Folia and Baile de Rabecada: Aural Narratives in a Brazilian Quilombo

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Abstract

This article describes the music of baile de rabecada *and* folia da bandeira *from the perspective of two rabeca players who are leaders in a rural Afro-Brazilian community. Their narratives rely on repertoire and music examples that are part of the aural tradition of these practices in the quilombo. Adopting as its focus specific music pieces, this study reveals that baile de rabecada features rhythmic patterns indicating a mixture of Iberian and Afro-Brazilian aspects, to a much greater extent than literature suggests. My ethnographic work on these two rabeca players highlights the association between their music practices and the socio-economic networks of the rural economy. The* baile *and the popular Catholic* folia da bandeira *are associated with an agrarian traditional system and territorial relations that form a cultural setting that operates as agency, which has enabled the communities in Vale do Ribeira to reclaim the historical meaning of the* quilombo *(maroon community), and carry out a political campaign for the recognition of their land rights. As a result of broad social changes, community leaders acknowledge that they do not perform the tradition as it was once practised and are now concerned with the extent to which future generations will maintain the rituals that characterize these rural Afro-Brazilian communities.*

Resumo

Este artigo descreve a música de baile de rabecada e folia da bandeira na perspectiva de dois jogadores de rabeca que são lideranças em uma comunidade afro-brasileira rural. Suas narrativas se baseiam significativamente em exemplos de repertório e música que fazem parte da tradição auditiva dessas práticas no quilombo. Adotando como foco músicas específicas, este estudo revela que o baile da rabecada apresenta padrões rítmicos afro-brasileiros indicando uma mistura de aspectos ibéricos e afro-brasileiros, em uma extensão muito maior do que outros estudos já sugeriram. Meu trabalho etnográfico sobre esses dois tocadores de rabeca salienta uma associação entre suas práticas musicais e as redes socioeconômicas da economia rural. O baile e a popular folia da bandeira católica estão associados a um sistema tradicional agrário e a relações territoriais que formam um cenário cultural que funciona como uma forma de agência, o que permitiu às comunidades do Vale do Ribeira recuperar o significado histórico do quilombo e promover uma campanha política pelo reconhecimento de seus direitos à terra. A incapacidade de dar continuidade às formas tradicionais eram praticadas no passado resultou de uma ampla mudança social, e os líderes comunitários agora estão preocupados se as gerações futuras poderão preservar os rituais que caracterizam o modo de vida dessas comunidades afro-brasileiras rurais.

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This article aims to analyse the music practices in the quilombo do Morro Seco, in Southeast Brazil, with a focus on the practices of two *rabeca* players who are leaders in their quilombo community, whose livelihood is based on traditional agriculture. In their presentation about recent land recognition claims to the national government, their argument and supporting evidence focused on their Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage and agency. My analysis focuses mainly on musical practices with aim to challenge the notion of fandango as an exclusive Iberian-Azorean style. Instead, I argue that, apart from sharing the same instruments in their performances, fandango and the *folia de reis* also share some similarities in their combinations of Iberian-Azorean and Afro-Brazilian practices. I also suggest that such a mixture is much more relevant than has previously been suggested in other studies.[2] The musicological aspect of my analysis is significant in that it opposes the argument that fandango is exclusively an Iberian practice. These aspects are revealed mainly through rhythmic patterns played in the *rabeca*[3] and the *caixa*[4] – the *tresillo*, the

[2] Folia de reis is a Brazilian celebration of popular Catholicism. The *folia de reis* celebrates and re-enacts the Biblical journey of the Three Kings according the Christian tradition. This is a ritual familiar to rural dwellers. The core of the *folia* is a set of singers and instrumentalists, accompanied by a clown, also called 'the puppet'. Its members are known as 'revellers'. (see Brandão 1978; Reily 2002; Tremura 2004). In Quilombo do Morro Seco the *folia de reis* is mostly referred to by the informants as *folia da bandeira.* This makes sense since every folia has its flag, the banner that identifies it, symbolizing at the same time, the journey of the Three Kings to Bethlehem and the intention with which the revellers are ready for pilgrimage (see Castro and Couto 1977). The *bandeira* (flag) is the object with higher religious value (Brandão 1977:11). The *reisado*, which is part of the folia da Bandeira, but is a indicated in the context of the quilombo by the informants as the music and the collective prayer that is performed by an ensemble in different rituals. The instrument formation and repertoire may differ according to rituals based on processions or within village yards.

[3] The *rabeca* is a bowed stringed lute. In Portugal it can be found in northern regions such as Minho, Douro Litoral and Beira Litoral. It has a shorted-neck *rabeca chuleira*, which is used in popular music ensembles (Oliveira 1982 [1966]: 224). According to Luis Soler (1978: 100), the *rabeca* was originally a Renaissance instrument, whose form was influenced by Arabic knowledge of music and musical instruments that were transported to Europe in the medieval era during the melding of cultures in the Iberian Peninsula. Veiga de Oliveira (1982) maintains that the *rabeca* is of North African origin and is a variation of the Arab *rebab*. The medieval *rebec, (rebek, ribible, rubible, rubebe)* is the instrument most closely related to the Arabic *rebab* (Panum 1939; Bachmann 1969). The Brazilian instruments, which are not standardised in terms of shape or measurement, also have different tuning and string numbering according to the different regional traditions. They are associated with popular drama, dances and religious rituals (Andrade 1959). The *rabeca* plays a relevant role in rural music and in theatrical dances originating from northeastern Brazilian genres such as the *cavalo marinho* and *coco* (Murphy 1997). In his ethnographic journey to northeastern Brazil in 1928 and 1929, ethnomusicologist Mario de Andrade (cited in Linemburg 2017: 101) recorded that the *rabeca* was a central part of many popular music genres, including the dance drama, *bumba meu boi*, which is one the most widespread genres in the country, and which in some northeastern areas is associated with the *folia de reis* during the Christmas festivities. In a different context, Luiz Fiaminghi (2008) analyses the emergence of the *rabeca* in the concert music of Brazil. Composer Eduardo Gramani first established the cultural significance of the *rabeca* as an instrument in its own right and not simply as a mere deviation from European violin making and its standards of construction. He used the *rabeca* to renew the contemporary classical musical repertoire: for example, Fiaminghi and the ensemble Anima give European medieval and pre-Baroque music and its instrumentation new form by recreating Brazilian popular oral traditions, emphasising the 'ritualistic elements' that were common to the pre-modern era in Brazil.

[4] The *caixa* is a membranophone snare drum with two skins. It is struck on the upper skin with two wooden drumsticks. The instruments found in the *folia de reis* in Brazil are similar to those found in the traditional music of the province of Beira in Portugal which may indicate its provenance and were part of military regiments in Brazil (Monteiro 2008).

habanera, and the *cinquillo* rhythm pattern (Vega 1967; Behague 1979; Sandroni 2001) –, which are chiefly rhythms derived from the time-line patterns of African music (Floyd 2017: 69). The two community informants keep their repertoire based on aural references, with no musical notation other than the lyrics. The aural tradition requires that the musicians learn a 'social repertoire' (Netll 2005) in order to maintain these practices through generations of performers. Unable to perform the *baile* or *bate o pé* (stomp dance) in full due to social and musical changes (the lack of musicians and the effects of recorded music on festivities), the leading musicians performed musical examples during my research through music parts related to each instrument.

