

The Sound of Semana Santa

**The Meaning of Music for the Religious Experience of Participants of the
Processions during Semana Santa in Antigua, Guatemala**



J.D.T. Lensink

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Introduction

It is dark, it is cold and it is quiet.

Slowly, very slowly, in the archway of the classical, yellow-white decorated church *La Merced*, a bundle of light appears. Shuffling forward, flanked by symmetrical placed saints and columns against the facade, a sober adorned, wooden platform with the icon of the *Jesús Nazareno* becomes visible. A noise that resembles a school bell cuts through the cold, quiet air, marking the moment whereupon this illuminated *anda* with the notable icon of Jesus Christ is raised. At the same time the square is filled by the first tones of the *marcha 'La Granadera'* and the warm, bright sounds of the trumpets and percussion cause a wave of motion: a sea of purple dressed *cucuruchos* kneels down on the uneven stones and strikes a cross.

Cradling, the *anda* moves forward on the rhythm of the music. Against the dark-brown wood lie the cheeks of seventy men, their eyes closed, their faces pained, determined and full of resentment. Placing their feet sideways forward, as the first this night they carry the weight on their shoulder.

The cross on the left shoulder, dressed in the red, modest tunic with merely a rope around the waist, the *Jesús Nazareno* comes closer. In the light of the moon he pervades the hearts of everyone with his gaze. Suffering, accusingly but loving, he looks me in the eyes.

Nervous, expectant and trembling of the cold I am waiting on the side of the road, my striking blonde hair covered by the black *madrileña*. After having seen passing by the cradling *anda*, the gracefully moving conductor and the blowing musicians, the second illuminated wooden platform with the icon of Mary comes to a halt before me. Together with the row of women around me I step forward, under the guidance of the drum roll of the timpanist. I place my hand on the right shoulder of number nineteen and place my own left shoulder underneath the leathern notch in the garnished wood. Slowly we start moving back and forth. I feel the soft *alfombra* beneath my feet, I smell the smoke of the *incienso* and I hear the music setting in behind me.

The weight presses my shoulder. The warmth flows through me. I close my eyes.

This experience marks the most special, intense, emotional and beautiful moment of my anthropological fieldwork in Antigua, Guatemala. During eight weeks I immersed myself into the world of Semana Santa, the religious processions and the holy music, the *música sacra*. Semana Santa, the holy week, the most important week of the year for many devotee, catholic *Antigüeños*, attracts half a million visitors. The city transforms itself, is filled to the point of collapsing, surrounded by an atmosphere of tense expectation. Families reunite, people don't sleep and the heavy, slow, strong sounds of the *marchas* played by the music bands form the sonic landscape during this time. Ten thousand purple and black dressed participants carry the icons of Jesus and Mary on eighteen meters long wooden, decorated platforms in the twelve to nineteen hour processions, commemorating the Passion of Christ. As the *Antigüeños* tend to say: ‘*todo tiene su color, olor y sabor*’ (everything has its color, smell and taste), denoting the many beautiful ingredients that characterize this religious tradition. The devotion towards the icons, the air filled with smoke, the ground covered with *alfombras*, the melancholic sound of the wind instruments; the feelings and experiences of the participants of the processions are described through those essential elements of Semana Santa. This experience and the specific role of the *música sacra* are the focal points of interest in this anthropological research, with the main question being:

What is the meaning of the music for the religious experience of the participants (carriers/*cucuruchos*) of the processions during and in preparation of *Semana Santa* in Antigua, Guatemala?

In my quest for the meaning of music I met many devotional people, attended countless religious events and participated myself. I encountered the essential role of the sensorial aspects of the icons, decorations, *alfombras* (colored sawdust carpets) and smoke of the *incienso*, with a fundamental sensorial element being the music of the *marcha fúnebre*. Devotion, emotion and senses form a beautiful connection with the role and effect of the music and this connection exactly is of fundamental importance.

This anthropological research is placed in the center of religious experience and musical meaning and the goal of the research is to gain insights into the meaning of music for the religious experience of the participants of the processions, during and in preparation of Semana Santa in Antigua, Guatemala. There are several reasons that emphasize the scientific and social relevance of this research goal.

Firstly, by studying the place of music within religion, this research contributes to the

theoretical relevance of linking the phenomena and concepts of music and religion, which has not been given a lot of attention in anthropological literature¹. Yet there exists a clear connection between music and religion and a significance in studying their relation. Rudolf Otto (in Beck 2006, 4; in Laack 2015, 223) wrote that the feelings associated with music are very similar to feelings of the holy itself: ‘musical feeling is something wholly other’. According to Otto, the human response to music is therefore composed of similar experiences as towards the numinous. Gerardus van der Leeuw (in Beck 2006, 4; in Laack 2015, 223) stated that there is hardly any worship without music, underscoring the intrinsic connection between religious ritual and musical activity: ‘it is impossible to effectively penetrate a religious tradition without the musical dimension’ (Beck 2006, 9). Laack (in Segal 2015) confirms that music often lies at the heart of religious cosmologies. Another reason she names for the importance of studying music in religion is the recognition of this field of human beings as relying on both intellect and emotions, sensations and the body (Laack 2015, 242). The art of music reaches to deep levels of aesthetic sensibility, expresses the experience of the sacred and directs spiritual emotions (Beck 2006, 5). This research exactly centers around the musical role within religious ritual and tradition, depending on the sensorial mediation of emotions leading to feeling and experience.

Secondly, this research contributes to the recently developed field of material religion, with an important role to play for aesthetics (*aisthêsis*, meaning sensory perception). Aesthetics refers to the process whereby practices, objects and for example music organize sensational forms through the senses, mediating perception and emotion, resulting in religious experience (Meyer 2012). By focusing on music as an integral material part within religion, mediating experience and involving emotion and the senses, this research thus places the theory of material religion at the central stage. Until now little anthropological literature has been published about the link between recent developed concepts within the anthropology of religion (material religion) and music. Moreover, what explains the influx of hundreds of thousands of people from Guatemala and abroad to visit Antigua and to celebrate Semana Santa? By using the concepts of material religion and aesthetics this research contributes to the understanding of the attraction of the tradition of Semana Santa.

Thirdly, although some literature has been written about Semana Santa in general, this

¹ There are two major reasons for this: the first concerns the misguided understanding of religion as a set of silent beliefs incorporated in scripture (a protestant legacy). The focus on doctrine and text had the implication of seeing religion as an inward phenomenon, which caused the negligence of studying religion as outward material expression, which in turn caused the negligence of incorporating music. The second reason concerns a dichotomy between religion and culture, including music (Beck 2006, 7-9; Laack 2015, 221), whereby the relationship between them therefore has been neglected.

world famous phenomenon has been given surprisingly little academic attention, especially concerning the specific role of music. This research fills the academic disparity about the music and its meaning during Semana Santa. Finally, the more experiential and materially oriented definition of religion used in this research is based on a Catholic perspective, which makes it the perfect working definition in a Catholic research context. Besides that, the study of Catholicism within the theory of material religion occupies a special place with respect to the relevance of this research. The ‘Protestant bias’², whereby religion was equated with Protestantism, has been countered by the ‘material turn’, whereby the neglect of the material dimension of religion is addressed. However, according to Meyer (2017)³, this shift in perspective cannot be completed without a focus on Catholicism using the same framework: ‘the explicit role assigned to the body, the senses, objects, images and rituals in the Catholic tradition can alert researchers to the broader relevance of materiality in religious practice at large’ (Meyer 2017, 311). Turning to Catholicism as an alternative archive, using the theory of material religion, is a much needed corrective and allows for a critique of the Protestant legacy and offers fresh insights for the study of religion from a material angle. Accordingly, this research exactly occupies this theoretical place, using material concepts of religion in a Catholic context.

