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The old image of the Candelaria had Amazigh inscriptions

According to the philologist Ignacio Reyes, the inscriptions engraved on the mantle of the original carving of the Virgin of Candelaria included phrases composed in the aboriginal language

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The philologist Ignacio Reyes believes he has unveiled one of the oldest enigmas in the history of the Canary Islands: the inscriptions engraved on the mantle of the original carving of the Virgin of Candelaria, with phrases composed in the Amazigh language and unveiled from a restored painting in Sevilla.

Ignacio Reyes exposes his interpretation of these letters stamped on the original mantle of the image in his work "La Madre del Cielo: Estudio de Filología Ínsulo-Amazighe", published by Le Canarien Ediciones and detailed in an interview with EFE.

This is a revised and expanded edition after the first one published by the researcher in 2007 and which now adds names of people linked to the guanartémico lineage, the ruler of Gran Canaria, whose denominations have "a direct connection with the cosmogonic thought, with the myths of creation, like girls called "the lady of heaven" and "the lady of creation".

The author, who is also a historian, points out that his goal is to make known one of the enigmas of the archipelago's history, since it is known that in the primitive figure of the Virgin of Candelaria there were letters engraved on the mantle, which was thought to they were acronyms or figurations.

These inscriptions were in the old image of the Virgin that disappeared in a storm in the 19th century, and whose appearance before the natives had been reported by Fray Alonso de Espinosa three centuries before, in 1594.

Ignacio Reyes indicates that at the end of 2006 a restorer in Seville told him that a client had brought him a painting of the Virgin of Candelaria acquired in the north of Tenerife and that Latin characters he did not understand appeared on the crossbar of the frame.

The philologist tried to translate the inscriptions but found that it was not Latin or Greek, until he found the consonants "n" and "t", equivalent to "candela" in Amazigh, a language in which the meaning of the words is deposited in the sequence of consonants and vowels have only a morphological value.

The texts of the Candelaria are written almost entirely with consonants and few vowels, but "very well placed" so that there is no confusion in the reading, assures Reyes, who indicates that from the aforementioned word he was able to translate the entire text, that " It is a wonder because it is a living language, written as it is pronounced " .

When he found the term "candela", he continues, "I did not have time to go to the text of Alonso de Espinosa, who had detailed all the characteristics of the image and wrote down the letters" of the mantle.

And in that text this word also appeared "and I began to pull the thread until I could translate all the letters that contained the mantle, which were sentences of Christian doctrine, I suspect that specifically Franciscan, as they were the first to arrive in the Canary Islands to evangelize" .

They are complete sentences in which God is praised and in which, as an example, it is said that the way of perfection is "a balm", and the word used for this meaning is "tabaiba dulce", one of the plants medicinal plants of the Canary Islands.



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According to Ignacio Reyes, this reveals a very close contact between the evangelizers and the aboriginal population, since the Franciscan missions arrived at the islands in the middle of the 14th century, one hundred years before the Conquest, and they learned their language.

The texts revealed are, in his opinion, "a marvel of linguistic and historical information" that provide "the links to consolidate the thesis that the cult of Candelaria is the Christian appropriation of the ancestral native cult related to the Canopo star".

The emergence of the star at dawn, and its evening appearance in the sky, coincide with the two festivities of the Candelaria in August and February, says Reyes, for whom it is "curious" that in the texts engraved on the mantle only allude to the native cults "speaking of them as superstitions and never of the appearance of the Virgin, but of finding, encounter".

To refer to it a concept is used that is not colloquial, but poetic, and that represents a very fine use of the language, adds the researcher, who gives the impression "that there was participation of the native clergy in the preparation of those materials".

Reyes adds that there are also inscriptions on the mantle of the Virgen del Pino, and among them there may be some "native" word, but there are also numbers and letters that she has not been able to decipher.

The researcher points out that in the Canaries it is not appreciated that the islands come from a "millennial" culture, since the Candelaria cult reflects a concept of creation "that is lost in the night of time" and that extends to the north of Africa from Mesopotamia to reach the islands.

It is the same idea of the creation of the Universe that science studies as the "Big Bang": the concept that a primordial star, Canopus, explodes at a given moment and generates the first sky. EFE

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