

THE MUSICAR DO ATAJO DE NEGRITOS DA FAMÍLIA BALLUMBROSIO: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF PERFORMANCE

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DOSSIER LOCAL MUSICKING

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ABSTRACT

The atajos de negritos are groups of Afro-descendant men, boys and girls who take to the streets of El Carmen-Peru at Christmas time, usually from December 23rd to January 7th, where they perform dances and songs. They are traditional troops performing as they are formed by amateurs, residents and people with connections to El Carmen. The objective of this research is to illustrate through the performance ethnography how the music, the performance and the repertoire of the atajo are configured, and to understand how they are linked to the locality in which they occur. This investigation contributed to his field of research by talking about the ways in which contemporary blacks in Peru are turning to traditional expressive forms as a means of conquering space and redefining their local position.

KEYWORDS
Atajo de Negritos;
Musicking Local;
Ethnomusicology;
Ethnography of
performance; Afro-
Peruvian Culture

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INTRODUCTION

It is an ethnography of the performance (Seeger 2015) and an analysis of the “musicking” (Small 1998) of the bold set, specifically that of the Ballumbrosio family, located in the district of El Carmen, on the south coast of Lima-Peru. The objective of this research was to illustrate through the ethnography of performance how music, performance and the repertoire of atajo are configured and to understand how social interactions and “music” develop within the community.

It was also considered important to understand the internal negotiations, the preparation process that takes place in the trials and practices before the pilgrimage until the end of the cycle. We continue with a dense description of the ritual process of the atajo, to then zoom in on three moments of this process in order to identify how each instance of the atajos journeys involves contextual changes.

Seeger (1992) proposes an orientation for the study of any type of music, systematized based on questions to be answered by observing a musical performance: what is performed? Who performs? Where does the performance take place? When does it occur? How does it happen? Why does it occur?

THE ATAJO DE NEGRITOS

The atajos de negritos are groups of men, boys and girls of African descent who take to the streets at Christmas time from December 23rd to January 7th where they perform dances and songs. They celebrate the birth of the Niño Jesus, as well as the day of the Virgen del Carmen (December 27), the city’s patronage and the Kings Day (January 6). In addition to the Christmas season, the atajo can participate in the celebrations of the day of the Virgen del Carmen from July 6 to 14, the day of Carmelite identity on November 26 (which celebrates the birthday of Patriarch Amador Ballumbrosio, symbol of identity Afro-Peruvian and Carmelite), as well as other festivities that may take place in other locations, including Lima.

The atajos are understood as traditional community performative tropes (Shelemay 2011, Wenger 1998), in that they are formed by amateurs, residents, and people with connections to El Carmen. The atajos de negritos can also be considered Afro-Andean, because they unite popular fervor and long-standing traditions that involve the transmission from generation to generation through collective knowledge that emerged from ethnic encounters in the region.



The performance of the atajo dramatizes narratives connected with the Magi, the shepherds and the experiences of enslaved Africans (Tompkins 2011). This same representation is reflected in other elements of the atajo, such as the lyrics, rhythms, dances, and clothing. These representations arise from the encounters and frictions of three cultures: the Andean, present in the values of the pre-Hispanic world; the Hispanic, linked to Catholicism, and the African legacy present in the rhythms used in the dances, among other aspects.

Another relevant aspect is how the atajo relates and positions itself in relation to the atajos from neighboring towns that come to El Carmem and dance in the plaza to honor the Virgen, thus generating a kind of open and informal competition, without judges, something that also happens in other locations in Chincha and Lima. Although it is not a formal competition, each atajo prepares for this meeting and performs the most complex or representative dances that are part of each atajo's repertoire. It is also in this context that the groups mark their identities, something especially evident in the clothes and colors they wear, but also in the style of the singing and choreography of each atajo.

The atajos de negritos are particularly present on the Peruvian Coast, south-central Lima, in the department of Ica, Chincha province, in districts such as El Carmen, Grocio Prado, Sunanpe, Tambo de Mora, and Chincha Alta, among others. In colonial times in these locations, there was a greater presence of enslaved Africans and African descendants due to the concentration of slave labor from the production of cotton, sugar cane, as well as some of the elderly slaves or slaves with some disability were placed on the farms of El Carmen.

It is worth mentioning that the Negrito dance is performed in other Latin American countries, as well as in other places in Peru, both in the Andean part and on the coast, in which it contains the Christian religious element imposed by the Spanish in the colonial era. This dance, in each locality, has acquired its own characteristics that are evident in the performance practices of its groups. In the Andean region, Negritos are often represented by dancers wearing black masks or painting their faces black, but this has a specific symbolic connotation referring to Christianity. As mentioned by Vasquez apud Chocano (2013, 20), "the term negrito does not refer to the skin color of the prospective dancers, but to the unbaptized condition of the Moors, who controlled the Iberian Peninsula before the advent of the Catholic kingdoms"

El Carmen, the focus of this research, is a district of approximately 12,050 inhabitants, located in the department of Ica. There are records that atajos have involved Afro-descendant communities since the middle of the 19th century. As other studies have shown (Tompkins 2011), Vasquez 1982), one

of the hypotheses of the possible origin of atajo refers to musical practices that derive from the Spanish tradition of singing and dancing in front of nativity scenes,

as well as the religious celebrations of African descendants at Corpus Christi in colonial times, which took place around churches” (Tompkins 2011 155). In the case of El Carmen, “the construction of the church was one of the factors that propitiated the emergence of Atajo de Negritos (Chocano 2013, 18).

Currently, the atajos of the town of El Carmen are cultural heritage of the Peruvian nation, according to vice-ministerial resolution No. 035-2012-VMPCIC-MC (Official Journal of the Republic of Peru, El Peruano 2012). The process of patrimonialization occurred thanks to the help of some academics, anthropologists, the masters, members of the El Carmen atajos, local residents, and the Ministry of Culture. Moreover, it was also included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, which took place in Bogota, Colombia at the “XVI Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage”.²

ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Another relevant aspect in the configurations of atajo musicking is that these performative practices favor occasions for social encounters, promoting the development of community among the participants.

But what is musicking?

This term, proposed by New Zealand musicologist Christopher Small (1998), proposes to rethink the concept of music, not only analyzing it as a sound object, but also how it is produced, music as a process and not as an object.

The term “musicking,” where music ceases to be a noun and becomes the verb, refers to any kind of relationship with music, either in musical production or practice (Small 1998).

