The Mask as a Privilege. Continuities and Adaptations in Cantabria's *Vijanera*[1]

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ABSTRACT

The *Vijanera* is a traditional winter mask festival celebrated every year in the small village of Silió in Cantabria, a region located on the northern coast of Spain. This ritual drama features colorful handmade costumes representing animals, mythological creatures, comic characters, and figures characteristic of rural agrarian society.
Historically, local variants of the *Vijanera* were celebrated in different localities throughout the Cantabrian valleys, but today most of these celebrations have disappeared or acquired new meanings. The practice of the *Vijanera* still thrives in Silió, where it was revitalized in the 1980s by local practitioners. As a ritual of renewal marking the transition from one year to the next, the festival embodies a series of values and meanings. It is a community celebration representing local identity and culture, while also serving as an attraction for heritage tourists. Several researchers have studied the *Vijanera* from various perspectives. Their publications help to reconstruct the history, main characteristics, uses, meanings, and significance of this festival, which has undergone transformations and adaptations. The visual aspects of this ritual drama have received the most attention, while music and sound have only been mentioned occasionally by authors who recognize their importance. The aim of this article is to examine the *Vijanera* from an ethnomusicological perspective, drawing on archival and online research as well as on my own fieldwork. I focus on key processes in the development of this festival in Silió and draw attention to the soundscape as an indispensable part of the celebration, which I examine here in a preliminary manner and which warrants more detailed study in the future.

KEYWORDS

Vijanera; Cantabria (Spain); Carnival ritual; winter mask festival; music and sound.



The *Vijanera:* a revitalized tradition

The *Vijanera* is a traditional winter mask festival celebrated in Cantabria, a region located on the northern coast of Spain. This cyclical ritual drama[2] marks the passing of the old year and the arrival of the new, while reinforcing community cohesion and the collective identity of its participants.

In the rural valleys of central and southern Cantabria, numerous *vijaneras* and similar mask festivals were celebrated in the past during the Carnival season. In the twenty-first

century, these rituals that were central to agrarian society have undergone a considerable decline. David López San Juan (2021, 29-30) attributes this decline to cultural and socio-economic changes that affected traditional culture throughout the twentieth century, as well as to the fact that carnival celebrations were generally banned in Spain between the 1930s and the late 1970s. He also calls attention to the fact that today the *Vijanera* that marks the transition of the year is only celebrated in Silió.[3] Silió is a village of 484 inhabitants (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2024) with a long tradition of livestock farming, located in the municipality of Molledo, in the Iguña Valley, in central Cantabria. The festival takes place in this village on the first Sunday in January, or the second Sunday if the first coincides with New Year's Day. The local community displays a clear awareness of the singularity of their festival, which is deeply linked to their identity and culture.

Every participant in the *Vijanera* ritual is known as a *vijanero*, a status reserved for those with a connection to Silió through birth, family or friendship ties, or residence in the village. At present, being a *vijanero* is regarded as a distinct local privilege, reflecting both social belonging and cultural continuity. Although Silió is a rural community, it is located in a valley marked by industrialization and the urbanization of local lifestyles, processes that began to leave their mark on Cantabria in the early twentieth century. Extant documentation indicates that the *Vijanera* was part of everyday life in Silió from at least the second half of the nineteenth century until 1936.

As evidenced by the works of several researchers and by the testimonies of those who promote and participate in the *Vijanera,*[4] at the beginning of the twentieth century, this festivity attracted both local residents and visitors from other towns and valleys who came to witness the performance. However, the celebration was interrupted during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the subsequent Francoist authoritarian regime (1939-1975), when it was banned. In the early 1980s, the social and political changes that took place in Cantabria and throughout Spain paved the way for the revitalization of the *Vijanera*.[5] The changes include the restitution of freedom of expression, the consolidation of Spanish democracy, the creation of Autonomous Communities, including Cantabria, and modernization driven by capitalist development, among others. It was during this period that a group of young people from Silió and the Iguña Valley, organized under the name *Bígaro* (snail), decided to revitalize this festival, which they considered significant for local culture and identity.

Since 1989, the ritual has been preserved by the *Asociación Cultural Amigos de la Vijanera* ("Friends of the *Vijanera* Cultural Association," hereafter the *Vijanera* Association). The members of this association, founded that same year in Silió, have been committed to reviving various festivals and rituals, with the active participation of local residents. The most notable of these is the *Vijanera*, which they promoted in order to gain official recognition. To this end, the association serves as the authoritative voice on matters concerning Silió's *Vijanera*. It also maintains ongoing contacts and negotiations with the media, institutions, and official bodies.

The revitalization of this ritual, which is highly valued by the inhabitants of Silió, has been a resounding success. As evidenced by my interview with the members of the *Vijanera* Association, César Rodríguez and Alberto García (August 2025), at the local level, the festival is not regarded as a "historical reenactment," but as a "deeply rooted lived experience" of profound significance. The organizers believe that the visitors who come each year to experience the *Vijanera* are much more than mere passive spectators. They are expected to mingle with and integrate into the troupe of *vijaneros*, who playfully tease each other and interact with attendees, occasionally directing mock confrontations at them. In this way, the "non-locals" also become active participants in the ritual.

This mask festival, which perpetuates an important part of the region's heritage, is also recognized for its connection to similar traditions not only in the Iberian Peninsula, but also in other countries in Europe and elsewhere. Today, institutions, academics, and custodians of these traditions highlight such affinities, which some researchers began to observe several decades ago. For example, in the 1960s, the renowned anthropologist and historian Julio Caro Baroja included the *vijaneras* in the corpus of masquerades that commemorated the turn of the year in Spain and other European countries (2006, 256-8). More recently, authors such as the anthropologist Eloy Gómez Pellón point out that the *Vijanera* of Silió is analogous to winter mask festivals celebrated not only in northern regions of Spain, but also in many parts of Europe. These traditions feature similar characters, costumes, masks, and cowbells (Gómez Pellón 2003, 44).

The *Vijanera* has received notable recognition from both Cantabrian institutions and external organizations due to its importance as cultural heritage. Among other distinctions, it has been officially declared an Intangible Ethnographic Cultural Asset by the Government of Cantabria (2021), as well as a Festival of Regional Tourist Interest (2000) and a Festival of National Tourist Interest (2009). It has also become part of networks of Iberian masquerades and international events. The *vijaneros* have occasionally traveled throughout Spain and abroad to participate in festivals, exhibitions, and parades alongside participants to similar celebrations from Spain, Portugal, and other countries.