With regard to the social relevance of the research there are three aspects to mention. Firstly, the *hermandad* (fraternity) *La Merced* (an important protagonist in the Semana Santa celebrations), where a main part of the research was carried out, has a strong need for thorough documentation and would like to receive my results for their magazine *La Reseña*. Secondly, one of the goals of the *hermandad La Merced* is to introduce outsiders or foreigners to their tradition: ‘no one can love something he does not know’⁴. Since surprisingly little academic attention has been given to this world famous tradition, this research will introduce Semana Santa and her beautiful events to a broader, foreign public. Moreover, because Semana Santa has such a mayor meaning for and forms part of the identity of the *Antigüenos*, the research is an articulation of respect for and recognition of the *Antigüenos*’ ‘being’. Finally, on a more general level, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the people around us. It touches upon questions about the core of the meaning of our existence: who are we? Why are people religious? What is the meaning of religion? This research

² Protestantism was based on a stereotyped distinction with Catholicism: the first seen as a sober, textual, inward religiosity of the mind, the latter referring to exuberant rituals, triggering the body and the senses, and a rich material culture (thus an outward religiosity of the body).

³ This book yet is unpublished and will be published in 2017. The particular chapter used here has been obtained via Meyer herself.

⁴ Manuel Estrada (president of the *hermandad La Merced*), interview, 05-03-2017.

provides a part of the answer by showing the religious worldview of *Antigüeños* who participate in the processions of Semana Santa. Especially in our current rapidly changing world, where boundaries between people are erected and fear or suspicion prevail over trust and appreciation for cultural diversity, this research calls for listening to each other, for seeing the beauty of people's ways of life and above all, for having faith in something, someone and each other.

Research methods

The anthropological fieldwork period covered the entire time under study from the beginning of Cuaresma (1st of March) to the end of Semana Santa (16th of April) since the research was carried out from the 29th of February until the 21st of April. Several qualitative research methods were used to collect the data. The fieldwork itself was connected to the field of ethnomusicology, which can be regarded as a combination of the disciplines of musicology and social/cultural anthropology (Nettl 2012, 20). It is the comparative holistic study of human musical diversity based on musical ethnography. The method of ethnomusicology thus consists of doing fieldwork, through living in the community, observing and recording musical events and interviewing musicians (Rice 2014, 27), aspects that all have been carried out during the research, aspects centered around three interrelated fields of ethnomusicology: the function of music, the musical style and the intrinsic value of music pieces (Blacking 1969, 33). Topics in ethnomusicology are focused on the music and its experience, the performance and performers, the audience and community and the temporal and spacial context. The aesthetics of music and how each music culture relates music to its worldview are frequently addressed themes (Titon 2009, 15,19-20). These topics and themes formed the basis and goal of the research.

Participant observation concerned the main method, although more than a method it is a way of approaching the fieldwork experience, gaining understanding of the most fundamental processes of social life. It rarely is, if ever, the only technique used in ethnographic research and provides context for more research methods (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 3), like interviewing. Other methods applied during the research therefore match this approach. Participant observation was mainly used for obtaining information about the course of events during Cuaresma (40 days before Semana Santa) and Semana Santa. "Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 1). By attending

almost all the events possible, observing the proceedings and describing in a highly detailed way the characteristics, elaborate information was gained about all the important activities. Moreover, I participated myself both by being a member of the public which attended certain core events, as well as by four times actively participating as a carrier in the processions. The main value of participant observation lies in this enculturation of tacit knowledge, since in no other way those embodied values, meaning and feelings can be interpreted (Schensul et al. 1999; DeWalt&DeWalt 2011). Besides that, through my close contacts with the *hermandad La Merced* (the fraternity of a church that organizes activities during Cuaresma and Semana Santa), I was able to attend several private, closed events. The building of *rapport* with certain key figures made those research activities possible. Mostly by visiting the church *La Merced* regularly, trust was gained and members recognized and knew me. As the president of the *hermandad* said: ‘‘*tú estás en tu casa*’’ (you’re at home here). The execution of participant observation thus consisted of attending all the events possible (including some private ones), participating in the processions myself and writing down the descriptive information in the form of field notes: ‘‘the writing of field notes is virtually the only way for the researcher to record the observation of the day to day events and behavior, overheard conversations and informal interviews that are the primary materials of participant observation’’ (DeWalt&DeWalt, 2011, 157). On the basis of short jot notes, fuller and more detailed notes or descriptions resulted in expanded field notes. Moreover, a log with a list of all the research activities, methods and informants was kept, as well as a diary in order to personally reflect on the course of the research events (O’Reilly 2012, 101-104). Since I lived for eight weeks in the research context, built close contacts with key informants, used Spanish as the local language and had access to and participated in activities with people who are fully participants in that context, I was able to gain unique insights into the worldview of the *Antigüenos* (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 5, 110-11), especially valuable since the research is focused on meaning and experience. Therefore the method of participant observation is highly valuable for the quality of the data. It enhances the quality of both data collection and data analysis since by living and participating in the culture under study, speaking the language of the informants and building contacts and trust, a tacit understanding is achieved whereby the interpretation of meaning, the learning of local values and patterns of action, moving and being, and a process of enculturation to the point of ‘feeling’ the point of view of the other is achieved (Desjarlais 1992, 26; Grills 1998). Most importantly, since the approach of participant observation itself is based, even dependent, on experiencing, participating, seeing, hearing and feeling, it concerned the ideal method for this research about experience, music

and the senses.

A second main method used during the research was informal, semi-structural and non-structural interviewing (O'Reilly 2012, 118-120). Informal interviewing has mainly been practiced during participant observation, by informally talking with participants to clarify some events that were happening at that moment or to ask about their participation and experiences. Semi-structural interviewing was adopted in the first weeks of the research, on the basis of a guide with certain topics and prepared, open-ended questions, in order to gather context information about the organization, parts and different events during the period under study. During the last weeks of the fieldwork non-structural or in-depth interviewing resulted in the most meaningful information, by merely using mental topics (the most important themes about feeling, experience, emotion, senses and music) and following the line of conversation, a strategy that DeWalt&DeWalt (2011, 137) and Bernard (2006) as well recognize: ‘‘the researcher is intent on following the lead of the informant, exerting only minimal impact on the topic and flow of interaction’’. In total, 22 in-depth interviews of varying hours and at least 42 informal conversations were carried out. In this way contextual knowledge about the meaning and characteristics of the events and important parts of Semana Santa, the processions and music was collected, as well as in-depth information about the experience of the processions and music of the participants and musicians themselves.