In Carmen - Chincha, the most of participants live in the same neighborhood and the events that take place involve the community as a whole. Therefore, the residents and the Catholic religious’ brotherhoods of El

² XVI Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO. Available at: <https://ich.unesco.org/es/RL/el-hatajo-de-negritos-y-las-pallitas-danzas-del-sur-de-la-costa-central-del-peru-01309>. Accessed January 25, 2019.



Carmen organize themselves every year to hold the feast of the Virgen del Carmen and the reception of the Niño Jesus.

This collective “ musicking” of the community around the atajo in its neighborhood contributes to creating a sense of unity among those involved, from the people who decorate their houses and provide food and drinks to the atajo, to those who go from house to house to give the blessing, to the internal organization of the atajos to define the houses where the rehearsals will take place, the costumes that will be used this year, the godfathers who will economically support the atajo to make the costumes, among other aspects. Thus, atajos play an important role in establishing cohesion in their communities.

The importance of the commitment that exists between the members of the atajo and all those who participate directly and indirectly in the manifestation is emphasized. In this way they preserve the traditions and customs of the locality, giving a sense of community, fellowship, and brotherhood that is reflected in the text of the songs in the repertoire. The account of the caporal Camilo Ballumbrosio corroborates this:

To join the atajo you need to have a spiritual commitment, not necessarily a promise. If you want to make a promise you can, but it's not mandatory, but you need to have devotion to the saints, the Virgen, the Baby Jesus, the Three Kings... to come dance and thank them all. For example, on Three Kings Day, which is the closure of the atajo's activities, a farewell to the saints is held with a song that, through the lyrics, represents the companionship and brotherhood that occurs among the members of the atajo, and that if one member cannot attend the next pilgrimage, the other members of the atajo will dance on his behalf and continue the tradition, at the same time paying homage to the ancestors. (Singing)... We'll give each other a hug, until next year... and if I can't come, my partner will come back, Until next year. (Ballumbrosio, Camilo 2017).

Another theoretical perspective used in this research corresponds to the classification of social fields of musical performance proposed by the American ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino (2008), which are: real-time music (subdivided into participatory performance and presentational performance) and recorded music (subdivided into studio art and hi-fi recordings). Within the classification of participatory performance, we find several aspects that arise within a collective context, highlighting certain particularities, such as: short, open and repetitive forms; little space for individual virtuosity; highly repetitive; rhythmic and temporal constancy; intensive variation; beginnings and endings, among other elements.



We analyze the performative practices of the *atajo de negritos*, considering them as part of the classification of participatory performance proposed by Thomas Turino (2008), unlike other Afro-Peruvian musical practices that emerged in another, non-religious/ritual context, such as the *festejo*, *lando*, *zamacueca*, among others. These would correspond to the presentational performance classification.

There are several musical traditions that could be classified as Afro-Peruvian. Historically, these traditions were fundamentally participatory in their orientation. That is, they occurred as community activities where everyone present would be involved in some way in the performance (Turino 2008).

In the participatory performative classification (Turino 2008) several elements are key to determining the role of music within the social-historical context and how it can become a presentational performance. Usually a participatory performance becomes presentational when it is taken out of its original context, spectacularizing it, restructuring it, adapting new musical forms in this new performance, and changing the role of music within this cultural manifestation.

The *atajo de negritos* brings as the center of the investigations its cultural richness, specifically in the artistic expressions of music and dance, the role it plays today and in the construction of the identity of the Afro-Peruvian community. As Glaura Lucas (2002) points out, music and dance in certain religions and rituals are central and can become mediators in social relations. “Music and dance become the main vehicle of religious experience in certain religious rituals, and are therefore fully integrated within the social organization of such religions” (Lucas 2002, 18). In the case of the *atajo de negritos*, the music and dance are strongly linked to the Catholic religion. This is reflected in the performance, in the lyrics of the repertoire, and above all in the devotion of the members and participants of the festivity on the day of the *Virgen del Carmen* and the *Niño Jesus*.

Commemorative rituals are a dramatization of “social memory” (Connerton 1989). It is a way of inscribing what the group wants to remember on its own body. As Reily (2002) mentions, through experiences in ritual, some practices can promote memorable experiences in social groups.

The effectiveness of any ritual, however coherent it may be, resides in its capacity to promote memorable experiences among the participants, capable of transporting them to the mythical universe of its collective dramatization. What will determine whether or not this occurs is how the structures are implemented in real contexts, where people meet and make use of their legacy to mediate their relationships with saints and with each other (Reily 2002).



The ritualistic religious element is very present in this manifestation, as the Catholic church plays a very important role in the constructions of new American identities. In Peru, the African religions complemented the Catholic religion, thus reaching a syncretism, reinterpreting, through the worship of saints, rituals of Catholicism. There was little distinction between the sacred and the profane.

According to Rosa Elena Vásquez (1982), the *mestizaje* that emerged during colonialism brought with it greater diversity, encounters, and interculturalities on the part not only of the Spaniards, but also among enslaved Africans from Central Africa (Guinea, Congo, and Angola) who were brought to the Americas. Since the arrival of the settlers, the Spanish brought and imposed their beliefs and ways of life, employing an excluding coercive domination, as well as their Christian religion, their traditions, among them music, musical instruments, dances, and new practices. Thus, the settlers' culture came to coexist and mix with the local culture.

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Three ethnographic surveys were conducted in Peru, in the locality of El Carmen, in the department of Chincha, the first in the period December 2017 (December 23 to 27) and January 2018 (January 6, Three Kings Day) in Grocio Prado. The second stage of the field research was conducted in July 2018 in Lima and El Carmen; finally, the third stage was conducted in the period from December 2018 to January 2019. This field research encompassed participant observation, filming, photographic records of the performances, and semi-structured interviews. The records made in the field were part of the journey of a specific *atajo* of the Ballumbrosio Family.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ATAJO DE NEGRITOS: TESTING, PREPARATION AND DEPARTURE

The rehearsals, preparation, and departures of the *atajo* days take place in the Ballumbrosio house, which is arranged to fit as many people as possible. It is usually always packed with members, tourists, photographers, and researchers coming from all over Peru and the world.