I start this article by locating the Caiçara culture because the music practices and instruments of this community are closely associated with Caiçara music, as shown by a substantial number of studies that have focused on the description of the social and musical characteristics of this culture (e.g. Willems 1952; Andrade 1972; Setti 1985; Araújo 2004; Pimentel, Gramani and Corrêa 2006; Diegues and Coelho 2013; Corrêa 2016). Although the members of this community are often regarded as caiçaras, they rarely make use of the term, often calling themselves *quilombolas*, suggesting a connection to the recent ethno-racial demands in Brazil.[5]

Although the Afro-Brazilian *quilombolas* share the Caiçaras' social and cultural setting, contemporary *quilombo* communities only gained legal recognition with the new Federal Constitution of 1988, and their existence has only recently been acknowledged based on their cultural specificities. Before 1988, the historical quilombos were distinguished as settlements of runaway slaves. After 1988, the existing quilombos started to be recognised through the establishment of links to historical quilombos on the basis of land occupation. However, following the last revision of the legislation in 2003, it was established that quilombos no longer needed to prove links to historical maroon communities in order to be recognised as so.

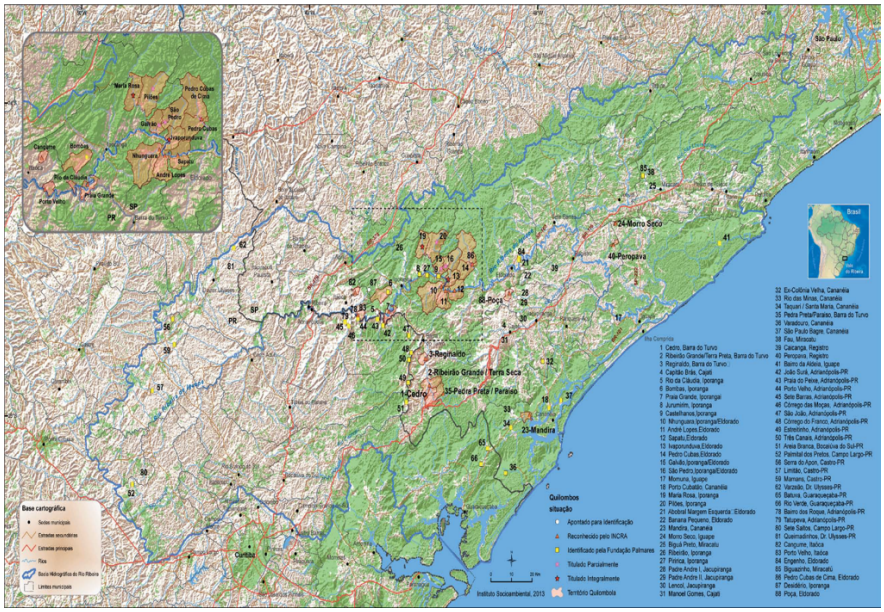
As a result of the reclamation of the term *quilombo* by contemporary black rural communities, new legislation was passed to recognise land ownership in the last few decades. According to Eliane O'Dwyer (2002), the notion of *quilombo* land rights is not based on archaeological evidence of temporal occupation or on proof of biological heredity, as the *quilombos* were not isolated groups with a strictly homogeneous population. Neither did these communities always spring from insurrectional or rebellious movements. Rather, they consisted, above all, of groups that developed daily practices of resistance through

[5] The Caiçara, who live along the coast of southeastern Brazil, have developed a lifestyle specific to their coastal environment in the Atlantic Forest, based on subsistence farming, and the practices of fishing and gathering fruit that they inherited from the different indigenous groups who inhabited the area in colonial times. The Caiçara have a mixed indigenous (mainly Carijó), Iberian and African heritage (Diegues 1988: 04). Emilio Willems (1952) describes the Caiçara as a distinct Portuguese-Indian-African-Creole subculture.

maintaining and reproducing their characteristic ways of life and consolidating a hold on their territory (2002: 18).

The Vale do Ribeira

Vale do Ribeira is a region located between the southern part of the state of São Paulo and the northeast of the state of Paraná. With a total area of 2,830,666 hectares and the population of approximately 480,000 inhabitants, the area contains numerous environmental protection units. Map 1 illustrates the quilombo communities in the Vale do Ribeira and the regulatory status of each quilombo concerning the use and occupation of the land. Map 2 depicts the road access to the quilombo of Morro Seco off the federal highway BR 116, with the nearest towns being Juquiá and Registro. The coastal area encompasses a number of different ecosystems: a vast river valley and a complex of coastal estuary lagoons, whose mangrove swamps form part of the Serra do Mar (Atlantic Forest).



Map 1. Quilombo communities of Vale do Ribeira; Cartographic base and regulatory status. Fonte: Base cartográfica: IGC, 2009; Territórios quilombolas: ITESP e EAACONE; Vegetação: SOS Mata Atlântica, 2008.

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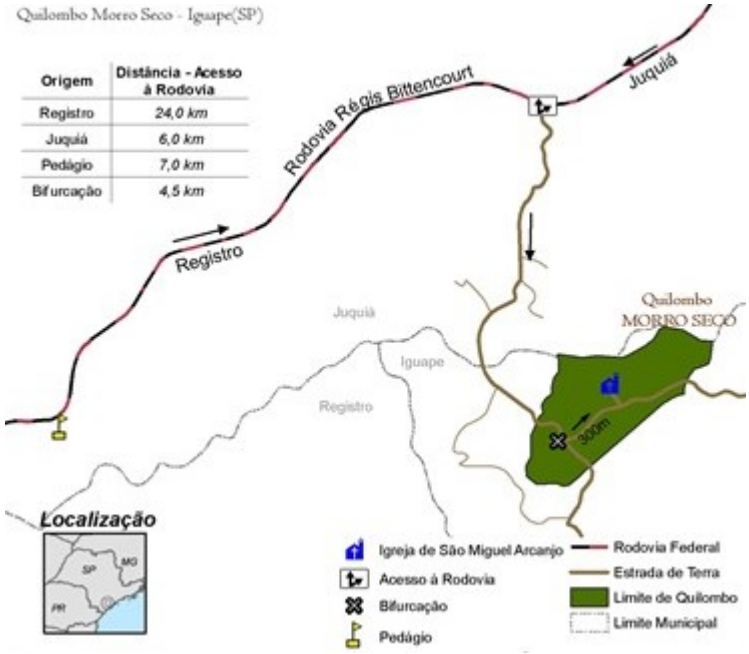


Map 2. Road access to the quilombo do Morro Seco from the main federal highway, with Juquiá and Registro being the nearest towns.

