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Beating the Drums of Santa Teresa: Performing Resistance in a Brazilian *Quilombo*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the evocative power of sonic and performative aspects of a set of actions taken by Catholic *quilombolas* (inhabitants of *quilombos*) in north-west Maranhão, Brazil, in the context of the religious celebration of their community's patron-saint Santa Teresa de Jesus. Its aim is to explore the principal ways in which the itinerant drummers employ sound, movement and performance to respond to the unsettled conditions of everyday life. In line with this volume's orienting questions, this article sheds light on some of the main evocations that emerge from engaging with sound in the context of a *quilombo* religious festivity and the impacts these may have upon people's lives in 'conflict circumstances'. The discussion focuses on the outings of the itinerant group (*batuque*) for the collection of donations (*joia*), and on the ways in which these ritualistic acts, which are heuristically called 'performative religious praxis', visibly and acoustically manifest Catholicism in a religiously contested territory. It is argued that in the *joia* outings Catholic resistance to the growing influence of local Pentecostal churches and *quilombola* resilience to land competitors are channelled through the *batuque*'s musical performance. In those instances, it is posited that in the *joia* outings, the space considered as the Saint's land is moulded, acted upon, reconfigured, and constituted by the *batuque* for the entire Catholic community.

KEYWORDS

Brazil; Itamatatiua (resistance); Catholicism; evangelical Christianity; *quilombo(s)*

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INTRODUCTION

This article explores the evocative power of sonic and performative aspects of a set of actions taken by Catholic *quilombolas*[1] in north-west Maranhão, Brazil, in the context of the religious celebration of their community's patron-saint Santa Teresa de Jesus. The annual religious feast, taking place from 14-16 October in a *quilombo* community called Itamatatiua, is the culmination of a series of events, among which the outings of a small group (called *batuque*), that collects donations for the realisation of the feast, is the most prominent.

About two months before the *festa*, the group leaves Itamatatiua to visit Catholic devotees in other village communities, carrying with it a statuette of the saint. The *batuque* is comprised of two *caixeiras* (adult women who play the drums of Santa Teresa), two *bandeiras* (young girls who carry the flags of the *festa*), one custodian of the Saint (carrying the figurine), one male guide with good knowledge of the area, its villages and people, and who makes arrangements for overnight accommodation, and one or two men who assist by carrying donations in livestock and food, firing petards to signal the *batuque*'s location (so that nearby villages know where they are and if they are approaching). The latter also act as guardians of the group throughout the visits. The women play the *caixa*, a type of two-headed rope-tension drum made of wood and calfskin played with two drumsticks and sing different context-related ditties during the outings and the house visits.

Following the trajectories covered by the *batuque*, I focus on the musical performance of the female drummers (*caixeiras*), who constitute the only instrumentalists and singers of the group, in order to illuminate nuances of resistance, provocation, and power display that inform the dynamics of an often agitated interplay between two locally important religious groups, namely Catholic and Pentecostal Christians.

Itamatatiua is a small Black rural *quilombo* community located in the municipality of Alcântara in the north-eastern Brazilian state of Maranhão. Such communities are legally recognised as 'remnants' of ancient maroon settlements, formed during the colonial era by enslaved people and their descendants (Arruti, 1997; Leite, 2000; Gomes, 2015). Like thousands of other *quilombos* in Brazil, Itamatatiua has acquired the certification of '*quilombo* descendant' community from the Palmares Foundation and awaits the outcome of the state process of land regularisation initiated several years ago.[2] While the 1988 Federal Constitution recognised collective land rights for the '*quilombo* remnant communities'[3] and stipulated the attribution of relevant land titles, at the time of writing only 179 communities have been granted land titles while nearly 1,700 are still waiting.[4] The slow process of

[1] *Quilombo* (pl. *quilombos*), or Black rural *quilombo* community, is the term used to describe the different village communities (mostly rural but also urban) today in Brazil, which collectively identify as descendants of enslaved runaways. The term is likely of Kimbundu origin (*kilombo*) and its earlier recorded use in Brazil is found in colonial records of the late 17th century which refer to improvised encampments of enslaved fugitives.

[2] The Palmares Cultural Foundation (FCP) is the government institution entrusted with the task of issuing official certificates to quilombo remnant communities based on their self-identification as such. These certificates are not title deeds, which, since 2003, can only be issued by the National Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian Reform (INCRA). Itamatatiua officially initiated this process in 2012.

[3] All translations from Portuguese in this essay are mine unless otherwise stated. The translation of 'quilombo remnant communities' refers to what in the Article 68 of the Temporary Constitutional Provisions Act (Ato das Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias, ADCT) of the 1988 Federal Constitution is mentioned as "remanescentes das comunidades dos quilombos".

[4] The figures are based on data published by INCRA. See Comissão Pró-Índio. Available at: http://cpisp.org.br/direitosquilombolas/ [Accessed 16 April 2019].

land regularisation, together with major political changes and current threats faced by minority groups in Brazil, have accentuated the conditions of land insecurity amongst *quilombolas* across the country.