Each year the house is decorated with Christmas ornaments and lights, a tree, and a nativity scene, which are inside the house. This activity is carried out together with various participants, such as: the owner of the house, members of the Ballumbrosio Family, the mayoral, who



is in charge of the internal organization of the atajo, the godfathers and godmothers of the atajo, who, besides contributing economically, also help with some of the preparations before and during the day, having an important role in the Burning of the Altar, which will be described later.³

All these participants set up an altar-andor around the nativity scene, which is decorated with colorful satin ribbons and Christmas ornaments. The altar-andor of the Ballumbrosio Family house was set up at the beginning of rehearsals and stayed in the same place until the day of the Burning of the Altar, since it would later be burned along with some of the Negritos' costumes, such as whips and sashes.

The process of learning the songs and dances of the atajos is collective, which are transmitted through oral tradition and are part of the cultural baggage that the members acquired as children. In this way the group learns to perform collectively as a whole. This is a tradition that involves intergenerational transmission; in many cases the children who join the atajo for the first time had a relative that danced in the group or had the opportunity to accompany the courses or rehearsals. This is because the town of El Carmen is a very small province and the majority of the population participates to some extent in the activities of the atajos.

Generally, in groups with participatory orientations there is a very fine distinction between rehearsal and performance, since it is not necessary that there is absolute synchronicity in the performance, but that the pleasure of collective music making predominates. According to reports from members of the atajo, the repertoire is composed of 24 dances, but currently only ten remain. Among the 24 dances, there are 5 or 6 that are the serranitas, the most Afro-Andean genre in the repertoire.⁴

As Chebo states, the Andean influence of the highlanders is related not only to the “Andean sounds”, but also to the demographic aspect, due to the fact that the town of Chinchá is geographically located near Andean regions such as Huancavelica and Ayacucho. In the case of the El Carmen locality there were migratory movements among the inhabitants of these towns.

Afro-Andean happens by demography, there is an Andean slope, there is an Andean creek... Geographically it is Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Ica and Chinchá, so obviously our ancestors were welcomed, healed by the people of the An-

³ A foreman of a group of people, animals, or a religious community.

⁴ A musical genre within atajo, alluding to the convergences of cultural encounters with Andean influence, both in sound (harmony, melody) and in lyrics and choreography.

des, some wise old men welcomed the children of slaves and then returned them healed to the coast. I remember I had an Andean friend, who was my grandmother's god-daughter, who was raised here, and they used to do a kind of exchange, so that they could learn the customs from there and learn the customs from here and thus maintain themselves, because it's the only way, once again I argue, the only way to preserve culture is fusion (mixture) because otherwise we won't have this Atajo de Negritos without fusion. You need to have people of both customs, you need to have people who are not black... nothing is pure anymore (Ballumbrosio, Chebo 2018).

The music, dance, and lyrics of the repertoire are reminiscent of a past that goes back to the slavery of black people in colonial times, telling of the experiences of rural and agricultural work, as well as Christmas songs of European origin, the villancicos. Thus, this repertoire evokes the cultural encounters with Andean people, the maintenance of black memory, and the subjugation of the Catholic religion.⁵

Between December 23 and 27, 2017, I had the opportunity to observe the activities of the Ballumbrosio Family atajo. Although I was not able to accompany the group in its rehearsals before its ritual journey, it was reported to me that the activities of the atajo de negritos begin on the first Saturday in October. The call was open to the entire community of El Carmen and was made through publicity in the Ballumbrosio house itself, where a poster was placed in the doorway, and on social networks such as Facebook. After several rehearsals from the first Saturday in October until December, the beginner participants were designated as negritos (dancers) and the more experienced dancers as caporales (usually members of the Ballumbrosio Family). Some participants who live in other locations, such as Lima, attended the rehearsals, as was the case with some of the Ballumbrosio brothers, a total of 14 brothers. Many of them live in Lima or even in other countries like France and the United States, but they make a point of participating in the atajo.

Throughout the atajo's journey there are nine distinct moments, which carry different meanings. These meanings are defined by several factors such as: the day of the celebration, for whom and why they dance, as well as the location where the demonstration will take place. Some of the moments change completely, despite happening on the same day. This aspect is reflected in the performance and music of Atajo de Negritos, because there are variations among the choreographies, which are related to the theme of the song's text.

5 European poetic musical form, 15th century (Christmas carols).

PERFORMATIVE ELEMENTS OF ATAJO

As mentioned earlier, within the repertoire of Atajo de Negritos, there are 24 dances each with a specific song. Among the atajos the term “dance” is used, which implies both song and choreography. Thus, we will use the term dance here in this sense, encompassing music and dance.

The repertoire of the atajos encompasses the following dances: “Acción de Gracias”, “Anunciación”, “Arrullamiento”, “Chica Fé”, “Contradanza”, “Contrapunto de Zapateo”, “Despedida de la Virgen del Camen”, “Despedida de Navidad”, “Despedida del 6 de enero”, “El Divino”, “En nombre de Dios comienzo”, “Hoy cantemos, hoy bailemos”, “El Borrachito”, “Pajarillo”, “Paloma Ingrata”, “Panalivio”, “Pasacalle”, “Pastorilla”, “Pastorcillo”, “Pisa de Humay”, “Cancion al niño Dios”, “Serrana Vieja”, “Yugo” e “Zancudito”.

Dances have texts with various purposes. Some have the purpose of worshiping the Niño Jesus or the Virgen of Carmen; others contain texts alluding to Christmas, such as the villancicos, as well as accounts of the experiences of slavery in the colonial era, and also a tribute to the ancestors, especially to the patriarch Amador Ballumbrosio; there are also dances to thank the faithful for having received the atajo in their homes and for having offered food and drink to the members of the group.

There is a logic to choosing the dances to be performed each year, respecting the “mandatory” dances that are for each theme already mentioned. The distinction in the choice of repertoire was noted in the field, as well as in the statements of Mr. Adan, who emphasized that the repertoire of the Augusto de Negritos is divided mainly into two parts, the specific repertoire for the Niño Jesus and the repertoire for the Virgen del Carmen, material that we will describe later.

According to the reports of the caporales and the information obtained in the research of Tompkins (2011) and Vasquez (1982), the atajos do not perform all 24 dances in the same year. There are several reasons for this, one of the main ones being the lack of time to interpret them all in the nine moments. Another aspect is the lack of teaching and learning time for the Negritos who are joining the atajo for the first time.

In the case of the Ballumbrosio Family atajo, Mr. Chebo, violinist and leader of the atajo, also reported that besides the lack of time to interpret the 24 dances in the nine moments, the atajo chooses the repertoire according to the members’ composition, because several caporales live abroad and don’t have the opportunity to participate every year.

