



# *Ensayo a dança y prosigue: ethnicity and exoticism in the villancicos de negros of the Portuguese Royal Chapel during the seventeenth century*

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## **Abstract**

The last decades have seen an increased growth and diversity of studies concerning the Iberian villancico of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in different institutional contexts such as the Monasterio de Santa Cruz of Coimbra, the Salamanca Cathedral, the Royal Chapel of Madrid and the Royal Chapel of Lisbon. One relevant strand of this vast repertoire is the *villancico de negro*, a subgenre characterized by the dialects and cultural practices of the African slaves which proliferated both in Spain, Portugal and in Latin America. The present article provides a systematic approach to the repertoire of *villancicos de negros* from the Portuguese Royal Chapel, focusing on thematic, choreographic and musical lines and promoting connections with several studies already produced on the same subject.

## **Keywords**

Portuguese baroque music – Lisbon Royal Chapel – musico-poetical forms – villancico – *Villancicos de negros* – exoticism.

## **Resumo**

Nas últimas décadas tem surgido um número crescente de estudos sobre o vilancico ibérico dos séculos dezessete e dezoito, em contextos institucionais tão diversos como o Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra, a Catedral de Salamanca, a Capela Real de Madrid e a Capela Real de Lisboa. Uma vertente importante deste vasto repertório é o *vilancico de negro*, subgénero caracterizado pelos dialetos e pelas práticas culturais dos escravos africanos que proliferaram em Espanha, Portugal e na América Latina. O presente artigo oferece uma abordagem sistematizada ao repertório de *vilancicos de negros* da Capela Real Portuguesa, incidindo em linhas temáticas, coreográficas e musicais, ao mesmo tempo que promove ligações com diversos estudos já produzidos sobre o mesmo tema.

## **Palavras-chave**

Música barroca portuguesa – Capela Real de Lisboa – formas poético-musicais – vilancico – *Villancicos de negros* – exotismo.

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The last decades have seen an increased growth and diversity of studies concerning the Iberian villancico of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in different institutional contexts such as the Monasterio de Santa Cruz of Coimbra (Brito, 1983), the Salamanca Cathedral (Torrente, 1997), the Royal Chapel of Madrid (Torrente, 2002) and the Royal Chapel of Lisbon (Lopes, 2006). One relevant strand of this vast repertoire is the *villancico de negro*, also titled *negrilla*, *negrito*, *negrina* or *guineo* in the original sources, and characterized by the dialects and cultural practices of the African slaves which proliferated both in Spain, Portugal and in Latin America. These pieces are among the so-called *villancicos de personajes* (character villancicos), since the main protagonists of the poetic texts belong to well-identified social and professional groups, such as shepherds, sailors and gypsies. Several scholars have studied this specific subgenre, within its literary and musical bounds, notably Natalie Vodovozova, Glenn Swiadon Martínez and José J. Labrador Herraiz, and Ralph A. DiFranco (Labrador Herraiz, 2004; Swiadon Martínez, 2000; Vodovozova, 1996). The *villancicos de negros* became popular from the end of the sixteenth-century onwards, when they began to take part in important festivities of the liturgical calendar, such as the *Corpus Christi*, and in rituals of the Royal Chapel of Madrid (Maria Gregori, 1997; Swiadon Martínez, 2000). Also prominent in theatrical genres as the *entremeses* and the *mojigangas*, the standard African character was portrayed as a kind of court jester that inspired humor in the audience, through body movement, exuberant dances and distorted pronunciation of Spanish and Portuguese words (Swiadon Martínez, 2000, p. 51). In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *villancicos de negros* were similarly cultivated in the Spanish colonies of the New World, as witnessed by the collection of *negros* by the Portuguese composer and chapel master of Puebla Cathedral (México), Gaspar Fernandes (c. 1570-1629). According to Robert Stevenson, it includes the oldest extant *guineo* composed in the New World (Stevenson, 1976, p. xciv). As Carolina Santamaría notes, the *villancicos de negros* played an important role as vehicles of evangelization among native populations in overseas territories (Santamaría, 2005, p. 11). In the Iberian Peninsula, the oldest dated manuscript sources bearing the title *Negro* come from the Monasterio de Santa Cruz of Coimbra (Stevenson, 1976, p. xciv).

The process of adaptation of the villancico to the liturgical context of the Divine Office brought with it a tendency to consolidate the poetic and musical forms around specific subjects, according to celebration. Therefore, narrative flows often described the visit of the shepherds to the newborn Child in Bethlehem, or praise the moral virtues of the Virgin Mary, among other topics. It was under this tradition that the genre developed, when it started to be a part of the musical life of the heirs of the Portuguese throne, in the Alentejo



city of Vila Viçosa, in the last years of the third decade of seventeenth century. From the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa we know today two booklets containing the texts of the villancicos sung during the Matins of Christmas eve, in 1637 and 1639.<sup>1</sup> Together with two publications issued in Lisbon by the composer and poet Manuel de Piño, also for Christmas,<sup>2</sup> these are the oldest Portuguese villancico booklets in the seventeenth century, and extremely rare indeed, as no copies survive of the sources kept in Biblioteca D. Manuel II of the Ducal Palace. Within the repertory of villancicos contained in these two booklets, written mainly in Spanish, we find an example of *villancico de negro* in the 1637 booklet, in addition to other linguistic variants: the Portuguese and the Galician. The inclusion of *Ola zente que aqui samo* («Hello people, we are all here»), as the third villancico of the second Nocturn of Matins is relevant because it testifies the rooting of this specific tradition in Portugal, as the genre flourished contemporaneously in Spain and Latin America (see Table 1). Furthermore, a musical concordance for this *villancico de negro* subsists in the repertory of Santa Cruz de Coimbra, which reveals further expansion of the genre.<sup>3</sup> In the Portuguese examples, the *fala de negro* or *linguajar de preto* (*Negro* speech) rests mainly on the creoles of Angola and Guinea, but we find also passages in the Spanish variety.

