informants, the priests of the church have opposed the installation of the "champas". reasons such as that sales of "snacks" detract from the importance and solemnity of the religious festivities. Despite this opposition, the "champas" have been installed. These priests seem to forget or ignore that the essence and validity of the religious festivities lies in the popular participation, for which the existence of these "champas" is essential.

The Carnival

Meaning of Carnival

Julio Caro Baroja, in his work *El Carnaval*, indicates that this festivity as it is celebrated today is a child (even if a prodigal one) of Christianity; he thinks that without the idea of Lent (Cuadragesima) it would not exist in the form in which it has persisted since obscure dates of the Euro Middle Ages. He points out that it was in the Middle Ages that its characters were fixed. In spite of the above, the author points out that within the carnival cycle several festivals of pagan roots were included (Julio Caro Baroja, 1965:22).

The aforementioned author continues pointing out that "the carnival" is a celebration in which many interests are synthesized: the rites that are ascribed to it reflect better than anything else this synthesis, in which the intentions of the social groups are much clearer than what the folklorists in favor of constantly applying the theory of the survivals and others closely linked to it have pretended.



In different parts of the city there are stalls for the sale of “cascarones” and “pica-pica”.



Group of school children with masks and masquerades for "Shrove Tuesday".

looking for a unique and common background, and, when the most of them could be spoken of a ritual morphology of certain monotony in time and space” (Julio Caro Baroja, 1965:1).

Caro Baroja adds that, with respect to the duration of the carnival, several theories exist, but that one of the most accepted is the one that indicates that the carnival is formed by the three days that precede Ash Wednesday. He also points out the importance of Tuesday of Carnival as the main day (Julio Caro Baroja, 1965:39-43).

The author indicates that the idea of “carnality” is the opposite of “spirituality” or “spiritualist”. Carnality means not only to perform acts opposed to the Christian spirit, but also irrational and crazy. (Julio Caro Baroja, 1965:48).

It would be that the Christian tends to sadness and even more so in the period of Lent and Passion Week. In contrast, there is the previous period, that of carnival, which is of joy and, many times, of unconsciousness. (Julio Caro Baroja, 1965:48).

Among the carnival practices that date back to the time of Calderón de la Barca, Caro Baroja points out the following:

Throwing bran and flour; burning cheesecloth, running roosters, churning dogs and cats; hanging maces, bladders, horns, boots, etc., to the tails of these animals. To throw water with pestles, syringes, to stone each other with eggs, oranges or other objects; to hang up and to keep dolls, called “wimps”; to whip and to seize each other with truncheons, bladders, etc.; to produce special noises with special artifacts; to break pots and pans, (Julio Caro Baroja, 1965:50).

Description of the festivity

In Guatemala City, the popular sectors celebrate carnival in a simple way, unlike in other countries, where this celebration acquires very special characteristics, such as Brazil and Panama, for example.

The popular sectors of Guatemala City generally celebrate carnival on the Sunday before Shrove Tuesday and this celebration is reduced to “breaking shells -which consists of breaking them on the head; throwing confetti, flour and water. In Guatemala City, the meeting places for this celebration are the capital's parks, such as the central park, Centenario, Morazán and the Zoological Park (La Aurora).

Several days before Tuesday, the making of the “cascarones” begins. “These are made with eggshells, painted with colored dyes and filled with confetti or “pica-pica” (Photo No. 5) (Photo No. 6).

According to tradition, the “cascarones” should not be broken after Shrove Tuesday (the days before and including Tuesday). If they are broken on Ash Wednesday or later, this action constitutes a “sin”, because the Lenten cycle begins on this day.

In some of the city's barrios (as already mentioned, the carnival), the carnival is celebrated in a special way, such as Las Vacas and Santa Rosita, in zone 16.

In Santa Rosita, the carnival merges with the patron saint's day, dedicated to Santa Rosa de Lima. The date that corresponds to this saint is August 30, but in this barrio the celebration takes place during carnival week: Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. On Saturday the “rezado” of the Virgin of Santa Rosa takes place, for which there is a confraternity in charge of organizing the festivity. This confraternity is made up of 12 members: 4 mayordomos and 8 capitanas. The members are renewed every year for the days of carnival. This ceremony of change of confraternity involves 24 people, 12 who deliver it and 12 who receive it. To make this change, the image of the patron saint is taken to the house of the first captain, which becomes the “Casa de la Cofradía” (House of the Confraternity). Here, the mayordomos and capitanas dance sones, “cascaronean” (break the shells) and drink liquor. Among the attributions of the confraternity, besides organizing the festivity, is to feed the members of the musical band that accompanies the “rezado”, for which they raise funds among the confreres. According to information gathered in Santa Rosita, some priests have opposed the existence of such confraternity, because they consider that the funds invested in the celebrations are excessive, and that such funds would be better invested in “alms” for the church.

Mrs. Laura Barillas, who in 1982 held the position of First Captain of the Santa Rosa confraternity, reported that the existence of the confraternity dates back approximately 40 years (Laura Barillas, 1982) (Photo No. 7).

For the “rezado” of Santa Rosita “toritos”, pomegranates, conetillos are burned, and “loas” are performed as they pass through. According to information provided in the locality, the Conquest Dance used to be held on this date, but due to economic factors it is no longer done nowadays.

For this festival, neighbors from other nearby barrios, such as Las Vacas and Sabana Arriba, come to Santa Rosita (Photo No. 8).

Catholic significance of the feast

The date of celebration of the Virgin of Santa Rosa, as already indicated, is August 30. Saint Rose of Lima is considered the patron saint of Latin America, since she was the first woman born in these lands to be canonized. She was born in Lima in 1586 and died in 1617. Pope Clement X canonized her in 1671 (Alban Butler, 1965:444.445)

3. THE DAY OF THE HOLY CROSS

On May 3 is celebrated the Day of the Cross, dedicated to the sowings and the masons.