The recognition of the *Vijanera* as regional cultural heritage, together with the media and social media impact that this entails, has contributed to increasing the number of visitors to the *Vijanera* of Silió in recent years.[6] These developments have also encouraged new researchers to take an interest in its study or to refer to this celebration in their publications.[7] In their public statements, institutions, official bodies, and the media tend to highlight the most ancestral and spectacular elements of this celebration. Drawing on both the work of anthropologists and ethnologists on winter mask festivals in Cantabria and the local knowledge passed down to the people of Silió, the official documents for the designation of the *Vijanera* as intangible cultural heritage highlight that this festival "was consolidated as an ancestral tradition" in the nineteenth century (BOE, 14 de Agosto de 2021, Sec. III, p. 100589). This tradition is considered typical of peasant communities and is linked to secular celebrations dating back to the Middle Ages and even to Antiquity (BOE, 14 de Agosto de 2021, Sec. III, p. 100589; BOC, 21 de Junio de 2017, p. 2). The spectacular elements are highlighted in references to the "performance and staging" of the ritual drama (BOC 21 de Junio de 2017, p. 2) which describe the colorful characters, the clamour and commotion, the spectacle, the humor, the metallic clanging of the cowbells, the display of vigor by the *zarramacos*, the frenetic dance of the *vijaneros*, and the bear character's roars and swipes (BOE, 14 de Agosto de 2021).

Now that Silió has secured its place on the cultural map, the *vijaneros* continue to promote this ritual as a form of community self-celebration, while adopting certain dynamics characteristic of tourism.[8] Welcoming visitors and, consequently, generating some income provides a boost to the local economy and that of the surrounding area, while helping to keep the festival going. Although it receives some support from the municipal government, the *Vijanera* remains essentially self-managed and self-financed.[9] At the same time, members of the *Vijanera* Association maintain that this festival, which has welcomed visitors from other places throughout its history, continues to be celebrated by and for the inhabitants of Silió. The representatives of this association are reluctant to be overly constrained by regulations that could alter their experience of the ritual. This makes them somewhat wary of official heritage recognition by national and international entities such as UNESCO.

As I will illustrate, the organizers maintain a deliberate fidelity to the *Vijanera* that they consider to have been inherited from their ancestors. However, they are aware that they live in a different society, governed by different principles. The testimonies I have collected in this regard remind us that "urban life is no longer as rooted in nature as it was in ancient agricultural settlements, so periodic rituals, including festivals, have become denaturalized" (Aguirre Baztán 2018, 434). Driven by the need to present their culture in a way that appeals to visitors, the promoters of the *Vijanera* have adapted the communal ritual celebration to the new circumstances. As a result, they have increased both the number and variety of characters that take part in the ritual drama, while intensifying the spectacular elements of the festival. These changes are reflected in aspects such as the costumes used and the development of various festive activities, in which music and sound play a prominent role.

These self-conscious processes respond, in part, to a desire to display, together with the satisfaction of a job well done, the pride that the inhabitants of Silió feel in their place of origin and their local culture. They consider the festival fascinating and unique. In shaping this distinctive image of the village and its festival, the analyses and accounts provided at different historical periods by researchers and chroniclers of the *Vijanera*, such as those referred to in the following section, must be considered.

Interpretations and Meanings of the Festival

From the perspective of anthropologist Antonio Montesino González, a specialist in popular mask festivities in Cantabria, the *Vijanera* is an expression of popular Carnival culture. This is partly due to its traditional date of celebration, which falls between New Year's Eve and the Sunday following Epiphany, within a festive period that extends from December to Lent (Montesino 1982, 24; Montesino 1987, 266).

Montesino also identifies in the *Vijanera* a series of morphological elements and expressive functions characteristic of carnival manifestations: revelry, commotion, masks and costumes, farce, satirical drama, grotesque realism, collective reparation, rites of passage, delimitation of symbolic boundaries, containment of evils, reversal of sexual roles, liberation from taboos, and symbolic dissolution of social differences (Montesino 1982). All these characteristics indicate a temporary and symbolic transgression of the established social order, carried out in a renewed act of collective catharsis (Montesino 1982, 24; 1991, 188).

The deeper meanings of the *Vijanera* are difficult to unravel. This festivity stands out not only for its aesthetic quality that displays a multiplicity of phenomena, but also for the complex network of ritual actions it entails (Montesino 1987, 286). Actions are performed in part consciously, but their symbolic meanings, which refer to the birth of the New Year, natural regeneration, or the eternal return of things, often transcend the intentions of local participants (Gómez Pellón 2003, 47). Moreover, the various fields of significance interwoven in this and other similar celebrations of popular culture have fluctuated over time, evolving as traditions continue to be transformed and reinvented (Montesino 1991, 188).[10] Publications on the *Vijanera* by writers and scholars from various backgrounds help us understand many aspects of this celebration and the ways in which it has been interpreted. Among the early researchers and chroniclers, Hermilio Alcalde del Río (1906), who linked this festival to prehistory, and Adriano García Lomas and Jesús Cancio (1928) stand out. Influenced by the

prevailing mindset of their time, these authors attributed qualities of historical antiquity, mythical features, and primitivism to this festival.

In doing so, they established some stereotypes about the *Vijanera* and its characters,[11] providing a basis for etymological speculations and static, romanticized, essentialist conceptions.[12] These discourses were later reproduced by other researchers[13] and prompted Antonio Montesino's criticism of the "quietist fundamentalism of folklore" (1987, 264).