In 1640, when Duke João IV moved to Lisbon to be crowned King of Portugal, after six decades of Spanish rule under the House of Habsburg, he insisted to maintain the musical practices of Vila Viçosa in the Royal Chapel of Lisbon, as he brought with him the Chapel Master Marcos Soares Pereira and the majority of the music books that belonged to the Ducal Palace (Lopes, 2006, p. 21). Next to his acclamation, on 1 December 1640, the King determined the inclusion of eight villancicos in the Christmas Matins and one in the morning Mass, as shown by the first booklet printed in the Lisbon workshop of Jorge Rodrigues.<sup>4</sup>

Contrary to what one might imagine, the repertory of Vila Viçosa was not transposed into the first Lisbon booklets, something that points out the new monarch's intention to

<sup>1</sup> *Villancicos que se cantaram na capella do Duque nosso Senhor nas matinas da noite do Natal. Em este Anno de 1639* (P-VV, BDMII 719 [2]). The 1637 booklet is listed in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> *Villancicos, y romances, a la Nauidad del niño Iesu, nuestra Señora, y varios Sanctos. Compuestos por Manuel de Piño, Ministril de su Magestad en su Real capilla de Lisboa.* [...] — *En Lisboa, En la officina de Pedro Craesbeeck, 1615* (E-Mn, R/12048); *Segvnda parte de villancicos, y romances, a la natividad del Niño Iesus, nuestra Señora, y varios Santos. Compuestos por Manuel de Piño, Ministril de su Magestad, en su Real capilla de Lisboa: y professo de la tercera regla del Seraphico P. S. Francisco.* [...] — *En Lisboa, Por Pedro Craesbeeck. 1618* (E-Mn, R/14681).

<sup>3</sup> Modern edition by (Matta, 2008). This work has been recorded in (Matta, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> *Villancicos, que se cantaraõ na Capella Real d'el Rey D. Joam nosso Senhor, o IV. de Portugal. Nas Matinas da noite do Natal, este anno de 1640.* [Portuguese coat of arms] *Com todas as licenças necessarias. Em Lisboa. Por Iorge Rodrigues.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>1</sup> P.).



define within his Royal Chapel a new characteristic space of musical and religious representation, reinforcing his newly acquired royal dignity (Lopes, 2006, p. 23). From 1640 onwards, the performance of *villancicos* was a standard feature of the Christmas ceremonies of the Royal Chapel of Lisbon and soon it spread to the Matins of Epiphany, on 6 January 1646. Finally, six years after the proclamation of the Virgin Mary as patron saint of the Kingdom of Portugal, *villancicos* with Marian related subjects were adopted in the feast of Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, celebrated in the 8 December 1652. This was the beginning of an enduring tradition of singing *villancicos* in these three main feasts of the liturgical year, a seventy-six year tradition that was interrupted only from January 1716 onwards, during the reign of King João V (1689-1750), when the liturgy of the papal curia was adopted in the Royal Chapel of Lisbon (Lopes, 2014).<sup>5</sup>

The above mentioned *Ola zente que aqui samo* would never again be sung in Lisbon Royal Chapel, but right on the second Christmas of the reign of João IV, a new *villancico de negro* made its appearance in the third Nocturn of Matins, *Venga turo lo neglio*, a work credited to composer Fr. Francisco de Santiago (c. 1578-1644), a close friend of the King.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, there is no known musical concordance for this example, as indeed for the vast majority of the textual sources from the Portuguese Royal Chapel. But *Venga turo lo neglio* must have pleased the King and his court audience, since it recurred later, in Christmas 1660 (see Table 1). This is the only example of text (and probably music) reutilization of a *Negro* in the entire repertoire.

After its first appearance in Christmas 1641, the *villancico de negro* continued to have a regular presence in the Portuguese Royal Chapel, with several examples detected in the decades of 1640, 1650 and 1660, as shown in Table 1.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For a survey of the Royal Chapel sources of *villancico* texts see (Lopes, 2007). A full catalogue of the *villancico* booklets published in Portugal during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is currently being prepared for publication as part of the *Catálogo Descritivo de Pliegos de Villancicos*, a project based in Universidad Complutense de Madrid and coordinated by Álvaro Torrente.

<sup>6</sup> See the final section of this article: “A note about the composers and the musical forms”.

<sup>7</sup> The table includes works written integrally in *Negro* dialects. Examples with partial use of those dialects, when combined with other dialects and languages (*ensaladas*), are referred separately.



