

Seitura

The lands of Riós, south east of Ourense, have a very important oral tradition of songs. Women have mostly kept this tradition of transmitting, while men were dedicated to dance and instrumental music. More than eighty songs were recently collected in that area, kept carefully by seventy-year-old women who learnt them in their childhood. Riós is plenty of harvesting, pasturing songs, carols...

We can easily appreciate that the third strophe corresponds to a very famous poem by Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885), one of the most important writers in the Galician language literature. Her well-known social care is not focused just on the emigration towards America but also to Castilia. She is particularly sensitised about the long stays in that country. Life in Castilia was particularly hard for the poet, who wrote the saddest poems of her book *New Leaves* in Simancas, caused by despair of feeling far away from her green country and feeling trapped in a land that looked like a desert. In *Galician Songs* the poet had already written full of rage about the way Galician people were treated by the Castilians in the jobs they had to do; for instance, in the poem “Castilians of Castilia”: she criticises the treatment received by the Galician workers in Castilia, land that she considered ugly in comparison with Galicia:

*Castilians of Castilia,
Treat well the Galicians;
When they go, they look like roses;
When they come back, they look like blacks.*

Rosalía has a bucolic and idealistic view of her country (a rich land). That's why she is particularly sad about poverty of most people, who are forced to go away in search of that richness they cannot get in their own land. Part of the problem was caused by *caciques*, local rulers who submitted country people to a very hard social and economical control. Emigration was the last option, when everything was sold and there was no solution for the familiar situation, the man of the household had to go away to America. In the poem *To Habana* she writes:

“They sold his oxen / They sold his cows / the pot of stew / and his blanket./ They sold his cart / and all his lands / they left him only / the clothes he wore”. Rosalía hurt by the pain of watching her country and people outraged, not only cries about Galicia and its people but also incites to a social change.

The *fouciña* (a narrow leaf sickle) is one of the farming implements the farmer spends more time with. Most tasks require of this sharp instrument; harvesting straw, green grass, small brooms, furze...

In a more literary sense, we all keep in mind the image of a wizard holding the golden sickle. Popular songs remind us that “Cut the bread with a sickle in Saint-John [June]”, or “Shake the sickle in Saint-Mary”:

This song is not an example of thematic unity, but reminds how hard country tasks are.

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As terras do Riós, no surleste ourensán, teñen unha importante tradición oral, no que se refire a cantigas. Foron maioritariamente as mulleres as que mantiveron viva esa tradición de transmitir os cantares, mentres que os homes se limitaron case por completo ó mundo instrumental ou ó baile. Recentemente, recolléronse nunha escolma máis de oitenta cantares desa comarca, conservados con mimo por septuaxenarias que os aprenderan na súa primeira nenez. En Riós abundan os cantares de seitura, de pastoreo, de Nadal e Reis, os romances, as rondas, etc.

Pode apreciarse doadamente que a terceira estrofa corresponde case literalmente cunha ben famosa de Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885). A preocupación social de Rosalía, ben coñecida, non só se centra na emigración alén do Atlántico, senón que tamén nos fala da emigración a Castela, coa que se sinte especialmente sensibilizada polas súas longas estadias nesa terra. A vida en Castela foi especialmente dura para a poetisa, que compuxo os poemas máis tristes de *Follas Novas* en Simancas, presa da desesperación por verse lonxe da súa verde terra e atrapada no que ela concibía como un deserto. Xa en *Cantares Gallegos* a poetisa fala con rabia e xenreira do trato que os casteláns prodigaban ós galegos que traballaban para eles en poemas como “Castellanos de Castilla”: crítica o trato que os xornaleiros galegos recibían en Castela, terra que ela consideraba fea e pobre en comparación con Galicia.

*Castellanos de Castilla,
tratade ben ós gallegos;
cando van, van como rosas,
cando vén, vén como negros.*

En parte pola visión bucólica e idealizada da súa terra (unha terra rica e pródiga) a Rosalía cáusalle especial pesadume a pobreza da maioría dos seus poboadores, que se ven obrigados a emigrar a terras foráneas para

alcanzar a riqueza que poderían conseguir na súa propia terra de non estar vixente a sociedade caciquil do século XIX, que acaparaba os bens a base da explotación dos campesiños, obrigados a pagar os foros. A emigración era a última opción, cando xa todo estaba vendido e non se solucionaba a situación familiar o home da casa debía marchar a facer as Américas (recordemos os primeiros versos de *¡Pra a Habana!*:

”Vendéronlle os bois/vendéronlle as vacas,/o pote do caldo / i a manta da cama. / Vendéronlle o carro / i as leiras que tiña ; / deixárono soio / coa roupa vestida.”). Rosalía, ferida pola dor de ver aldraxada á súa terra e á súa xente, chora por Galicia e polos galegos, pero tamén incita a un cambio social.

A fouciña é un dos apeiros de labranza cos que máis horas pasa o labrego. Moitas tarefas requiren dese instrumento cortante, segar a palla, a herba verde, as xestas pequenas, os toxos, etc...

Nun senso máis literario, todos conservarmos a imaxe do druída coa fouciña de ouro na man. E o cancionero lémbraos que “en san Xoan, bótalle a fouciña ó pan”, e tamén que “por santa Mariña, dalle coa fouciña”.

A cantiga non é un exemplo de unidade temática, pero lémbraos a dureza dos traballos do campo, porque para gañar a vida hai que procurarlle moitos coidados á colleita.