

Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings

Volume 2017

Article 155

2017

CTS 7: Palma

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Recommended Citation

(2017) "CTS 7: Palma," *Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings*: Vol. 2017 , Article 155.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings/vol2017/iss1/155>

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PALMA by Ana María Munar

Personal. I grew accustomed to its beauty, the colors, the dark gold of the stones, the reds, and the multiple blues of the skies and the sea. I could anticipate its good and bad habits, the noises and the smells. Like air, one only discovers how necessary it is in its absence. It is only from time to time, walking around a corner, that I surprise myself encountering all its beauty with a new gaze, the gaze of a stranger, a tourist, maybe your gaze? – In amazement!

Alma. Cities like Palma have an ancient soul [Alma in Spanish]. Many civilizations have been here. The first settlement was already during the Iron Age, 2000 BC, but the city was officially founded by the Romans 2130 years ago. Both official languages in Majorca (Spanish and Catalan) have Latin roots. After the Roman Empire, Palma was part of Byzantium and then had over three hundred years of Islamic control during the Muslim period, which ended with the Christian conquering of the city in the late Middle Ages by King Jaume I [James], still a very popular name in Mallorca.

Life. Put some comfortable shoes on and enjoy the shade of the old narrow streets, take a seat in one of the many cafés that populate the city, and enjoy the colorful performance of people passing by. Here are some of my favorite spots: *Es Mercat de S’Olivar* (buy fruit, olives, and cheese in this farmers market), *Can Joan de S’Aigo* (an ice cream and coffee shop from the 18th century), get lost in the neighborhoods of La Lonja and the Cathedral, and try the traditional hot sandwiches of *el Bar Bosch*.

Mediterranean. Despite (or maybe because of) its many cultural influences and civilizations, Palma has always kept its Mediterranean identity. The Mediterranean that approaches and leaves...

después de besar mi aldea.
Jugando con la marea
te vas, pensando en volver.
Eres como una mujer
perfumadita de brea
que se añora y que se quiere
que se conoce y se teme.

after kissing my village.
Playing with the tide
you leave, with the intention to return.
You are like a woman
scented with tar
who is missed and loved,
who is known and feared.

“Mediterráneo”, Joan Manuel Serrat

Always. Do you love a place? Which one? I love Palma...always...