No.	Place of performance	Feast	Year	Position in Matins	Title	Composer	Concordances
001	Vila Viçosa	Christmas	1637	M-N-II, no. 3	<i>Ola zente que aqui siamo</i>	Anon.	P-Cug, MM 50
002	Lisboa	Christmas	1641	M-N-III, no. 2	<i>Fengas turo lo neglo</i>	[Fr. Francisco de Santiago]	<i>Índex</i> , p. 205.
003	Lisboa	Christmas	1643	M-N-II, no. 2	<i>Jenr Cruba como relanca</i>	[Carlos Patiño]	Nery S-Pat C. 37
004	Lisboa	Christmas	1644	M-N-III, no. 2	<i>Menuevrio sa en Bele</i>	[Gabriel Diaz Besson]	<i>Índex</i> , p. 175.
005	Lisboa	Epiphany	1648	M-N-II, no. 1	<i>Tengese cava nola mala negla</i>	[Carlos Patiño]	Nery S-Pat C. 55
006	Lisboa	Christmas	1648	M-N-III, no. 2	<i>Svolo plima nita</i>	Anon.	
007	Lisboa	Epiphany	1649	M-N-III, no. 1	<i>Que quele?</i>	Anon.	
008	Lisboa	Christmas	1652	M-N-III, no. 2	<i>Bomo anclando bomo pleto</i>	Anon.	
009	Lisboa	Epiphany	1654	M-N-III, no. 1	<i>A svolo Flancipulo?</i>	[Juan Gutiérrez de Podilla]	M-P, AMVCCP511.8
010	Lisboa	Christmas	1654	M-N-II, no. 2	<i>Dma mana donda va?</i>	[Fr. Francisco de Santiago]	<i>Índex</i> , p. 206.
011	Lisboa	Christmas	1658	M-N-I, no. 3	<i>Bomo plimo noxos neglo</i>	Anon.	
012	Lisboa	Christmas	1659	M-N-I, no. 3	<i>No sabe nora senola Pascuala?</i>	Anon.	
013	Lisboa	Christmas	1660	M-N-II, no. 2	<i>Fengas turo lo neglo</i>	[Fr. Francisco de Santiago]	<i>Índex</i> , p. 205.
014	Lisboa	Christmas	1662	M-N-II, no. 3	<i>Ola gente que jaze nos comas</i>	Anon.	
015	Lisboa	Christmas	1663	M-N-II, no. 2	<i>Ola, ou, ó zente blanco</i>	Anon.	
016	Lisboa	Christmas	1664	M-N-II, no. 1	<i>Afassa, afassa zente</i>	Anon.	
017	Lisboa	Christmas	1665	M-N-II, no. 3	<i>Oh Perbo, bozo toda darne?</i>	Anon.	
018	Lisboa	Christmas	1667	M-N-II, no. 2	<i>Ola Flancico Flanzado</i>	Anon.	
019	Lisboa	Christmas	1668	N-I, no. 3	<i>Ola Fencico Gaspá</i>	Anon.	

Table 1. *Villancicos de negros* sung in the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa and in the Royal Chapel of Lisbon

<sup>8</sup> For a list of the printed sources and their locations, see the Appendix.



As can be observed, the last *villancico de negro* was heard in Christmas Matins 1668. Given the chronological distribution of the *Negros* in other Portuguese and Spanish cult centers, the abandonment of the genre in Lisbon Royal Chapel seems to have been relatively precocious and denotes a move towards a linguistic evenness of the repertoire as a whole, thus assuring the legitimation of the *villancico* as a vernacular complement to the liturgy through a renewed linguistic presentation, as it has been released from its older and “unpolished” connotations.<sup>9</sup>

*Negros* are associated mainly with Christmas feast, but three examples were sang in the feast of Epiphany, as well. There are several thematic cross-lines that propitiated the inclusion of *Negros* in both feasts, for instance the announcement of the Nativity, or the visit to the newborn Child in the cave of Bethlehem. A study of Christmas topoi shows that most examples are related to the broadcasting of the good news, carried by someone that was indeed near the Child or heard the story from a family member (see Examples 1-3).

004. *Nocturno terceiro. Villancico VIII.* — [Fr. Francisco de Santiago]  
*Manueryia sà en Bele*

[Estribillo]

1. *Manueryia sà en Bele,*
  2. *Que me conta volsa mece?*
  1. *Lo que vi,*
  2. *Quita ra y, tu lo viste?*
  1. *Si bona fé.*
  2. *Tururu capè*
- Vamo aya, y a Manué,*  
*que sà en blaço de Malia*  
*cantalemo la folia,*  
*lo canalio, y saltare.*

[Refrain]

1. The Child Emanuel is in Bethlehem.
  2. What are you telling me?
  1. Things I saw,
  2. Who was there, did you see Him?
  1. Yes, in all truth.
  2. Tururu capè
- We will go now, to visit Emanuel,  
He is in the arms of Mary  
We will sing the folia,  
and the canarios, and saltarello.

Example 1. Christmas 1644 (excerpt).

<sup>9</sup> In Portugal, the last booklet containing one *villancico de negro* belongs to Christmas 1705, in Coimbra's Cathedral, while in the Royal Chapel of Madrid the genre subsists until c. 1700 (Serra, Ruiz, & Cojo, 1992, p. 112). The only secondary idioms that remained in consistent use from the 1670's were Portuguese and Gipsy (Lopes, 2006, p. 118).



006. *Terceiro Nocturno. Villancico VIII.* [Anón.]  
— *Siolo plima mia*

[Estribillo]  
*Siolo plima mia*  
*glante nova tlaigo, oyó, oyò*  
*que ha naciro un Niño*  
*màs beyo que Mayo.*

[Refrain]  
Sir, my cousin  
I bring great news, oyó, oyó  
A Child was born  
More beautiful than May.

Example 2. Christmas 1648 (excerpt)

008. *Segundo Nocturno. Villancico VII.* [Anón.]  
— *Bamo andando bamo pleto*

[Estribillo]  
*1. Bamo andando bamo pleto*  
*2. Bamo plimo bamo pleto*  
*3. Bamo plimo turo eyo*  
*2. y velemo el nacimiento*  
*deste Niño cabayero*  
*que oy ha naciro en Belena*  
*de una Niña cabayera*

[Refrain]  
Let's get going, black people  
Let's go cousins, let's go blacks  
Let's go cousins, all of us  
And we will see the birth  
Of this Knight Child  
That was born today in Bethlehem  
Of a Knight Girl.

Example 3. Christmas 1652 (excerpt).