A third method concerned document analysis. A list of all the documents received was made and the documents have been analyzed. Those additional documents among others consist of explanations of events, books, magazines and CD's, as well as documents that were gained because of my participation in the processions⁵. The abundance of presents like books and CD's given by informants shows the extent of trust and *rapport* that was built.

The last method used was the method of the life story. The life story is a qualitative research method to gather information about the subjective essence of a person's whole life (Atkinson 1998, 3). Through a life story the researcher has access to the perspective of the participant: his/her values, definitions and knowledge of social processes acquired through experiences (Plummer in Atkinson 2001, 400). At the end of the research one life story has been carried out. As Tagg (1958, 67) explains, the preparation of the life story begins with the

⁵ Certain events like *velaciones* (veilings), processions or concerts, provided written information about for example the meaning of a biblical scene, or the program of the music. The magazines have been published by *La Merced* and address certain topics about Cuaresma and Semana Santa. One book is an education book for children to learn how to play an instrument, the other book is about the history of the *marchas*. The three CD's contain a lot of *marchas*, with one CD being a recording of a concert I attended. Because of my participation I received an envelope with the card with my turn which I had to pin on my chest during the procession. Included were the programs of the places of participation connected to streets and *marchas*. I received two posters as well.

selection of participants, whereby people who inspire or fascinate the researcher are suited (Atkinson 1998, 67). Luis told his life story and was the perfect participant for several reasons. Firstly, Luis is able to reflect on experiential processes of himself, by creating a distance towards his own conscience. In addition, Luis and I experienced Semana Santa and her most important moments together, which offered the opportunity to observe his participation and experiences from a close angle. Moreover, we could talk about the experiences and events at the moment these were unfolding. We became friends, I learned about his life, I met his family and he turned into my key informant. All this made Luis the perfect candidate because his story could be placed in a broader and deeper (historical) context of him as a person, strengthening the information with understanding and meaning. In a life story several core themes can serve as angle of incidence (Atkinson 1998, 21, 43-52). Luis' life story focused on the themes family (role, meaning, past, growing up), cultural settings and traditions (Semana Santa) and inner life and conscience (experience and feeling), since those themes connected to the research topic and to our experiences together. The quality of the life story as a method consists of the value of a narrative, a validity in the form of subjective truths, focused on meaning. Life stories are essential for a complete understanding of human life and culture (Atkinson 1998, 7, 20, 24; Taylor in Plummer in Atkinson 2001, 395; Blackman 1991, 56) and contain a certain richness and profundity (Bertaux 1984, 232-233).

The combination of the above described methods led to triangulation, by which data collected in different ways could be compared, with the result of cross validation (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 128; Boeijs 2010, 176). For instance, events seen during participant observation were subject of discussion over interviews and about the same events could be read in the documents received. Information about experiences in interviews in turn could be observed during events. Besides triangulation, the methods used were connected to and selected for types of questions (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 127).

Despite these methodological strengths, the limitations of the research need to be taken into account as well. In the first place the fieldwork was carried out alone, over a period of eight weeks which is a relatively short time with respect to anthropological fieldwork. More time would have resulted in a more elaborate and diverse research population, more life stories and the possibility of attending more events⁶. Moreover, these eight weeks under study comprised the exact period of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, which meant that the research

⁶ Although all possible events have been attended, some events took place on the same time, which had the inevitable consequence of choosing.

participants were extremely busy. The research period therefore had the consequence of a less high amount of extended and repeated in-depth interviews and life stories. In addition, the research population consisted of persons closely connected with the activities and music of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. Their interest in convincing an outsider of the beauty of 'their' tradition could have influenced the research findings. Lastly, the participants only were men (with the exception of one woman). The reason for this presumably concerns the higher amount of male participation during the organization and activities of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, the generally more public role of men and myself being a woman.

As explained, participant observation was used for obtaining information about the course of events during Cuaresma and Semana Santa and non-structural interviewing for in-depth information about the experience of the processions and music of the participants and musicians themselves. An important point to make is the approach of participant observation as iterative process. This means an alternation between data collection and analysis, with coding leading to new data and new data to new codes, also called 'the spiral of analysis' (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 179; Boeije 2010, 14, 90). This process results in new questions and deepening of findings, therefore improving the quality. Furthermore, interview questions continually were assessed and adapted, observations were written down as completely as possible and most importantly, the representativeness of the research site and venues, activities and informants (DeWalt&DeWalt 2011, 110-111; Boeije 2010, 34-35; O'Reilly 2012, 42-47, 225) was really high. In Antigua, also called 'the capital of the faith', Semana Santa namely manifests itself most strongly of whole Latin-America, therefore ensuing maximization of topic and research site. Informants as well represented the key figures in both the organizational and musical contexts (the president of the *hermandad La Merced*, the most wanted conductor and a researcher engaged in recording, press and broadcasting) as well as 'general' participants carrying or playing as an musician in the processions. Also, all the events and activities during Cuaresma and Semana Santa were attended, observed and recorded. Finally, the methods and methodological choices were documented considering methodological accountability (Boeije 2010, 173) and by asking key informants about events observed or by checking information of informants, member validation was achieved (Boeije 2010, 177; O'Reilly 2012, 226). All this ensured the reliability and validity of the data collected, assuring the quality of this qualitative research. And, most importantly, since the qualitative methods were chosen in order to answer questions about meaning and experience, the validity of the data is high for the reason that informants described their personal feelings and experiences.

Reflection

Attached to the methodological accountability, a reflection on the role, background and impact of myself as a researcher with respect to the research findings, as well as on some ethical principles is necessary. The research centers around religion and music and therefore my own relation concerning these concepts and phenomena is important to mention. In the first place I was not brought up with the Catholic religion. Although my family is partly Christian (Protestant) and I have attend a Catholic primary school, I consider myself agnostic, which had the consequence that I did not share the religious background with my informants. This has never been a problem (not even regarding my participation in the processions), since I had some knowledge about Catholicism, I have always been open about my own religious position and expressed my curiosity in learning more about their religion. In the second place I have a musical background, because I have been playing the recorder since I was six years old. Moreover, I have experience in carrying out anthropological ethnomusicological research, although previously on a smaller scale. This background and knowledge enabled me to observe and analyze the style, function and meaning of music.

Two other points need to be touched upon as well: my gender and socio-economic class. I never had the feeling that as a researcher and woman I had problems with for example access to any persons, information or events. However, my position as a female researcher has always to be kept in mind while interpreting the research findings. Furthermore, the research population mostly consisted of middle-high class informants. Antigua is one of the wealthier cities, which means that people from Antigua in general have a high economic status. The *hermandades* from the rich churches of Antigua are integrated by members from affluent families as well⁷. With my European, high economic classed background it probably has been easier to build contacts with my informants, since we shared our class to a certain point. The research therefore is class-bound, regarding my own economic position combined with the research location and wealthy *hermandades*.