With his research and publications since the 1980s, Montesino inaugurated an analysis based on more scientific perspectives and theoretical paradigms, to which other researchers of the *Vijanera* have contributed in recent decades.[14] Interest in research into traditional celebrations in Cantabria since the 1980s is part of a broader trend that has been observed throughout Spain. As Eloy Gómez Pellón pointed out in the early 1990s,

> It is no coincidence that in recent years there has been a resurgence of research in Spain into the study of festivals in particular, and customs and traditions in general, from a local and regional perspective. This phenomenon has emerged under the influence of the socio-political situation, combined with the development of anthropological science. (Gómez Pellón 1993, 24)

Under these renewed approaches, scholars view the festival as a dynamic phenomenon in which the most atavistic aspects of the ritual, its characters and festive actions, its history, and its metaphorical meanings and social functions, are continuously redefined. Several authors also acknowledge the ongoing processes of revitalization, heritagization and tourism promotion, which are important for understanding the *Vijanera* and other cultural manifestations in contemporary Cantabrian society.[15] These are also significant twenty-first-century phenomena that are being studied in connection with these rituals, both in Spain and internationally.[16]

Among the interpretations offered thus far, several aspects stand out. These include the aforementioned notions of carnivalesque transgression and the regeneration and renewal of annual, natural, and life cycles. Other notable features are the cohesive nature of the ritual, which serves as a festive expression not only of collective identity, but also of individual, family, and generational identities. It provides a means of articulating the tensions, hopes, and image that festival participants have of themselves and others. In addition, the festival expresses a particular way of life and a distinctive worldview in which the natural, cultural, and supernatural converge. Researchers also attribute social functions to this celebration, such as showing people and communities the norms that govern daily life. Furthermore, they recognize this ritual as a foundation of cultural identity for the people of Silió, combating oblivion, isolation, and abandonment. By assuming this role, the ritual guarantees the perpetuation of the social structure, fostering the regeneration of society. Finally, the *Vijanera* has been seen as a celebration of an important element of autochthonous tradition that was consciously revitalized and preserved, integrated into the regional cultural heritage, and turned into a tourist attraction.

The results of my research clarify certain aspects and reveal dimensions of the ritual that complement the contributions of other scholars. First, the importance of strengthening and maintaining the community and fostering local pride acquires new significance if we focus on demography. Several inhabitants of Silió, a village with a somewhat aging population, must commute daily to work. Many others originally from the village had to emigrate and, given the significant identity value of the *Vijanera*, they return each year during the period designated for the festival. This situation leads organizers to bring together and coordinate local residents and people who live elsewhere. Secondly, the activities involved

in carefully preparing and celebrating this festival, which brings together people of different ages, help to instill or revive values and ways of life characteristic of the rural past. The community collaboration required to perform the *Vijanera* helps to counteract the lack of social interaction and community life associated with the individualism of contemporary urban society. Thirdly, the festival promotes among younger generations respect for cultural and family heritage, as well as for their elders and ancestors, some of whom were *vijaneros* and revitalized this ritual. To express their appreciation, some locals continue to play the same roles and characters as their relatives did in the past, evoking important personal memories and emotions. Fourth, lyrics and other ritualized verbal expressions used in the songs and performances of the *Vijanera* highlight the local parlance, which the inhabitants of Silió are keen to preserve. Fifth, for those who wear masks, other aspects serve as an incentive, such as the experience of momentary liberation and licentiousness. Finally, people connected to Silió feel proud of belonging to a special place possessing a distinctive cultural heritage that integrates the broader phenomenon of European winter mask festivals. The local and regional significance of this celebration, as I have observed through fieldwork and interviews, stems, on the one hand, from a sense of local belonging to the village and an assertion of identity that distinguishes the inhabitants of Silió from other groups. On the other hand, it is due to the fact that the *Vijanera* has become a symbol of the entire region of Cantabria. This is confirmed in official documents recognizing it as intangible cultural heritage (BOE, 14 de Agosto de 2021, Secc. III, p. 100588, 100589).

The explanations provided by experts such as those mentioned here have influenced, to a certain extent, the meanings that the festival has today for participants and organizers.[17] At the same time, the members of the *Vijanera* Association maintain their own narratives and local perspectives. For example, although researchers classify it as a Carnival festival, for contemporary *vijaneros* the *Vijanera* is not a Carnival, since they do not simply wear costumes, but rather become possessed by the characters they adopt and embody. This feature, common in ritual dramas, is distinct from the conventional patterns of Carnival celebrations. These ideas were emphasized by César Rodríguez, representative of the *Vijanera* Association, during the interview I conducted with him and Alberto García in August 2025:

> ...you don't dress up. You are. What are you? You are a character. The character you happen to be... And on top of that, if you haven't eaten, you're nervous, and you drink a little bit of *orujo* (spirits), then... you transform yourself and the character possesses you.
> ...this is not a Carnival. And we don't dress up... I find that term particularly offensive, because if our grandparents never talked about carnival, why do we have to talk about carnival now?

Beyond this, the custodians of this ritual have no objection to the *Vijanera* being—and signifying—whatever each person wishes to find in it. As César also put it during the interview when I asked him about the meanings of the ritual: "*Vijanera* means whatever you want it to mean."

In the publications consulted, some aspects of the celebration have received less attention. When narrating the events that take place during the festival, authors tend to focus mainly on the ritual action itself, leaving aside aspects of organization, management, and the media and tourist promotion that are also evident and that I will outline here. Previous scholars have also not paid sufficient attention to behaviors related to the spectacularization of the *Vijanera*, which encompasses both the theatrical performance of the ritual drama in the morning and the recreational activities that follow in the afternoon and evening. Furthermore, the attention paid to sound is rather limited. The mere presence of many performative actions

expressed through sound often goes unnoticed, as does their importance to the ritual. Researchers of this festival recognize the relevance of noise, sounds, and music alongside movement, gestures, and words. However, in their accounts and explanations, they focus solely on specific musical or sound moments, rendering invisible a central element of the *Vijanera's* identity that contributes to the coherence of the entire celebration: its unique soundscape. This concept, understood here in the sense of Murray Schafer (1977) and Steven Feld (2012),[18] is not foreign to the organizers themselves,[19] and seems to be highly relevant to understanding a ritual so closely intertwined with the cultural and sound ecology of Silió. Feld's theoretical proposals influenced Nicola Scaldaferri's (2020) work on the Campanaccio of San Mauro Forte (Italy) and other festivals and rituals involving animal bells which, like the *Vijanera*, are celebrated around the Carnival period. This work was another source of inspiration for my research.[20]

Having introduced the *Vijanera* and outlined the main meanings and interpretations attributed by participants and researchers, I will now provide evidence that the soundscape is an inherent element of this celebration, which allows for a deeper understanding of it. To this end, I will present the most prominent characters in this complex ritual drama, along with their attributes and sonic behaviors. Next, I will offer an overview of the unfolding of the festive action, which is expressed through a rich variety of gestures, movements, words, poetry, sounds, and instrumental and vocal music. The initial analysis presented here, which identifies the key elements that make up the soundscape of the *Vijanera* and provides evidence of their symbolic significance in the ritual, lays the groundwork for a more detailed examination of this complex issue in future research.