The region was colonised in the early sixteenth century by the Portuguese and Spanish settlers following the expeditions of Américo Vespúcio and João Solis, respectively, who landed on the island now known as Ilha do Cardoso (which includes Cananéia, the southern-most city in the state of São Paulo). The Carijó people, who are part of the indigenous Guarani linguistic family (Litaiff 2009), inhabited the region at the time. However, they had all but disappeared by the seventeenth century. The Vale do Ribeira was also the seasonal home of the Guainá people (from the Jê linguistic group), who visited the area during the winter to fish. The Guarani sub-groups Mbya and Chiripa – who currently live in most of the Brazilian southeast coastal region – arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century from the inner parts of Spanish America and Brazil. There are no specific dates for the arrival of African peoples in the Vale do Ribeira but it is possible that they were initially transported there in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to work as slaves in the gold mines. The city of Iguape served as a central slave market, dealing not only with African slaves but also with indigenous Brazilians. Many of the rural Afro-Brazilian communities in the region were formed after the period of gold mining ended, relying on subsistence agriculture, such as the cultivation of rice (Stucchi 2000: 8).

The predominant African groups in southeast Brazil were the Bantu-speaking subgroups from Congo, Angola, and Mozambique (Slenes 1992: 55-56). Even with the decline of the African slave trade from 1815, slaves from these regions continued to arrive in Rio de Janeiro and were then re-exported to southern ports (Gomes 2012: 15). Many of

these captives were probably sent to São Paulo, to the ports of Iguape and Cananéia. The Bantu-speaking subgroups were known by a variety of names – Angolas, Congos or Cabindas, Benguelas, Bángalas, Cassanges, Dembos, Macúas, and Angicos – and the main languages of these peoples in Brazil were Quimbundo, Quicongo and Umbundo.

After the abolition of slavery, the Vale do Ribeira continued to receive frequent clandestine shipments of enslaved peoples as its wild and jagged coastline deterred inspections by the authorities. Official documents from the time recorded the clandestine disembarkation of slaves in Iguape (Canabrava 1950: 560; Boccia 1977: 349). One legal document details how a municipal judge confiscated a ship that had transported African slaves who, once disembarked, were probably taken along hidden routes through the forest. One slave was found on the same day, triggering an official enquiry. The court record recounts that many *pretos* (black people) were summoned to act as interpreters during his interrogation, but communication was impossible; no one was able to comprehend his language (Canabrava 1950: 562).

Quilombo and Caiçara Socio-Cultural Practices

The remaining cultural traditions of Caiçara people, such as festivities, dances, and choreography are associated with fishing, hunting and farming. In the case of the Caiçara, resisting the pressure on their 'customs' (Thompson 1991) links directly to the potential loss of their land and to social modernisation (Setti 1985). *Quilombo* communities in Vale do Ribeira form part of Caiçara social life. Their artistic manifestations and their practices, such as collective work or *mutirão*, are related to local merrymaking, dancing, and choreographed musical performances. The *mutirão*, *pixirão* or *puxirão,* is part of the subsistence agriculture of the Caiçara people (Diegues 2006), a method employed by small farmers and fisherman, which brings the community together to share the work on the plantations, the harvesting, the fishing and even the building of houses or boats. The host responsible for the *mutirão* usually offers to throw a party with live music and food for all his fellow workers engaged in the collective task. The interpersonal relationship and kinship play a major role specially with the `family blocks': members of the same family living in the same neighbourhood as indicated by Antonio Candido (2010: 237).

The musical events that take place soon after the *mutirão* work is completed is a communal moment of joy, where people can socialise with local residents but also with other communities from the broader area. The celebratory atmosphere is expressed in the form of a dance party, called a *baile* or *bate pé* as in the *baile de rabecada* (dance party based on *rabeca* repertoire) in Morro Seco. Generally called fandango Caiçara, it constitutes the basis of partnerships, strengthening family ties through dating and marriage, and consolidating friendships among the elders (Fortes Filho, 2005: 45).

Through their self-definition as Afro-Brazilians whose heritage is connected to a former maroon community, the members of this *quilombo* have championed not only their traditional livelihood based on an agrarian economy, but also their syncretic religious practices and music rituals. The Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA in Portuguese) had a significant role in assisting the communities to identify their historical, cultural, and territorial heritage to present their case to the Federal government (see Andrade and Tatto 2013). Quilombos are guaranteed the right to be characterized as so even by self-definition. Although part of the communities have been recognized, which is the case of Morro Seco, the situation of many communities in the Vale do Ribeira still needs to be settled in terms of legal rights for land occupation. The *Programa Brasil Quilombola* (Brazilian Quilombo Programme) is responsible for consolidating the related public policies to attend the interest of the quilombo communities in different areas. Based on decree 4887/2003, the concept used in the programme says quilombos are ethnic-racial groups according to self-attribution criteria, with their own historical trajectory, endowed with specific territorial relations, of black ancestry, and related to resistance to historical coercion. However, in the legal sphere, land management encounters many barriers to guaranteeing the right to title such lands on which communities live (see Silva and Borges 2015).

Rabeca Players

Bonifácio Modesto Pereira

Morro Seco, a rural area in the mountains, is located within the Atlantic Forest. According to the inhabitants of the area, Morro Seco itself was originally known as 'Capoava', a deforested, open clearing where escaped slaves fled and made their home.

Figure 1. Bonifácio Pereira playing the *rabeca*. (Photograph: Luiz Moretto)

Bonifácio Modesto Pereira, a highly politicised representative of his community who has previously served for a term as a councillor in the town of Juquiá, explained some of the difficulties he has faced in the battle for legal recognition of land. However, in the early 2000s, the possibility of gaining land rights through a *quilombo* federal statute emerged. These rights were conceded to lands as long as they were maintained strictly as collective properties. According to Bonifácio, the history of his family is entwined with the land and its usage. Combined with its socio-cultural background, the community's distintictive way of life met all the necessary requirements to have the land recognised as a *quilombo*. His grandfather, who was probably a fugitive or freed slave, arrived there as a single person, but now, as Bonifácio mentions, there are twenty-two families in the area, totalling around eighty-six individuals. For him, the *'patrimônio cultural'*(cultural heritage) of the quilombo, which includes the *baile de rabecada* and the *folia da bandeira*, are part of their characteristic way of life.

In Bonifácio's view, 'the *folia da bandeira* is a [semi-]religious ritual brought from Portugal during the colonial period' and it is a core factor of devotion in the community.[6] In

[4] Interview with Bonifácio Pereira, 08 September 2014.

fact, the *folia da Bandeira* has been connected to the Iberian Peninsula since the colonial period and, in Portugal, there is written evidence of groups performing songs during King's Day (January 6). 'Accounts of *folias* mention a group of men dressed in elaborate, stylized clothing and accompanied by musical instruments such as accordions, tambourines, and drums' (Tremura 2004:01). Also corroborating the description of Bonifácio, musicians, singers, and dancers take part in *jornadas* (journeys), performing as they walk from home to home in the community. Although it revolves around the biblical story of the Nativity and the three kings or wise men, the theme can also involve events from everyday life, including scenic choreography of love and war. [7]

Folk Catholicism, with its syncretic rites, combines elements of Iberian and Afro-Brazilian cultures and still exists throughout Brazil. These practices, which include the *congada, moçambique,* or *folias,* emerged during the colonial slave era and contributed to the growth of syncretic religious rites and socio-political activities which, in Brazil, fall under the rubric of 'popular Catholic rituals'. Thus, enslaved peoples interacted with at least two different cultural systems: the coloniser's and their own. Roger Bastide (2007 [1960]) points to the way in which the African mentality was radically transformed and Christianised to the point where African deities were identified with Catholic saints, and one was recognized as Christ (see Ramos 1935; Apter 2005). 'The ritual syncretism would then be explained by an earlier assimilation of collective representations involving a shift from one social stratum to another' (Bastide: 2007 [1960]: 276).