During the research process the anthropological ethical code has been maintained. Ethical principles as informed consent, confidentiality and privacy formed the frame of the data collection. In the first place the nature of the data collection and the purpose for which the data would be used was fully outlined to the informants, who in turn were able to choose if they wanted to participate. The subject and goal of the research were explained, as well as

⁷ The processions from the churches in Antigua are seen as the ‘‘home-processions’’ for the *Antigüenos*, with certain rules and in general *cucuruchos* from wealthy families. The procession of for example San Felipe is seen in a broader way, with *cucuruchos* from any economic class. Processions thus are partly class-bounded.

the methods and academical purposes. At any moment this principle of informed consent was at work, to the point that a formal interview with my key informant and friend Luis was planned, since the line between informal conversation and conversation aimed at research findings would otherwise be blurred. In this way the unwanted result of using information, which Luis unconsciously would tell me while experiencing Semana Santa together, for research purposes was prevented. Moreover, all interviews were recorded with the permission of the informants. None of the informants regarded recording and the use of their names as a problem. Subjects about which participants in rare cases could not or did not want to talk about, were not further addressed in order to ensure privacy. The handling of data was explained and the possibility of receiving the thesis was offered to the informants. Consciously and responsibly the contacts and the collecting and use of information were handled in the light of the ethical standard.

Research location

The fieldwork took place in Antigua, Guatemala. Guatemala is one of the most diverse countries of Latin-America, with landscapes characterized by high plains with mountains and volcanoes, the Maya ruins of Tikal amidst the tropical rainforest and the Pacific coast in the South. Maya civilization flourished, however in 1524 the Spaniards reached Guatemala during their conquest of the 'new world' (Fischer 2003, 55). Guatemala's violent political history is defined by many conflicts and political changes of dictatorial and democratic regimes, culminating in thirty years of civil war from the seventies until the peace accord in 1996 (Vidgen 2016, 268-274). Under the rule of general Ríos Montt the violence reached its height (Fischer 2003, 30-34), a period many *Guatemaltecos* painfully bear in their memories. The current president is Jimmy Morales. The population generally is divided into two major ethnic groups, the Indians (consisting of numerous ethnic divisions, descendants of the Mayas) and 'Ladinos', whereby the latter are of mixed descent (Fischer 2003, 25). Among 21 different indigenous languages, Spanish is the official state-language. The majority of the population adheres to Catholicism.

Antigua, the former capital of Guatemala, is characterized by her beautiful appearance of colored, one-floor high houses with overhanging balconies on eye level, cobblestone streets and squares surrounded by churches, ruins and purple blossom. Surrounded by three volcanoes, marking the view of this colonial city, Antigua forms part of the UNESCO world heritage list. After the big earthquake of 1773 many parts were destroyed, especially the higher buildings such as churches, which ruins now constitute a famous element of this

touristic city. Antigua is known for her elaborate religious celebrations of Semana Santa (Vidgen 2016, 63, 65), making it the perfect research site.

Research population

The research population consisted of participants of the processions in the form of *cucuruchos* (carriers), musicians and conductors (who played in the *bandas* accompanying the processions), one artist and members of the *hermandad La Merced* who organize two important processions and many activities during Cuaresma and Semana Santa (and who as well often are participants). The church *La Merced* therefore constituted a valuable research site and entry point. The *Hermandad La Merced* played a key role during the research and was chosen because of her prominent place in the processional landscape of Antigua. Moreover, the excellent contact built with the president of this *hermandad* made access to all (private) events possible, as well as the building of contacts and interviews with other members of the *hermandad*. Members of the *hermandad* consist of noble, good-hearted men and women of different ages who have been selected for being a member of the *hermandad*, because of their devotion towards this church and the icons and because of their required qualities like the will to serve, responsibility and the capacity to work together. Moreover, with the contracted conductor for the processions of *La Merced* (and almost every other important procession), Hector Gomez, an interview could be set up via the *hermandad*. Two other conductors have been reached during concerts and through other contacts. Interviews with musicians as well were arranged during concerts and contacts were built via other musicians. The musicians spoken to played in different bands on various instruments and mainly were young men with a required musical level, this time of the year working for a certain conductor. The *cucuruchos* outside the *hermandad* represented here mostly were men, and informal conversations took place on the streets on the day of processions.

Finally, beside Manuel Estrada, president of the *Hermandad La Merced*, two other key informants have to be introduced. The first is Enrique Berduo, who works at *Cronista de la Ciudad de La Antigua, Guatemala*, an institution which protects and preserves Antigua. He studies the tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa and is involved in broadcastings on various media. Furthermore, he is a *cucurucho* himself and five interviews were executed in which he explained everything about Cuaresma, Semana Santa, the events and different parts. His own participation as well was addressed. The second key informant is Luis, whom I met during a concert of *marchas fúnebres*. Living in Guatemala City, he and his entire family visit his uncle in Antigua every year to experience Semana Santa. Luis, eighteen years old, wanting

to practice his English with me and studying physics, explained many aspects during the holy week to me, himself being a *cucurucho* too. As friends we experienced this important time together.

In order to gain insights into the meaning of music for the religious experience during processions of Semana Santa, the following chapters will be discussed. The first chapter presents the scholarly review in which the central concepts of religion and music are explored. The experiential and material dimensions of religion are emphasized through the theories of lived and material religion, with an important role for aesthetics. Then the connection between music and emotion is described, after which the concepts of religion, music, emotion and experience are integrated. The scholarly review forms the conceptual basis for the empirical data in the next chapters. Chapters two, three and four constitute the explorative-descriptive empirical context. The second chapter describes the history, organization, meaning and characteristics of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. The third chapter is connected to the second and shows a vivid account of all the events during this period. The meaning, characteristics and events described in these chapters will be related to the theories of lived and material religion. The fourth chapter focusses on the music in particular: the history, style, role and the musicians. The emotional and experiential meaning of music described in the scholarly review will be connected to this religious music during Semana Santa. Chapters five and six present the empirical findings surrounding musical meaning and religious experience. The fifth chapter is about the participation in the processions, both of carriers and musicians. Sensorial aspects are explained and connected to the experience of the participants. The sixth chapter describes the meaning and effect of the music for the experience of participants (*cucuruchos*) of the processions. The theory of aesthetics will form the main concept in explaining the mediation of lived religious experience through the music as a material component. Finally, in the conclusion the relevance and significance of the research are proven, the main arguments are summarized and the research question is answered.

Chapter one: Theoretical framework

In order to gain insights into the meaning of music for the religious experience during processions of Semana Santa, two concepts occupy a central position when mapping out the theoretical framework surrounding this research topic: religion and music. The aim of the following paragraphs is to explore these concepts, as well as their relation.

The first three paragraphs will look at the concept of religion. Religion is defined and the experiential and material dimensions of religion are emphasized. Thereafter two important theories will come to the fore: lived and material religion. The latter will include a description of aesthetics as well. The fourth paragraph elaborates on the relation between emotion and the concept of music. Accordingly, music is connected to materiality and aesthetics, with music being a material mediator for experience. The fifth paragraph connects the concepts of the previous paragraphs and is about the interrelation between religion, music, emotion and experience. The ability of music to evoke emotions and mediate religious experience is examined.