Towards a study of the soundscape of Silio's *Vijanera*

The characters

At present, in Silió, the ritual troupe of the *Vijanera* is made up of around 150 *vijaneros* who take on the roles of a remarkable variety of characters, identified by specific traits and names. Some of these characters wear masks, such as the bear, whose costume completely conceals the wearer's identity. Other prominent figures, such as the *zarramacos* and the *danzarín negro*, paint their faces instead of wearing masks, making their identities recognizable.

An important part of the *Vijanera* ritual can be explained by the metaphorical capture and killing of the bear, which signifies the expulsion of all evil. The bear is portrayed as destructive figure, a representation that dates back to the agrarian society in which this celebration probably originated, at a time when the animal posed a real threat



Fig. 1. The bear and the tamer along with *zarramacos* and other characters. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.

by attacking livestock and destroying crops. This animal was important for the culture of several Cantabrian valleys, but became extinct in the region about a hundred years ago. Today, the NGO *Fundación Oso Pardo* contributes to the study and preservation of native bears, as well as their habitat and ecosystem. During the *Vijanera* ritual, the bear is accompanied by *el amo* (the tamer).[21] (Fig. 1)

In the hunt and killing of the bear, as in much of the celebration, the emblematic *zarramacos* (heroic warriors) of the *Vijanera* play a central role, also contributing significantly to the soundscape of the ritual. These characters blacken their faces and wear striking costumes with tall conical hats adorned with rosettes and sound-producing elements, such as jingle bells. The use of sheepskins and objects made of leather or esparto grass in their clothing gives them an almost zoomorphic appearance. They also carry a staff, which they use to support themselves as they move and sway. The presence of the *zarramacos* throughout the ritual drama is accentuated by the powerful volume and timbre of the eight cowbells that hang from eacg performer's body and that they ring frequently. In Silió, there is a specific emic term to designate that sound-producing action: *jorricar los campanos* (to ring the cowbells). As my research reveals, during the course of the ritual action, the *zarramacos* use the thunderous sound of these instruments to guide the procession of the *vijaneros*. According to local accounts, it is also the clanging of the cowbells that awakens and frightens the bear, overwhelming it at the moment of its symbolic death. For this reason, some researchers attribute supernatural powers to the "warriors" who sound the bells.[22]



Fig. 2. *Zarramaco*. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025

The considerable weight of the large cowbells they carry requires the role of *zarramacos* to be performed by men of great physical strength. Four bells are placed on the chest and four on the back: the largest ones on the torso and the smaller ones around the waist, all firmly secured with ropes. Traditionally, and even today, several young men from Silió compete for the role of *zarramacos* as a way of publicly displaying their strength and virility.[23]

The considerable physical effort involved in carrying and ringimg the cowbells during the parade through the village, combined with the intense noise, frayed nerves, limited food intake, and occasional alcohol consumption, can lead these performers to experience altered states of consciousness.[24] (Fig. 2.)

The symbolic expulsion of evil, which revolves largely around the figure of the bear, is an important element in the *Vijanera*. However, many other components and figures are involved, enriching its meaning and symbolism. Particularly noteworthy are the *danzarines* (dancers), who structure various moments of the ritual performance as leading figures who lead and clear the way for the procession, jumping and dancing while leaning on the staffs they carry in their hands.

The *danzarines* are divided into two categories: the *danzarines blancos* (white dancers) and the *danzarín negro* (black dancer), with meanings corresponding to their colors (the bright side and the dark side). These dancers carry musical instruments associated with



Fig. 3. Black dancer. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.



Fig. 4. White dancers. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.

pastoral and livestock culture, such as a hunting horn and small bells. As my interlocutors emphasized, these instruments, together with the large cowbells carried by the *zarramacos*, are traditionally used in Silió to emit signals and communicate at a distance, as well as to identify, locate, and give orders to livestock. The *danzarín negro*'s face is blackened. He wears esparto grass clothing and sandals, as well as and a straw hat. His costume is adorned with hanging corn cobs and, sometimes, small bells hang from his staff. He also carries a hunting horn, which he sounds at key moments, acting as the "master of ceremonies" (López San Juan 2021, 36). It is important to highlight the role of the black dancer in playing the horn and producing central verbal expressions during various festive actions. His function, which remains largely unexplored, is crucial for the ritual's efficacy, guiding the action and signaling pivotal moments. (Fig. 3)

In contrast, a small group of *danzarines blancos* wear white masks that partially cover their faces. Each of them wears a white blouse and trousers, a red sash that extends from one shoulder to the opposite side of the waist, and white esparto sandals. Their tall, cylindrical hats are adorned with ribbons, jingle bells, and pompoms, and they wear a leather belt from which small bells hang. As they move and jump, the instruments they carry as part of their costumes produce a high-pitched metallic sound. (Fig. 4)

The troupe includes many other figures who contribute to the visual spectacle and revelry of the festival. Some of them occasionally assume a central role in the performance. It is difficult to list and classify them, but López San Juan offers a systematization that helps to understand the forms that the *vijaneros* can take, distinguishing between fixed and variable characters (2021, 30-42). Among the fixed characters, *los negros* (embodying the dark side) represent the less privileged members of society or take on zoomorphic and vegetal forms, while *los blancos* (characters of light) reflect wealth and social status and appear refined and elegant in contrast to the coarseness of the characters of darkness. In general, the characters take on human or zoomorphic forms, represent objects, or assume the appearance of fantastic beings or elements of nature. Some are linked to local myths, beliefs, and superstitions.

Among those with a human appearance, in addition to stereotypical comic figures, several are associated with the transition of life and annual cycles (youth and old age, the old and new year), or represent individuals from different backgrounds, social groups, and professions associated with traditional rural society.

In recent years, López San Juan has highlighted the large number of *vijaneros* who carry out a richly staged performance with extraordinary energy (2021, 63). The meticulous craftsmanship of the costumes contributes to the spectacular nature of this festival, in which color and movement are further enhanced by the fact that it takes place in broad daylight. Alongside young people and adults, children now also participate, and a "children's *Vijanera*" has even been created for the day before the traditional *Vijanera*, with the aim of promoting generational succession. The characters in the adult *Vijanera* continue to be exclusively male, as tradition dictates.[25] Women participate in preparing the costumes and organizing the festival, which includes a community dinner on the days around the celebration, attended by *vijaneros* of both sexes and all ages. In the children's *Vijanera*, boys and girls parade together.