The announcement can be combined with by some kind of preparation, such as the reunion of the slave musicians and their various musical instruments under the guidance of the polar star, in order to cheer the upcoming procession to the cave of Bethlehem (see Example 4):



009. III. *Noctvrno. Villancico V.* — [Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla]  
*A siolo Flanciquío?*

[Estribillo]

1. *A siolo Flanciquío?*
2. *Que manda siol Tomé?*
1. *Tenemo tura instlumenta  
templarita con cunselta?*

*Copla 1*

*Vamo a ver un Niño beya  
con un colaçon tan alto,  
que con no tenel un qualto  
ha conviràro tres Reya,  
campemo con nuestra estreya  
bailandolo alegremente,  
que el ejercicio a la gente  
bueno és pera la salud.*

[Refrain]

1. Ah, Master Francisco?
2. What do you want, master Tomé?
1. Do we have the instruments  
all tuned for the concert?

Verse 1

We are going to see a beautiful Child  
with such an high heart,  
that since He didn't have a fourth  
He has invited three Kings,  
Let's camp with our star  
dancing with joy,  
because the exercise  
is good for everybody's health.

Example 4. Epiphany 1654 (excerpts).

The expectation of the visit, with joyful dances and songs played an important role in Epiphany *Negros*, but there was a powerful attraction, namely the presence of one of the Magi, Balthazar, who had African origin, according to tradition. Therefore, a strong community connection developed towards this particular Wise Man, followed by a sense of empathy shared by all slaves that were present at the crib and even by the newborn Child Himself, recognized as a member of the group. This topic is detectable in the following example, written in the Spanish variant of the *fala de negro* (see Example 5):





*Segundo Nocturno. Villancico IV.* Anón.  
— *Ayà vá, ayà vá* [Ensalada]

Estribillo

*Ayà vá, ayà vá  
xacarica de novidade,  
y moleno la cantarà  
con hi, hi, hi, hi,  
con há, há, há, há,  
de xacarica que estrena,  
porque el yanto del Niño cesse,  
y aun que a la blanca le pese  
la à de cantar la molena.  
Ayà vâ,  
con gran ré, mi, fá, sol, là,  
Ayá vâ.*

*Prosigue el Romance*

*Legaran turo a adorayo,  
y al llegar lo Reye preta  
el Niño le yamó plimo  
y el le bolvió reverencia.*

Refrain

*Ayà vá, ayà vá  
a new, little xacara,  
and black people will sing it  
with hi, hi, hi, hi,  
with há, há, há, há,  
A debut of a little xacara,  
will stop the Child's crying,  
and although it does not please whites  
Blacks will sing it.  
Ayà vâ,  
with great ré, mi, fá, sol, là,  
Ayá vâ.*

The Romance follows

They all arrived to worship Him,  
and when the black King came  
The Child called him cousin  
and he paid Him reverence.

Example 5. Epiphany 1658 (excerpts).<sup>10</sup>

In a previous ensalada attributed to Frei Francisco de Santiago and included in the first booklet for Epiphany (1646), we can find instances of ecumenical character, where the slaves claim the same rights of the Royal family as a means to impose their citizenship (see Example 6):

<sup>10</sup> [Portuguese coat of arms] *Villancicos que se cantarão na Capella do muito Alto, & muito Poderoso Rey D. Affonso o VI. N. S. Nas Matinas da Festa dos Reys da era de 1658. Lisboa. Com todas as licenças. Na Officina Craesbeeckiana. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>3</sup> P.).*



*Tercero Nocturno. Villancico V.* [Fr. Francisco de Santiago]  
*Blanco, y negro. — Si temblais de*  
*amores* [Ensalada]

[Estribillo]

[Refrain]

Si temblais de amores  
 divino Niño,  
 al imperio del fuego  
 se rinde el frio?

If You tremble with love  
 divine Child,  
 to the empire of fire  
 laugh the cold?

*Copla primera*  
*Samo de càsta de Reye,*  
*y no podemos ser pleza,*  
*que ya Mandinga confiessa*  
*del Niño divina leye,*  
*entre una mula, y un buye*  
*neglo buscamos la vida.*

First verse  
 We are from royal breed  
 and we cannot be arrested,  
 as Mandinga already confesses  
 the holy law of the Child,  
 between a mule and a ox  
 black people seek life.

Example 6. Epiphany 1646 (excerpts).<sup>11</sup>

In several examples, the announcement is followed by an action or event in the narrative line, usually a cheerful procession that culminates with the visit and adoration of the Child in the crib. On arrival, the slaves offer praise and affection to the newborn Child or display concern for His lack of comfort (Example 7):

017. *Segvndo Noctvrno. Villancico VI.* [Anón.]  
 — *Oh Pedro, bozo inda dorme?*

[Introducción]

[Introduction]

1. *Oh Pedro, bozo inda dorme?*  
*Oh canzana despertà*  
 2. *Inda agola me deitá.*  
 1. *Quem te arrancàra os bigode,*  
*oh Pedro, Pedro, zombamo.*  
 2. *Não zombamo, mas dlomimo.*

1. Hey, Pedro, are you still sleeping?  
 Hey, bunch of dogs wake up  
 2. I went to bed just now.  
 1. If someone will rip off your moustache,  
 Pedro, Pedro, let's mock  
 2. We do not mock, we are sleeping.

<sup>11</sup> *Villancicos, que se cantaram na Capella do muito Alto, & muito poderoso Rey D. Ioam o Quarto O Amado nosso Senhor. Nas Matinas da noute dos Reys, da Era 1646.* [Portuguese coat of arms] *Em Lisboa. Por Paulo Craesbeeck.* (P-Ln, Res. 1897 P.).



*1. Dá cá hum fumaça plimo  
pala vê se despertamo?*

1. Give me a smoke, cousin,  
so we can see if we wake up?

*1. Bota logo humas plegão,  
que toro neglo se zunte  
pala vai os plosição.*

Sing now some street cries,  
so that all black people will join  
to go to the procession.