The nearly 200 *quilombos* dotting the municipal area of Alcântara have grown out of early maroon settlements which were often able to grow and survive for long periods of time during slavery (Almeida, 2006). Despite the long-lasting and often continuous occupation, none of these communities holds title to their collectively inhabited territories. Among the major obstacles to *quilombo* land titling today are large so-called 'development initiatives' of national interest (e.g., mining, military and technology projects), as well as the ceaseless agribusiness demand for vast stretches of land for the implementation of agro-industrial projects. In recent years, groups openly opposing *quilombo* and indigenous land regularisation increasingly gain political leverage to defend and promote their interests, further exacerbating land insecurity among constitutionally protected ethnic minorities (Hatzikidi, 2019a, pp. 160-165). In Alcântara, the construction of Brazil's space base (Centro de Lançamento de Alcântara – CLA or Alcântara Launch Base) in the 1980s, caused the forced dislocation of twenty-three *quilombos* from their traditionally inhabited territories and has since initiated a series of alternating cycles of land threats, tensions and negotiations between *quilombolas* and the Brazilian State that continues to this day (Andrade, 2006; Pereira Junior, 2009; Serejo Lopes, 2012; Mitchell, 2017). The decades following CLA's implementation saw large waves of civil rights education and political mobilisation by the *quilombolas* who are determined to defend and protect their collectively inhabited territories.

On the southern end of the Alcântara peninsula, and on the other extreme of the zone directly affected by the CLA, we find a second zone, comprising nearly forty *quilombos*, locally denominated 'lands of Santa Teresa'. Itamatatiua is the symbolic and administrative centre of this zone which spreads out to over fifty thousand hectares, and, which according to the *quilombolas*, belongs to their patron-saint, Santa Teresa de Jesus, who they recognise as the legitimate land owner. In a recent text (Hatzikidi, 2019b), I discuss the entanglement of specific notions of religious, ethno-racial and cultural identities with local perceptions of autochthony that characterise Catholic collective notions of identity and place in the lands of Santa Teresa. I wish to draw on this discussion to contextualise the main issues I will critically explore here. In what follows, I will first summarise some of the key points, which will provide the basis for the analysis of sonic and performative aspects of the religious feast. I will then focus on the outings of the itinerant group for the collection of donations, called *joia*, and the ways in which these ritualistic acts, which I heuristically call 'performative religious praxis', visibly and acoustically manifest Catholicism in a religiously contested territory. The *batuque*'s performative religious praxis, in the context of the annual religious feast, brings to the fore the Catholic *quilombolas*' resistance to the growing presence of Pentecostal Christianity in the lands of Santa Teresa and their resilience in the face of a long and arduous struggle for the establishment of their collective rights to land.

PLACE AND MUSIC-MAKING

The Festa de Santa Teresa in Itamatatiua is tied to the community's foundation narratives, according to which Santa Teresa invited 'the Black people of Itamatatiua' to live on her lands and promised to protect them. In exchange, the then freed people promised to share equally and take care of her land and adopted the Saint's name 'de Jesus' as their own last name, thereby becoming Santa Teresa's

children.[5] As the original community grew, more and more small settlements emerged within the Saint's territory, which came to comprise approximately forty *quilombo* communities. Itamatatiua, as the first of these village communities and the place where Santa Teresa herself is believed to reside, is the administrative and religious centre of this zone. The founding members of Itamatatiua were authorised by Santa Teresa to administer the collective territory and to make sure the rules of the sacred pact were kept. For this purpose, they instituted the role of the land custodian (*encarregado/a da terra*). This hereditary role, which continues to this day, is primarily to maintain harmonious relations among residents and to ensure all equally benefit from and respect the shared territory. When a resident wishes to build a house or find a plot to cultivate the land, he/she needs to consult with the land custodian who will indicate an appropriate area for their needs. As part of the holy pact with Santa Teresa, no resident of the Saint's lands is allowed to appropriate, enclose or sell any part of the common land as an individual. While the produce harvested as a result of one's labour may be owned individually, natural resources cannot be. Similar precepts apply to areas demarcated as *quilombola* territory.

In recent years, however, many of these rules have been defied by residents who refuse to ask for the land custodian's advice before taking hold of a plot of land and claiming ownership over it. While this tendency is evident amongst outsiders who move to the Saint's lands and the younger generation who do not "really care about these territorial duties because they think it is a thing of the past," as Zé Roxo, an elderly resident from Itamatatiua told me, those who are commonly identified as culprits are Evangelical Christians. As I have shown elsewhere (Hatzikidi, 2019b), targeting the non-Catholic other as the main (or sole) residents responsible for a growing land crisis in the lands of Santa Teresa reveals how tensions over land occupation are articulated as tensions over religious identity. Among the main reasons that Evangelical presence has been experienced as antagonistic by many Catholics is the rejection of the cult of saints and the presupposition that the land belongs to Santa Teresa.