At present, as the troupe has more than doubled in size compared with the traditional number of *vijaneros*, more people embody the same types of characters, with new variants being incorporated along with other costumes that were already in use in the past. I have found that this important increase is governed by criteria of material and acoustic sustainability. In the case of the *zarramacos*, in the previous decades there were around eight of these figures in a group of approximately 60 *vijaneros*. Today, there are 26 adult *zarramacos* and around 10 children within a troupe of roughly 150 *vijaneros*. Maintaining the proportion of these figures relative to the entire troupe allows their cowbells to continue to guide the performers, by producing an adequate sound volume. This characteristic demonstrates that a significant part of the ritual action in the *Vijanera* is guided by sound.

Furthermore, as summarized in the following section, throughout the festive day there is a wide variety of sounds produced by elements worn as part of the *vijaneros*' costumes, by their gestures, actions, verbalizations, and songs, and by the human and animal cries they utter. At specific times, the celebration includes live music, performed with musical instruments or the human voice, as well as some recorded music.

The festive action

On *Vijanera* Day, the *vijaneros*, nervous and excited, gather together, put on their costumes, take on their character roles, and then parade through the streets to perform various ritualized acts. The ritual follows a series of actions in a predetermined order, which has been subject to certain adaptations over the years. Below, I describe the main moments of the celebration as I have experienced and reconstructed them,[26] guided at all times by my particular interest in the musical and sonic components. The very soundscape of Silió is transformed on the day of this ritual. The village is unusually quiet and peaceful, as much of it is closed to traffic to allow the procession to pass through the streets. This situation highlights the sounds produced by nature, local residents, visitors, and the *vijaneros* themselves.

The first significant act of the celebration is marked by sound. In the darkness of the early morning, between six and seven o'clock, some young men take to the streets and ring large cowbells, announcing to the villagers that it is *Vijanera* Day. From that moment on, the different characters begin to put on their costumes and prepare for the festival, gathering animals and items necessary for the ritual. For this purpose, most *vijaneros* congregate in the old school building, which serves as the headquarters of the *Vijanera* Association.

From around 9:00 a.m., visitors begin to arrive in the village of Silió and disperse across various points along the route where the procession will later pass, eagerly awaiting the start of the festivities. Television crews and journalists also begin to make their presence felt, starting to document the festival and interviewing the participants. Numerous photographers are present as well, later moving into the midst of the parade to capture the moment.

In the field next to the schools, where a significant part of the subsequent action will take place, an outdoor stage has been set up along with a tent with a bar serving food and drinks, providing shelter from the cold typical of early January. From this location, to entertain both residents and tourists, a loudspeaker system plays recorded folk music throughout the village, broadcasting music by popular folk bands from both Cantabria and other regions and countries.

At around 11:00 a.m., acoustic signals can be heard again: the firing of three rockets, indicating that the parade is about to begin. At that point, the *vijaneros* take to the streets from various strategically located places. The most spectacular moment occurs when part of the troupe descends from the Santa Marina neighborhood, located in the upper part of the village, along a tree-lined path, accompanied by the deafening sound of the cowbells rung by the *zarramacos*, who move in a more or less synchronized manner.

As in the rest of the parade, throughout this part the *vijaneros* interact with visitors, who stand on the sides of the paths and streets or mingle with the troupe, risking more than a few whippings. Many spectators also record or photograph various moments of the performance or take selfies with their mobile phones. Upon reaching one of the meadows located above the lower part of the village, the *zarramacos*, aided by the tamer and other characters, chase and capture the bear. In doing so, they are helped by the loud sound of their cowbells, which drowns out the music from the loudspeakers. This music is silenced at this point so as not to interfere. This is a key ritual moment that attracts the attention of many spectators. Once the bear has been captured, the procession continues downhill to meet up with the rest of the troupe in the square next to the church.

Then, the entire group of *vijaneros* heads to the village's border with the neighborhood of Santián to perform the ritual of "the defense of the territorial boundary." In the past peasant society, this rite was of great importance and was performed by members of the *vijaneras* of Silió and the neighboring villages. Today, there are no other *vijaneras*, so this ritual is performed as a simulation, in which the *vijaneros* of Silió position themselves in two groups on either side of the white line painted on the road that divides the territories, thus recreating the ancient rivalry. (Fig. 5)

Along the route to the boundary, black and white dancers lead the procession, jumping and running, causing their small bells and jingle bells to sound. They are followed by the *zarramacos*, with the enveloping metallic sound of their cowbells. The rest of the troupe, which adds to the sound density of the parade, moves forward and backward irregularly, mingling and interacting with each other and with the spectators. At this and other moments, various gestures, movements, and playful antics enrich the soundscape, accompanied by shouts, noises, sounds, and verbalizations. When everyone reaches the boundary, while the audience settles down to watch the performance, the *danzarín negro* points his staff at the white line painted on the road. At that moment, he sounds a long blast on his hunting horn, creating a marked silence amid the festive revelry, a silence that signals the sacred nature of this point in the ritual. The dancer then shouts: *"Esta es la raya. El límite el pueblo. ¿Qué queréis, guerra o paz?"* ("This is the boundary. The limit of the village. What do you want, war or peace?"). The rest of the troupe responds: *"¡Guerra!"* ("War!"), and everyone begins



Fig. 5. Defending territorial boundaries. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.



Fig. 6. The *zarramacos* sounding their cowbells. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.