*Estribillo*

Refrain

*Tod. E le, le, le, & la, la, la,*

*Tod. [Todos=everyone] E le, le, le, & la, la,  
la,*

*Deuso naciro nos paya está.  
Turo zunto bayemo, & saltemo,  
alegemo a siolo Menino,  
que nace esta noite nuns pobre Portá.*

The born God is lying on the hay  
Let us dance all together, and jump,  
Let's make the Lord Child happy,  
He who was born tonight in a poor crib.

*Coplas*

Verses

*Menino dos mia vida,  
que sá tlemendo de flio,  
aqui traze hum vaqueilio  
vesti mia Pequenina,  
tomá estes dois garia,  
& começai a papã.*

Holy-Child of my life,  
Who are trembling with cold,  
we bring You a piece of cow leather  
to dress my little Child,  
accept this two delights  
and start eating.

Example 7. Christmas 1665 (excerpts).

The signs of direct communication with the newborn Child, shown in the previous examples, are very similar to the *villancicos* in Portuguese. Both categories share the same tendency to praise the physical attributes of the Child, such as “beauty” and the brilliance of His eyes, and use expressions of concern over the cold or His crying (Lopes, 2006, p. 144).

It is important to underline that in all Christmas repertory, the various ethnic and professional groups are clearly identified in the social hierarchy, with their languages and patterns of behavior, in order to reflect a comprehensive view of all society, one that provides, at the same time, a model of integration and the inherent perception of the limits which are imposed on each group and should not be infringed upon. Beyond the creole dialect and the festive display, with jumps, dances and singing, there are repeated references to family relationships, involving cousins (“*plimos*”) and brothers (“*manos*”). In a more detailed level, some characters are identified by their own names, some of them adopted from the Portuguese onomastic use (for example, “*Flanciquio*” = Francisco, “*Frunando*” = Fernando, “*Gaspá*” = Gaspar). As in the case of the Portuguese and Galicians,



the slaves geographical origin is also mentioned, as in the first villancico for Christmas 1664, *Afassa, afassa zente*, in which the people of Angola, Brazil and Sao Tomé and Príncipe come together in order to celebrate with dances the birth of the newborn Child (see Example 8).

016. *Segvndo Noctvrno. Villancico IV.* —  
*Afassa, afassa zente*

*Afassa, afassa zente  
que quere entrá Angola,  
com todos seus pletio,  
& suas vitangola,  
festejà os Minino,  
que chama Manoelio,  
que palio os Seola,  
nuns pobre portalzio.*

2. *Nam ha de bayá senam Blasil,*  
1. *Nam ha de frugà senam Angola,*  
3. *Nam tem que falà, nem que dizè,  
plimelo está Sam Thomè.*

*Dança*

1. *Minino quo nace,  
por nos resgatà,  
bem he que bayemo,  
para nos saruá.*

Get away, get away, people  
that Angola wants to enter,  
with all its black people,  
and its vitangola,<sup>12</sup>  
to celebrate the Child,  
whose name is Emanuel,  
to whom Our Lady gave birth,  
in a poor portal.

2. Only Brazil shall dance,  
1. Only Angola shall celebrate,  
3. They must not talk, or speak,  
In the first place comes Sao Tomé.

Dance

1. A Child that is born,  
to rescue us,  
it is good that we dance,  
so that He can save us.

Example 8. Christmas 1664 (excerpts).

The dialogue between different characters, denoted by alternating numbers in the above examples), brings dynamic and dramatic sense do the story. Frequently, the dialogues are combined with body gestures and movement, which makes plausible the staging of some examples in its original contexts of performance. In Example 8, there is a clear indication of a dance section (*Dança*), as also is the case with the more explicit inscription in the third villancico for the first Nocturn of Christmas 1658 (see Example 9).

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<sup>12</sup> Traditional dances.



<p>011. <i>Primeiro Noctvrno. Villancico</i>  <i>III. Neglo. — Bamo plimo todos neglo</i></p> <p>[Coplas]</p> <p><i>Bamo plimo todos neglo,</i>  <i>bamo o portà re Belen,</i></p> <p><i>para fazemo una ranças,</i>  <i>al Señor Manuè.</i></p> <p><i>Ensayo a dança, &amp; prosigue.</i></p> <p><i>Bon está la ranza palentes,</i>  <i>Bamo andando que jà vé</i>  <i>portà donde gente negla,</i>  <i>hoze hade mostlà quen he.</i></p>	<p>[Anón.]</p> <p>[Verses]</p> <p>Let's go, all the black cousins,          let's go to the portal of          Bethlehem,          to make some dances,          for the Lord Emanuel.</p> <p>Rehearse the dance and proceed.</p> <p>The dance is good, my relatives          let's get going, soon we will see          the portal where black people,          will show today who they are.</p>
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Example 9. Christmas 1658 (excerpts).

The concluding performing inscription of the above villancico, *Em sayo, & dà fim*, shows that the initial dance was repeated at the end, after the coplas section, thus creating an energetic and visually impressive conclusion. Probably combined with colorful costumes and musical instruments, often referred in the texts, the above dances would have been rehearsed before the ceremonies, so that they could be incorporated without delay in the related sections of the villancicos, when the moment came.

As can be seen in Table 1, most of the *villancicos de negros* were sung in the second or third Nocturns, as a means to encourage the public after an extended liturgical service in Latin (Swiaddon Martínez, 2000, p. 50). Even if accomplished with the restraint implied by the liturgical circumstances, the exteriorization of joy and pleasure played a decisive role in the implementation of secular influences inside the church.