Religion defined

What is religion? Religion has always constituted an important place in the anthropological discipline, with many, essential works of for example Emile Durkheim (1912/2001), Max Weber (1904/1958), A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1962/1965) and Victor Turner (1969/1995). In the 19th century the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tyler defined religion as ‘‘the belief in spiritual beings’’ (Bowie 2005, 20). Although remarkably durable, definitions have been extended over the years. Ninian Smart (in Bowie 2005, 21-22) analyses religion according to various dimensions, which shows the practical, aesthetic and emotional aspects of religion, besides the concentration on scriptures and doctrine. Instead of focusing on how religion ought to be, Smart focusses on how it is actually lived. Tieleman (2011, 156) adds that Smart’s dimensions like ‘special experiences’ (or the emotional) and ‘artistic expressions’ (or the material)⁸ acknowledge the focus on what religion *does* and that it is entangled with culture, the immanent and transcendent. Tieleman (2011, 159) himself describes religion as ‘‘a collection of forms of expression’’. One of the most famous definitions comes from Robert Orsi (in Meyer 2012, 24; in McGuire 2008, 13): ‘‘religion is the practice of making the invisible visible, of concretizing the order of the universe, the nature of human life and its destiny, and the various possibilities of human interiority itself (...) in order to render them

⁸ The other categories are: myths and stories; doctrine; rituals; communities and institutions; morals; politics and economics (Tieleman 2011, 157; Bowie 2005, 22).

visible and tangible, present to the senses and in the circumstances of everyday life (...)’’. This happens by ‘‘offering multiple media for materializing the sacred’’, according to Orsi (in Meyer 2012, 24).

These definitions show a movement away from religion as an ideology, scripture or doctrine (which is too narrow to grasp the concept fully) towards a dynamic lived and material religion, concepts that will be explored in the next two paragraphs.

Lived religion

What is lived religion? As the term implies, it refers to religion as lived. Morgan (2010, 18) defines it as ‘‘religion at work’’; what does religion in everyday life and among people? With a focus on practices, a shift is made clear from the centrality of beliefs to religion as one of the things people do in order to organize their worlds into coherent domains of experience (Morgan 2010, 18). Practice and experience seem to be the central elements of lived religion, which is made clear by McGuire as well (2008, 3-4), who writes about religion as expressed and experienced in the lives of individuals. She calls religion at the individual level a bundle of beliefs and practices which are ‘‘ever-changing, multifaceted and often messy’’ (Luckman (in McGuire 2008, 17) terms this ‘‘invisible religion’’), in opposition to the doctrines of religious institutions. The internal coherence of lived religion requires a practical coherence, whereby it needs to make sense in one’s everyday life. The changing and messy character of lived religion is what Chidester (2012) means by ‘‘wild religion’’. By focusing on ‘‘the sacred’’, which is ‘‘produced through the labor of intensive interpretation and regular ritualization⁹’’, religion is seen as dynamic, personal and wild: ‘‘the sacred is produced in relation to wild forces’’ (Chidester 2012, 2). Therefore, according to McGuire (2008, 11-12), it is not enough to assume that individuals commit to a single package of beliefs and practices of an official religion, in order to understand how people engage in their religions in their everyday lives. This shows the importance of a focus on religion as lived: ‘‘by examining lived religion, we may get closer to an understanding and meaning of religion in all its complexity and diversity’’ (McGuire 2008, 16). In sum, lived religion is besides beliefs, ideas and morals about everyday practices, involving their bodily, emotional and religious experiences and expressions. Tallon (in Corrigan 2008) speaks therefore about ‘‘heart religion’’. Emotion is what makes us human and what defines religion, because human access to worth, values and the good is through what we feel deeply about: ‘‘if one’s heart is not in

⁹ ‘‘Which generates a surplus of meaning that is immediately available for appropriation, as people make the sacred their own, but is also vulnerable to contestations over who legitimately owns and operates the sacred’’ (Chidester 2012, ix).

it, something essential is missing'' (Tallon in Corrigan 2008, 122).

Lived religion, as characterized above, thus involves practices and experiences. This intrinsically connects lived religion with material religion. Brown (2013, 487) speaks about the intersection of those fields whereby objects, practices and feelings form 'material culture' of which the centrality in lived religion has to be indispensably recognized: belief happens materially and belief is something people do (Brown 2013, 486). Chidester (2008, 232-233) too connects the dynamic and wild character of lived religion with the materiality of religion. What people do is linked with things, beginning with the materiality of embodiment, and in this way people 'engage the wildness of materiality'. Embodiment and materiality comprise lived religion and therefore make sensation and feeling the medium of belief (Morgan 2010, 18). This brings 'aesthetics' in the picture too. The next paragraph is about material religion and aesthetics.

Material religion and aesthetics

What is material religion? To answer this question it is helpful to start with 'material culture'. Material culture is defined as 'artifacts' made by human beings and ideas about these artifacts (Kieschnick in Corrigan 2008, 224). This can be connected to religion, with material culture meaning all aspects of religion that pertain to bodies, objects, places and artifacts (Morgan 2010, 16): 'the material culture of religion is the total range of objects and practices that engage the human body in acts of belief'' (Brown 2013, 486). Material religion is about asking how religion happens materially (Meyer 2010, 209).

It is important to look at the material dimension of religion because it seems to be the key to the making of religious identity. Furthermore, in this way the definition of religion is framed in proposition instead of opposition to materiality (Meyer 2008, 227) which makes more than sense according to Keane (2008, 230-231), because beliefs always take a material form: 'materiality is a precondition for the social circulation and temporal persistence of experiences and ideas (...). Perhaps the very idea of the immaterial is ultimately an effect of reactions to materiality''. So a recent conclusion is made that materiality is inextricable from religion whereby religion should be seen as a network of people, divine beings, institutions, things, places and communities (Meyer 2008, 209): 'there is no such thing as an immaterial religion'' (Meyer 2010, 210).

An important point has to be made about materiality as a cultural construction. We need to concentrate on lives and practices of objects (Meyer 2010, 209). Material culture is both about objects and what people do with those objects, which as a consequence means that

practices with the objects involve material forms which engage bodies, sensations, feelings and experiences: “the body is the universal register of belief” (Brown 2013, 486). Morgan (2010, 15) therefore defines the material culture of lived religion as practice of engaging the human body in the configuration of the sacred¹⁰. As Bowie (2005, 35) describes, the human body is used as a symbolic classificatory mechanism. The body is trained to mediate between the immanent and transcendent, leading to embodied practices which involve all the senses. Those learned body skills are what Marcel Mauss (in Bowie 2005, 49-52) calls ‘techniques of the body’, connected to Pierre Bourdieu’s famous concept of ‘habitus’. Embodied practices link the material aspects of people’s lives with the spiritual (McGuire 2008, 13). This mediation thus consists of the body, senses and material culture. The underlying idea behind all this is called ‘aesthetics’. The process of aesthetic mediation will be explained below.