In a previous analysis of the reasons for the entanglement between religious and territorial tensions in Alcântara, I have addressed the ethno-legal framework for *quilombo* land regularisation, Black and *quilombola* political organisation and the legacy of 'liberationist Christianity' (Löwy, 1996, pp. 30-33). I suggested that the majority of Catholic *quilombolas* have sought to manifest their presence against their religious and land antagonists and have taken action to maintain and renew the historical ties amongst the residents of the shared territory (Hatzikidi 2019b). I have called the actions that aim to preserve and reinforce the Catholic and ethno-racial identity of the lands of Santa Teresa against what is perceived as a socio-religious threat against local traditions 'religious activism' and argued that there are three main streams through which they are channelled: 1) a series of oral narratives, circulating widely across and beyond the zone, that revolve around Santa Teresa's divine intervention to protect her children and punish trespassers and other wrongdoers – usually Evangelicals; 2) the visits of the patron-saint with her itinerant group to collect donations for her religious feast; and 3) the main feast days which mark the most important event in the local Catholic religious calendar

[5] Itamatatiua's patron saint is Santa Teresa of Ávila, also known as Santa Teresa of Jesus, born in Spain in 1515 and canonised in 1622 by Pope Paul V.

and which provide a unique opportunity for the Saint's children from across and beyond her lands to come together.

My focus in this article is on the second of these acts of 'religious activism', the outings for the collection of donations, which I wish to explore in relation to the constitution of space and sound during the *batuque*'s public performance. As social and human geographers have long suggested, "space in itself may be primordially given, but the organisation and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience" (Soja, 1989, pp. 79-80). Since everything we do is embedded in space, if we seek to understand how a particular place is made, un- or remade, "we must first ask who, or what, comes together" there (Potter, 2010, p. 25; Gilmore, 2013, p. 86; Hise, 2004, p. 550; Mitchell, 2002). In a context of religious tensions over land control, beyond a ritualistic reproduction of elements essential to the religious feast, the itinerant group collecting donations represents and communicates the "norms, values, and conceptual schemes" (Ortner 1984, p. 154) that Catholic *quilombolas* deem essential to the maintenance of social order. Through them, they manifest a strong Catholic resistance to the Pentecostal presence and their determination to maintain the lands they inhabit, as lands of Santa Teresa.

As the Catholic majority struggles to prevent radical transformations in their religiously circumscribed ethnic territory, it insists on maintaining the status quo, which it also considers essential to the land regularisation process. My interest here is not in how recent socio-religious developments have affected the music produced by female drummers (in which no significant changes have been observed over the last few years) but in how the music and, more specifically, its public performance, are used to engage with these changes. In other words, my aim is to show that specific musical "performative behaviours are not accidental but intentional, and they have an additional quality of being reflexive" (West and Bowman 2010, p. 279).

The *caixeiras*' drum playing and singing involves a complex performance which draws on a large repertoire of ditties (*cantigas*), each having distinct melodic lines, rhythm and lyrics. In many ways, the drummers speak through the *cantigas* they choose to sing. The drum rhythm varies largely based on the moment in which the performance takes place. The *caixeiras* identify these moments and act upon them, producing more cheerful or more solemn tunes, managing pauses and the alteration of sound and silence and adjusting their voices and intensity of drumbeat. For example, when the *batuque* enters a community it announces its arrival with a song performed in a loud and high-spirited fashion (for one of the ditties that may be sung on this occasion, see Appendix, Song 1).

Residents expect the visit and, when hearing the drums, they know the Saint with her *batuque* have arrived. They open their doors and prepare their donations. When the group approaches, the house owners come to the door and make way for the Saint to come in. The custodian who has the honour of carrying the Saint throughout the visit carefully hands in the small-sized statue of Santa Teresa to the devotee receiving it. As they take the Saint through the house and receive her blessings, the *caixeiras* sing ditties of gratitude for the *joia* and perform ceremonial dance moves. After a short while, the house owner carefully hands back the Saint and thanks her and the *batuque* for their visit. Sometimes devotees are especially moved by Santa Teresa's visit and start crying or holding on to her and praying continously. The *caixeiras* then quickly shift the tune and sing a ditty apt for the occasion (see Appendix, Song 2). When the Saint is handed back to the custodian, blessings are

exchanged, donations are handed to the porter, and the *batuque* moves on to the next house expressing good wishes to the devotees (see Appendix, Songs 3 and 4 for some examples).

In what follows, I will situate this text within the broader literature at the intersection of religious studies and ethnomusicology and explain my use of some key operative concepts, before moving to a more in-depth discussion of the *batuque's* outings and the performative soundscapes it creates.

SOUND AND RITUALISTIC PERFORMANCE IN CONFLICT CIRCUMSTANCES

A solid body of literature in ethnomusicology traces different connections between religious experiences and music. From studies of early Pentecostal churches' soundscape (Daniels, 2008; Dove, 2009) and changes in religious music production (Johnson, B. 2008), to the audibility and 'loudness' of contemporary Pentecostal rituals (Clarke, 2018); and from the exploration of links between lyrical content and lived social contexts (Weekes, 2005) to the 'pastoral' role of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) in spiritualizing the everyday lives of Evangelical churchgoers (Lindenbaum, 2012), and the expansion of the 'Evangelical soundscape' beyond church venues and camp meetings to mainstream popular culture (Schaefer, 2012), the literature has given considerable attention to music making in the Evangelical religious world. With some notable exceptions, (such as the work of Reily (2002, 2006) on *folias de reis* in São Paulo and 'baroque' Catholic celebrations in Minas Gerais; (see also Lumbwe 2014, Iyanaga 2015)), significantly less attention has been given to contemporary music-making within and beyond the Catholic Church. This essay aims at contributing to anthropological discussions of music production in the Catholic religious world.