REPERTOIRE FOR THE NIÑO JESUS

This repertoire is made up of dances whose texts deal specifically with the worship of the Niño Jesus, welcoming the newborn and celebrating his arrival. The repertoire is chosen in advance by the caporales and violinists far in advance. It usually takes place in the month of October, when rehearsals and preparations take place before the performance. It usually takes place in the month of October, when rehearsals and preparations take place before the performance. “Arrullamiento, “El Divino”; “La Llegada Del Rey” and “Hoy cantemos hoy bailemos”. Each song is interpreted according to the moment of the performance, for example, when they carry the Niño Jesus on pilgrimages or when the Niño Jesus is honored.

The theme of this repertoire is also reflected in the choreography, for many of the body movements performed are related to the worship of the Niño Jesus, as is the case in the dance “Arrullamiento”, in which we observe that there is no tap dance; the progression of the dance changes according to the beating of the bells. The progression at the beginning of the dance is slower, and the members of the atajo group together in five or six negritos and intertwine their whips. In this way they form a small base where the Niño Jesus is placed. Each group in the atajo has approximately two minutes to carry the Niño Jesus in this way during the dance. One element of the choreography involves each group walking counterclockwise, carrying the Niño Jesus on their whips, until the text of the song starts referring to the worship of the Niño Jesus and the blessing of the Virgen María. At this point the members of the atajo prostrate themselves and kneel for a period of time.

Arrullamiento

*A tus pies postrados todos nos rendimos,
A tus pies postrados todos nos rendimos,*

*Para que nos bendiga la Virgen María
Para que nos bendiga la Virgen María.*

After this part of the choreography, the caporales speed up the progression, beating the bells more quickly, the text also changes, and the tap-dancing begins.

REPERTOIRE FOR THE VIRGEN DEL CARMEN

This repertoire is characterized by containing dances with texts alluding to the Virgen del Carmen, such as: “Homenaje a la Virgen del Carmen” e “Despedida de la Virgen del Carmen”. It is worth mentioning that both

dances correspond to the same melodic sequence and choreographic steps, changing only the text. The difference corresponds to the specific moment it is performed: the dance “Homenaje a la Virgen del Carmen” is performed at the beginning of the pilgrimage, when the Virgen is taken out of the church on the litter, to perform the pilgrimages in the following days, and the dance of “Despedida de la Virgen del Carmen” is performed on December 28th at noon, when the saint is transported to the church, where she will remain until next year. This repertoire symbolizes the beginning and the end of the Virgen del Carmen’s festivity cycle. Below we offer a transcription of the melody of this repertoire, with the first line of text being part of the first strophe of “Homenaje a la Virgen del Carmen” and the second line being the first strophe of the text from “Despedida de la Virgen del Carmen”.

HOMENAJE A LA VIRGEN DEL CARMEN Y DESPEDIDA DE LA VIRGEN DEL CARMEN

Voz

Vi - va
 A - diós vir - gen so - be - ra - na a - dio vir - gen so - be - ra - na

5

Voz

vi - va la vir - gen Ma - ri a vi - va la vir - gen Ma - ri a
 Ma - dre del ni - ño Je - sús ma - dre del ni - ño Je - sús

9

Voz

Tri la la lai la la lai lai lai tri la la lai la lai lai la
 Tri la la lai la la lai lai lai tri la la lai la lai lai lai

FIGURE 1. Transcription of the first strophe of the dances “Homenaje a la Virgen del Carmen” and “Despedida de la Virgen del Carmen”, which are part of the repertoire of Atajo de Negritos.

Source: Field research at El Carmen 07/23/2018 (Transcription by the author).

LAST GENERAL REHEARSAL IN THE HOME OF THE AMADOR BALLUMBROSIO

The last general rehearsal takes place on the last Saturday night before Christmas. I had the opportunity to observe for two consecutive years how the Ballumbrosio Family’s atajo rehearsals developed, which had some changes in time and date. The first time I attended the rehearsal was on Saturday, December 23rd from 6pm to 9:30pm, which was longer than the second time, which was on Saturday, December 22nd, starting at 8pm and ending at 10pm.



The members of the atajo are convoked around 6 or 8 PM at the house of the patriarch Amador Ballumbrosio, and this is always the meeting point defined by the caporales and the mayoral or mayorala. All of this is contained in the internal regulations of the atajos de negritos, as reported by the caporales of the Ballumbrosio Family atajo as well as the caporales of other atajos. Furthermore, the Ballumbrosio house carries many meanings about ancestry, maintenance of tradition, and respect, since Mr. Amador, the founder of the Ballumbrosio atajo, has always lived in this house and it is where his widow, some children and grandchildren still live. It is also worth pointing out that many tourists go there to learn a little about the Ballumbrosio Family and the history of the atajos.

Inside the house there are many paintings of photographs, portraits of Amador Ballumbrosio, the atajo, and the Ballumbrosio Family, as well as decorations, diplomas of recognition of the atajo, for being considered cultural patrimony of the nation; in the center of the house there is a painting portraying Amador Ballumbrosio holding his violin, whose size is approximately 100 x 120 cm. This portrait is significant for representing Amador Ballumbrosio's presence in the atajo. This "presence" emerges even in the fact that before starting the pilgrimage, on the evening of December 24th, after the preparations for the first route, all the members of the atajo pose together in the portrait to take a picture and thus register all the members who participated in the atajo that year.

Before the rehearsal started, the members were slowly arriving at the Ballumbrosio house, waiting for the other members to arrive. Some were alone, training, or in small groups, chatting. The younger ones told jokes and shared experiences, and others practiced some steps and even challenged others to do more complex steps. These collective learning processes in the rehearsal, as well as in the other moments of the atajo, which will be described later, provide knowledge, a feeling of belonging, and at the same time help the participants to place themselves in their respective roles within the group.

In the course of the rehearsal in the two observed instances, it was noted that there was a pause, since the atajo dances require a lot of physical effort. During the break the owners of the house (in this case Amador Ballumbrosio's sons) offered drinks and snacks to all the members of the Ballumbrosio atajo, as well as to the people watching the rehearsal. Likewise, the presence of people from outside El Carmen was observed – visitors, photographers, tourists filming and taking pictures. Usually, in order to enter the Ballumbrosio family home and make an audiovisual record, it is necessary to talk to one of the Ballumbrosio brothers, such as Mr. Chebo or Miguel, beforehand.