Fig. 7. Singing of the *coplas*. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.

to jump and move energetically, producing a din dominated by the powerful sound of the cowbells of the *zarramacos*. Silence returns and, after another horn blast, the dancer repeats the question *"¿Qué queréis, guerra o paz?"* ("What do you want, war or peace?"), receiving the same response. On the third occasion, the troupe replies that it wants peace, moving and jumping even more energetically. After a final horn call, the black dancer shouts: *"¡Viva la Vijanera de Silió!"* ("Long live the *Vijanera* of Silió!"), to which the troupe responds with another *"¡Viva!"* ("Long live!"). The procession then resumes its parade back to the center of the village. (Fig. 6)

After midday, the group arrives at the field next to the schools, where two important performances take place on a stage equipped with a public address system. The first and main performance consists of the singing of *coplas* (short verses) by two or more *vijaneros*. The second performance is the "pregnant woman giving birth" (*parto de la preñá*). The *coplas* consist of between sixty and seventy satirical poetic compositions that refer to events that have taken place in Silió throughout the year, as well as to current social, political, and economic issues at the regional, national, and international levels. The *coplas* are anonymous, since they are composed and written down collectively each year by "the *Vijanera.*" Several scholars attribute to their lyrics the functions of expelling the old year, along with all its evils, and facilitating cyclical renewal. (Fig. 7)

After the *coplas*, a song that is a current hit is sometimes performed to engage the audience, using the original melody, but altering the lyrics by means of *contrafactum* to achieve a satirical effect. This is one of the most entertaining moments of the festival, as the lyrics of the *coplas* and songs provide a public space for scathing criticism, vulgarity, and transgression. Non-local spectators find the lyrics amusing, although they are unfamiliar with some idiomatic expressions and remain largely unaware of the deeper meanings of those verses that allude to the daily life of the village. For their part, the villagers show a particular fondness for the *coplas* that refer to events that have taken place in Silió. Visitors often fail to realize that one of the main objectives of celebrating the transgressive *Vijanera* is to offer a critical and satirical review of local daily life throughout the year. Several organizers of this ritual spend the entire year taking note of noteworthy episodes to incorporate them into these *coplas*, which allow them to verbalize issues that would otherwise remain unspoken.

Residents also tend to prefer lyrics that are not explicit, requiring some effort to guess who they refer to. Not every villager welcomes criticism and satire, and tensions have sometimes arisen with the *vijaneros*, but during the *Vijanera* season everything must be accepted. These episodes are part of the exchange of messages among residents in front of the outside spectators. Printed versions of the *coplas* and songs are sold in small booklets on the lawn. With their donations for these booklets, attendees help the *Vijanera* Association finance the festival. For visitors, these booklets—which are sometimes mistaken for event programmes—serve as a kind of souvenir and help them follow the content of the staged performance. By contrast, many residents of Silió value and collect these texts, as they narrate part of local life and serve as a resource for reconstructing the historical collective memory of the village.

After the sung recitation of the *coplas*, on the same stage located in the field next to the schools, a festive satirical-burlesque event is performed, one that is highly representative of the *Vijanera* in its sense of marking the annual transition and the cycle of life. This is the "pregnant woman giving birth," a fictional birth in which a female character—played by a man—represents the old year and gives birth to an animal, which serves to predict the nature of the coming year.[27] Both the singing of the *coplas* and the subsequent scene in which the pregnant woman gives birth are punctuated by the thunderous sound of the cowbells

of the *zarramacos*, who, together with the rest of the audience, stand up to watch the action unfold on stage. The *zarramacos* sound their bells especially at the moments indicated by the *vijaneros* who are acting. From time to time, singers and actors address the entire audience and ask for applause to allow a brief respite during the lengthy recitation of the *coplas*. On other occasions, members of the public spontaneously respond to the content of the lyrics with cheers or boos, as appropriate. To reinforce the staging, liven up the festival, and serve as a transition between scenes, pop music and Celtic rock music are occasionally played loudly over the loudspeakers in the field. The presence of recorded music creates a different atmosphere, but does not seem to interfere with the overall soundscape of the ritualized action.

While the performance is unfolding on stage in the field next to the schools, journalists and television crews interview some organizers and local government representatives. In addition, they broadcast the events live or record them for later release in the media and on social media platforms—such as Facebook and Instagram—which many festival-goers also use for the same purpose.

After the scene in which the pregnant woman gives birth, the audience is invited from the stage to join in the collective cheers that conclude this part of the performance: *"¡Viva Cantabria! ¡Viva Silió! ¡Viva la Vijanera!"* ("Long live Cantabria! Long live Silió! Long live the *Vijanera*!"). The troupe then returns to the square adjacent to the church, which is located nearby, where one of the most important rituals of the festival takes place: the allegorical death of the bear. The tamer, who has kept the bear captive during the procession, tries to control the animal, which resists, while the *zarramacos* corner it in a circle, sounding their cowbells with increasing intensity and getting closer and closer, as other *vijaneros* move around them. (Fig. 8)

When they are close enough, the *zarramacos* enact the threatening and beating of the beast, which, stunned and disoriented by the clamor, falls to the ground, exhausted. A group of *zarramacos* place their staffs on the bear, signaling its death, which symbolizes liberation from all evil. (Fig. 9)

Finally, as the sound of folk music re-emerges from the loudspeakers in the nearby field, the *danzarín negro* blows his horn again. Just as during the performance of "the defense of the territorial boundary," the sound signals produced by the horn alternate in a call-and-response pattern with verbalizations, jumps, movements, and other sounds produced by the *vijaneros*. On this occasion, another character successively shouts after each of the three sound signals: "Long live Cantabria!" "Long live Silió!" and an energetic "Long live the *Vijanera*!"—each acclamation being repeated by the *vijaneros* and some audience members. At around 2:30 p.m., for the media and many spectators, the event concludes, prompting their departure.

The festivities continue from that moment on for the *vijaneros* who, after the ritualized dramatization, want to experience "our *Vijanera*, going to the bars with the revelry of traditional music and having a good time" (Interview with Alberto García, December 2024). Some visitors often choose to stay for lunch and prolong their participation in the festival. Until late evening, music and entertainment are provided. The *vijaneros* mingle with family, friends, and other attendees, sharing jokes and fun in spaces such as local bars, the village streets, and, in particular, the field next to the schools. In these spaces and at these times, recorded and live music is offered—in fact, some musicians and participants arrive at this time of the day—while some *zarramacos* and *danzarines* occasionally continue to ring their iconic bells and jingle bells. Inside the tent set up in that field, the bar installed by the *Vijanera* Association offers food and drinks for purchase, as well as lottery tickets and merchandise,



Fig. 8. The *zarramacos* circle the bear. Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.



Fig. 9. The *zarramacos* threaten the bear while other vijaneros move in a circle around them.
Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras, *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.

through which visitors can also contribute to financing the festival.