According to Diegues (2006: 17), along Brazil's São Paulo coast, the *folia de reis* emerged 'purely in a local sense and was carried out by the Caiçara residents themselves, without the supervision of any religious entity'. The processional forms emerged mostly through patron saint festivals connected to the Catholic tradition, and were devoted to a specific saint and nurtured by the *irmandades* (brotherhoods). The brotherhoods were pivotal for black and mestizos to adjust to the imposed subservience of the Catholicism, and as a way to resist the coloniser. Above all, the brotherhoods operated as associations that attended the needs of blacks and mulattoes in the colony (Russell-Wood 1974: 569).

Generally, the *fandango* was very popular as a ballroom dance in the nineteenth century, and as such, was practised by different social classes in Brazil. It was therefore largely accepted by the dominant class of slave owners. However, the *batuque* drumming and dance practices, which included the *fandango*, were performed only by slaves and poor whites, and the practice began to be discriminated against when economic elites of Brazil started to adopt European bourgeois habits, rejecting local popular culture. Most drumming and dancing practices that fell under the term '*batuque*' were often considered raucous party music by these elites. According to Magnus Pereira, the *fandango* was regarded as having a

[5] The term 'choreography' for the scenic celebration of folia de reis is normally used by the informants, who also make reference to the stage clothes each group have to perform it. The term is also employed by Carlos Brandão (1977).

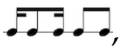
libidinous and lascivious character, and its practice was restricted in several communities, where the style was seen as a corruption of local customs, and it was occasionally banned. In the colonial period, the *fandango* formed part of other drum and dance events capable of assembling slaves, freed Africans, poor whites, and *mestizos* to perform in the *senzalas* (slave houses), in the yards or on the city streets. Magnus Pereira indicates that that the *fandango* and the *batuque* consisted of the same thing (Pereira 1996: 165). However, it is not possible to establish that fandango and *batuque* were in fact similar practices, or were generally ways to refer to diverse social dances. The notion that fandango is part of Afro-Brazilian music was not rare among artists. In a 1949 autobiography, for example, the actress and writer Luz Del Fuego (1948), referred to fandango as a dance of '*estranho sabor Afro-Brasileiro* (weird Afro-Brazilian taste).

An anthropological report commissioned by the Brazilian government states that the *quilombolas'* claim that the *fandango* is of African derivation 'does not correspond with the truth' (Turatti 2006: 36). The report indicates that this so-called 'error' has its origin in the *quilombolas'* desire to preserve their cultural heritage. Although recognising that this emerging sense of cultural identity is positive for the future of *quilombo* communities, the report does not take into consideration the cultural influences of European, African, and indigenous peoples that can be found in the Brazilian *fandango* as played in these *quilombo* societies, which embody the miscegenated transformation of the music.

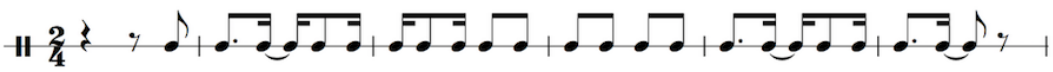
In his descriptions of the dance called *lundu* (*lhundu*, *kalundu*) in early nineteenth-century Brazil, Johann Rugendas also mentioned another dance performed by couples which could have been the *fandango* (cited in Stevenson 1968: 22-3; Fryer 2000: 117). It appears that during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the *fandango* was already 'Africanised', incorporating the *umbigada* and foot stomp, for example. It also contributed to the choreography of the *lundu* (Fryer 2000: 117-19), and the rhythmic patterns were chiefly Afro-Brazilian. Considered 'lascivious' and 'obscene' by the Catholic Church and the colonial authority, these dances suffered coercion or were banned, with practitioners developing tactics to preserve the music. These tactics may indicate the way rhythmic structures survived. The argument that the fandango was influenced by the rhythm played on those dances corroborates the claims by those *quilombo* inhabitants that *fandango* has, to some degree, Afro-Brazilian influence. In fact, while there are predominant aspects in the dance, choreography, and instruments that point to an Iberian genealogy, aspects of the rhythm are common to other Afro-Brazilian music genres.

Foot-stomping rhythms

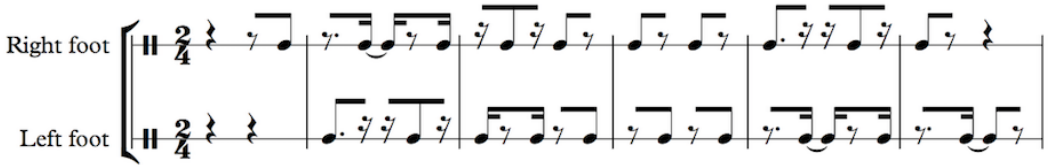
Like other Afro-Brazilian music and dance genres, the *moda-rufado* (foot-stomping dance) presents a 'characteristic Brazilian syncopation' (Andrade 1959; Sandroni 2002),

which is XX.XX.X. or  , as I illustrate in the musical transcriptions below. In the following examples, the transcription reveals two different rhythmic patterns during which the dancers strike the floor with both feet or with each foot in turn. First, I show the pattern (music examples 1 and 3) and then its division between the two feet (music examples 2 and 4). The dancers perform the linear rhythmic patterns by beating each foot alternately or together.

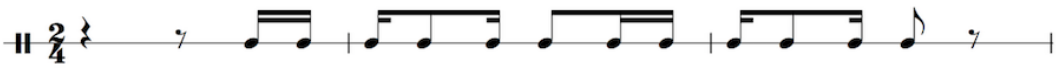
Music example 1.



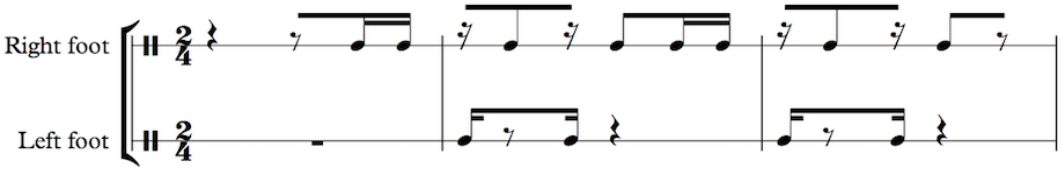
Music example 2.



Music example 3.



Music example 4.