Furthermore, research on ecstatic experiences in Black Christian churches has been explored at length and is also often linked to 'transcendence' (as an awareness of transgressing everyday experience) in religions of African heritage in different Black Diaspora sites (Butler, 2002; McAlister, 2002; Jennings, 2008; Murphy, 2012; Reed, 2012). However, drum playing, singing, and physical movement in the context discussed here does not involve ecstatic experiences either on the part of the *caixeiras* or in relation to listeners/participants. Several studies of religious music experience suggest connections between sound and articulations of identity (Dickerson, 2009; McAlister, 2012; Schaefer, 2012) and explore the relations between Christian ideology and racial ideology (Aquino, 2007; Burdick, 1999; 2009; Collins, 2004).

Other scholarly approaches explore the relation between music-making and place-making. Burdick (2008), for example, discusses how music's (especially Black gospel and gospel rap) thematisation of place interacts with conceptions of class among São Paulo Evangelicals. Russell (2011) and McAlister (2012), on the other hand, have explored music-making in relation to the formation of diasporic identities.

In this discussion, I am interested in how the "affective value" (Russell, 2011, p. 310) of music may become a valuable resource for place-making, for the evocation of past links, and for the renewal of collective relationships. McAlister (2012) suggests that music-making and hearing as 'active processes' have the ability to re-signify emotional experiences and accord new meanings and connotations even when the same music is played and listened to (McAlister, 2012, pp. 27, 30). In the context of the village communities of the lands of Santa Teresa, which are tied together with old-established links to the patron-saint and the Catholic Church, the

ditties sung by the *caixeiras* are extremely familiar to residents (Catholic and Evangelical converts alike) who can distinguish the precise moment of the procession by recognising the different melodies and drumbeats. Yet, despite the repetition of songs that have passed from one generation to the next and have, according to residents, been performed from memory since the existence of Itamatatiua, the performance of the *caixeiras*, the *bandeiras* and the *batuque* as a whole, acquires new nuances in the changing and charged religious atmosphere in the Saint's lands.

As discussed above, the distinct attitudes towards land use of Catholics and Evangelicals in the lands of Santa Teresa create tensions between them. While this discontent remains largely tacit, it acquires voice, sound and physical shape in the different church services and religious celebrations of either side. I focus here on how these tensions take musical shape during the *batuque* outings and explore how Catholics create soundscapes of opposition and resistance to the threatening Pentecostal presence in their lands. These soundscapes contrast with how Evangelicals audibly and visibly manifest their objection to the Catholic 'false doctrine' – for example, in the frequent worship services (*cultos*) they hold with the indispensable inclusion of loud speakers. Within this context of tension, which culminates in audible 'conflict circumstances', the outings for *joia* demonstrate Catholic presence across the village communities that comprise the Saint's land and their effective control over it. They also manifest their defiance of Evangelical negation (and even mocking) of their saints and their cultural and religious expressions.

A recent volume in ethnomusicology edited by O'Connell and El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (2010) places music at the heart of research into conflict. The notion of conflict is approached cautiously, acknowledging the vast diversity and contextual nature of its articulations, without presuming the presence of violence. In this broad understanding, conflict is conceptualised as "a breakdown in relationships and as a challenge to authority" (O' Connell and Castelo-Branco, 2010, p. 3)."Suggesting that 'music occupies a paradoxical position, used both to escalate conflict and to promote conflict resolution" (O' Connell and Castelo-Branco, 2010, p. 12), the contributors to the volume consider, among other things, ways in which music can be used to identify conflict (by examining manifestations of discord in musical discourse and practice) and ways in which music is employed to resolve conflict. I find the theorisation of conflict proposed in the volume particularly pertinent to the 'conflict circumstances' observed in the ethnographic context under discussion.

In a rapidly shifting and religiously saturated social landscape, one of the *festa*'s main workings is to renew members' affiliation to the Saint's family. Hence, beyond serving a strictly religious purpose (devotion to a patron saint), the *festa* is simultaneously acting on a shared religious heritage – the latter understood here as collective historical legacy. While the assertion of difference between Catholic and Evangelical Christians is a secondary effect in the current climate of religious tension in Itamatatiua, the collection of *joia*, and the *festa* more broadly, first and foremost contribute to the creation of unity amongst residents under one large Catholic umbrella. In other words, under the abovementioned 'conflict circumstances', the outings are fundamentally about delimiting a resilient shared geography called lands of Santa Teresa and less about provoking the religious other.

In her analysis of Holy Week celebrations in Campanha, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, Reily (2006) shows a tension between 'continuity' and 'change', in the form ritual performances are to take place, that originate from different

ideological approaches within the Catholic Church. Unlike the religious landscape of Itamatatiua, where we observe a sharp distinction between Catholics and Pentecostals and a relative congruence of understanding in relation to religious life between clergy and devotees of either side, Reily describes an important rupture between the Catholic Church and the faithful, which has resulted in the church being seen as "a serious threat to the town's traditions" (Reily, 2006, p. 40). Local 'historical consciousness', linked to a 'baroque' mode of religiosity, conflicts with the more horizontal approach the clergy, in line with Vatican II messages, wished to introduce. As Reily shows, for local Catholics Holy Week baroque celebration did not only come to epitomise local conceptions of religiosity and cultural integrity, but "its production has provided a means of annually renewing the region's links with its glorious past" (Reily, 2006, p. 57). While Catholics in the lands of Santa Teresa make no allusion to a 'glorious past', they equally aim at renewing long-established links between the *quilombolas* who inhabit the 40 communities around Itamatatiua, through a sonic and bodily engagement which generates powerful and memorable experiences for the participants.