Christian meaning of the feast

The Catholic calendar commemorates on May 3 the “Invention of the Holy Cross”.

The Christian Year notes that this day celebrates the discovery of the cross made in Jerusalem, by the Empress Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, in the year 326. (Año Christiano, 1784:52)

According to sacred history, a cross appeared to Emperor Constantine in battle, in the air, with an inscription that read: “You will win by virtue of this sign” (Christian Year, 1784:52). He also indicates that on the same occasion, Christ appeared to him and commanded him to copy the cross, which was obeyed, The Emperor had a cross made of gold with precious stones, on the top of which was a monogram explaining the name of Jesus Christ, accompanied by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which means that Christ is the beginning and the end of all things. From the wide part of the cross hung a piece of fine red cloth, embroidered with gold and precious stones, which had at the top and bottom the embroidered busts of the emperor and his sons. This banner was called Lábaro (Año Christiano, 1784:52-53).



The processional platform of the Child of the Holy Cross.



Silver plate, one of the relics of the Carmona and Granizo families.

The sacred history also relates that the emperor's mother, Elena, a pious woman of 80 years of age, climbed Mount Golgotha with the desire to discover the Cross of Jesus Christ (the Sacred Wood). The Gentiles had built on the site of the Holy Sepulcher, a temple dedicated to the Goddess Venus. The first thing Helen did was to have it demolished and ordered to dig until the Holy Sepulcher was discovered.

Next to it, three identical crosses were found, without distinguishing which one was that of Christ, because the sign that said "Jesus Nazarene, King of the Jews", had fallen off and was in the middle of the three. To elucidate which one was that of the Savior, it was necessary to prove it through miracles, that is to say, applying the three crosses to the sick and the dead. One of the crosses worked miracles. The Empress Helena had a large church built on the site where the cross had been found, and left a piece of it there; another she sent to her son Constantine, and the third she sent to her son Constantine.

In order to celebrate the feast in commemoration of the finding of the the feast was fixed on May 3, with the purpose of bringing it as close as possible to the Passion of Christ and the adoration of the Cross, which takes place on Good Friday.

The feast today

In Guatemala City this day is commemorated mainly by the masons, who elaborate altars with the symbol of the cross, made with flowers, paper ornaments, etc., in the construction sites.

In addition, there is a family type procession of the Child of the Holy Cross, whose image is similar to that of the Child of Amatitlán or Belem, whose festivity takes place in Amatitlán on the same date. This activity is almost unknown in Guatemala City.

The procession of the Holy Cross

The Carmona and Granizo families carry out the procession of an image of the Child of the Holy Cross (Photo No. 9).

According to reports of Mr. Manuel Granizo, this feast was held since 1699 in Antigua Guatemala. This informant affirms that this image belonged to the church of the Vera Cruz, in that city. (Photo No. 10)

This procession is a family celebration in which some neighbors participate.

On April 25, the novena begins. On May 2, the procession of the “Niño Dios de la Santa Cruz” takes place, leaving from the private house located at 2a, calle 17-33, zona 1, in the capital city. It returns at 6:00 p.m.

On May 3 at 9:30 a.m. a mass is celebrated in the church of Cerro del Carmen, by intention of the devotees of the image, living and dead. On the evening of this day the novena concludes.

According to Mr. Granizo's information, the masses have been celebrated in other years in different churches: Santa Teresa, San José, Candelaria, the Old Parish, etc.

According to information gathered, in order to “take out the procession” it is necessary to request a permit from the Departmental Government. It is estimated that the expenses amount to Q 300.00: the music band charges Q 110.00 and for the mass a stipend of Q 75.00 is paid.

To organize and carry out the procession, there is a committee, with the collaboration of a group of young people.

When trying to establish the origin of the image and the procession, it was reported that the image was found in the Cerro de la Cruz (Antigua Guatemala) and that the procession was transferred to Nueva Guatemala (Informant Tomás Rolando Granizo, 1982). (Photo No. 11)

There are some popular beliefs about the image of the Niño de la Santa Cruz:

1. one such belief says that: “the child punishes with fire the people who do not attend the procession”.

2. Another one affirms that: 'a lady was opposed to the celebration, to the making of tamales; her 17 year old niece did not want to pray, so they were burned in a bonfire” 3.

3. The informant indicates: “I owe him my life, I had an illness, they put it in my stomach, I owe him my health” (Informant Manuel Granizo, 1982)

This image has its own novena, which begins to be prayed 9 days before May 3. The novena belongs to the family, as does the image (Photo No.12) (Photo No.13).

The procession has peculiar characteristics, since, as has been indicated, it is of a family character, although other members of the community (in this case of the barrio) participate indirectly in the procession. Because of



Mrs. Laura Barillas, who in 1982 held the position of Captain and her home was the "Casa de la Cofradía de Santa Rosa". (House of the Cofraternity of Santa Rosa).



Informant Mr. Manuel Granizo.

its family character, it is little known and is not considered part of the city's religious festivities; therefore, there is no information about it, with the data provided by the informants members of the mentioned family.

It is possible that this procession has been transferred from the city of Santiago de Guatemala (as the informants affirm,) but there is also the possibility that it is a variant of the one that is carried out in the city of Amatitlán, due to the similar characteristics that it presents. To affirm any of the possibilities, it would be necessary to carry out a meticulous investigation. In the present work nothing more than a hypothesis is proposed.

What can be assured is that this festivity has important functions within the family nucleus. In addition, it is considered that it is a phenomenon in the process of folklorization.

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