

"THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET"

1307 - 1308

"El Setge de Miravet" (The Siege of Miravet) is a theatrical performance of historical and costumary character which commemorates the end of the "Order of the Jerusalem Temple" of the Aragon Crown, concerning mainly the ups and downs and the negotiations between the King of Catalonia-Aragon Jaume II and the Templars of His Lordship, which took place in the Castle of Miravet (See of the Provincial Master of this powerful Order) between November 1307 and Desember 1308.

At the same time, it claims to be a homage to the people of the "Village of the Ebre Holy Rock": Miravet, of remote origins.

At that time (1308), the Miravetans were all Moorish and some of them Jews, strongly settled in the islamic traditions from the first years of the VIII century, with the Sarracen Conquest of the place.

They were at the service of the knight-Monks who were their absolute masters by Royal Donation, after the Christian Conquest on the 24th August , 1153.

The Templars respected the people in exchange of work and obedience as they did in the Holy Land.

This tradition has survived in an important part until now (resisting to the massive expulsion of the Moorish in 1610).

Gastronomy, hand-work of clay, many words and expressions, present Family names, attitudes, the mastership in fluvial navigation and the use of water are vivid examples of the origins and history of this ancient town, military and privileged place meant to close the Ebre in the South in all the known wars in the country.

SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERS INTERVENTIONS

(A musical poem starts, a hymn of "El Setge de Miravet", that expresses the tragedy and, at the same time, the light at the end of the way. A brief speech of introduction situates the historical feats and then begins the action with the musical piece of "Jamaa de Miravet", that gives the entry to the moorish actors).

THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET

Brahem (cultivator): He introduces himself in a slightly surprising fashion (few people know that Moorish and Jews lived together as servants to the "More Christian Knights"). He explains the point of view of the Musulman inhabitants of what is happening; he alludes to the traditions, the working of the Jamaa (Community of the Believers or Town-Hall) and, at the end, he introduces the characters of the village "who came to give a hand" and also "to look around", "to see what is happening".

Jucef Cornella: He is a Jew of Miravetan Jamaa who reproaches Brahem not to mind enough about his Community.

Axa (Brahem's wife): She reproaches him to waste his time while his fields are neglected. She concludes that men are not worth much and she enumerates the many activities achieved by the women of the Community.

Fátima (a widow): She discusses Axa's opinion about men. She refers how the "Miravet Customs" (Juridic Compendium of that time, among the oldest of Catalonia), protect the property of the married women and, especially, of the widows with sons.

Ayet (Alamí, civil representative of the Moorish Community): He explains how the Conquest of the Arabic Hins by the Christian in 1153 took place, the enormous human losses and the suffering of the people. He announces the version of the Head of the fortress that "he is old and a bit ill"

(A conventual type of music sounds that symbolizes a prayer to God in this critical moment for the Templars, while the Head of the Monastery-fortress appears).

Berenguer de Santjust (last Comendador of Miravet and ancient Provincial master of the Order): he pictures the sacred character of the conquest and the religious and military elitism of the Templars. He brings to mind the Donation of the King to the "Master of Hispania and Provença", Pere de Rovira, and to the first Comendador Guillem Berard in 1153, after a very hard and sanguinary battle, after seven months of siege against the "Sarracen Devils".

(Scene recreated 155 years before 1308, year of the actual siege of the Temple).

Royal emissary: He delivers the Royal Document of 1153 that certifies the Donation to the Templars of the territory of the Castle of Miravet (it comprised a good part of the regions of Ribera d'Ebre, Terra Alta and Matarranya to which were added their possessions in the Tortosa area). The document is read nearly in its totality, with utter faithfulness to the original, full of semantic curiosities, territorial descriptions and the poetry that usually accompanies the writings of the XII Century.

THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET

(While the emissary reads the document, one hears "Flors", a music that describes the transformation into wealth of all was touched by the knight-Monks).