Having situated this discussion within the relevant literature, I will now explain my use of the heuristic notion of 'performative religious praxis'. Geertz's (1973) thesis of 'religious performances', which encapsulates a set of 'abstract beliefs' and renders them 'real',[6] has been as famous as it has been controversial. However, I am interested in his formulation of 'religious performances', as part of 'social performances', insofar as they provide a helpful analytical frame for the exploration of Itamatatiua religious manifestations. Geertz defines 'religious performances' as "enactments, materialisations, realisations" of a particular religious perspective, which become not only models *of* what people believe, but also models *for* believing in it (Geertz, 1973, pp. 113-114). Such 'full-blown ceremonies', induce "a set of moods and motivations – an ethos – and defin[e] an image of cosmic order – a world view – by means of a single set of symbols" (1973, p. 118). I find that Geertz's thesis dialogues with ethnomusicologist Samuel Araújo's (2010) conception of 'sound praxis', defined as an operative category which "strategically focuses on the sonic aspects of human activity, without isolating them from their political dimension – that is, action that proposes alliances, mediations, and ruptures" (Araújo and Grupo Musicultura, 2010, p. 219).

Drawing on these concepts of 'religious performances' and 'sound praxis', I propose the heuristic notion of 'performative religious praxis'. Reflecting the entanglement of ritualistic musical performance and political action, this notion appears particularly helpful in discussing the soundscapes that are formed in the outings for the collection of *joia*. Acknowledging that "musical meaning relies on context" (McAlister, 2012, p. 33), I will try to show how such performative religious praxis contributes to the simultaneous articulation of particular religious and political perspectives, both deeply enmeshed in local understandings of a Catholic *quilombola* identity.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM AND PERFORMATIVE RELIGIOUS PRAXIS

The October celebration is without doubt the single largest and most important religious event in the Catholic calendar in the lands of Santa Teresa. The outings for the collection of *joia* usually begin in July or August. The *batuque* visits each

[6] My understanding of Geertz's theorisation of the "really real" (1973, p. 112) has greatly benefited from a discussion with Benoît de L'Estoile and his students in the Oikonomia Seminar at the Centre Maurice Halbwachs, Paris, in March 2019.

and every community that forms part of the collective territory on foot, performing ditties according to the occasion. Carrying a figurine of Santa Teresa – commonly considered to be the Saint herself – the *batuque* goes from door-to-door where residents welcome the Saint and her itinerant group and hand them their contribution. While walking inside a village, the four women – the two drummers and the two young girls who wave the flags of the *festa* – may sing the following ditty: "Teresinha is collecting *joia*, but it is not out of need; She collects to find out whose heart is good indeed" (see also Appendix, Song 3 for more examples).

Starting with the communities further away from Itamatatiua, the group gradually returns to its centre by early October. The *festa* officially begins on 6 October, when the *mastro*, a tall decorated tree trunk, is installed in front of the church. A large crowd gathered from different *quilombos* and towns nearby accompany the men who carry the trunk in a high-spirited procession to the church of Santa Teresa. The *caixeiras* beat their drums and sing as they walk along. "The *mastro* of my judge is from the tree of *mamoré*, carried by the men and celebrated by us women", one ditty goes. The songs of the *caixeiras* alternate with the cheerful music of an invited brass orchestra that calls everyone to dance along as they walk up the steep dirt road to Itamatatiua. After long and strenuous efforts, the *mastro* is installed in front of the church, signalling the beginning of the *novenas.*

Starting that night, and for nine consecutive nights, the *novenas* take place. Organised by a different person each night – called a *mordomo*, usually alternating between male and female *mordomos* – they consist of public praying at the church followed by the offering of a lavish table full of cakes, sodas and special treats for the kids, paid for by the organiser. *Novenas* are usually held as a form of payment for a promise made to Santa Teresa. The same is true for the 'judges' of the *mastro* and the feast. It is worth noting here that most *mordomos* are not from Itamatatiua, but rather residents of other communities within the Saint's land, while the 'judges' of the *festa* and of the *mastro* are, with rare exceptions, from Itamatatiua.

The last novena takes place on the eve of 15 October, which is the night Itamatatiua takes its turn in offering its *joia*, closing the cycle of each year's round of donations. On that day all festivities culminate. The *casa da festa* and the church are full of people who come to pay tribute to their beloved Santa Teresinha. Catholics from every part of the Baixada Maranhense come to Itamatatiua on a short pilgrimage, which attracts hundreds. In the afternoon of the same day, the main procession takes place in the centre of the community. On 16 October, the *festa* concludes with the announcement of the following year's organisers.