During the rehearsal break the older members and leaders took the time to tell the younger members a few stories about how the atajos performed in the past. As I could observe in the rehearsal in 2017, where the caporal Miguel Ballumbrosio reported that formerly the members in the performances wore crowns and that from now on the members would wear them again, because the crowns represented the Magi who take the blessing to the homes of devotees.

After handing out the food and drinks to the members of the atajo and all the people watching the rehearsal, the caporal Miguel, Amador Ballumbrosio's son, asked everyone to be quiet and still. At that point he went to a dwelling and brought the crowns for the Negritos. He reported that formerly every year the Negritos wore crowns, that this tradition has been lost over time and that on this day they would wear them on the route and festivities of worship of the Niño Jesus and the Virgen del Carmen (Field diaries, El Carmen 2017).

The first time I accompanied the atajo it was not possible to accurately count the total number of songs rehearsed, because I had difficulty recognizing the whole repertoire, since the records previously collected by Tompkins (2011) and Vasquez (1982) did not contain the whole repertoire, but only some transcriptions of the lyrics and few in musical notation.

At the rehearsal, some of the atajo members' family members stayed outside the house watching, taking pictures, filming with their cell phones. They were very happy that their children were participating in the act. In most cases the participation of the members in the atajo is intergenerational, which means that the tradition of participating is maintained, whether by devotion to the Niño Jesus or the Virgen del Carmen. At the end of the rehearsal, the family members wait for the baptism, an important initiation ritual that is part of the configuration of the atajos, which will be described below.

THE BAPTISM

The baptism takes place after the rehearsal is over. It takes place in the same house, in a specific place, next to the nativity scene. Through baptism the members of the atajo are purified, which allows them to distribute the blessings of the Niño Jesus to the members of the community during their pilgrimages. As I have been informed in several instances, the act of baptism has a transformative power to take the negrito out of the Moorish condition, making him a Christian. The only member that is not baptized is the *paraleta* or *viejito*, who wears an old man or devil mask



and maintains his Moorish condition throughout the manifestation in order to scare away the evil spirits that are around the atajo.

The two times I observed it, the start time was between 9:45 and 10:00 p.m. The baptism is part of the rite of passage for admission to the atajo. Each year all members are baptized regardless of their length of stay and their role in the atajo. Who is in charge of the baptism is the priest, who is usually a caporal who can be designated as a priest by the leaders of the atajo. The priest symbolizes a joker who ridicules the Catholic religion. In both years, I observed that the priest wore colorful clothing and accessories, neon sun lenses, a sheet on his back used as a cape or tunic, and a scarf used as a turban.

Also participating in this ritual are the choirboys, who are dancing children of the atajo who are chosen at random; in 2017 two boys of about nine or ten years old were chosen, who kept laughing the whole time due to the clowning of the priest, who made jokes about people being baptized. The following year, three choirboys were chosen, two boys and a girl of about 12 years old; they were also laughing, but not as much as the children the previous year, despite the graces of the priest. The choirboys stand at the priest's side, one on the right and one on the left, each holding the objects used in the ritual. One of them holds a small coffer, where the godmothers or godfathers give alms, which are used for part of the expenses of the organization of the atajo, as well as for the purchase of food and soft drinks for the members of the atajos. In the other hand they hold a small container of salt. The other choirboy holds a glass with holy water and a flower, the same flower that will be used to pour the water on each dancer when they are baptized.

The baptism process takes place on the side of the crib. The caporales or owners of the house lay a blanket on the floor so that the dancers – or negritos – can kneel in front of the priest to be baptized, while the others stand next to their godmothers or godfathers, near the priest, waiting their turn at the baptism – sometimes they line up or simply wait to be called, but everyone stands very close, witnessing the baptism.

The ritual begins when the priest calls for baptism and everyone stands in line. At this point he gives the instructions to the godmothers or godfathers, who are waiting beside the member to be baptized holding a perfume and a pocket handkerchief that will be used at the baptism. The priest's first instruction is to place the pocket handkerchief on the dancer's head. Then the priest tells the godmother or godfather that they have to choose the name of a flower, regardless of the gender of the dancer, in order to baptize him or her. He asks to be handed the perfume that is used to pour over the dancer, after speaking the name of the flower.



Then the priest gives a little salt to the member to be baptized. In 2017 each aspirant was given a spoonful of salt, but the following year the priest used only his fingers to give the salt. He then dipped the flower in holy water, the same water that one of the choirboys were holding. At the moment of the baptism the godmother or godfather puts money in an alms box, then the priest usually does a ritualistic dance, tap-dancing, and says a few phrases reminiscent of African languages as well as the Catholic religion, giving a blessing. Finally, you pour some perfume and holy water over the participant being baptized. In this way, the negrito is ready to integrate the atajos.

PREPARATION AND THE PILGRIMAGE

The next day, December 24, the participants of the atajo are summoned at 8:00 pm at Amador Ballumbrosio's house to prepare and begin the first day of the pilgrimage and the procession of the Virgen del Carmen. Most of the members of the atajo arrived accompanied by some of the family members, usually the children, while other teenage members arrived together with their younger siblings so that they could help with the preparation and finish getting ready in the house. The mothers of the Negritos, other family members and owners of the house worked together to get everything ready, helping with the placement of the banners and crowns for the central day's performance at the arrival of the Niño Jesus.

However, the preparation ended around 8:50 pm. So the procession left the Ballumbrosio house at 9pm to begin the pilgrimage that followed the main streets of the El Carmen district, through the central square and finally arrived at the church. At the same time, the procession of the Virgen del Carmen was taking place in the El Carmen district, which was also integrated by other performing associations, such as bands, pallase, and other El Carmen processions. None of these performing associations quit playing, even though there was a meeting and often the songs and repertoires did not coincide. In some cases it has been observed that when the procession of the Virgen del Carmen came close to the coats, the musicians stopped singing and followed the pulse of the band's music with the bells, until the music of the Virgen del Carmen followed its course.⁶

ARRIVAL AT THE CHURCH AND THE MEETING

After following the route through the streets, the atajos head for the church of El Carmen, which is in the center of the city. Upon arriving

⁶ The women's version of the atajo de negritos, made up exclusively of women and girls.



at the church I observed that all the atajos, the pallas group and the band were dancing and playing simultaneously, waiting for the arrival and entrance of the Virgen del Carmen into the church. At 11:00 pm the procession of the Virgen del Carmen is taken inside the church to begin the mass, which ends at 11:45 pm, during which time the atajos remain outside the church at the main door, some taking advantage of this time to rest for a while on the bars of the church staircase until the bells ring at midnight. At this moment, the members of the atajos congratulate each other and continue dancing and singing, this time celebrating the arrival of the Niño Jesus. In this part of the pilgrimage, the atajo has a specific repertoire, which usually contains the same melody line as the other songs, but with different lyrics.

