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## DRUMMING IN THE NIGHT, RITE AND PERFORMANCE IN BAJO ARAGÓN

The author considers various aspects of the drum performances that take place in three towns in Bajo Aragón, Spain: Hajar, La Puebla de Hajar, and Calanda. The performances on snare and bass drums occur only on two days during the celebration of Holy Week in two distinct settings: religious processions and, apart from these, primarily at night. An analysis reveals that the drum performances are the actual realization of a spirit of community and of a desire for individual self-expression among the Bajoaragoneses, and that they constitute the means rendering all this possible.

Keywords: Holy Week, drumming, Spain

This essay will examine some aspects of drum performances that occur in three towns of Bajo Aragón, Spain: Hajar, La Puebla de Hajar, Calanda.<sup>1</sup> The *Bajoaragoneses* are renowned in Spain, and to some extent also abroad, for two cultural characteristics: their *afición* [love] for the sound of percussion and their outstanding skill in playing the *tambor* (snare) and *bombo* (bass) drums.<sup>2</sup> This they exercise on two days only, during Holy

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<sup>1</sup> A natural region rich in storied tradition, the territory of Bajo Aragón lies between Teruel and Zaragoza, extending from the south of the Ebro River to the farthest reaches of the Iberian mountain system. It is furrowed by the rivers Martín, Regallo, Guadalope, and Matarraña, while on the east the Algás River, and on the west the Aguasvivas River define its borders. With its area of 6,000 square kilometres and population of some 70,000, Bajo Aragón is currently one of the most economically and culturally powerful districts of the Comunidad Autónoma Aragonesa. In November 1996, the Cortes de Aragón approved a new administrative subdivision of Aragón, which assigned some of the towns of Bajo Aragón to other *comarcas*, such as Bajo Martín, and Andorra. Nevertheless, I have preferred to use the term Bajo Aragón, which is commonly used in the towns where I did my research. The inhabitants of Hajar, La Puebla de Hajar, and Calanda refer to themselves as *Bajoaragoneses*.

<sup>2</sup> A native of Calanda, the famed film director Luis Buñuel (1900-1983) used the traditional drum rhythms of his village as sound tracks for his films, from *L'âge d'or* (1930) to *Simón del desierto* (1965). Buñuel also authored a book of memoirs, *Mi último suspiro*

Week, from midnight, Holy Thursday to 10 p.m., Holy Saturday, the only time it is possible to do so. The rest of the year, the use of snare and bass drums is forbidden, and they are put away and not touched.<sup>3</sup>

During the designated time when it is permitted, the playing of the *toques* and *marchas* (rhythms) goes on virtually uninterrupted and in two quite distinct situations: at religious processions, and, most importantly, apart from these, during the night. Participation in drum performances is collective in the widest sense of the term: in each town studied, at least 40 percent of the population present played either the *tambor* or the *bombo*. Bernard Lortat-Jacob observed that "the object of the festival is the community, which mobilizes itself for the occasion" (1994:9). He believed the music to be a kind of transposition of the festival to the plane of sound. In the towns of Bajo Aragón it is the community (almost entirely composed of *Hijaranos*, *Pueblanos*, or *Calandinos*, that is, those who reside or were born in these villages) that mobilizes itself. Holy Week becomes an occasion for a collective exchange of roles, as the inhabitants become drummers. In this instance, the performance of rhythms is not merely a part of the festival or its attendant spectacle, but is *the event itself*: it is, literally, the festival. The most important rituals are therefore the performances, while the religious rites (in which percussion playing is still foremost) assume in proportion a relatively minor role. In such a situation, drum performances furnish the words of an intense sonorous discourse, in which, all (or almost all), with loud and simultaneous voices, rethink, reformulate, and reestablish their reasons for being and staying together. From this standpoint, the drum performances that are not part of nocturnal religious processions are highly significant.<sup>4</sup>