While this may be the most important event, religious and territorial bonds between the different communities that comprise the Saint's land are not dormant only to be awakened in the period before and during the *festa.* Throughout the year, religious, kin and neighbourly ties bring residents together. The existence of both the church and the cemetery in Itamatatiua are essential to the maintenance of these inter-communal relationships. Important events in the religious calendar, as well as burials in the communal cemetery, are not only opportunities for Catholics to gather together but also a good reminder of the deep-rooted ties with the Saint's home of each 'satellite community'.

Other Catholic religious events that take place throughout the year mainly revolve around Catechism and occasional meetings. Alessiane, a young school teacher, and Dona Maria lead such activities in Itamatatiua. Dona Maria will typically run Sunday catechism (which essentially substitutes the Sunday mass), while Alessiane leads all activities that connect Itamatatiua's Catholic community with those of

other *quilombos* in Alcântara and the Baixada. These usually consist of 'youth meetings' (*encontros da juventude*) where young people from different communities meet and are encouraged to get involved in religious life through entertaining and participatory activities. Also, groups from the *quilombos* commonly gather together to celebrate important events in the Catholic calendar, such as religious feasts and masses, by visiting different communities or towns in the Baixada.

Such church-related activities bring together Catholics from across the Saint's land throughout the year. Residents, however, often express their regret at the absence of clergy in their communities. They often allude to this relative lack of the Church from the everyday life of *quilombolas* as one of the main reasons behind Pentecostalism's growing popularity. Unlike the lack of priests in Alcântara's *quilombos*, all Evangelical churches have their pastor firmly based in the community. For some Itamatatiuenses, this lack is a major set-back in facing the growing Evangelical presence. The *casa do padre* in Itamatatiua, where missionaries would reside for long periods over several decades, stood dilapidated for many years and has now become derelict. "We need more support from the church so we can educate our youth and not let them be seduced by the Evangelicals", said Dona Cecí, an elder resident of Itamatatiua.

Dona Cecí expressed a preoccupation, common among Catholics in the Saint's lands, with regards to the growing presence of Evangelicals who adopt a radically different lifestyle. Pentecostal churches promise spiritual liberation from life's plight through individual salvation and a radical transformation of the *crentes'* (born-again Christian) way of living. As part of this process, many Evangelical churches prohibit lifestyles that include the consumption of alcoholic beverages, extramarital sex, drugs and particular types of music (to name but a few). In order to avoid worldly temptations, most *crentes* only attend social events organised by members of the Evangelical community. Such lifestyle choices sharply separate *crentes* from non-*crentes* in the social space and, from an Evangelical point of view, serve to exemplify how a virtuous life in Jesus can be led. As Peel (2016) has argued, "religions tend to assume their most distinctive form when they are at the edge of their range, set in antithesis to another way of being" (2016, p. 540). As a result, and despite the openness of many Evangelicals, some tend to be perceived as 'provocative' and 'disrespectful' towards non-*crentes* by many of my Catholic interlocutors.

After conversion, many Catholics argue, the *crentes* looks down on 'sinners' who have not yet found salvation. They are also often believed to mock Catholic faith in saints.[7] Most Evangelicals distance themselves from their fellow non-Evangelical villagers, especially when religious events are taking place in the community. As with other celebrations, the Evangelical community of the lands of Santa Teresa do not participate in any of the festivities that relate to the Catholic patron saint. On such occasions, they either shut their doors and windows and avoid communication

[7] In the lands of Santa Teresa, Evangelical rejection and mockery of the cult of the saint have taken several forms. Perhaps one of the most significant cases was the large red graffiti painted on the wall of the Centre for Ceramic Production (and next door to the makeshift Assembly of God in Itamatatiua) which read: "The Saint is an idiot". At the national level, one of the most notorious attacks against the cult of saints was the nationally televised vandalism against a statute of Brazil's patron saint, Our Lady of Aparecida, by former pastor and televangelist Sérgio von Helder on the saint's name day (see Johnson 1997, p. 123; Birman and Lehmann 1999, pp. 150-151).

with non-*crente*s or leave the community altogether for the day. At other times, they organise a service and manifest their presence in a visible and audible fashion.

On the eve of the *mastro* in 2015, for instance, a group of people had gathered at a communal open-air oven house in Itamatatiua to prepare traditional manioc cakes offered every night after the church service. Many people look forward to these annual gatherings. Such occasions are festive opportunities to gather together, tell jokes and tease one another, catch up on news and gossip, and enjoy oneself while "working for Santa Teresa", as many say. On that morning however, it was extremely difficult to have a conversation. Christian music was blasting from the makeshift Pentecostal church just a few metres away. Doors and windows were left wide open to facilitate the flow of sound out of the loud speakers. Most people who had gathered to make the cakes complained that the deafening sound made the work unbearable and "ruined the day". After a few hours, and towards the end of the baking, the music stopped, and all windows and doors were shut.

One morning I was having a conversation with Juliene, a young woman from the nearby town of Bequimão who works in the school's kitchen in Itamatatiua. She is Evangelical "but nice", some Itamatatiuenses had told me before meeting her. We were talking about her experience in the Assembly of God church she attended, and about what many Evangelicals think when it comes to other religions and cultural expressions. I then narrated an incident that had happened a few days earlier. In the community's assembly place – which is also the Centre for Ceramic Production of Itamatatiua and always a busy meeting point – a group of children of different ages had gathered for an extracurricular activity. Among them were the children of pastor Juniel, on one of the rare social occasions in which they participated together with non-Pentecostal children from Itamatatiua.