Contemporary editions of the *Vijanera* feature instrumental and vocal performances, which may be presented live—with or without sound amplification—or through recorded music. Performers may include the *vijaneros* and other festival participants, as well as musicians who come specifically for the occasion. Some improvise songs and music spontaneously, while others are hired. Delegating musical performance to professional or amateur artists, who may receive some remuneration, seems to mark a certain distancing from the earlier forms of traditional entertainment.[28] (Fig. 10)



Fig. 10. Improvised songs and music.
Credit photo: Luis Ángel Moreno Landeras , *Vijanera* in Silió, 5 January 2025.

A few performers of traditional and folk music who regularly participate in the *Vijanera* are prominent throughout the region. In fact, a few years ago, this celebration brought together a significant number of renowned musicians and groups who gathered in Silió to play music and share the festive atmosphere. For the 2025 edition, as in previous years, the organizers hired Gustavo Gutiérrez, presented as DJ Tavuko, who is a well-known musician specialized in Cantabrian traditional and folk music. Gustavo sets up his mobile DJ equipment[29] on a small trailer pulled by a tractor inside the tent and plays traditional regional music, as well as pop, folk, and folk-rock from local, national, and international repertoires, getting a large group of participants of different ages to dance.

During this final recreational moment of the *Vijanera*, the loud music often drowns out the occasional ringing produced by the few *zarramacos* who, still in their costumes and wearing their cowbells, remain scattered across the field. At this stage, their sound no longer carries the same significance, as it is understood that they have already fulfilled their main ritual function.

Conclusions and future perspectives

This article examines essential components of Silió's *Vijanera*, while revealing other dimensions that underscore the value of studying the festival. It examines aspects of the festive action that highlight not only the continuities with the past, but also the new forms of organization, management, and promotion of the festival as a tourist attraction. Its increasing spectacularization and mediatization have enhanced the division of the event into two parts: the ritual drama that unfolds until lunchtime and the leisure time that follows. These dynamics, characteristic of its recent history, can be explained by the fact that the *Vijanera* remains a living ritual, adapting its forms and meanings to the needs of society at a given time.

The *Vijanera* offers visitors an aesthetically striking spectacle that evokes mythical imagery to provide recreational experiences for heritage tourists. At the same time, for the

inhabitants of Silió, this festival—now geared toward tourism—continues to carry profound meanings and lived experiences. It is a celebration that reveals, to those willing to look beyond the visual appeal of the spectacle, numerous aspects of life, idiosyncrasies, and elements of the local community's history and culture. The people of Silió assert their role as custodians of the *Vijanera* ritual in the municipality of Molledo in the Iguña Valley, thereby expressing a sense of privilege and responsibility. Beyond this local framework, a broader regional identity emerges. The cheers for the Autonomous Community of Cantabria heard during the festival serve as a reminder that—as recalled in a recent publication by César Rodríguez (2024, 57), the representative of the *Vijanera* Association—this festivity was revitalized in the context of the political changes that established the current autonomy (Rodríguez 2024, 57). Furthermore, as explained above, the Regional Government of Cantabria has played an active role in the efforts to recognize this festival as part of the region's cultural heritage.

At the same time, this article draws attention to the importance of focusing on the *Vijanera*'s exuberant soundscape, structured and regulated by the powerful sound of the cowbells of the *zarramacos*. Building on the presence and function of music and sound outlined in this preliminary approach, future ethnographic study of this ritual will allow for a more in-depth examination and enable comparisons with existing studies of analogous traditions in other European contexts, such as Scaldaferri's (2020) sonic ethnography. Further research in this area will help identify some key elements that participants consider fundamental to this multifaceted celebration, which compellingly expresses and showcases local identity, pride, and prestige.

NOTES

1. This article is a result of the R&D project "Tourism and processes of spectacularization of contemporary Iberian musical traditions" (reference PID2020-115959GB-I00), funded by the Spanish State Research Agency (MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033).

2. Following Victor Turner (1982) and Richard Schechner (1988), I understand ritual drama as a collective performative action that transforms the celebrating community and connects it to transcendent, non-physical dimensions of existence. Such an action requires the repetition of sacred symbols, gestures, and narratives, combining various expressive practices that include words, music, dance, songs, masks, costumes, and gestures. Through its connection between ritual and theatre, this form of stage performance allows for the dramatization of social processes and seeks symbolic efficacy.

3. Other winter mask festivals have been preserved or recovered and are currently celebrated in Cantabria, but not at the beginning of the year. Rather, they take place during the following months, within the Carnival period.

4. This article draws on archival and online research, as well as fieldwork conducted in Silió. I have consulted bibliographic sources, newspapers, and official documents containing legislation and regulations, as well as other written materials that provide primary and secondary sources on the *Vijanera* and similar rites and rituals. Some of the materials were provided to me by the *vijaneros*. I have conducted a systematic search of audiovisual sources and websites that document and depict the festival under study, such as the *Vijanera* Association's website, YouTube, and the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. My fieldwork included audiovisual recordings of two editions of the *Vijanera* in Silió (in 2018 and 2025), which provided me with very useful data and insights. I also took a guided tour of the *Vijanera* Interpretation Center in Silió and gathered very valuable information from interviews conducted there with two representatives of the aforementioned association. The first interview was with Alberto García Gómez (27th of December 2024) and the second with him and César Rodríguez Fernández (12th of August 2025). In addition, I have had informal conversations with some residents of Silió and with musicians and visitors who regularly attend the *Vijanera*. In the final section of this article, I include the main bibliographic references and online resources consulted, as well as the interviews conducted.

5. As proposed by Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (2014, 3-4), I understand revitalization as a revival, that is, a process that involves the active performance, promotion, and dissemination of music and other cultural practices that

are valued as ancient or historical and are usually perceived as under threat or at risk of disappearing.

6. According to the information provided by the *Vijanera* Association, most visitors come from Cantabria and neighboring regions, such as the Basque Country and Asturias, but also from Galicia, Madrid, and Barcelona in Spain. A number of foreign visitors come from Portugal, Belgium, France, other European countries, and the USA.

7. In recent years, two master's theses have been defended on this festival (Herrero Laborda 2016; López San Juan 2021). The latter highlights the great popularity and significant recognition that this festival has achieved (López San Juan 2021, 6). Furthermore, in his book on Cantabrian identity, sociologist Adrián G. Gómez prominently mentions the *Vijanera* of Silió as a festival that reinforces the cultural and political expression of regional belonging (Gómez 2022, 82-3, 108-9).