These transcriptions of rhythmic patterns were based on the examples provided by Bonifácio and his brother, Hermes, in Quilombo do Morro Seco, which matched with the patterns in recordings and live performances during the *Festa dos Navegantes* (Seafarers' Festival) in the town of Cananéia. Bonifácio pointed out that the rhythmic patterns change

according to the *moda* (the song or musical piece). Each *moda* is defined by a particular name and introduces different themes, rhythmic patterns, verse structures, and aspects of dance (Corrêa and Gramani 2006: 21).

The Rabeca

According to Bonifácio, rabeca playing is associated with the three voices of the folia ensemble: 'There are three singers in the *folia da bandeira*: the *folião* [the 'reveller' or main singer], the *baixão* [the lowest voice] and the *tipe*. So, to accompany these three voices, we play the melodies on the *rabeca*.' In the quilombo's *folia da bandeira*, it is the *folião* who leads the verses, either singing solo or initiating the question-and-answer sequence with the chorus. The *baixão* is a lower voice that usually sings a third or a sixth from the main voice, and the *tipe* (*tripe*, *tiple*), is a thin, shrill voice, suitable for boys, or sung by adults in falsetto (it can be a male or female voice), that 'generally sings an octave above the main voice as each phrase comes to an end, thus ensuring its tonal tessitura' (Setti 1985: 181).[8] The *tipe* is an important element in Portuguese music: in his analysis of this type of vocal tradition in the music of female singers from the region of Minho in northern Portugal, Oliveira (1966) describes how the high-pitched voice also delineates the ornamentation of the song and emphasises the ends of phrases.

As an accompany to the voices, the *rabeca* has a specific mode of construction: its fabrication involves choosing a particular *caixeta* tree *(tabebuia cassinoides)* belonging to a species native to the Atlantic Forest. The instrument is shaped out of a large plank of this soft, white wood. This type of *rabeca* is called the *rabeca de coxo* (trough fiddle), a one-piece back-and-ribs fiddle that has a distinct top and back, depending on how they are joined to form the whole body. The type of *rabeca* used in the quilombo is the three-stringed instrument which plays two melodies using double stops or one melody with frequent use of bourdon through open strings. Asked if he would give an example, Bonifácio demonstrated by playing the melodies on double stops, clarifying that these are employed as two lower notes and can function as a bourdon on the low third string to support the group singers by giving them a pitch reference.

[8] For a detailed analysis of *Caiçara* vocal music, see Kilza Setti (1985: 178-210).

Figure 2. A three-stringed rabeca de cocho at Quilombo do Morro Seco. (Photograph: Luiz Moretto)

The existence of a variety of *rabecas* made out of wood from trees native to the Atlantic Forest is suggestive of the effects of hybrid cultures in which the original European violins and guitars were transformed into hybrid instruments. 'Hybridity' is a concept proposed by Nestor Canclini who defines it as 'those socio-cultural processes within which structures of subjectivity and power, which exist separately, merge to generate new structures, subjectivities, objects and practices' (2015: 19). Hybridisation in this context serves as a crucial explanation of how seemingly immutable musical practices and their cultures were 'transplanted' to Brazil, where they went through a process of adjustment. However, this was not simply a juxtaposition of cultures but a miscegenation of people forming syncretic cultural practices, including its material culture (Stewart 1999). This process took course through the singular Portuguese colonisation in the Americas, which was developed not only through power relations between the colonising class and the subaltern classes, but also through mixed-race union between people (Prado Jr 1986). Such mixtures were well accepted by the Catholic Church.

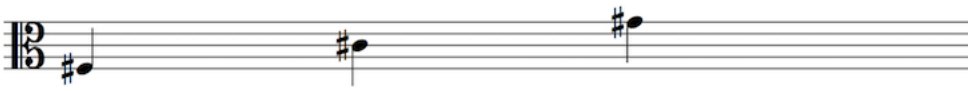
As with vocal music, instrumental music may have been introduced at a time when the Catholic Jesuit order had a greater presence in Brazil. The *rabeca* practice contains some of the characteristics of polyphony, such as the instrumentation and tuning standards, drawn from European Renaissance and pre-Baroque periods. The greatest expansion of the Jesuits in the Portuguese colonies occurred during the seventeenth century, and this coincided with the increase in Brazil of musical instruments of European provenance. Marcos Holler lists the musical instruments found in colonial institutional inventories in the Americas, revealing the scarcity of fiddles. Holler argues that it is not possible to determine whether the construction of string instruments reflected the influence of the Jesuits or not (2010: 57). Although there is a lack of correlation between string instruments and the *rabeca*'s dissemination in Brazil, the music of the *folia de reis* and *fandango* reveals some similarities

with the early European sacred music that the Jesuits played in Brazil. Christopher Page (1987) notes that the modal melodies and the modal bourdon in medieval fiddle or *tirana* music has a frequent occurrence of fourths and fifths. In the *folia da bandeira* and *fandango* of Morro Seco, the *rabeca*'s tuning patterns also combine fourths and fifths, which Page calls 'heterophonic tuning', mixing different intervals in a similar way to medieval fiddle playing (1987: 128-30).[9]

The Tuning of the Rabeca

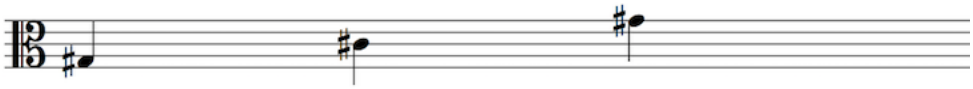
Bonifácio describes two different tuning patterns for the *rabeca*: the *afinação por baixo* (a lower pitch), which is used in the procession of *folia da bandeira*, and the *afinação alta* (a higher pitch), which is used when playing in the collective prayer of *reisado*. The tuning used when performing the *folia da bandeira* is formed of two consecutive fifths.

Music example 5.
Afinação por baixo:



The tuning adopted to perform the *reisado* is a fourth followed by a fifth and is called *afinação por baixo.*

Music example 6.
Afinação por cima:

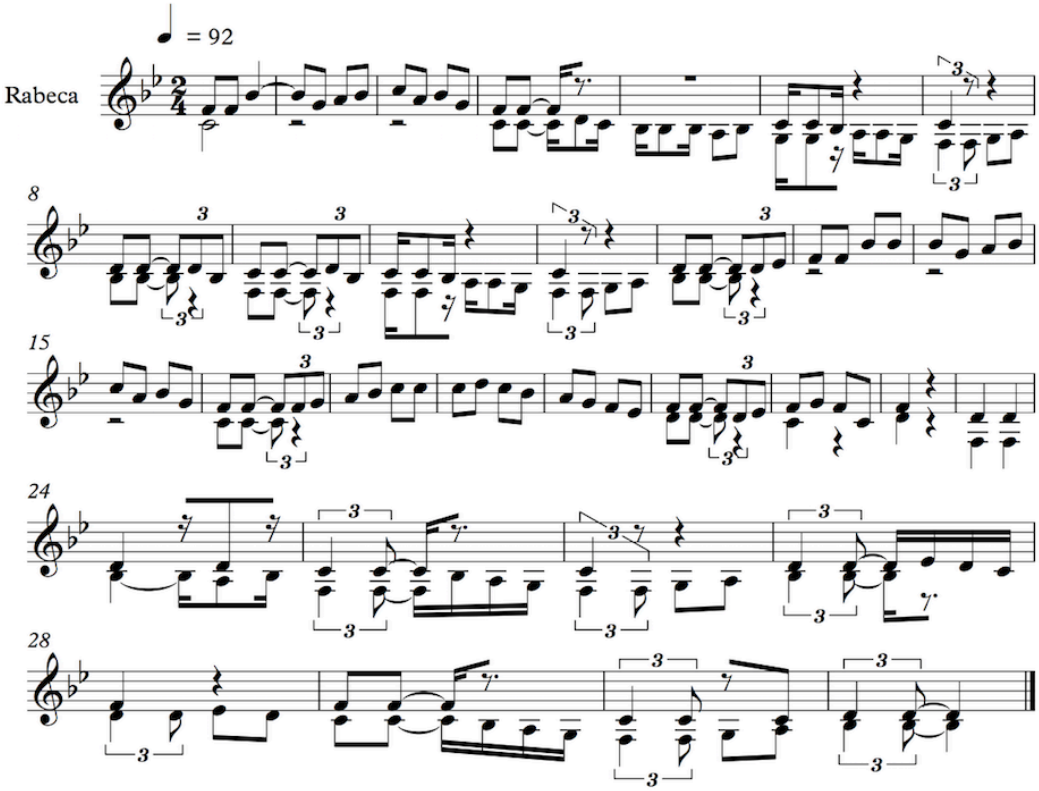


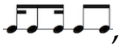
An analysis of these tunings reveals that the pitch is lower than the international standard pitch of A 440 Hz. It is approximately a semitone lower than the standard pitch – for instance, F#-C#-G# is a lower semitone tuning of G-D-A. In fact, both Bonifácio and his brother, Hermes, tune their instruments by ear, as they have perfect control over their perception of the intervals without need of a tuner or *diapason*. If, as appears likely, the sonority of the *rabeca* is linked to that of older instruments dating back to the European Renaissance, the perception of musicians trained in these traditions is based on the tuning

[9] As heterophony in ethnomusicology may refers to simultaneous variations of the same motif or melody found mainly in non-European music, the reference to what Page (1987) sees as heterophonic is clearly related to different patterns or alternate tuning on medieval fiddles.

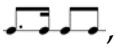
(of around A 416 Hz) standard in Renaissance and Baroque music (Haynes 2002). The tuning patterns mix fourths and fifths with the use of double stops played simultaneously as two melodies, with one occasionally functioning as a bourdon. Music example 5 illustrates the use of double stops and bourdon effect. This probably enabled these instruments to reproduce the polyphony music of composition forms that the Franco-Flemish School brought from Burgundian Netherlands to northeastern Brazil. As part of the Brazilian universe of musical hybridisation, the *rabeca* of Morro Seco is often used to appropriate timbral and modal expressions that may have affiliations with European medieval music – a strong possibility given medieval music's influence on the instrumentation of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Music example 7.



The music example 7 is a transcription of the piece called 'Balanço' as played in the rabeca by Bonifácio. The title of this *moda*, 'Balanço' ('Swing'), is suggestive of its character as a dance. It is interesting to note the swinging, dance feeling of the characteristic syncopation and *habanera* rhythm patterns which are divisions of the *tresillo* (Sandroni 2002: 106-7). Both the characteristic syncopation,  , and the *habanera* rhythm pattern,

BRASILIANA: *Journal for Brazilian Studies*. ISSN 2245-4373.
Double Issue Vol. 8 Nos. 1-2 (2019).

 , give the piece its *balanço* character; the displacement of the meter accentuation given by the syncopation pattern, as is clearly shown in bar 5. This is represented in triplets, as is the lower melody in bars 7, 11, and 28, but the effect is the same as the *habanera* figure above. The syncopated rhythmic patterns in bars 8, 12, 16, and 20 have the effect of the characteristic syncopation or *cinquillo*, although it is written with different figures. The two melodies are played in the *rabeca* solo. The predominant intervals between the two are fourths and fifths, similar to those Page notes in European medieval fiddle playing (1987). Although the use of thirds is also frequent, it occurs normally in the middle of the phrases, as in bars 8, 12, 20, 24, 27, 28, and 30. The intervals of fourths and fifths are emphasised at the beginning and end of the phrases, or in descending periods. This usual employment of fourths and fifths in the repertoire of the *folia da bandeira* corroborates Bonifácio's mention of the lower tune giving a reference for the pitch when accompanying singing parts in the piece, sometimes functioning as a bass line or occasionally as a bourdon.

Hermes Modesto Pereira

Figure 3. Hermes Pereira playing the *rabeca*. (Photograph: Luiz Moretto)

Hermes Pereira indicated his aesthetic preferences when performing the *folia da bandeira* and the *baile*, including the instrument's specific sound and tuning, and the skill of the ensemble in reproducing the texture of the voice, the viola, the *rabeca*, and the

percussion, as well as the rhythm of *bate pé* itself, matching the sound of the instruments with the choreography of the dance.[10]

In relation to his musical repertoire, Hermes mentioned a number of *moda*s, in particular the *tirana grande*, which he believes is the most difficult musical piece performed in Morro Seco. He explained that they used to play the *tirana grande* in the *folia da bandeira* and in the *mutirão*, during the dance parties that followed the communal work. During the *tirana grande*, they initially set the rhythmic phrase by clapping, guiding the instruments' tempo and rhythmic patterns. The men and women first dance in pairs but this quickly changes as they line up and form a figure of eight. This is the moment to clap hands and begin the stomp dancing.

Figure 4. A *folia de reis* group with Hermes Pereira playing the guitar and Bonifacio Pereira on the *rabeca*. (Photograph: Juliana Ferreira/Isa)