The atajo continues dancing and singing in the streets, following the pilgrimage route until it reaches the Ballumbrosio house. Once there, the caporales and the mayoralia gather all the members to give some feedback and correct some aspects about the route already taken, such as asking them to sing more loudly and to have more concentration and devotion to dance to the Niño Jesus and the Virgen del Carmen, they also give the directions for the next route.

THE PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOMES OF THE DEVOTEES

On the following day, December 25, the atajos are called to come to the Ballumbrosio house at 10:00 a.m., to make the route of the visitations to the homes of the devotees both in El Carmen and also in neighboring towns, such as Guayabo, San Jose, and San Regis. The starting and ending point of the atajos is always the Ballumbrosio house. To make the transfers to neighboring towns, the Ballumbrosio Family has a van, and other cars belonging to godfathers and family friends are also available to give rides to members without their own transportation, as happened in the transfer between Guayabo and Hacienda San José, which I witnessed.

The structure of the visits to the houses of the devotees follows a very similar pattern, but the lyrics of the songs sung change according to the owner of the house and the time the atajo stays there. The structure of the pilgrimages is as follows: the atajo enters the houses of the devotees singing and dancing, staying close to the crib, after the performance, each house owner offers drinks and food, and finally they sing a thanksgiving song, the content of which changes according to the name of the house owner and also the food he offers to the atajo.

The first place to visit was the Guayabo church, located a ten-minute drive from El Carmen. I was curious to know why the atajo started the pilgrimage with this church, as I had been informed that no atajo can enter the church. According to the caporales, this church was very dear to Mr. Amador Ballumbrosio and he was allowed to go in there and sing to the Niño Jesus. They entered the Guayabo church at about 11:45 a.m. and stayed dancing and singing until 12:15 p.m. The repertoire performed in the house pilgrimages also differs between the houses they visit. In the case of the church, the tap-dancing repertoire did not predominate, but at the end of each visit, whatever it is, they always sing the same song, thanking the owner for having offered soda, drinks, bread, or even lunch:

*Luzmila que bien ha quedado,
ay Luzmila Luzmila que bien ha quedado,
Gaseocita rica nos ha regalao,
Luzmila que bien ha quedado,
ay Luzmila Luzmila que bien ha quedado,
Gaseocita rica nos ha regalao,
Lalalalailalala ...*

On this route we visited the Guayabo church, four houses and a restaurant, which is representative of the locality, many tourists were there. The last house to be visited was the house of one of the caporales, Amador Ballumbrosio's son, who is in charge of the Amador Ballumbrosio Cultural Center that was under construction.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE CEMETERY

In this course, which began on December 26, 2018, the atajo members were summoned at 11am. On this occasion the atajo was divided into two groups, one group formed by children and adolescents and commanded by an adult, the caporal Chebo Ballumbrosio, and another formed predominantly by caporales. Chebo explained a little bit about why this division exists and the distinction that exists in these two groups of atajos and respective pilgrimages. The children's pilgrimage is distinct from the other group, bringing a meaningful narrative of celebrating life. According to the account of the caporales,

The route of the children's group goes to the town of Hoja Redonda, located 10 km from El Carmen. The children's Christmas is celebrated there, and other children's groups participate. A mass is held and other activities... This moment represents life, one commemorates life, the opposite case to the pilgrimage to the Cemetery, which

commemorates death and the ancestors...⁷(Ballumbrosio 2018).⁸

The children's atajo involved 15 boys and girls, corresponding to an age range of 5 to 12 years. They went to the town of Hoja Redonda, 10 minutes from El Carmen. Unfortunately, I was not able to follow the route of this group because I had already planned to accompany the atajo group that was going to the cemetery. The caporales group had 15 caporales, between youth and adults, led by Amador's son caporales. They went to the pilgrimage to the Cemetery to visit and dance at the graves of their ancestors, especially the patriarch Amador Ballumbrosio, founder of this atajo. This pilgrimage takes us back in time; it celebrates death, the ancestors, and maintains tradition. The performance has a different structure than the visits to the houses: the element of challenge is more present, the dancers tap dance near the tomb of the ancestors who followed the tradition of the atajo and tell stories and anecdotes about Mr. Amador.

In the previous year, there was a considerable difference in the formation of the members of the group that made the pilgrimage to the Cemetery, including some children and teenagers in addition to the adults, including the five year old boy Menique, the youngest of the group who followed the pilgrimage from the beginning to the end. Menique got notoriety at the performance, as he danced on the tomb of Amador Ballumbrosio, and was congratulated by the other members of the atajo. This did not happen in 2018, due to the fact that Menique and the other children and teenagers participated in the children's atajo.

The differences between these two groups that perform two distinct pilgrimages simultaneously are present not only in the performance, but also in the organization and the configuration of the music-making.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE VIRGEN DEL CARMEN

This pilgrimage took place on December 27, the central day of the demonstration because it celebrates the day of the Virgen del Carmen, which along with Christmas is the most important feast of El Carmen. On this day, the activities begin in the morning and end around 2:00 a.m. the next day, and it is therefore the performance that demands the most

⁷ Interview granted by Mr. Chebo Ballumbrosio (2018). Translation made by the author.

⁸ The children's shortcut route goes to the town of Hoja Redonda, located 10 km from El Carmen. This is where the children's Christmas is celebrated and other children's shortcuts participate. A mass and other activities are held... This moment represents life, it commemorates life, the opposite case of the pilgrimage to the cemetery, which commemorates death and the ancestors... (Chebo Ballumbrosio 2018).

physical effort because it lasts about two and a half hours and takes place in the central square, an open place, without a roof, at a time when the temperature can reach 27°/28°C.

The atajo is called at noon so that the group can prepare and go to the Plaza de El Carmen to meet the atajos coming from neighboring towns, who simultaneously sing and dance in the square. When everyone is ready, the route starts at 1 pm, leaving from the Ballumbrosio house to the square. They stay dancing and singing until 3 pm. In this performance the atajo has to present the most rehearsed repertoire and the most virtuosic choreography, because it will compete with the other atajos that are also trying to show themselves as the best. These other atajos come with part of the members' families, and many of them root for the atajo they belong to. The atajo performance ends when the participants return to the Ballumbrosio house so that they can rest and participate in the feast in honor of the Virgen del Carmen.