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(published in 1982), one of whose chapters is dedicated to "The Drums of Calanda". Buñuel's celebrity, his films, and the distribution of his book have helped draw many tourists to Calanda, especially in the period after the death of Franco. Nine Bajoaragonese towns (Albalate del Arzobispo, Alcañiz, Alcorisa, Andorra, Samper de Calanda, and Urrea de Gaén, in addition to those mentioned), moreover, are included in the "Route of the Tambor and Bombo", designed to attract tourists to the region for the Holy Week celebrations.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, drums can be heard in the Bajoaragonese towns from February on, when players begin to try out rhythm sequences that will be performed during the course of the "Route of the Tambor and Bombo". These performances, however, are considered an anticipation of Holy Week, rather than as part of the actual celebration. In Bajo Aragón, moreover, there are active duos consisting of snare drum and *dulzaina*, a traditional oboe (see Bajén and Gros 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Emphasis on performance may overshadow aspects of Holy Week in Bajo Aragón also deserving of further study: for example, an analysis of the rhythms; the history and classification of musical instruments; the transmission of performance techniques; the relations between the sacred and profane in the festival; and the influence of tourism and mass communication on performance, to name a few. These cannot be considered here, and will be the subject of forthcoming publications. For a general overview of Holy Week in Bajo Aragón see: Micolau Adell and Senz Guallar 1984; Segura Rodriguez 1987:175-259. I wish to thank Francisco Javier Senz Guallar and the Instituto de Estudios Turolenses of Teruel who facilitated my research in the field in Bajo Aragón.

### ***Romper la hora***

The phrase *romper la hora* [breaking the hour] refers to the event that coincides with the first performance of all the performers together in the principal town plaza, commencing with a violent percussive attack at midnight on Holy Thursday.<sup>5</sup> The rise of the decibel level at the moment of the attack is appreciable: at La Puebla de Híjar the peak level varies from 105 to 114 dB; at Híjar it is circa 114 dB. A few seconds earlier, the decibel level in the plazas of the two towns was 60 dB (López Barrio and Carles 1996:73-74). The high decibel level (100-110 dB), which will be maintained during the two days of the year when drumming is permitted, is the most obvious sign that the festival has actually started. When the first groups of players withdraw from the plaza at about 20 minutes after midnight, *romper la hora* is considered over.

At Híjar the Plaza de España begins to fill at about 11 p.m. The first to arrive are the tourists, attracted by the publicity given to Holy Week at Híjar.<sup>6</sup> The tourists tend to gather in the middle of the plaza, a position that they will have to give up to make room for the performers, who arrive either alone or in small groups. Players reunite year after year in predetermined spots, usually the ones habitually occupied by the groups to which they belong, forcing the tourists to disperse to the edges of the plaza, under the portals that surround it on every side. By 11:30 or so the plaza is full of players.

From above it is possible to clearly distinguish the different groups. *Bombos* players who arrive late enter the plaza carrying their instruments on their heads, while those unable to get in set up their drums in the adjacent streets.

The sound level in the plaza is quite high; almost everyone speaks loudly, people greet each other noisily, and many players joke and laugh. Intermittent beating of *tambor* or *bombo* can be heard, as here and there players adjust the tuning of their instruments or are simply unable to contain their growing excitement; but at a few minutes before midnight the sound level begins to diminish substantially, and almost total silence follows. The faces of the players express intense concentration and perceptible nervous tension. A narrow corridor opens up in the crowd, permitting the passage of the Alcade from the Ayuntamiento Portal to the middle of the plaza. At midnight, amid general silence, and from a raised position visible to all, the Alcade lowers his arm with an abrupt gesture, and all the players simultaneously begin to play as loudly as possible.

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<sup>5</sup> *Romper la hora* takes place at different times in some of the towns considered here: at Calanda, for example, it begins at 12:00 noon on Good Friday.

<sup>6</sup> Holy Week at Híjar has been declared a "Fiesta de Interés Turístico Nacional" [Festival of National Touristic Interest] in 1966.