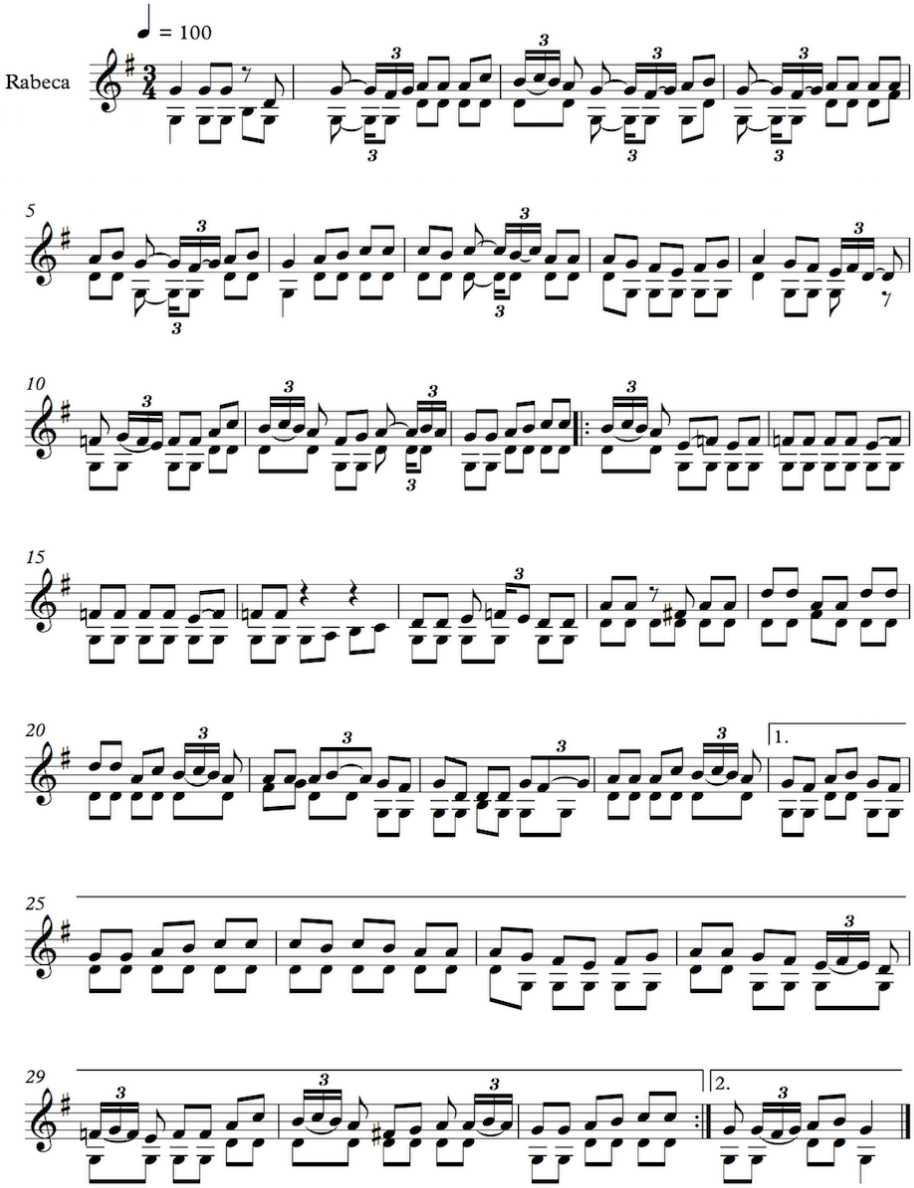
Hermes, therefore, emphasizes that the musical performances integrate the everyday activities that accompany the annual cycles of nature and the cultivation of the land. Activities such as carpentry, fashioning products out of vegetable fibres, sowing and harvesting take place at specific times of the year and are all accompanied by musical rites. As Hermes notes: 'When Christmas comes around and we start to receive signs [from the] insects and cicadas, we remember that it is time to host the *reisado* and *folia*.

Asked about a piece for the *folia da bandeira*, Hermes tuned his *rabeca* and performed the 'Toque da Bandeira' ('Song of the Bandeira') – a composition of this type is called the *chegada* (arrival). The musicians perform particular songs at three specific moments: first,

[10] Interview with Hermes Pereira, 9 Sep 2014.

when they go to visit the host, they play the *chegada*; second, at the moment of arrival at the front of the house, they start to play a piece known as the *entrada* (entry), anticipating the moment when they step inside; and third, when the group leaves towards another house, they play the *despedida* (farewell). The group starts to play the instrumental performance, *tocando e batendo caixa* (on the *rabeca*, viola, guitar, and the snare drum or *caixa de folia*) as they approach the host's house. Only once they are inside the house does the singing commence.