On that afternoon, the two girls and the youngest boy of the pastor's family noticed the long drums used for the *Tambor de Crioula* dance[8] that were kept at the Centre and approached them intrigued. They touched the drums with hesitation and laughter and started beating them softly. As soon as he heard the sound, their older brother quickly approached his siblings and asked them to stop at once. The younger siblings, evidently embarrassed, stopped and moved away. Juliene laughed at my surprise and explained that for Evangelicals these are "instruments of the devil" and should therefore not be played. The drums are not the only things Evangelicals "do not tolerate", continued Juliene, but several other aspects of what many Afro-Brazilians consider part of their material and immaterial heritage and many Catholics part of their religious heritage and practice are also associated with devilish adoration.

Against this background of everyday conflict, the *caixeiras*' drum playing and singing is an audible and visible manifestation of the Saint's and her children's presence within the shared territory and of their determination to maintain the religious links that tie them with one another and with their land. The *batuque*'s sonic manifestation not only calls Catholics into action by contributing to the organisation of the religious festivity, but also delivers a strong message of determination to Evangelicals. "Let's beat those drums real loud guys! Let's show

[8] This is a popular dance in Maranhão. It involves a rotational dance and the beating of three, differently sized, drums, together with two wooden sticks struck against the largest of the three drums. All instruments are typically played by men while the dance is typically performed by women (see Ferretti, 2002).

them we're here. Santa Teresa is here!", said Benedita as the *batuque* was entering a village.

RENEWING FAMILY BONDS

Drum beating is a symbolic gesture that is powerfully perceived by those at whom the message is directed. An instrument widely known to be strongly disliked by Pentecostals but essential to the *festa*, as well as to what has come to be considered 'Black' and '*quilombo* cultural heritage' (Kenny, 2011), the drum assumes a central and symbolic role in aggregating the Catholic community across the different *quilombos*, while alienating Pentecostals. In the company of the Saint who is always carried along, the *batuque* takes the opportunity to amplify its Catholic voice and manifest its presence. The drums of Santa Teresa announce the group's arrival loud and clear and shape the space reached by their vibrating sound. The thundering drumbeat and the songs sung by the *caixeiras* carry far across the scrublands of southeast Alcântara as the group walks through each *quilombo*, reverberating a pulsating Catholic soundscape throughout the lands of Santa Teresa. In this sense, like the *festa*, the hand-carved drums of the *caixeiras* acquire a symbolic dimension and become an embodiment of the Catholic community itself (Meyer, 2012, p. 165).

The physical presence of the Saint in the villages seeks to recuperate some of the 'lost' territory currently occupied by Evangelicals. The way music, sound, and performance are employed by the *batuque* shape the space around them (O'Connell, 2010, p. 216) and, in a festive context, articulate Catholic dissent and resistance to the presence of Evangelical Christians in the lands of Santa Teresa. The *batuque* distinguishes the 'Evangelical houses' from the rest, in all the villages they visit. Walking outside the houses, accompanied by local people who join the procession, the *caixeiras* control the sound of their drums and their voices, choosing when to remain silent and when to manifest their presence. It is usually the oldest and most experienced *caixeira* who gives the tempo and chooses the verse, to be followed by the second *caixeira* and the young *bandeiras.* As most Evangelicals do not offer *joia*, the *batuque* often opts not to go near their houses. "If we [inadvertently] approach a house [of Evangelicals] they just don't open their doors. Some may even donate, but most take the opportunity to come out and start shouting and saying ugly things to us", one of the women told me. Other times, the *batuque*, often under the guidance and encouragement of local villagers, performs their songs even when passing outside an Evangelical house, knowing that behind closed doors and windows the family sits inside and listens. It is hoped, in those moments, that the affective value of a familiar performative religious praxis will awake a sentiment of empathy and understanding, which, if not forceful enough to reverse a process of religious conversion, might be able to induce respect for the Saint and her religious feast as essential parts of local collective life.

Seen in this light, the ritualistic performance of the *batuque* on behalf of all Catholic *quilombolas* becomes an essential part of their religious activism, or resistance, which is in turn one of the key local grass-roots forms of taking action in defence of their collective ethnic territory and of manifesting their historical resilience. The music performance of the *batuque* in the lengthy outings for the collection of donations for the realisation of the Catholic religious celebration, does not only encode cultural difference but its sonic and visual manifestation across the vast lands of Santa Teresa emerge as a form of political action for the protection of the Catholic *quilombola* territory from the unsolicited and individual land appropriation by many Evangelicals.

In those instances, therefore, the lands of Santa Teresa open up as a 'sociopolitical arena' (Hatuka and Kallus 2007, p. 147) where social facts are located (Logan 2012, p. 508) and continuously negotiated. This negotiation between shifting socio-religious worlds "takes place in contexts, but it is conducted in the light of strategies, which imply temporal schemas by which the deposits of the past might be converted into desired future outcomes" (Peel 2016, p. 542). In this sense then, the constitution of a Catholic space is an ongoing, open-ended and socially constructed process (Loopmans, Cowell and Oosterlynck, 2012, p. 700). The "performative religious praxis" that comprises the Catholic feast may reproduce familiar sounds, yet, given the ever-changing socio-religious context and the growing influence of Evangelical churches, they simultaneously establish new associations (McAlister 2012). In the "conflict circumstances" described above, the well-known ditties and rhythms played are simultaneously capable of tapping into collective memory, thus calling into action (and often calling back) the Catholic community, and of making a statement of determination, resistance, and resilience vis-à-vis the Evangelical community.

