El silencio de la ciudad blanca
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El Silencio de la ciudad blanca (The silence of the white city) is a thriller in the style of Hannibal Lector meets Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, creepy and stylised in equal measure. It is set in Vitoria in the Basque Country. It would be an overstatement to say that it does for Vitoria what Leopoldo Alas Clarín did for Oviedo, but the novel certainly sets Vitoria firmly on the literary map. A heavy sense of historical dualism pervades this novel, which intertwines three parallel chronologies to resolve the mystery. The antihero (Inspector Unai Ayala of the Spanish National Police) is heavy with Chandler in several passages, making it a dream to translate.

Unai Ayala is a forty-year-old widower with a troubled backstory. He works for the police as a profiler. He wanted to become a policeman because of a strange series of murders which occurred twenty years earlier (in the 1990s), the origin of which lies in some murky bourgeois hypocrisy of the 1960s-70s. The murders stopped suddenly after the arrest of a local aristocrat-business man (Tasio) by his identical twin brother, Ignacio (a policeman).

The novel opens with a fresh double murder (in 2017) in which the naked corpses of a boy and girl are found in a staged embrace, reminiscent (we later learn) of an ancient Basque burial practice (or possibly a pastiche eighteenth-century occult sacrifice). These corpses are discovered at the centre of Vitoria's medieval magnificence, the cathedral. Inspector Ayala is the go-to profiler and he soon becomes embroiled in a spectacular piece of cat & mouse detective work reminiscent of films like Silence of the lambs and Seven, with a medieval twist which Umberto Eco would have appreciated.

…. The city breathes with the nostrils of a secondary character, as its streets and avenues and graveyard pulsate with the footsteps of revellers and mourners.

…Arguably the most interesting aspect of the novel is the insight it provides into Spanish (and especially Basque) class structure historically and the very peculiar sociology of the Basque country's most aristocratic of towns.

The novel went through 11 reprints in 2017 and should be a number one priority for translation by a major distributor.

From the reader´s report by .