Hijar, 1997: few minutes before the *romper la hora*

At La Puebla de Hajar the succession of events and behaviours that lead to the *romper la hora* are similar. In this village also, the plaza begins to fill up at around 11:15 p.m., and is virtually full by 11:45 or so. Here, too, groups of players occupy the streets adjoining the plaza. In this phase of Holy Week, there is less tourist presence at La Puebla de Hajar, and the period of silence preceding the abrupt attack of all the performers begins to be honoured at about five minutes before midnight.

There are two conspicuous differences between the *romper la hora* in Hijar and that at La Puebla de Hajar. The first is that at Hijar the players must appear in the plaza dressed in black tunics, while players in La Puebla do not observe this rule.<sup>7</sup> The second is a difference in the drum performance itself. At Hijar, each group of players performs a certain rhythm, one that may be common to many groups but not to all. Each group, moreover, observes its own tempo in the pulse of the beat. The resultant sound is a superimposition and sometimes interweaving of different rhythms, or of similar rhythms performed at different tempi. At La Puebla de Hajar, on the other hand, all the performers execute the same rhythm (which is identical to that subsequently used in the processions) at the same tempo. The entire plaza is in rhythm from the moment of the attack. When listening to the *romper la hora* from above, one can

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<sup>7</sup> At Hijar the first procession begins at two in the morning on Good Friday.

sometimes detect slight, temporary differences in the rhythmic pulse between groups of performers located at different ends of the plaza. When one is standing within the plaza listening at ground level, however, these differences virtually disappear.

### *Cuadrillas*

The drummers assemble in groups known as *cuadrillas*. During Holy Week, players never perform solo: each individual performance takes place from within one of the *cuadrillas*. The makeup of these groups is quite stable from year to year. Internally, the due proportion between the number of snare to bass drums must be respected — one *bombo* for every three *tambores* is generally considered optimal. This proportion is nonetheless not binding, nor, for that matter, is there a fixed number of players to the *cuadrillas*, which can vary from as few as four players to as many as 30 or more.

Ties of friendship or family unite members. The *cuadrillas* may comprise groups of childhood friends, neighbours, or family (either nuclear or extended). Some consist solely of women. Where this is the case, it rarely connotes competition with or opposition to groups of male players, since nowadays there is no prohibition against drum playing by women<sup>8</sup> and in almost all the towns of Bajo Aragón *cuadrillas* can be of mixed gender.

A *cuadrilla* can be seen as the expression on an acoustic plane of interpersonal relationships: ties (frequently overlapping) of partnership, friendship, and kinship structure every *cuadrilla*. Although this affords the groups considerable stability, they are nonetheless not immutable. Their composition changes over time, as some dissolve in order to form new ones. Moreover, the *cuadrillas* do not always function as closed entities, for participation of other players is allowed and may even be welcomed and sought after. Also, players who are not Bajoaragoneses, or those who move from town to town, may join groups on a temporary basis.

Skill in playing is not a prerequisite for membership in a *cuadrilla*. Group solidarity takes precedence over playing technique, though this does not mean that performance abilities are not valued either within one's own *cuadrilla* or among others. But group cohesion — the ability to keep together in performing the rhythms — is considered even more important than mere expressions of individual virtuosity. A successful *cuadrilla* is one in which interpersonal ties are effectively expressed in a correct rhythmic performance. In this way, the performance of a rhythm can last a long time without the players finding it boring or needlessly repetitive.

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<sup>8</sup> Until 1997 drumming by women was formally prohibited in Hjar, even though in the past female groups and solo performers did play both in processions and at night. The prohibition was openly set aside during the Holy Week celebrations of 1997, in which a number of all-women groups participated.

The attainment of rhythmic balance between the various components of the group is at once a source of satisfaction and an incentive for repetition.