At night there is a party organized by the community, the church, and the municipality, at the church's door, where several groups, besides the atajos, perform, showing other Afro-Peruvian dances and manifestations, such as festejo, lando, and bands, and there are also presentations of contemporary Afro-Peruvian music groups, among others. All these groups contribute to celebrating the arrival of the Virgen del Carmen in the church.

THE DAY OF KINGS AND THE BLESSED MELCHORITA IN GROCIO PRADO

After the celebrations of the day of the Virgen del Carmen and the Niño Jesus, the atajo rests until the Day of Kings, January 6. This pilgrimage begins in a neighboring town, Grocio Prado-Chincha, where the birth of Blessed Melchorita, a Franciscan nun who was born in this locality, is commemorated on the same date. According to testimonies from the older residents, she did and does perform miracles, so many people go to her house to pray and ask for miracles. On this day from early morning many people line up to get to Melchorita's house. The street commerce is growing significantly, so much so that the streets are crowded with food stalls preventing pedestrians from entering, and other people take advantage of this to sell souvenirs with the picture of the Blessed. Next to Melchorita's house there is an enclosure where traditionally all the "atajos" from the Chincha department go to dance and sing, it is the biggest concentration of "atajos", because the groups come from all the localities in the Chincha department, such as Sunampe, Tambo de Mora, Alto Laran, Chincha baja, alta, among others.

The difference between the performances of the atajos from El Carmen and those from other locations was evident. Some atajos, such as that of Tambo de Mora, used a different instrumentation from the traditional atajos of El Carmen, by placing a percussion instrument that was alien to the atajo tradition. Many of the members of the other atajos, such as the Cordova Carazas Family atajo from El Carmen, even the same members of the Ballumbrosio Family atajo, rejected this proposal, because, according to them, the only percussion “instrument” or rhythmic element within the structure and instrumentation of the atajos should be the tap dance, so that what these other atajos were doing to make the tradition “more modern” was, to them, a sacrilege. The performances performed in this context had a more presentational character, demonstrating to the public the most virtuosic steps and complex choreographies, demarcating their territory, legitimacy, and identity in the performance.

On this pilgrimage the Ballumbrosio group was called to the Ballumbrosio house at 9:00 a.m. to arrive in Grocio Prado around 9:45 a.m. and go to the enclosure next to Blessed Melchorita’s house, where other groups were waiting in line to enter. At the door there was a gentleman determining the order in which the atajos should enter. The enclosure is a very small space, with little or almost no ventilation and no signage of the capacity limit. In this way, the people who went in there had to keep pushing each other to get a place to watch the atajos. I had a hard time getting in, as well as finding a safe place to film, but luckily among so many people I found a well-known lady, a friend of the Ballumbrosio’s and an Afro-descendant cultist, Nachi Bustamante, who helped me find a good place to document the event.

The atajos had approximately 15 minutes or less to be able to enter and perform inside the enclosure. Inside there was no extended waiting time that was silent, as the atajos came and went performing, it was one performance after another. The Ballumbrosio atajo performed around 10:30, and before them performed the atajo of the Cordova Carazas Family, also from El Carmen. At the end of the Ballumbrosio atajo performance, the group went to the square in Grocio Prado to perform, staying for about an hour. At the end, many people in the square waited to take pictures with the Ballumbrosio brothers. In the documentation done the previous year, I observed that in the square there were reporters and various media outlets doing interviews and filming the Ballumbrosio atajo.

After the performance, the members of the atajo went to have lunch at a restaurant in front of the square, which, according to Chebo Ballumbrosio, is the place they go to every year because his father Amador liked to go there. After lunch the atajo took a tour of Chinchá Square and a couple of wineries near El Carmen. I was able to follow these routes, but later I



learned that the atajo had no rest and were wandering around the houses of the devotees in and around El Carmen until the night. Still missing was the last pilgrimage and one of the most important, representing the closing of the ritual cycle, which I will describe below.

CLOSING RITUAL OF THE CYCLE: THE BURNING OF THE ALTAR

After the pilgrimage in the house of the devotees in the town of El Carmen, the procession gathered in the Ballumbrosio house at midnight to remove the altar from the crib and make the last pilgrimage of the whole journey. On this pilgrimage there were many tourists and family members of the atajo members, due to the significance of this ritual that closes the cycle of the entire journey. The pilgrimage began when the caporales, the godmothers and godfathers of the atajo removed the altar that was next to the Ballumbrosio's crib, to take it to an open place in order to carry out the ritual of the burning of the altar, as well as the accessories and costumes of the atajo, such as the whips that were used to hold the bells and the sashes that were part of the costumes of the members of the atajo. It is loaded with meanings and symbolism: on the one hand the burning ritual creates a space for community integration; on the other hand, the burning of the altar and symbolic objects allows for the renewal of the ritual the following year, when these materials will be remade for the next journey.

THE MUSICKING OF THE ATAJO DE NEGRITOS: PROCESSES OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND RITUALS

The objective of this research was to document the atajos of the Negritos in Peru, which are concentrated in the province of Chincha. The research was carried out in the district of El Carmen, a locality that has developed an African tradition with its own characteristics, specific to the locality, and which the participants see as an Afro-Andean manifestation, also having a European influence, due to the fact that it occurs within Catholic festivities.

Ethnomusicology in Peru has focused on the cultural manifestations of the Andes, neglecting the African legacy. This paper aims to demonstrate that there is another side to Peruvian music, one that encompasses the legacy of enslaved Africans brought to the region during the colonial period.

Within the atajo, there is a hierarchical structure, which is marked by several factors: kinship, with Amador Ballumbrosio's sons being the main leaders of the atajo; age, with older members generally being among the



leaders; and performance ability, since particularly virtuous members can acquire prominent positions in the atajo even though they are young and not part of the Ballumbrosio clan. This for example is the case of the caporal-child Menique, who became such a figure because of his virtuosic tap-dancing, which evidences his “caporal soul.”