Music Example 8

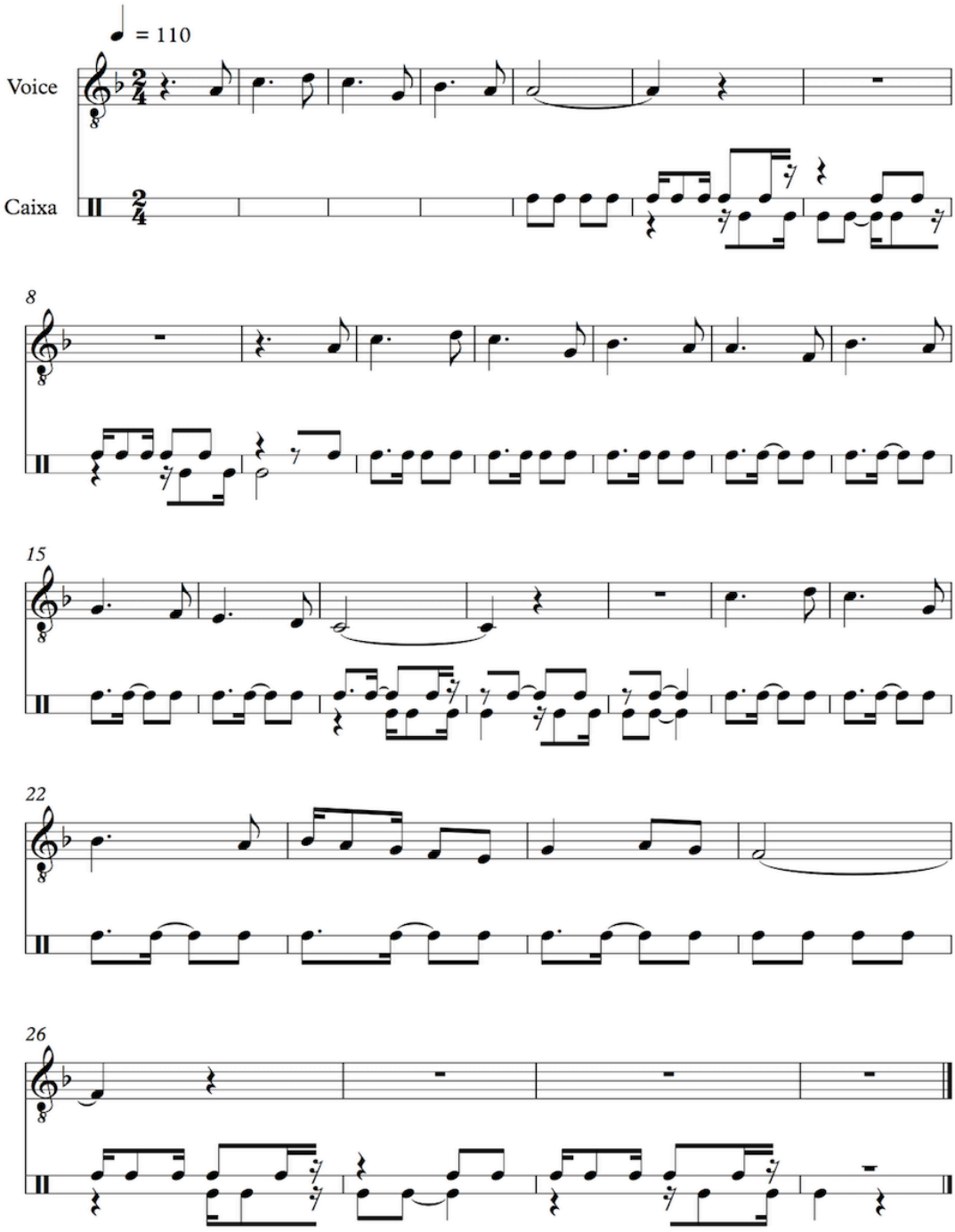


Music example 8 illustrates the texture produced by using the double stops and parts which emphasise the fundamental tone of the harmonic series (see Fiaminghi 2013). Throughout the piece, the open strings work as a bourdon to the main melodic voice. Although in this *folia* the bourdon changes from the tonic G to the dominant D, the first and fifth tonal degrees are not always stressed and the minor seventh degree characterises the modalism (in this case, the mixolydian effect from b10 to b17 and in b29). The transcription is a semitone higher than it sounds in order to simplify the notation, but the pitch would be appropriate at A 415 Hz. The dance character of this *folia* performance is reflected in the *rabeca*'s dislocation of the upper and lower mordents (written as triplets) of the different beats in the ternary time signature, affecting the metric accentuation of the measure. The triplet falls on the first beat (b2, b3, b4, b10, b11, b13, b29, b30 and b31), on the second beat (b3, b5, b7 and b17), and on the third (b9, b11, b20, b23, b28 and b30), or it occurs twice in the bar (b3, b11 and b30) or consecutively from beat three to beat one (b9 to b10 and b28 to b29).

Hermes is a *caixa* player himself and demonstrated the patterns used in the *folia da bandeira*, using his voice as a guide, singing the main vocal part of the *folia* and the line of the *rabeca*. The transcription in music example 9 shows a *despedida* in which the vocal melody and the *caixa* line deliver three parts in a multilinear rhythmic pattern.

Figure 5. Hermes Pereira playing the *caixa de folia*. (Photograph: Luiz Moretto)

Music example 9.



Hermes played the *caixa* with two drumsticks while singing a rhythmic accompaniment. The predominant rhythm patterns played on the *caixa* are the characteristic syncopation (XX.XX.X), the *habanera* (X.XX.X) and the *tresillo* (X.X.X). It is interesting to note how the player changes from the *habanera* pattern to the *tresillo* from b12 to b13. This short

piece reveals the extent to which the *folia de reis* is affected by aspects of rhythms of African derivation that were incorporated into popular Catholic rituals in this part of Brazil. According to Suzel Reily (2002:42), the eight-pulse timeline of the *tresillo* is probably an influence adopted from slaves and *forros* (freed slaves) from North-east Brazil 'who were brought to work in southeastern coffee-growing regions during the nineteenth century'.[11]

Music and religion

During the period of this field research, Hermes was the mass leader in charge. Despite the centralised nature of the Catholic Church, they do not nominate a priest to preside over these rituals. To verify the authenticity of this practice, it is necessary to turn to certain rules in the official Catholic Church that refer to the 'extraordinary ministry of communion', which gives (either temporarily or permanently) a 'person of faith', who is in charge of the mass, the religious authority to distribute communion. This is a key factor contributing to the consolidation of the *quilombo* and its members as musical-religious subjects: the *quilombo* is configured as a community without a centralised power where leadership roles change according to circumstance and time. In Brazil, a lay person in their social life congregating in the church may have acquired their position of power as a consequence of lack of *ordens regulares* (regular orders): the disorder of postures and regiments of office in Portugal which were under reform from 1572. This led to the rise of 'judgment of the people' and prosecutors of the masters to give the plebe worker a voice over norms and taxation regulated between the crown and the city council of Lisbon, acquired during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Langhans 1946). As musicians and community leaders, individuals such as Bonifácio and Hermes play a hierarchical role in the *quilombo*. They are involved in the coordination of the religious and musical rituals, in the political and economic decisions of the community, and in the organisation of agricultural activities. This role contains a dynamic of power and patronage that is not associated with economic position but with political and religious leadership in a society in which musicians are able to establish a respected 'personal stance or position' (Waterman 1990).

[11] The coffee-growing regions Reily (2005) alludes to are other parts of São Paulo state, South-east Rio de Janeiro, South Minas Gerais, mainly the Vale do Paraiba, which form other cultural settings, however, the spread of musical elements of slaves and *forros* may have influenced the music in Vale do Ribeira. Another possibility is the late immigration of slaves that arrived in the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Santos who brought their music to the rice plantations of the Vale do Ribeira, which was based on slave labour.

Figure 6. Hermes Pereira celebrating mass. (Photograph: Luiz Moretto)

Although the Catholic Church considers popular Catholic rituals such as the *folia da bandeira* and *congada* as unofficial, for the participants these rituals sustain the fragile division between sacred and profane practices. They regard the *folia da bandeira* and *reisado* as sacred rituals and the *baile de rabecada* as a secular event. It is through the different levels of permissiveness or censure that community members develop an understanding of the tenuous relationship between the sacred and profane within the context of each ritual. For example, one informant reported that he is not against the habit of drinking *cachaça* (a spirit made of sugarcane) during the religious processions, nor does he disapprove the use of alcohol at gatherings where the *fandango* is performed. However, he is generally critical if someone behaves inappropriately – for instance, he took issue with someone from another community who used to drink *cachaça* and reach the end of the ritual covered in mud and wrapped in the flag.

Musical and Social Change

Currently, one of the main concerns regarding quilombo music practices is the decrease in numbers of musicians with technical knowledge of instrument playing and repertoire. There has been a visible decline in the number of *rabeca* players in the quilombo communities of Vale do Ribeira. One issue that has contributed greatly to the disquiet felt by musicians of the older generation is the disappearance of the dance parties where *bailes* are performed. For example, the musicians of Quilombo do Mandira, another community in Estrada do Ariri, a district of Cananéia, have lost their last *rabeca* player. In an interview

with a *fandango* group from Mandira, the lead musician, Arnaldo, declared: 'The live music was all we had, including music to celebrate our dance parties. There was no radio or recorded music. Even during the carnival, we performed the *fandango* live as our dance. Today, the youngsters do not want to learn anymore.' Arnaldo mentioned that his *fandango* ensemble disbanded after the death of Angico, the *rabeca* player, as no one currently knows how to play the *rabeca* in their area. [12]

The evangelism of the new Pentecostal churches is pointed out as partly responsible for the decreasing number of players. Hermes mentioned the challenging situation provoked by the arrival of the Pentecostals. These new churches are among the many factors affecting the Caiçara communities' way of life, alongside urbanisation, real-estate speculation, and the creation of new nature reserves (Diegues and Coellho 2013: 96). Those converting to evangelical Christianity are discouraged from performing the *fandango* and the *folia da bandeira* as the church's regime attributes little respect for these genres. The conversion to other religious practices creates social and political divergences among communities, corroborating Bonifácio's and Hermes' concerns regarding the difficulty of maintaining *folia* practices.

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[12] Interview with Arnaldo Mandira (musician), September 2015, Porto Cubatão, quilombo Mandira.

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