The spatial representation of the unity of the *cuadrilla* is the circular arrangement in which the members stand when they play standing still. The circle delimits both the physical performance space and the impalpable realm of interpersonal relationships and sound. It allows the players to "stay" inside the rhythm, facilitating the precision of their own performance, which is contemporaneous with the performance of other *cuadrillas*.

The *cuadrilla* is also the physical and acoustic zone within which the drumming abilities of individual players unfold. A performer is proficient above all within the context of his group; the better he is, the more prestige accrues to it. A *cuadrilla* becomes famous because it possesses a good drummer whose name is always associated with it. There are several ways in which an individual player's distinctive voice can emerge from within this group context. The principal one is the role of the *jefe* [leader], who is usually the most skillful snare drum player (although there are rare instances of leaders who play the bass drum). The leader's main task is to maintain the group's cohesion, above all during performance, when he (or she) is responsible for the correct performance of the selected rhythm, often indicating the correct beat or accurate rhythmic figure. A player can also achieve distinction by varying and underlining the rhythm during performance. A snare drummer, for example, may vary the rhythm with *redobles* [rolls], which, when complex and prolonged, are highly prized. A bass drum player can emphasize his performance by increasing the volume, but it is predominantly his regularity in keeping the beat that wins him esteem as a player.

### **Rondas**

At the end of the *romper la hora*, the *cuadrillas* withdraw from the plaza and begin a walk through the streets of the towns: *la ronda*. The disposition of the drummers during the *ronda* takes into account the number of players and the width of the streets traveled. The most common is a formation of two more or less parallel lines, with the *cuadrilla* leader at the head. The group proceeds while playing, the leader signaling transitions from one *toque* to another, when everyone has judged the previous rhythm has been played for a sufficient time. If the chosen rhythm is not well performed, as evidenced by lack of rhythmic cohesion, it will be abandoned for another.

#### Hijar, 1997: the *cuadrilla* "El Diablo"

The *ronda* through the streets usually follows a customary route, repeated year after year. But although some stops are obligatory, the itinerary may also vary. *Cuadrillas* generally stop in front of the homes of group members. They play a *toque* until invited in to consume food and drink, prepared in advance. The custom of making these prearranged visits is honoured year after year. Other, not prearranged, stops may take place before the homes of former group members who have died during the year. When this is the case, the playing of the rhythms underscores acoustic and affective continuity with the deceased. The stops do not

invariably signify formalized recognition or tribute, however. Sometimes *cuadrillas* stop before the house of someone thought to have behaved badly to one of the players, or known to dislike the sound of drumming. In this case, the visits denote derision or challenge. *Cuadrillas* often stop and play a rhythm when they reach a portal. These stops have a purely acoustic function. Stopping under portals is considered desirable because their vaulted arches amplify the drum sounds and render the rhythmic cohesion of the groups especially noticeable.<sup>9</sup> Recently other stopping places have been added to the ritually established (and considered traditional) ones just mentioned. Many *cuadrillas*, particularly those composed of boys and girls, stop at cafés and discotheques to consume alcoholic drinks and meet friends from other groups.

Calanda, 1996: a *cuadrilla* and other players in Plaza de España

At Calanda, *rondas* take place at night between Friday and Saturday, after the event known as the *reanudación de redobles* [resumption of the drum rolls], which occurs after 10 p.m. in the Plaza de España, which at Calanda is the privileged place for the passage, stops, and exhibition of the different *cuadrillas*. Some groups have particular spots, usually the same ones they occupied some hours before, during the *romper la hora*, and they remain

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<sup>9</sup> The decibel level of the *cuadrillas* playing under the gates of the Plaza de España at Calanda reaches 115 dB (López Barrio and Carles 1997:74).



there for longer or shorter periods. The *rondas* of Calanda focus on the Plaza like expanding and contracting waves of sound that leave only to come back again.

