

Coca Izaguirre, M. (2017). *Entre toques y bailes: los cantos. La Tumba Francesa de Guantánamo*. Guantánamo: El Mar y la Montaña.

Coca Izaguirre, M. (2017). *Between touches and dances: the songs. The French Tomb of Guantánamo*. Guantánamo: The Sea and the Mountain.

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The work that concerns us today, *Among touches and dances: the songs. The French Tomb of Guantánamo*, is the result of Manuel Coca Izaguirre's interest in this subject from a very young age when, as he himself says in the Preamble: "my parents took me to Céspedes Park in Santiago de Cuba to see that group of black people dancing with a certain air of highness and long colored robes to the rhythm of big drums "(Coca, 2017, p.17).

Coca Izaguirre has a degree in Literature and a PhD in Literary Sciences since 2015. He has published several articles on literature in Guantánamo and on the French Tomb Pompadour Santa Catalina de Ricci in national and foreign magazines. In the years 2013 and 2016 he won the Provincial Award for scientific research results granted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba. He was a professor in the faculty of Social and Humanistic Sciences of the University of Guantánamo, and currently he works as a professor in the University Center of Art, Architecture and Design (CUAAD) of the University of Guadalajara.

The book, published by the Editorial The Sea and the Mountain in 2017, the result of a meticulous inquiry into the first expressions and subsequent development of the French tombs in Cuba and

especially in Guantánamo, is structured externally in eight sections that allow to run, in an organized way and with a natural and feasible language, for the different moments of an interesting and little studied history that has its culminating point in the analysis of the songs that today are interpreted in the Pompadour Santa Catalina de Ricci.

The first section: Sing to a prologue, written by Marta Cordiés Jackson, director of the African Cultural Center Fernando Ortiz, and who was the Coca Izaguirre tutor in the doctoral process is, in addition to a presentation of the work and its author, a lesson in itself of history on the arrival of Haitians in Cuban lands, the meaning of the French tomb term, the value of orality, and the relationship between modernity and tradition. Cordiés takes the opportunity to highlight the importance of this research turned into a work of art, when it expresses:

(...)When we read it we are convinced that the trace of man on earth always remains, even when many years pass, many generations, there will always be an ear and a heartbeat that respond to the touch of the catá, that listen to the rhythm of the Mason and that the French tomb continue to resonate in your memory. (Coca, 2017, p.15)

In Preamble, the second section, Coca explains the reasons that led him to inquire about an issue that has deep roots in our culture, the research methods and techniques he used, the sources he consulted, and the importance for him of the approach of topics such as these "in a context of technological advances, processes of globalization and international tourism" (Coca, 2017, p.23).

In the third section: The French tomb between literature and research, the result of a deep investigation in various bibliographical sources, reveals the names of poets, narrators, essayists and intellectuals who from 90 to 2016 have examined one or another aspect of the French tombs, the texts that they published on the subject, and the conclusions reached. There are authors like Emilio Bacardí, Regino E. Boti, Alejo Carpentier, Fernando Ortiz, Luis J. Morlote, Raúl Inciarte, María Teresa Linares, Olavo Alén, Elsa Pelegrín, Olga Fernández, Eusebia Sánchez, Marinela Méndez, Nieves Armas and Martha Esther Esquenazi, among others, that through novels, stories, poems, articles, theses, have tried to safeguard the legacy of men and women who through dances, songs, touches and parties have preserve a tradition.

Tombs and societies: The Pompadour Santa Catalina de Ricci, is the fourth section of the book. In it, the author examines the emergence and development of French tombs in Cuba and specifically in Guantánamo, to deepen later into the Tomb of the French Pompadour Santa Catalina de Ricci and

offer information on the date of its foundation, the names it acquired, venues that he even managed to achieve the one that today occupies in Serafín Sánchez between Jesús del Sol and Narciso López, values that he keeps, traditions that he has lost; documentation compiled from materials consulted in archives, and interviews made to members of this society.

In the fifth section of the book: The parties of the Society of French Tomb Pompadour Santa Catalina de Ricci, very suggestive data related to this society are provided as they are the rise of the name, curious relationship between the concubine Pompadour and the Catholic saint Catherine de Ricci ; and the particular structure that keeps where the Queen appears, unlike the other societies of this type in the country where this figure of the court has disappeared and has been replaced by the president. Then Coca is analyzing in detail each of the components of the parties of the tomb: songs, touches and dances.

The information presented here allows knowing that the drums were built by Pelayo Terry, a former member of the society, but that today there is no one who knows about it for what they are very zealously cared for; and that each one has representative colors and a name that identifies him: La Caridad, La Aurora, D Bilico, La Fe, whose origin is unknown. With respect to the touches and the dance, the researcher verified, from the observation that he made of this society during three years, that in the French tomb of Guantánamo the mason, the yubá and the front are executed, and that the fabric of the tape has never been made.

Between touches and dances: songs, is the sixth section of the work, dedicated entirely to describe the characteristics of these songs, the languages in which they are performed, the topics that are addressed. The author carries out a contextual, thematic and interpretative analysis of the songs with examples that illustrate each of the aspects that are being examined. It is necessary to signify the praiseworthy task carried out by Coca when classifying the songs by subject and rhythm, transcribing the collected texts in situ, and specifying their general characteristics.

In Just a pause, penultimate part of the book, the essayist explains in detail the importance for present and future generations to know their past, the roots of their culture and their traditions as a way of preserving the history of a people. In Appendices festive songs, civil songs, song of gratitude, political singing, organized according to themes and rhythms are transcribed.

I think it would have been a great chance to mention the names of some dancers and drummers who have been working for more than 10 years in the French Tomb of Guantanamo as a way of

recognizing an uninterrupted task that encourages this society to hold the Order for National Culture, and that has been recognized by Unesco in 2003 as Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Between touches and dances: the songs. The French Tomb of Guantánamo is an essential work for anyone interested in knowing habits and customs of the Cuban nation. It has, among others, the merit of helping young people to appreciate a practice that distinguishes us as a people by telling the story of shared values, knowledge and goals of a generation that has known how to protect their culture and identity with zeal.

Through the text the author shows that traditions can transmute over time as a result of the experiences and knowledge that society achieves, the needs of adaptation, the influence exerted by other social groups with which relationships are maintained, and by the influx of young generations, but that this does not diminish their value, but contributes to their strengthening.

Today, when the globalization phenomenon causes that many traditions and customs of countries and regions are getting lost due to imported fashions from European nations and the United States mainly, it is of great merit to read a book that invites us to keep active a legacy that differentiate us from any other social group, both in Cuba and internationally.