It is interesting to note that in all the villancico repertoire of the Portuguese Royal Chapel, the term *dança* is exclusively associated with *villancicos de negros* or *ensaladas* while *baile* is reserved for the villancicos in Spanish or Portuguese language (Lopes, 2006, p. 233). The dichotomy is discussed in literary and theatrical sources from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, in terms not always clear or consistent, but details have been given, for instance by José Antonio González de Salas in 1633: “las *danzas* son de movimientos más mesurados y graves, y en donde no se usa de los brazos sino de los pies



solo: los *bailes* admiten gestos más libres de los brazos y de los pies juntamente” (“The *danzas* have more measured and solemn movements, using only the foot and not the arms; the *bailes* admit more spontaneous gestures of the arms and of the foot all together”).<sup>13</sup>

Whichever kind of performance was evolved, it is reasonable to believe that the choreographic component would be more tolerated in the *Negro* dances than in the *bailes* of a theatrical origin, since it was a musical genre inspired by the living testimony of everyday life (Swiaddon Martínez, 2001, p. 2). In this sense, there is an element of familiarity with the African culture in Portuguese and Spanish literature of the seventeenth century, an element that is absent from other literary traditions of central and northern Europe, in which *Negros* appear as “exotic” figures from faraway lands, depicted in fanciful ways (Labrador Herraiz, 2004, p. 5). In Portugal, *Negro* slaves ensured most of the hard work, either in the countryside or in urban areas, and they interacted directly with mainstream society (Tinhorão, 1997). In addition, the participation of black musicians on ceremonial events is attested by iconographic sources (Goulão, 1994). This phenomenon of integration gave rise to more intense and realistic views of the “other”, thus dissolving, at least partially, the tendency to create “exoticisms” based in artificial constructions of reality.

The coexistence of different levels of society in a certain context is occasionally reflected on the villancico texts, with a clear intention to underline the universality of Salvation. In the following example, the slaves invite their masters, the “white people”, to undertake a fraternal pilgrimage to Bethlehem, always surrounded by dances, jumps and musical instruments,<sup>14</sup> departing from the place of reconciliation and union of all mankind that is the Church of Christ (see Example 10).

015. *Segvndo Noctvrno. Villancico V.* [Anón.]  
— *Ola, ou, ó zente blanco*

[Introducción]

*Ola, ou, ó zente blanco  
que sâ aqui zunto no Greja  
dar ponto logo nos boca,  
calâ, aquietá, silencia.*

*Estribillo*

[Introduction]

Hello, white people  
that are together in church  
keep your mouth closed right now  
don't talk, be quiet and in silence.

Refrain

<sup>13</sup> *Nueva idea de la tragedia antigua*, ed. 1778, p. 171, cit. in (Cotarelo y Morí, 2000, p. clxv).

<sup>14</sup> As in Example 6, instances of onomatopoeic character abound, in which the rhythms and sounds of percussion instruments are imitated.



*Vamo a Belem toro zunto,  
bayando, saltando, repeniqui  
peniqui penicando instrumenta,  
os adufe, tam, tam, tam,  
os pandeilo, xi, xi, xi,  
os gaita, tu, ru, ru, ru,  
ploque lâ nesse Presepia  
os boy, & os mula  
vendo os dança negra,  
os boy ficarà espantaro,  
& os mula fica com o bessa.*

Let's go to Bethlehem all together,  
dancing, jumping, playing<sup>15</sup>  
playing instruments,  
the adufe,<sup>16</sup> tam, tam, tam,  
the tambourines, xi, xi, xi,  
the pipes, tu, ru, ru, ru,  
because in this crib  
the ox and the mule  
watching the negro dances,  
the ox will be amazed,  
and the mule stays all the more.

Example 10. Christmas 1663 (excerpts).

Despite the signs of “emancipation” or “permissiveness”, one cannot overlook the numerous derogation implications, brought either by suggestions of childishness and naivety that abound in the texts, either by the distorted pronunciation of words, or by the allegedly immoral conduct that could be implied in the dance movements. It is important to keep in mind the constraints and limitations that were imposed to composers and librettists, of whom very little is known today. The role of creative individuals, such as chapel masters, poets and members of the clergy, was to reproduce, decade after decade, the main thematic conventions related to the sacred villancico. The creative action of these authors could not develop apart from a well-defined set of ideological values and social regulations that dominated society in the *Ancient Régime*, so any approach to this repertory should benefit from a multi-angled perspective, one that help to decode the complex symbolic systems that reflects religion and society in all its shadings and relations.

### **A NOTE ABOUT THE COMPOSERS AND THE MUSICAL FORMS**

As can be seen in Table 1, it is only possible to assign the musical authorship to 6 (31,5 %) of 19 *villancicos de negros*, through comparison of *incipits* and internal sections with other musical and textual sources. These attributions should be seen as probable, since none of the printed sources of the Portuguese Royal Chapel contain references neither to composers, nor to librettists, thus invalidating any definitive confirmation. Departing from

<sup>15</sup> The sound of little drums.

<sup>16</sup> Square tambourine.



this scenario, two works, *Venga turo lo neglio* (nos. 002 and 013) and *Dime mana donde vá?* (no. 010) can be attributed to Fr. Francisco de Santiago, both with concordances in the *Index of Livraria de Mvsica*, a massive music library gathered by King João IV († 1656) of which more than 2300 works were *villancicos* (Luis Iglesias, 2002). In all the *villancico* repertoire of the Lisbon Royal Chapel, Santiago has the higher number of ascribed *villancicos* (Lopes, 2006, p. 216-218). This fact is understandable since there existed, as already suggested, a relation of high esteem between the King and this clergyman of Portuguese origin that lived most of his life in Spain.