In 1996 and 1997, I witnessed the *ronda* of a group directed by Isidro Esquin Piquer, known as El Rabalera. The *ronda* of El Rabalera's *cuadrilla* leaves from his house, where group members have assembled. After a passage of some hundred or so metres, traversed while playing, the *cuadrilla* stops in its usual space inside the plaza, where other performers join it. It remains there playing for several hours, while other groups of players pass by or stay. The plaza is the principal performance space, the acoustic centre to which the players continually return in the course of a night. Rarely if ever, do groups stop to play in the streets, using them instead primarily for passage. When El Rabalera feels his *cuadrilla* has sufficiently performed the rhythms he indicates to them from time to time, he has them once more resume the *ronda*. They follow a route known to everyone, as he leads the group to a house where other friends and relatives have prepared a nighttime meal of food and drinks. This time the *cuadrilla* seldom stops along the way, except perhaps at small squares or wayside shrines.

### *Piques*

During the night, the trajectories, preplanned or not, of the various *cuadrillas*, inevitably cross. Two or more groups may encounter each other in the same place during the *rondas*, whose space for actualization coincides with that of the town. The main plaza and the street crossings are privileged spaces for these meetings. When this happens, groups normally adopt one of two customary modes of conduct. In the first, a group passes beside or across from the other *cuadrilla* and continues without stopping on its own itinerary. In the second, it stops beside or in front of the other players, which happens primarily when the space doesn't allow passage, either because it is too narrow, or because it is momentarily blocked by other performers. The rule observed by all the *cuadrillas* is that each must continue playing its own rhythm. A meeting between two or more *cuadrillas* is primarily a clash of different rhythms. The *pique* occurs when two *cuadrillas*, each playing a different rhythm, try to compel each other to perform the other group's *toque*.

Several performance strategies are employed during the *piques*. At the moment of the encounter both *cuadrillas* may be lined up in formation, or one might be lined up and the other in a circle, but when the *pique* begins, both groups tend quickly to form circles. This allows the performers a greater awareness of their own rhythm, as against that of the other *cuadrilla*. The sound remains within the circle formed, enabling the performers to focus on their performance. The nature of the space, however, does not always allow one or both groups to form circles during

an encounter, as when, for example, they meet in an alley. In this case, the players remain in the positions they had assumed during the *ronda* (mostly lined up in formation), but instead turn their backs on the opposing *cuadrilla*, turning toward an imaginary centre. The players conceive the *piques* as dangerous situations, because at any moment they may lose the rhythm they have been playing. Lapses of concentration signify defeat, and it is therefore necessary for all the members of the *cuadrilla* to concentrate their maximum attention on the rhythm of their own *toque*. Reestablishing the circle or turning towards each other allows a greater perception of the *marcha*, and therefore of the *pique*.

The second performance strategy employed during *piques* is that of playing as loudly as possible. When the *cuadrillas* that meet are numerically more or less equivalent, a means of prevailing is afforded by preventing the drummers of the other group from clearly perceiving its own rhythm. If one *marcha* is clearly louder than another, the conclusion is inevitable: one of the *cuadrillas* has succeeded in winning. Louder playing requires greater physical force: the drummers are conscious of having to force their technical abilities, and the fact of having turned toward each other is a form of mutual incitement. Sometime the rise in volume slightly precedes the start of the *pique* — a *cuadrilla*, in approaching another group of drummers, may begin to play more loudly in order to signal its readiness for a confrontation, or, on the other hand, to dissuade the others from beginning one.

In this game, which is a form of ritualized provocation and battle, the group that succeeds in maintaining its rhythm is the one that wins. The involvement of the players must therefore be total. Individual drummers do not lose, rather, the entire *cuadrilla* is defeated. Not only must the player give his undivided attention to his own and the other players' rhythms, but his entire body also participates in the *pique*. A performer in difficulty looks around at the other players and matches his movements to theirs, above all, at those times when the sound level of the two *cuadrillas* is equivalent. His sight thus assists his hearing: the *bombo* players and the leaders are observed closely, for their gestures (frequently emphatic in the circumstances) visibly express the rhythm. His body also perceives the low sounds of the *bombo* players; these instruments, therefore, acquire a fundamental importance during the *pique*, since their rhythmic pulse remains perceptible even when everything else tends to become indistinct. The involvement of the performer must be total: he literally throws his entire self into the conflict with the other performers.