It was evident how the entire community of El Carmen participates in the music-making of the event, not just the members of the atajo. It also includes members of the community, such as the brotherhood of El Carmen, which organizes the route of the Virgen del Carmen, as well as the families that receive the Virgen and the atajos in their homes. It also points to the music of the seamstresses, who are in charge of making the costumes for the atajo members, such as the sashes, which are individually made according to the request of the atajo member, usually with personalized details. It is worth noting that street trading increases considerably at the time of the El Carmen festivities. In this way the residents increase their income with the production and sale of food products, handicrafts, and the rental of housing for tourists.

The ritual process of the atajo was related, which is composed of nine moments, from the beginning of the cycle, in the rehearsals and preparations, to the end and closing of the cycle, on the day of the Burning of the Altar. Within the process of the nine moments, we observed how the music of atajo developed, which demarcates its own identity through the performance and through the spaces in which it develops. This aspect is evident in some specific actions within the process: 1) The demonstration begins and ends at the home of the Ballumbrosio patriarch; 2) It has a ritual character and 3) The atajo occupies public and private spaces.

Regarding the first aspect, we observe that the cycle begins in the Ballumbrosio house in October with the rehearsals and comes to an end in January with the Burning of the Altar, when the members of the atajo and other “external” participants return to the Ballumbrosio house to celebrate the end of the ritual process. In this way, we understand that the Ballumbrosio house carries significant value for the atajo. Thus, this feeling of belonging is also transmitted to the community and to the other “external” participants.

The second aspect highlights how the whole process of the atajo manifestation has a ritual character, evidenced in several moments, such as the Baptism, held in the Ballumbrosio house after the last General Rehearsal. In this ritual, all the members of the atajo have to be baptized by the priest, thus preparing and purifying themselves to be able to take the blessings to the homes of the devotees. Likewise, this is the ritual in which the Negritos quit being Moors to become Christians.



The only member that is not baptized is the *paraletto* or *viejito*, who wears an old man or devil mask and maintains his Moorish condition throughout the manifestation in order to scare away the evil spirits that are around the *atajo*.

Another ritual process is evident in the visits to the homes of the devotees, an event in which families organize themselves each year and prepare for the arrival of the Niño Jesus and the Virgen, who bring their blessings and prosperity to the community. In El Carmen it is believed that the *atajos*, through their songs of adoration to the Niño Jesus and the Virgen, bring the blessing of the Magi. Through their pilgrimages, the *atajos* link the families of devotees uniting them into a Christian community (Reily 2002). As Reily (2002) argues, scholars tend to focus their studies on the public aspects of religious manifestations involving house-to-house pilgrimages, however, for the communities in question attention is mainly focused on the visitations where the sacred blessings are distributed.

In the third aspect, we point out that there is a distinction between the spaces where the *atajo* performances are developed, highlighting the differences between performances that take place in public places and in private places, thus creating distinct meanings. For example, in the performances in public squares, one notices competitiveness among the costumes, so that each group works hard on performing elaborate steps and choreography, something that receives less attention in the visits to the homes of the devotees or in the Burning of the Altar, events in which the repertoire changes and the performance acquires a fundamentally participatory character. In this way we understand that each moment of the manifestation carries a meaning, articulated to the place where it occurs and the people involved in the music making.

At the moment of the pilgrimage to the cemetery several aspects are evident, such as, for example, the breaking of hierarchy in the performances, the celebration of life and death, and the respect and maintenance of ancestry. This moment is strongly linked with the religious-Catholic aspect and is composed of three moments that take place on the same day: 1) the Pilgrimage and performance in the Plaza del El Carmen; 2) the celebration of the central feast of the Virgen del Carmen; and 3) the Pilgrimage of the Virgen. Besides the religious aspect, it is evident how social interactions develop among the participants of the other *atajos*, often generating rivalries, competitions, and the addition of new expressive languages within the choreographies and songs. This interaction allows the “unconscious exchange” of new performative elements. In this way, they develop a “new form” in the interpretation of the dances. This is because in this performance the *atajos* sing and dance simultaneously with other *atajos* in the Plaza del El Carmen.



Another relevant aspect that happens in the Central Feast of the Virgen is the fact that, on the same stage, musical groups of various genres are presented, ranging from traditional Afro-Peruvian music, such as: festejo, lando, among others, to jazz and classical music groups, bringing diverse sounds produced by ensembles formed by residents of El Carmen, residents of neighboring towns, and residents of Lima, something that does not happen often in El Carmen.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The atajo is intergenerational, related to Catholic religiosity, and, according to Turino's (2008) classification, is performed in a participatory way¹⁸. The performance is collective in its whole process. Today it remains in force thanks to the community. Its members are in charge of its organization and financing; most of them, the local community participates directly or indirectly in the rituals of the atajo, so that everyone is part of the music. But even among the atajos there are more presentational groups that perform on non-traditional dates and outside the ritualistic religious context, changing their purpose and consequently becoming presentational performances, but this is more frequent in the spectacularized presentations that take place in theaters in Lima and abroad than in El Carmem.

The ritualistic religious element is very present in this manifestation, as the Catholic church plays a very important role in the constructions of new American identities. In Peru, the African religions have complemented the Catholic religion, thus reaching a syncretism, reinterpreting, through the worship of saints, rituals of Catholicism; one can also notice how little distinction there is between the sacred and the profane.

With this preliminary work, we hope to have contributed to the study of traditional music from the coast of Peru, as well as to rethink other possible paths for a more detailed study of Afro-Peruvian musical practices in the current context and the possible relations and convergences that take place in the Afro-Latin context.

This research focused on a specific group, and from this group broader articulations can be thought of. Other approaches that understand the study of the musical practices of this atajo in relation to atajos from other places and how this tradition is articulated with Afro-Peruvian and Afro-Andean traditions, as well as how they are articulated with other Afro-Latin American traditions, remain to be worked on.

Likewise, a new study of this universe is justified, since such an investigation can elucidate the ways in which blacks in contemporary Peru and

elsewhere in Latin America are turning to traditional expressive forms as a means of gaining space and redefining their position in the nation.

The chants have a question and answer structure, this reflects the hierarchy and roles played by the more experienced members, which in this case would be the caporales or the violinists, as opposed to the younger members such as the negritos. The dance and music are cyclical, made up of short, repetitive phrases. It is also noticeable that the music has elements of the Andean aesthetic, which is reflected in the sonorities produced by the violin. The African element is appreciated in the rhythms used in tap dancing and in the oral tradition of the slaves that persists in folklore, and in the Andean element of the violin's sound and in the melodic lines of the voice, where the pentatonic scale predominates, as well as in the harmony of the Andean huayno.

TRANSLATION
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