Two other *villancicos de negros*, *lesu Crisa como reluça* (no. 003) and *Tengase aya nola mala neglia* (no. 005) are ascribed to the master of the Royal Chapel of Madrid, Carlos Patiño (c. 1600-1675). These concordances can be found in the correspondence exchanged between King João IV and the Portuguese ambassador to France, the Marquis of Nisa (Nery, 1990). In the overall repertory, the influence of Carlos Patiño is greater in the sources of the *Capela Real* than in the *Index of Livraria de Mvsica* and we can trace it well beyond the composer's life (Lopes, 2006, p. 222). Another *Negro*, *Manueriya sá en Bele* (no. 004) is ascribed to Gabriel Díaz Bessón (c.1590-1638), who was also at the service of the Spanish Royal Chapel until 1614. This attribution supports the assertion that the *villancicos* sung in the Portuguese Royal Chapel throughout the seventeenth century were composed, in vast majority, by Spanish musicians or by Portuguese that consolidated their professional activities in Spain, such as Manuel de Tavares, Manuel Correia do Campo and Estêvão de Brito. The only exception to this Iberian framework is represented by a *Negro* for the feast of Epiphany 1654, possibly composed by Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c.1590-1664), a musician of Spanish birth who spent most of his life at the service of Puebla Cathedral in Mexico.<sup>17</sup>

Although there are no known musical sources for most of the works explored in this article, it's possible to draw a few conclusions from the analysis of the printed texts. The musical forms of the 19 examples can be divided in different categories, as shown in the following table (see Table 2):

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<sup>17</sup> See Table 1, no. 009, *A siolo Flanciquío?* Modern edition by (Stevenson, 1974). The most recent recording is in (Sramek, 2014). I express my gratitude to Omar Morales Abril for his helpful feedback on this *villancico*.





	No. of villancicos	%
Category 1	5	26 %
Category 2	7	37 %
Category 3	4	21 %
Category 4	3	16 %
Total	19	100%

Category 1. Forms with *estribillo* and *coplas*

Category 2. Forms with *esttribillo*, *responsión* and *coplas*

Category 3. Forms with *introducción*, *estribillo* and *coplas*

Category 4. Free forms

Table 2. Musical forms of the *villancicos de negros* sung in the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa and in the Royal Chapel of Lisbon.

From Table 2 we can conclude that the largest group of *Negros* are based in forms with *responsión*, in which the *estribillo* is repeated only in part (generally its final verses), between or after the *coplas*. The *responsión* has generally a greater number of vocal forces than the preceding section, a fact corroborated by the *Index of Livraria de Mvsica*. For example, in *Venga turo lo neglio*, we find the indication *a duo. Pue toquemo lo cascaue. a 10*, meaning that the initial duet was replaced in the *responsión* by a contrasting choir of 10 voices (*Index*, p. 205). Similar indications of vocal expansion are given under the entries *Manueria sá en Bele* (*Index*, p. 175) and *Dime mana a donde vá* (*Index*, p. 206). To those indications, the *Index* adds another, of an esthetical nature, and possibly suggested by the King himself: *Venga turo lo neglio* and *Manueria sá en Bele* are classified as MB (*Muito Bom* = Very Good).

Traditional forms, characterized by full repetition of the *estribillo*, also stand out in Table 2. *Ola zente que aqui samo* (no. 001) is an example of Category 1, in which the solos alternate with tutti sections, formed by two choirs, each one with four voices. In the printed source of this villancico, the *incipit* of the *estribillo* part is given after the final *coplas*, indicating a full repetition from its beginning, a fact confirmed by the musical source.

Although the term *Introducion* or the Portuguese variant *Introducçaõ* are never used in *Negro* sources, this kind of preparatory sections can be inferred in cases were a conventional structure of *estribillo* and *coplas* is already set. For example, in *Oh Pedro, bozo inda dorme?* (see Example 7), the strophic forms of the *estribillo* and *coplas* stand in



contrast with the introductory extended dialogue between different characters, which would have a distinct musical setting.

In the final category of the free forms are included three less usual examples, with extended dialogs or elaborate dance sections, *Bamo plimo todos negro* (no. 011), *Afassa, afassa zente* (no. 016) and *Olá Farancico Gaspá* (no. 019), the last *villancico de negro* to be sung in Lisbon Royal Chapel.

From a global point of view, the distribution shown in Table 2 follow the general development of musical form in the *villancico* repertoire of the Portuguese Royal Chapel, reinforcing the evidence that the composers of the prevalent Spanish repertoire were, in most cases, the same authors of *villancicos de negros*.

As new *villancico* funds are being discovered and explored, we hope that future research will bring further concordances and insights to a peculiar repertoire that was part of the Baroque mosaic, both in Iberian Peninsula and Latin America.



## LIST OF PRINTED SOURCES

001. *Villancicos qve se cantaram na capella do Excellentissimo Principe Dom Ioão, Duque de Bragança nosso senhor. Nas Matinas, & festa do Natal deste anno de 1637* (P-VV, BDMII 710 <sup>[1]</sup>).

002. *Villancicos. Qve se cantarão na real capella do muito alto, & muito poderoso Rey D. Ioam o IV. Nosso Senhor. Nas Matinas da Noite do Natal da era de 1641. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Em Lisboa. Por Iorge Rodriguez.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>2</sup>).

003. *Villancicos, qve se cantaram Na Cappella, do muyto alto, & muyto poderoso Rey Dom Ioam o IIII. o Amado nosso Senhor. Nas matinas da noite do Natal da era de 1643. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1643. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Lisboa. Por Domingos Lopes Rosa.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>4</sup>).

004. *Villancicos, qve se cantaram na Capella, do muyto alto, & muyto poderoso Rey Dom Ioam o Quarto o Amado nosso Senhor, Nas matinas da noute do Natal da era de 1644. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1644. Lisboa. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Por Domingos Lopes Rosa.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>5</sup>).