The length of the *pique* is indefinite, it may be brief (as short as a minute) or longer (five minutes or more) depending on such factors as the place of the conflict, the number of players in the *cuadrillas*, and the skill of the drummers. The best *piques* are those in which the opposing *cuadrillas* reach an equilibrium and, for prolonged periods, two perfectly performed rhythms can be distinguished overlapping and sometimes crossing. The *pique* is the moment when the integrity of the *cuadrillas*,

expressed in sound through the collective performance of a rhythm, is at risk (even momentarily) of disappearing. The winning *cuadrilla* "consumes" the other, forcing it to perform its rhythm or to be silent. The *pique* is therefore a ritualized form of rhythmic contest, though without ever involving the expression of personal rivalry between the players: winning or losing are only significant as part of the ritual contest of Holy Week and have no further consequences.<sup>10</sup>

### *Cese del toque*

At La Puebla de Hajar the *cese del toque* [end of the rhythm] occurs at 10 p.m. on Holy Saturday. The *cese del toque* is the moment of closure for every drum performance. Formerly, this moment was not rigidly determined and probably was not even a communal event for many, as it is today. It has been pushed forward from hour to hour over the years: almost as though the players wanted to prolong the duration of their performance, deferring the instant when the almost year-long prohibition on playing *tambores* and *bombos* becomes binding.<sup>11</sup>

After the last procession (which begins at 6:30 p.m. and ends a few hours later) the *cuadrillas* reassemble in the streets or in the plaza. There is a noticeable intensity now, both in their playing and in their emotions, along with a virtual absence of *piques*, those that do occur being short-lived. The *cuadrillas* tend to set themselves up in their prescribed places in the plaza, after having stopped to play in front of cafés or the front doors of some of group members. Each group plays its preferred rhythm: accord between the players is eagerly sought, perfect performance being the goal. Some *cuadrillas* locate themselves under portals in order to help themselves to stay better within the rhythm. The plaza fills up slowly. From the square the overlapping of the various rhythms is quite noticeable but attenuates as the listener approaches an individual *cuadrilla*: from the centre of which its own rhythm is the most perceptible, with those of all the others forming the background.

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<sup>10</sup> If the *pique* is perceived as stemming from personal conflicts, it is assessed negatively by the other players (Segura Rodriguez 1987:244-245).

<sup>11</sup> At Hajar the players stop playing at the end of the last procession on Holy Saturday. At Calanda the *finalización des redobles* [end of the drumrolls] takes place at 2 p.m. on Holy Saturday, with somewhat different modalities from those observed at La Puebla de Hajar.

La Puebla de Hajar, 1997: a *cuadrilla* under a portal before the *cese del toque*

The *cese del toque* at La Puebla de Hajar acts like a *romper la hora* in reverse, moving from an indifferent rhythmic situation toward one of the greatest possible rhythmic cohesion. At around 9:30 p.m. there is still no agreement between the players, who by now have filled the plaza and the adjoining streets. Without anyone knowing how or where, a *cuadrilla* starts to play *the* rhythm, which is the same one used during the processions and for the *romper la hora*. One by one, nearby *cuadrillas* take it up, until finally all the groups are playing it. From a centre that is nonetheless not the geographical centre of the plaza, concentric circles begin to spread, whose circumference is a function of the processional rhythm. By 9:55 p.m. or so, rhythmic congruity is total and there is a noticeable tendency for the players to play more loudly and slightly to accelerate the tempo.