As discussed earlier, material culture has the potential of making the intangible transcendent reality present (Morgan 2010, 18). Brown (2013, 6, 8) names the example of art and icons which can play a vital role in evoking ecstatic or mystical states that convey a sense of powerful presence. In the same light, Kieschnick (in Corrigan 2008, 226) talks about objects which can evoke and transform emotion of believers in religious contexts: “in the interaction of religion and emotion, we find objects everywhere¹¹”. In this process of mediation, the body and senses play an essential role. ‘Doing’ religion produces a religious body which in turn produces perceptions and sensations (Segal 2015). Meyer¹² has written about this system of mediation, material culture and aesthetics. She proposes that humans, by mobilizing texts, sounds, pictures or objects and by engaging in practices, ‘fabricate’ a sense of the presence of something beyond (Meyer 2012, 22). In the space between religion as immanent and transcendent, Meyer (2012, 24-25) takes the everyday as the location whence a sense of ‘beyond the ordinary’ is generated, and pictures, objects, music, but the human body as well can become religious media. In this process of religious mediation, she coins the term ‘sensational forms’, referring to a configuration of religious media in which a believers sensorium is tuned through techniques of the body (Meyer 2012, 26-27). Those sensational forms generate emotions which leads to a ‘genesis of presence’. Plate (2012) connects to this idea of aesthetics and sensually mediated experiences of religion. He takes the body as central medium, which he calls ‘the skin of religion’. The aesthetic body is trained in sensational

¹⁰ Morgan (2010, 17) talks also about the idea of the ‘social body’, which is a felt association to which the individual belongs and experiences this connection in sensuous ways. Material means mediate this feeling.

¹¹ Another point Kieschnick (in Corrigan 2008) makes is that objects themselves are sometimes said to embody sentiments, influenced by the idea of a presence of divinity in inanimate things.

¹² Meyer (2012, 7-14) talks also about the ‘protestant legacy’ that caused the long-lasting idea of religion as something inward, transcendent and immaterial.

forms which create sacred space and experience: ‘‘the senses are the media of the body¹³’’ (Plate 2012, 173).

In conclusion: practices or objects (materiality) are the necessary forms through which the ‘invisible’ is shown by being figured through embodied aesthetic practices (sensational forms/‘aesthetic formation’) which organize perception and emotion. Studying this offers deep insights into the genesis of worlds of religious lived experience (Meyer 2015).

Music, emotion and experience

What is music? The best and most used foundational definition of music is from John Blacking: ‘‘humanly organized sound’’ (Blacking 1969, 71). Music is connected to culture¹⁴ and the true meaning of music will never be achieved when detached from the musical and cultural context (Blacking 1969, 57). The value of music lies in the kind and quality of human experience involved in its creation and performance (Blacking 1969, 71). Moreover, music provokes emotions and represents something beyond music (Rice 2014, 61).

Hence music has the ability to move people emotionally (Rice 2014, 76) and often has been regarded as the most directly emotional of the arts. Music seems to explore levels of awareness and feeling that elude words (Brown in Corrigan 2008, 200): ‘‘symbols fall short in the realm of feeling and experience. That is why we need music’’ (Rice 2014, 59). But how can music alone express particular emotions? Why is music that unique medium of emotions? Rice (2014, 60) sees the complexity of music as a sign itself as an explanation of music as powerful bearer of meaning and emotion. However, Brown (in Corrigan 2008, 202) poses the question if our emotions need to be only about the music. Nussbaum (in Corrigan 2008, 215) thinks that music can contain beliefs and emotions about something other than itself. This makes room for the idea that the combination of music, thoughts, experience, perception and body states are all involved with emotion (Corrigan 2008).

This can be the starting point for the theory of John Blacking (1969) about the value of music in human experience. According to him, the function, structure and value of music can all be related to individual and social experience. As already mentioned, Blacking sees music as communication. He acknowledges the idea that music can express something extramusical, but this can only be done if the experience to which it refers already exists in the mind of the

¹³ As an example Plate (2012, 177) speaks about ‘‘the sense of sound can create sacred space’’, which exemplifies the research question.

¹⁴ Some enduring cultural themes about concepts of music are: cosmology and religion, the social behavior of musicians, the coherence of music with the other arts, the meaning of music, the relationship between musical and cultural change (Rice 2014, 65).

listener (Blacking 1969, 39). This means that music can make people more aware of feelings that they have experienced. Blacking (1969, 42-52) divides musical communication into four categories based on its social role. The first consists of music in relation to cultural experience, which can stimulate physical states and emotional impact, especially in a social context. The second concerns the idea of performance which announces social situations, certain feelings and even reinforces social values. Feelings thus are associated with social situations. The third is about music associated with a social situation that can heighten emotions, even without a relation to that social situation in that moment. The fourth is music, without connection to social life, which may express aspects of society and convey consciousness of experience. Blacking (1969, 59) argues that the function of music is to enhance the quality of experiences and therefore states that ‘the world of music is a world of human experience’. That is why music’s value consists of the expression of realities of the human condition. Ultimately, the aim of music is to make people more aware and thus more human, by capturing the force of individual experience with the form of collective cultural experience (Blacking 1969, 68).

In conclusion: music is a powerful bearer of meaning and emotion, representing something beyond the music itself. The emotional meaning of music resides in the idea of music in its social and cultural context, with reference to individual and collective experience, with the result of emotion, physical state and mental consciousness.

Musical experience of the sacred

People’s religious experience can be triggered by music and music can facilitate contact with the numinous (Laack in Segal 2015). Nettl (in Beck 2006, 7) even states that since music is found in religious ritual in all societies, perhaps music was invented for humans to have a special way of communicating with the supernatural. A possible reason for music as ‘vehicle par excellence for carrying the religious impulse’ (Beck 2006, 14), is that music is capable of conveying levels of complexity in the same way as religion does. The elusiveness of music in form and content is part of the reason why music is an effective means of communicating with a God¹⁵ (Beck 2006, 14).

So music, like religion, has the power to transport people to another time and place (Beck 2006, 6). Blacking (1969, 38) refers to this by in turn referring to the composer Mahler, who said that music can create a world of virtual time which may lead to ‘the other world’, in

¹⁵ For more information on music as a door to experiencing transcendence (Laack 2015, 225) see ‘Voicing the Ineffable’ by Siglind Bruhn (2004).

which things are no longer subject to time and space. He called this the complete absorption in the 'timeless now of the divine spirit'. Music tries to offer experiences and sensitivities of consciousness of the self and the immanence of God (Blacking 1969, 60).

An important part of the religious experience through music is the evoking of emotions. Brown (in Corrigan 2008, 212) has written about this connection between religion, music and emotion. Emotions can be aroused by the sound, shape and design of music offered in the service to God. Music can be moving precisely because it conveys a deeper sense of spiritual realities, thereby being a form of communication with the 'Supreme Being'. Corrigan (2008) calls this the autonomy of music, providing emotions which cannot be provided any other way. The ultimate connection between emotion, religion and music is formulated in a convincing way: 'emotions of music have their home in the experience of the self as a whole in relation to society and the world. And since religion is concerned with vital and harmonious relations between the self, others, world and God, one can see why religion has a vested interest in music' (Brown in Corrigan 2008, 216).