8. The increase in tourist numbers has led festival organizers to control access to the village, provide parking areas, ensure safety standards, and provide facilities, such as bars and portable toilets.

9. Gómez Pellón (2003, 44) explains that this kind of ritual festivals has always relied on fundraising strategies at the local and regional levels to remain financially viable.

10. Montesino (2004, 92, 512) reminds us that all cultural manifestations are the product of historical evolution. They refer to tradition and collective memory, but also to the reinvention of tradition by generations living in a different era from that of their ancestors in agrarian society.

11. Stereotypes primarily refer to the idea that this ritual is celebrated according to a fixed, idealized sequence of festive acts involving archetypal characters who represent humans, animals, and natural and mythical elements to express universal symbols, such as the struggle between good and evil, life and death, or the cyclical conception of time. Some clearly stereotypical images have been created around the figure of the *zarramacos*, who, clad in sheepskin and cowbells, are portrayed as ferocious, performing "wild dances" and producing a deafening and unbearable noise.

12. For example, in line with his work with Jesús Cancio in 1928, in a later publication, Adriano García Lomas defined the *Vijanera* as a "festival of remote pastoral origin" that represents a "Cantabrian racial manifestation" (García Lomas 1999).

13. This is the case of Joaquín González Echegaray (1979-1980), who presents this festival in the valleys of Iguña, Anievas, and Toranzo as a kind of Carnival of supposed pastoral origin that preserves features of unquestionable primitivism and witnesses remote pagan customs found not only in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, but also throughout Western Europe and other regions of the world.

14. These include Gómez Pellón (2003), Durán Cabrera (2004), Herrero Laborda (2016), and López San Juan (2021), all mentioned in this text.

15. In fact, during the process of heritage designation, the rural winter masks were not initially officially recognized by the Autonomous Government of Cantabria as an Intangible Ethnographic Cultural Asset. This was because the experts responsible for the report concluded that the primarily tourist and commercial nature of some of the celebrations undermined their heritage value (BOE, 26 de Enero de 2018, Secc. III, Pág. 10687).

16. Examples of this can be found in recent publications by researchers from various disciplines, such as the article on winter mask festivals, tourism, and ICH by Fernández-Álvarez, González-González, and Sara Ouali-Fernández (2026). Also worth noting are several chapters from the book on masks, carnival celebrations, and heritage, edited by Panero García and Pinelo Tiza (2023).

17. This is evident, for example, in the section "Origins and historical documentation" on the website of the "Asociación Cultural Amigos de la Vijanera" (https://www.vijanera.com/origen/), which contains a selected list of publications and news about this festivity.

18. According to these authors, the soundscape can be understood as the acoustic environment or landscape of a particular place, comprising natural, human-made, and artificial sounds. Steven Feld's acoustemology extends this concept by focusing on the embodied, sensory, and culturally shaped experience of that environment, which enables sonic ways of knowing and being in the world, assuming that sound is central to making sense of life.

19. When I asked them about the sonic elements that make up the "soundscape" of the celebration, members of the *Vijanera* Association mentioned several that they considered relevant and characteristic, such as the sounds of the cowbells and other smaller bells, the blast of the hunting horn, the tambourine played by one of the characters, and the shouts and jokes of others. They also referred to a wide variety of sounds, such as the rustling of the leaves used to make the costumes of some *vijaneros*, the cracking of whips that other *vijaneros* direct at the spectators, and the continuous movements that produce multiple sounds.

20. As indicated by Scaldaferri (2020, 54), Feld has carried out sonic ethnographies on bells, soundscapes, and winter festivals in Europe and elsewhere, and has edited a series of CDs (e.g. Feld 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). Some editions resulted from the collaboration between Feld and Scaldaferri on ethnomusicological research projects and publications.

21. The tamer represents the character who captures, chains, publicly exhibits, and dominates the bear throughout the parade.

22. Cristina Herrero points out the transformative power of the sound of the cowbells carried by the *zarramacos* as a vehicle for bringing joy, warding off evil spirits, establishing communication with the sacred and the transcendental, and dominating the wild (Herrero Laborda 2016, 61).

23. Traditionally, the *vijaneros* were young local men who participated in the initiation rite that was part of this ritual marking the transition from one year to the next. Today, both young and middle-aged men play the role of *zarramacos*.

24. According to Alberto García (interview, December 2024), some *vijaneros* "go into a trance" when they transform and the character possesses them. This is a special moment in

which, while remaining aware of what is happening, they feel happy and special, as if they were in another dimension.

25. From a gender perspective, this may seem quite striking, but although I heard some criticism of this from spectators during my fieldwork, the participation of both sexes in the performance of the ritual—which is currently permitted at many winter mask festivals in Spain and the Iberian Peninsula—is not allowed in Silió's *Vijanera*. The organizers prohibit female participation, arguing that it contravenes the traditional norms governing the ritual that they inherited from their ancestors. The text of the declaration by which the Government of Cantabria designates this celebration as an Intangible Ethnographic Cultural Asset (BOE, 14 de Agosto de 2021, Sec. III, p. 100589) reiterates that it is performed exclusively by young men.

26. I base the description largely on my systematic observation of the 2025 edition of the *Vijanera*, checking the information against my previous knowledge and the narratives and explanations provided by other researchers.

27. In 2025, the pregnant woman gave birth to a hen, which the actors presented to the audience as a symbol of fertility.

28. Limited evidence from *Vijanera* celebrations in the early twentieth century briefly suggests that recreational activities included "folk dance with local airs" (Montesino 1982, 24). My hypothesis is that musical performances were provided by local residents and visitors who played music spontaneously. However, it would be interesting to try to find out whether musicians were also hired, and whether they were paid for this purpose.

29. This is a mobile entertainment service that includes sound equipment, lighting, and a professional DJ to animate and create the right atmosphere at events such as parties, weddings, festivals, and corporate events.

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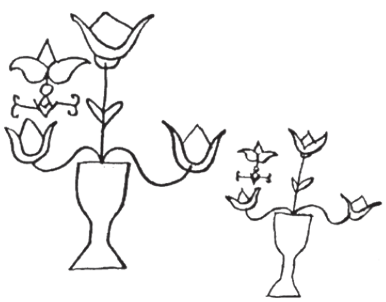
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