I attended the *cese del toque* at La Puebla de Hajar on three occasions and witnessed basically two different modalities of closure. On one occasion, all the *cuadrillas* maintained the same rhythm to the end. On the other two, a sudden quickening of the rhythmic pace on the part of one *cuadrilla* compromised the rhythmic integrity of the whole, resulting in a brusque transition to a-rhythmic playing during which the majority of players played different rhythms and sounds instead of the processional rhythm.<sup>12</sup> Amid this undifferentiated rhythm the sole element favoured by the players was again volume, which increased until the end of the performance. To know when to stop, the players watched the hands of the clock on the façade of the Ayuntamiento that closes the plaza on the south

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<sup>12</sup> The conclusion of the drumming does not invariably end with a unified rhythm, sometimes a *cuadrilla* may keep on playing its own rhythm *against* those of all the other groups, not recognizing the rights of the others to determine which rhythm to follow (Segura Rodriguez 1987:175-176).

side, toward which all gazes were turned.<sup>13</sup> In the few seconds of the conclusion, there is a rapid decrescendo until everyone in the plaza and nearby streets has stopped playing. Those who continue to play are shushed by the crowd and severely criticized in discussions on subsequent days. A few cheers for La Puebla de Híjar can be heard, then the buzz of people arranging to meet after dinner or in the following year.

### ***Being in rhythm***

Holy Week in the towns of Bajo Aragón is more than a religious celebration during which drums are played. The predominance of "profane", over liturgical performances is a clear indicator that something equally or more important than the celebration in sound of the Passion is in play. Through the rhythms, in fact, the community fulfills its desire to be together, unveiling its (normally hidden) rules through the medium of the performances. It is for this reason that the performance of the rhythms is not delegated to groups of professional, or semi-professional performers, but instead involves everyone, men and women, young and old, all of whom feel called upon to play the drums.

The norms regulating performances in the different settings of the festival and in the moments in which they occur appear as the clear manifestation of different modalities of community involvement. The greatest cohesion occurs during the *romper la hora*: the dominant emotion among the players before the collective percussive attack is that of gratification in being together with the others once again (and mentally also with the players of the past, whose memory is silently invoked before beginning to play). This cohesion is expressed most obviously during the *romper la hora* at La Puebla de Híjar, where all the players perform the same rhythm with the same beat.

Being and feeling together is central to other performances as well, above all, of those that take place within the *cuadrilla*. An aspect that emerges distinctly from an analysis of the performance is the need of the players of every *cuadrilla* to achieve the optimal degree of mutual rhythmic communication and understanding. When this is achieved, and it happens quite frequently (thanks to the widespread drumming talents of the Bajoaragoneses), the players tend to repeat their rhythm virtually indefinitely. This prolonged repetition, however, does not produce satiation or boredom either among the performers or their listeners. To repeat a rhythm is a source of pleasure, joy, and personal and collective satisfaction. In this connection, we may recall the observations of Thomas Turino (1993:111), who pointed out how in the course of the festival, prolonged repetition serves to bring people together by attesting to their

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<sup>13</sup> Recently, the custom of stopping at a signal from the Alcade, who stands in a circular space opened up by participants a few instants before 10 p.m., has been introduced. However, not all players regarded this positively.

social unity. Moving and playing together in a group, "being in sync", is a crucial element for perceiving oneself as a participant of a social situation. In this sense, the music is a form of "affective intensity". In the context of the festival, prolonged musical repetition, far from inducing boredom, is rather a source of aesthetic power, offering the possibility, as Turino reminds us, of a deepening connection between the members of a community. The rhythms thus become the actual realization of community identity and not simply its symbolic expression. Turino's observations are especially pertinent to the rhythmic performances in Bajo Aragón during Holy Week. The *cuadrilla's* repetition of a rhythm becomes, in effect, the concrete realization of unity among group members. Iteration confirms the accord among those making up the little community of the *cuadrilla*.

Another level of cohesion results from the shared knowledge of the rhythms. Although *cuadrillas* sometimes perform original rhythms of their own composition, they usually play traditional ones, which can be said to pass from one group to another during Holy Week. This sharing or exchange of rhythms is yet another way Bajoaragoneses affirm their sense of community.