In conclusion: music lies at the heart of religions and concerns the material means through which emotions, the body and sensory perception are stimulated, mediating religious experience.

Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs the relation between religion and music has been explored. This scholarly review forms the basis for the empirical context and empirical findings. Firstly, the complex concept of religion was defined, which lead to a lived and material approach of religion. Lived religion involves practices and experiences and is connected to material religion. Materiality is inextricable from religion and involves an aesthetic mediation of religious lived experience via the body, perception and emotion. Consequently the concept of music was defined as 'humanly organized sound' and connected to emotion. Music has emotional and experiential meaning and has the ability to represent something beyond the music itself, through the combination of socio-cultural context, body states, thoughts and perception. Finally the previous concepts were combined in order to explore music in religion. Music is capable of evoking emotions and therefore concerns a material means for mediating religious experience.

The characteristics and events of Cuaresma and Semana Santa which form the practices of this tradition and which are explained in chapter two and three, as well as the religious experiences of *cucuruchos* in the processions that will be described in chapter five,

will place Semana Santa at the center of lived religion. The theory of material religion whereby material culture forms the sensory medium for experience, interprets the processional parts and sensorial aspects, which are explained in chapter three and five. These parts and aspects constitute the material culture that addresses the senses. As a processional part and sensorial aspect, the holy music during the processions, which is delineated in chapter four, has an emotional and experiential meaning. This meaning resides in the socio-cultural context of the processions of Semana Santa (connected to the practice of carrying) and the capability of evoking emotions that represent something beyond the music itself, namely memories. The musical empirical context of chapter four will connect to this emotional meaning in chapter five, a meaning which forms part of the *cucuruchos*' experience. Chapter six describes the effect of the music for this religious experience, whereby the conceptual relation between music and religion takes form. Music, as a material means and sensorial aspect, thereby addressing the senses and evoking emotions, mediates lived religious experience. This process of aesthetic mediation and sensational forms constitutes the conceptual basis for the main argument of the research.

Chapter two: The meaning and organization of Cuaresma and Semana Santa

‘*Somos cucuruchos*’¹⁶

Semana Santa and the period of forty days of preparation, Cuaresma, are awaited with tremendous expectation during the whole year. Indulged with meaning, this is the most beautiful time for many *Antigüeños*. This chapter provides a short history about this tradition and describes the meaning and organization.

The history of Semana Santa¹⁷

Semana Santa and her processions are described as ‘*piEDAD popular*’¹⁸; devotion with a public character, with the motive of strengthening people’s faith and coming closer to God (*acercamiento*). This public devotion initiated in the beginning of the 17th century with outside-activities, formerly only being a liturgical celebration inside the churches. During the same time the first *cofradías*, now called *hermandades*, originated, which played a fundamental role in organizing the processions. The origin of the processions initially formed a reaction on the Reformation, meant to maintain the devotion of the population and emphasizing feeling in religion instead of reason. Emotion had to be of central importance and the goal was to affect people through the suffering icon which captured Jesus’ pain¹⁹.

This development started in Spain and was transmitted to Guatemala, where the tradition adopted her own identity: with the tradition of Semana Santa being a fusion of cultures between the Spanish-Europeans and the Mayas, Semana Santa in Antigua²⁰ Guatemala currently has many typical local characteristics. Here Semana Santa is famous because of her processions; the photo of the icon of the *Jesús Nazareno* in the procession of the church *La Merced* on *Viernes Santo* (holy Friday), concerns ‘our presentation card in

¹⁶ We are carriers in the procession.

¹⁷ Little academic publications exist about the history of the phenomenon of Semana Santa. The information presented here is gathered during my fieldwork and based on several sources consisting of received documents and interviews.

¹⁸ Manuel Estrada & Victor Valle (president and secretary of the *hermandad La Merced*), interview, 05-03-2017.

¹⁹ During the processions the people asked for certain miracles, for instance that people wouldn’t die, that there wouldn’t be storms or that the earthquakes would come to an end.

²⁰ Other cities or villages have their own ‘Semana Santa-identity’; their own style and feeling, where for instance the clothes, decorations and form of celebrations show certain differences. In Quetzaltenango for example, during the procession organized by one church, people have to accompany the procession the whole time and are not allowed to drink or eat. In Guatemala City carriers have to be present fifteen minutes before to make the right order in altitude. Moreover, when the carriers change, the procession is paused and rested on small iron pillars. Furthermore, in many countries in Latin-America and Europe Semana Santa is celebrated as well. My colleague Carolien Lubberhuizen, who wrote her bachelorthesis about the construction of identity at the Palermitan Marketplace of Ballarò in the context of the refugee crisis, refers to the processions of Semana Santa in Palermo, Sicily, Italy.

front of the world’’²¹. The processions are extensive, with immense *andas* and many carriers²². In Antigua there exists ‘‘this mysticism’’²³, something special which attracts and is unexplainable. *Antigüeños* especially have a lot of *fe* (faith)²⁴ and the tradition of Semana Santa marks the lives of many persons. Being *cucurucho* in the processions is even part of who they are, their identity, as Ligia Solorzano²⁵ explained: ‘‘an *Antigüeno* is not a spectator, but is active during the celebrations. When someone won’t carry, he isn’t *Antigüeno*. It is like the moment when a child hits his head against the balcony hanging over the street: when a child never has hit his head, he isn’t *Antigüeno*, just like when a person has never carried’’.

In former times the processions merely consisted of the icon carried around solely by men, with small platforms (*andas*) and almost no decorations. In the 19th century activities expanded and a strong emphasis was placed on public participation. The 20th century marked the introduction of the processional music²⁶, the *música sacra* in the form of *marchas fúnebres*.

Today the processions have many more elaborate components²⁷. Moreover, the tradition is still changing. Previously *alfombras* were only made on the morning of holy Friday in one specific street and mainly composed of geometrical figures, whereas nowadays all the processional streets during the whole period of Cuaresma are covered with *alfombras* which exist in an elaborate mixture of figures with many details. Furthermore, the *andas*, the amount of carriers, the size of the *bandas*²⁸ and the processional routes continue growing each year; generations of believers find new ways of expressing their love for ‘‘*el Señor*’’.

This massive cultural event nowadays has an extensive commercial aspect too. During processions the streets are filled with people selling various goods such as water, candies, plastic toys, balloons, hats, participation clothes, typical food and many more²⁹. The sounds of noisy toys, for children serving as a souvenir of Semana Santa, and the bells of little moving ice cream carts on the cobblestone streets are characteristic of Semana Santa as well.

²¹ Manuel Estrada, interview, 05-03-2017.

²² Who pay to be able to carry. In other places like Spain people are chosen to carry.

²³ Manuel Estrada, interview, 05-03-2017.