Furthermore, beyond the musical performance itself, the somatic associations are also very important. For the *caixeiras* and the people joining the *batuque* on an outing, spending hours walking under the sun, singing and visiting houses hours on end, the experience is lodged somatically (McAlister, 2012, p. 33), alternating between exhilaration and exhaustion. This sonic and somatic experience is one with which most residents are familiar – even Evangelicals, since most of them at some point in their lifetime were also Catholics and had participated in the feast. For most *quilombolas*, therefore, the sonic vibrations of the drums and the loud singing of the *caixeiras* bring back deep-seated memories which are virtually impossible to ignore.

What the operative notion of performative religious praxis aims to convey, therefore, is the fluidity between different forms of intentional action (whether political, religious or musical), which can contextually take the form of ritual participation and performance. This concept, acknowledging the ever-shifting circumstances from which the specific conditions of conflict emerge, incorporates the deliberate and changing actions of the social actors involved in a performative ritual form, inherent part of a religious tradition, that is less mouldable or subject to radical change.

CONCLUSION: THE DRUMS OF SANTA TERESA AS SONIC AND PERFORMATIVE ACT OF RESISTANCE

As I have shown, in the context of religious tension over land occupation in southeast Alcântara, drum beating becomes a symbolic gesture that is powerfully perceived by those for whom the message is intended. The beating of drums in the open for everyone to hear (Catholics and Evangelicals alike) taps into a reservoir of symbolic understandings that may invoke great joy from the former and provoke distress from the latter. As Voegelin has suggested, "sound renders the object dynamic", while the very act of listening "produces a sonic life-world that we inhabit, with or against our will" (Voegelin, 2011, p.11). The drumbeat reaches Evangelicals even through closed doors, whether they wish to listen or not. The same can surely be said for Evangelicals' loudspeakers that deeply 'provoke' many Catholics.

Filling the space with their controversial sound, the drums of Santa Teresa are calling out the Catholic community and reinforce the Saint's presence in her lands. Along with the sound of the drums, Catholicism spreads across the shared territory

and, at least during the festivities, prevails over the loud Evangelical preaching. The drumbeat, argues Hendy (2014, p. 143), "has always been the authentic sound of the dispossessed […] their way of saying, 'I'm here, I exist, I won't be ignored'". Beating the drums of Santa Teresa serves as a powerful reminder to both Catholics and Evangelicals that these lands continue to be under the custody of the Saint's children.

The festive activities Catholics engage in occur in the presence of their own public and their 'counterpublic'. They contribute in important ways in constructing a Catholic sense of place and religious identity, while they simultaneously transform, and are being transformed by, the environment in which they take place. In this context, the *batuque*'s performative religious praxis is simultaneously a ritualistic aspect of the festivities and an opportunity for residents to manifest their collective resilience in the face of historical adversities and their resistance to the presence of and land occupation by Evangelicals. Catholic religious manifestations, therefore, transpire as "ways of rooting in the territory", through which the children of Santa Teresa "(re)affirm a territorial identity with which they can reinforce socio-spatial relationships" (Moreira, 2011, p. 8).

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APPENDIX

Song 1

Beat the drum my *caixeira*	*Toca caixa minha caixeira*
It is time, it is time for me to save	*É hora é hora que vou salvar*
It is time my God	*É hora é meu Deus*
It is time for me to save	*É hora que vou salvar*

Song 2

The sun enters through the door	*O sol entra pela porta*
The moon through the window	*E a lua pela janela*
Lady Santa Teresa	*Senhora Santa Teresa*
I am not leaving without you	*Eu não vou daqui sem ela*
Lady give back the Saint	*Senhora me dê a Santa*
I will not leave her with you	*Que essa Santa eu não lhe dou*
This Saint is not mine	*Essa Santa não é minha*
She is our Saviour's	*É do nosso Salvador*

Song 3

Lady who offered the *joia*	*Senhora que deu a joia*
Your seat is in the sky	*Seu assento está no céu*
A golden chair	*Uma cadeira de oro*
Lined with veil	*Toda forrada de véu*
Lady of the house	*Senhora dona de casa*
I am leaving now	*Eu já vou me retirar*
Goodbye until next year	*Adeus até paro ano*
I will be coming back	*Eu tornarei a voltar*
Stay with God	*Fique vós com Deus Adeus*
I am also leaving with Him	*Que eu também com Deus me vou*
Stay with our Lady	*Fique com Nossa Senhora*
With Teresinha I leave	*Com Teresinha eu vou*

Song 4

Teresinha came from faraway	*Teresinha veio de longe*
Tired from walking	*Cansadinha de andar*
In the house of this devotee	*Na casa deste devoto*
She came to get some rest	*Ela veio se descansar*

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