Being and playing together does not necessarily imply that everyone plays the same rhythms all the time. This may well occur during religious processions, but these do not predominate either in length or intensity. Identity and sense of community are expressed through playing the same rhythms, *together with* differentiation. This can happen from the opening moment of the *romper la hora*, when the various groups play the same rhythm at different tempi, as at Hajar and Calanda. Being united with the others means being so in different ways — each drummer has sense of belonging to the wider community of the town, while still being free to make his own voice heard as a member of a "micro-community", that of his group. Even the rhythms, which taken together represent an identifying element, taken singly may be used at particular moments as distinguishing elements among the various groups. An individual drummer may develop a distinctive personal style, which is highly prized when he is skillful player.

In their drum performances the Bajoaragoneses are able to harmonize their identities as members of a community with their need to achieve individual distinction. By means of an explicit and conscious alternation of collective and private moments, they use the festival as a principal occasion to recognize their similarities and differences. To make this evident to each and every participant simultaneously, they employ a special language, that of the rhythms, through which they express both their ties and their personal conflicts; and it is only because they are expressed through rhythms in the drum performances that the conflicts have no further negative consequences, as for example in the *piques*.

For the Bajoaragoneses drum performances are the concrete, actual realization of their membership in a community, of their sense of identity and of distinction, achieved through the playing of the rhythms. Holy Week in Bajo Aragón resembles a rite, where beyond celebrating the Passion, the drummers "celebrate" the rhythms — rhythms that give coherence and meaning to their behaviour and relationships. Year after year, *Hijaranos*, *Pueblanos* and *Calandinos* continue to play the same *toques*, but with slight additions and subtractions, modifying the details of some of the rhythmic arrangements. This determines collective consciousness of the passage of time, affirming through performance the meaning of being "still here and still together", as they were in the past, yet otherwise than in the past.

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## BUBNJANJE U NOĆI, OBRED I IZVEDBA U BAJO AROGÓNU

### SAŽETAK

U radu se analiziraju razni aspekti bubnjarskih izvedbi u tri gradića Bajo Aragóna u Španjolskoj: Hjaru, La Puebla de Hjaru i Calandi. Bubnjanje na *tamboru*, malom bubnju i *bombu*, velikom bubnju, događa se tijekom dva dana za vrijeme Velikog tjedna, od ponoći Velikog četvrtka do 22 sata na Veliku subotu. Ostali se dio godine poštuje zabrana sviranja tih dvaju instrumenata. Izvođenje *toque* i *marcha* ritmova odvija se takoreći neprekidno tijekom utvrdenoga razdoblja u dvije odvojene postavbe: u vjerskim procesijama i izvan njih, u zbivanjima koja se odvijaju prvenstveno noću. Sudjelovanje u bubnjarskim izvedbama zajedničko je u najširem smislu: u svakom je navedenom gradu gotovo 40 posto prisutnih sviralo bubnjeve. Noćne izvedbe, koje nisu bile dio procesija, zbog svojega su se intenziteta i trajanja činile najvažnijima. Autor razmatra početnu izvedbu, *romper la hora* [prekidanje sata], posljednju izvedbu, *cese del toque* [kraj ritmova] te izvedbe tijekom noćnih *rondasa* [ophoda] svirača ulicama gradića. Analizira i sastav *cuadrilla*, skupina svirača, norme koje određuju ritmove unutar skupina te *piques*, ritualizirane sukobe između raznih skupina. Prema autoru, bubnjarske su izvedbe stvarni izraz zajedništva Bajoaragonaca, njihovog identiteta i razlika ostvarenih putem ritmova. Veliki tjedan u Bajo Aragónu stoga nalikuje na obred tijekom kojeg, osim što se slavi Muka, bubnjari slave ritmove, te time njihovo ponašanje i svi njihovi odnosi postaju međusobno povezanim.

Ključne riječi: Veliki tjedan, bubnjanje, Španjolska