005. *Villancicos qve se cantaram, na real capella do muyto alto, & muyto poderoso Rey D. Ioam o IV. nosso Senhor. Nas matinas dos Reys da era de 1648. Em Lisboa. Com as licenças necessarias. Por Manoel Gomes de Carualho.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>10</sup>)

006. *Villancicos, qve se cantaram na Capella, do muyto alto, & muyto poderoso Rey Dom Ioam o Quarto Nosso Senhor. Nas matinas da noute do Natal da era de 1648. [Portuguese coat of arms] Lisboa. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Por Domingos Lopes Rosa.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>11</sup>).

007. *Villancicos, Da Capella Real. Nas matinas da festa dos Reys do anno de 1649. [Portuguese coat of arms] Lisboa. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Por Domingos Lopes Rosa.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>12</sup>).

008. [V]illancicos, [q]ve se cantaram na Capella, do muyto alto, y muyto poderoso Rey Dom Ioam o Quarto Nosso Senhor. Nas matinas da noite do Natal da era de 1652. [Portuguese coat of arms] Lisboa. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Por Domingos Lopes Rosa. (BR-Rn, SLR 2bis, 7, nº 13).

009. *Villancicos Da Capella Real. Nas matinas da festa dos Reys do anno de 1654. [Portuguese coat of arms] Em Lisboa. Com todas as licenças necessarias. Por Domingos Lopes Rosa.* (P-Ln, Res. 189<sup>24</sup>).



010. [Portuguese coat of arms] *Villancicos qve se cantarão na Capella do muyto Alto, & muyto Poderoso Rey Dom Ioão o IV. N. S. Nas Matinas da noite do Natal da era de 1654. Lisboa. Com todas as licenças. Na Officina Craesbeeckiana. (P-VV, BDMII 769 <sup>[10]</sup>).*

011. [Portuguese coat of arms] *Villancicos qve se cantaram na Capella do muito Alto, & muito poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. Nas Matinas da noute do Natal no Anno d'1658. Em Lisboa. Con todas as licenssas. Na Officina Craesbeeckiana. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>5</sup>).*

012. [Portuguese coat of arms] *Villancicos que se cantarão na Capella do muito Alto, & muito Poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. N. S. Nas Matinas, & Festa do Natal de 1659. Lisboa. Com Licença. por Antonio Craesbeeck. An. 1659. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>8</sup>).*

013. [Portuguese coat of arms] *Villancicos que se cantarão na Capella do muito Alto, & Poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. N. S. Nas Matinas da noute do Natal do anno de 1660. Em Lisboa. Com Licença. Por Antonio Craesbeeck. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>11</sup>).*

014. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1662. *Villancicos qve se cantarão na Capella do muito Alto, & Poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. Nosso Senhor. Nas matinas, e festa do Natal. Lisboa. Com as licenças necessarias. Na Officina de Henrique Valente de Oliueira, Impressor delRey N. S. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>17</sup>).*

015. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1663. *Villancicos qve se Cantaraõ Na Capella do muito Alto, & Poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. Nosso Senhor. Nas matinas, e festa do Natal. Lisboa. Com as licenças necessarias. Na Officina de Henrique Valête de Oliueira, Impressor delRey N. S. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>20</sup>).*

016. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1664. *Villancicos qve se cantarão Na Capella do muito Alto, & muito Poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. Nosso Senhor. Nas matinas, e festa do Natal. Lisboa. Com licenças necessarias. Na Officina de Henrique Valête de Oliueira, Impressor delRey N. S. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>23</sup>).*

017. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1665. *Villancicos qve se cantarão na Capella do muito Alto, & Poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. Nosso Senhor. Nas matinas, e festa do Natal. Lisboa. Com as licenças necessarias. Na Officina de Henrique Valente de Oliueira, Impressor delRey N. S. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>26</sup>).*

018. *Villancicos qve se cantarão na capella do muito alto, e muito poderoso Rey D. Affonso VI. Nosso Senhor. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1667. Nas matinas da noite do Natal. Lisboa. Com as licenças necessarias. Na Impressão de Antonio Craesbeeck de Mello Impressor d' ElRey N. S. & de Sua Alteza. (P-Ln, Res. 190<sup>32</sup>).*



019. *Villancicos, que se cantaram na capella do muito alto, e muito poderoso Principe Dom Pedro Nosso Senhor. Anno [Portuguese coat of arms] 1668. Nas matinas da noite do Natal. Lisboa. Na Impressão de Antonio Craesbeeck de Melo. Impressor de S. Alteza. (P-Ln, Res. 191<sup>1</sup>).*

#### **LIBRARY SIGLA (RISM — REPERTOIRE INTERNATIONAL DES SOURCES MUSICALES)**

BR-Rn: Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, National Library

E-Mn: Spain, Madrid, National Library

P-Ln: Portugal, Lisboa, National Library

P-La: Portugal, Lisboa, National Palace of Ajuda's Library

P-EVp: Portugal, Évora, Public Library

P-VV: Portugal, Vila Viçosa, Ducal Palace Library

#### **GENERAL SIGLA**

*Index: Primeira parte do index da livraria de musica do mvito alto, e poderoso Rey Dom Iooã o IV. Nosso Senhor. — Por ordem de sua Mag. por Paulo Craesbeck. Anno 1649 (The Music Library of the Harvard College Library, Mus 37.63.467 <<http://id.lib.harvard.edu/aleph/005870840/catalog>>)*

M-N-I: Matins, Nocturn I

M-N-II: Matins, Nocturn II

M-N-III: Matins, Nocturn III

Nery S: Rui Vieira Nery's supplementary list (Nery, 1990)



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