Berenguer de Santjust: He explains how they their possessions, defended the Conquest and developed the Crusade towards the Southern Lands (València), the Mediterranean one (Mallorca) and the Holy Land. He evokes the meaning of the White Cape and the Red Cross. He defends himself from the intention of Pope Climent V.

Brahem: He complains about the works the Christians inflict to the village people. He explains how they helped, with their own sweat, in the war against their brothers-in-religion. He thanks Allah for Jerusalem not being in Christian hands any more.

Zhara Guasqui: village young girl, really disposed to accept the end of the Templars. She hopes that the new Masters will give them more freedom.

Ramon d'Olivier: Templar Comendador of Saragossa, refugee in the Castle by an order of detention against him dictated by the King. He eulogizes the work of people constructions, the civil engineering and the progress of the agriculture impelled by the Order.

Berenguer de Coll and Guerau de Rocamora: They are two Templars who defend the good name of the order and their sufferings during the Conquest battles. They absolutely refuse the fusion with the Hospitaliers whom they consider "cistern water", impossible to mix with "holy oil" (the Templars).

Foma Papasseit: Potter artisan. He describes some accusations he has heard against the Templars, without believing them. He shows some feats of the dayly life in the castle, the way the Royal blokade is tightening and his fear of the future.

Habiba Papasseit (Foma's wife): She gives little importance to the situation and trusts in some possibility of exit. She describes, as if it were a feast, the departure of Master Ximén de Lenda, in a beautiful vessel, by the river, going to hold an interview with the King (The Master would never get back, prisoner in Valencia, tricked by Jaume II).

Foma Papasseit: He "reads" light signals announcing the arrival of a Dignatary.

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Ramon de Saguàrdia: The comendador of Masdeu (Rosselló) enters the Castle (one hears "Ramon de Saguàrdia", a court-style music in his honour). Templar of a high prestige and Lieutenant of the Master of the Aragon Crown, now imprisoned. He arrives accompanied by one knight and four sergeants.

THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET

Berenguer de Santjust: He wishes welcome to Saguàrdia, he explains to him the situation of the different fortresses of the order and puts the Castle at his disposal.

Ramon de Saguàrdia: He receives "with love" the charge of leading the Templars of the Aragon Crown in their contentious with king Jaume II.

Berenguer de Santjust: He gives instructions to close the way to the Castle against the blockade forces. He asks for news from the French Kingdom.

Afterwards, a dialogue of a strong mystical content takes place between both characters, where they evoke the "rigorous and pure" construction of the Castle of the "poor Knights of Christ", following the inspiration of Saint Bernat, their guide and protector. They evoke Santa M^a de Gràcia, Virgin of the Templars and of Miravet. They repulse the sad face of the great Master Jaques de Molay and they decide to refer directly to the Pope, distrusting the terrestrial powers.

Emissary to Jaume II: He brings a letter from the King, which he gives to Ramon de Saguàrdia.

Jaume d'Oluja: Comendador of Granyena, refugee in the castle. He reads the King's letter where the surrender of the Templars is ordered in the name of the Pope. The King promises to treat them with benevolence in payment of the military favours received.

Ramon de Saguàrdia: He enjoins the brothers to retire to celebrate the "Capitulum" and answers the King.

(One hears "Goijos de Miravet", a music of a long tradition). The Chaplain shows Our Lady of Gràcia and the Templars kiss Her mantle while they take leave.

Abdelluç Llop (llaguter): Fluvial navigator. He offers the Emissary something to eat and takes occasion to relate some daily details about the Templars. He tells the life of navigation on the Ebro, the formation of a Mercenary Army -the famous "Almogàvars"- and the development of the Knights transport recourses while they officiate the General Capitulum in the castle.

(One hears "El Debat", a Blues which recreates the stress of this special meeting).

Salvador d'Anglesola (sergeant Templar): He reads the Capitulum answer. In it, it is reminded the King all the military and financial favours accomplished, in particular when they decisively contribute to save the Kingdom of his father's, King Pere, against the French King, Philippe Ardit, who had invaded Catalonia. They refuse to surrender and ask to be heard by the Pope himself.

THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET

Jaume de Garrigans: He travels with the writing. The letter is a summary of the original series written by Ramon de Saguàrdia to the Pope and the King, in ancient Catalan, from the Castle, in 1307 and 1308.

Brahem, Abdomèlich Massot, Jucef Cornela and Shara: Personages of the Miravetan Jamaa, who start a multiple dialogue and explain how the castle blockade is becoming more and more intolerable for all them. They refer to the regulations of meals, hygiene, etc. They point out that the sergeant-Monk (Garrigans) sent to parley with the king is not realible and that the old Comendador never liked him too much.

Jaume de Garrigans: He brings the news of a possible agreement that does not satisfy the Templar expectations. They firmly refuse his management. Ramon de Saguàrdia cuts the discussion and orders the reclusion in "Permanet Capitulum".

Juci Sala (donkeys merchant and respected Moorish): He explains how the Knights' courage is failling down and he proclaims the impossibility to buy Moorish soul. He predicts Garrigans betrayal.

Jaume de Garrigans: He justifies his betrayal form the possibilism. He trusts in the King's gratitude as he brings some letters written directly to the Pope, without the Royal Knowledge.

Juci Sala and Brahem: They observe Garrigan's coward escape. Brahem recalls that the works of the fields are neglected since too long a time. The Comendador has given his license for the servants to leave the Castle. The Miravetans fetch their implements to quit the fortress.

Alquima Ferro: She reminds Ayet of their duty to remain strong as nobody ever dared touching Miravet where the Templars where within. She intuits that the village would never have the same prestige.

Ayet Moreso: He gives instructions to behave properly and try to satisfy the new masters with whom they will have to agree new conditions of coexistence.

Two souls and the final judgement trumpet (interpreted by two feminine and one masculine personages): they declaim some paragraphs from the "Dies Irae" of the Carolingian Mass. They symbolize the alliction and desperation before the juncture of surrender to the King'forces. They suggest the Final Judgement and the announcement trumpet.

(Afterwards, one hears "La Decisió", musical piece that espreses the coming and going to hell until seeing the Reality, while the Templars meet around a mysterious primal stone which symbolizes their initiatic esoterism).

THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET

Ramon de Saguàrdia: He invokes the Creator, offering Him again the souls of the Templars. They bless the Chalice in a remembrance of the Lord's Last Supper and they drink from the Saint Grail.

(Meanwhile, one hears "El Grial", a solemn music which symbolizes their union with God.

Ramon de Saguàrdia: He ordains the Castle to surrender and recalls the battle scream of the Order "Dead or alive, we belong to Thee, my Lord".

Bernat de Libia (delegate of the King): he politely asks them to leave the Castle and to go to the quay.

(One hears "El Comiat", a music with some touches of hope while the Templars take leave.).

Berenguer de Santjust: The last Comendador refuses to leave the Ebre fortress which was given to him by the Order and he retires to the Command Room with his two nephews, Sergeant-Templars.

He implores the mysticism of Saint Bernat and prepares to receive his death with devotion, while he recalls that the Templar treasure is no other but walking freely, following a straight way, to reach the Truth.

("El Comiat" keeps on. Saguàrdia and two other Templars decide to get back to the chappel with the "Gonfalon-Beausant", the Order Ensign).

Once all the actors have left the scenic space, the Hymn of the beginning sounds again, this time sung by all the participants.

The End

THE SIEGE OF MIRAVET

OTHER INDICATIONS

The name of the Templar personages come from Ramon de Saguàrdia's diplomatic letters, written during the Siege of Miravet and other original documents.

The names of the Moorish personages come from a Census of Miravet of the year 1494.

The authorship, direction, interpretation, bringing out, wardrobe, lighting, etc... have been achieved by the people of Miravet (800 inhabitants) in a complete autonomus way, based on a history of the own people, coordinated and directed by the author, Santi Marsal.

The composition, conductorship, and musical arrangements are from the local Maestro Antoni Vives. The interpretation is achieved by the Band and the Choir of Garcia and Miravet.