²⁴ *Fe* is different from *religión* (religion) in the sense that religions can differ but the idea of faith stays the same. Different religions divide people, but all people can have faith in a God.

²⁵ Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview 22-03-2017.

²⁶ Before the 20th century, music already could be heard behind the windows when families hired musicians to play for the processions as an act of devotion, an offering. Later this was given a continuity in the form of institutionalizing the music within the processions.

²⁷ This will be extensively discussed in chapter three.

²⁸ This year, on the first Sunday of Cuaresma, one of the bands even partly consisted of indigenous people for the first time, with as well a lot of female musicians included, showing a shift in the kind of musicians with not solely *ladino* men.

²⁹ Exhibition in museum *Sor Juana*, participant observation.

The hermandad La Merced

At the crossing of 6th *Avenida* and 1st *Calle*, in the very north of Antigua at the busy square filled with green roofed food stalls, the striking yellow church *La Merced* marks the view of this part of the city. The interior of *La Merced*³⁰ is symmetrically organized, with wooden church benches on both sides of the big columns, the vaulted nave leading towards the choir and apse, where the altar forms the focal point of the church. Against the walls of the side aisles gold colored glass cases show various famous icons of different saints, icons far from abstract representations, with real hair and vivid facial expressions to the point of drawn tears on the cheeks.

Next to the building of the church, the ruined convent³¹ of *La Merced* constitutes the workplace of the *hermandad*. A *hermandad* forms part of a church, is a group of devote church members and in charge of the ecclesial activities. The *hermandad La Merced* now exists 341 years and has sixty to seventy members, consisting of *socios* (general members, approximately 55, male and female) and *colaboradores* (approximately 20), young boys from thirteen to eighteen years old who have been selected and want to become a member when they turn eighteen. The *colaboradores* help the *socios*, performing the same tasks. The members form part of several commissions, in charge of various organizational parts. The *hermandad* has a *sacerdote* (priest) and falls under a diocese (*obispo*). *La Merced* is directed by the board, among others consisting of the president, secretary and treasurer.

Striking similarities come to the fore when members explain their wish to form part of the *hermandad*: in the first place out of faith and devotion, but a strong emphasis is laid on family traditions; fathers took their sons with them to the processions and whole generations feel connected to *La Merced* and her *Jesús Nazareno*. Many family members have carried in this church' processions, as Marco Marinelli³² illustrated: ‘‘from my grandfather to my father, I have been a *cucurucho* all my life’’. Walter Monge³³ cannot even remember when he started as *colaborador*, because he came along with his father (who was the president of the *hermandad* and who died in 2010): ‘‘I want to follow the footsteps of my dad’’.

Every night and weekend members of the *hermandad* work in the convent after their

³⁰ Many catholic churches are located in Antigua. Although belonging to the same catholic authority, every church has his own charisma. *La Merced* is founded on ‘*libres para liberar*’ (free to free/freedoms to free) (Manuel Estrada, interview, 05-03-2017).

³¹ The earthquake in 1773 ruined many churches and connected convents, although the church of *La Merced* maintained its original structure because of the lower, massive construction.

³² Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

³³ *Colaborador* of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

regular jobs, in preparation of all the activities during Cuaresma and Semana Santa³⁴. The planning process for this period already starts in August; from the beginning of Cuaresma it is all execution³⁵. The registrations of *cucuruchos* concern a mayor task and are organized according to four steps, which I have gone through myself when I participated³⁶.

When a person is not yet known as *cucurucho* for *La Merced*, the first step concerns the measurement of the shoulder height. I had to stand straight on a dark brown, wooden cube, after which a male member, dressed in the recognizable white shirt of the *hermandad*, laid two wooden poles on my shoulders. Consequently, two female members wrote my height of 1.44 cm. down on an orange paper, which I had to give to two other men in charge of the payment of thirty Quetzals per person. I received two posters of the icons of the *Virgin de Dolores* and *Jesús Nazareno* and continued to the last step, where my personal information was digitalized, receiving a second paper that I had to hand in one or two days before the procession. Therefore, in the afternoon of the 7th of April, two days before *Domingo de Ramos*, I entered the crowded ruins of *La Merced*, and received at women-table number one (as indicated on my paper) the envelope with my turn: *turno 2, brazo* (arm) 19 (which means the early second turn and the uneven side of the *anda* (left shoulder)). All the names of *cucuruchos* are ordered according to height, with the tallest people carrying first and the smallest last, coinciding with the number of the *turno*. The *brazo* as well corresponds to height, since the tallest people carry at the back of the *anda* and the smallest in front. The female members thus handed me the envelope, which they put in a golden folder³⁷ with the image of the *Jesús Nazareno*, containing a list for both processions with turns, their corresponding streets and *marchas*. After 48 turns the list started again, which meant that most women had to carry twice. Lastly, the members explained the required clothing to me, consisting of black shoes, black tights, a black skirt till the knees, a white shirt and a black *madrileña*, which is a kind of lace scarf for covering the hair.

³⁴ The *hermandad* is in charge of the organization and realization of for example *velaciones* (veilings), the *adorno* (the choosing of the decoration on the *anda*), *alfombras* (sawdust carpets with flowers, fruits and vegetables), the change of tunics of the icons, concerts, the *Traslado* (when the icons are placed on the *andas*), the preparation and decoration of the church, public relations, contracting a conductor and the selecting of *marchas*, the registration of *cucuruchos* and naturally, the processions (*La Merced* organizes three processions; *Domingo de Ramos* (or *La Reseña*), *Viernes Santo* and a child procession on *Miercoles Santo*). Besides these organizational activities, the *hermandad* has to coordinate everything with the municipal authorities, who play a role in for example the logistics of cleaning the city, traffic, parking, road marking, tourism, access to healthcare, police, bathrooms et cetera.

³⁵ Besides the organization of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, the *hermandad* organizes other year activities, centered around the celebrations of *Corpus Cristi*, the anniversaries of the icons and Christmas. All churches have *hermandades*, which organize events during Cuaresma and Semana Santa. The major churches in Antigua besides *La Merced* are: *Escuela de Cristo*, *San Francisco*, the cathedral, *San Pedro Apóstol*, *El Calvario*.

³⁶ The registration at *La Merced* is automatically for both processions.

³⁷ This folder contained an explanation about the *Jesús Nazareno* of *La Merced* and a little book with images and descriptions about the stations of the *Via Crucis* (the way of Jesus with his cross to the place where he would be crucified) too.

The work of the *hermandad* thus demands a great effort of the members³⁸, culminating in nights without sleep in the days before and during Semana Santa. The best shown example of this concerns the nightly preparation of the *velación*³⁹ (see appendix 1 for a description of the proceedings taken place) for the virgin Mary, from Thursday to Friday the 7th of April, in which members worked from 9 p.m. till 6 a.m. During this night the church was closed and only accessible for the *hermandad*. A special ambiance could be sensed, me as an in- and outsider⁴⁰ in a dark church in the night, amazed by the teamwork, feeling the cold, togetherness, energy and tiredness of the members around me.

These nightly preparations show the enormous amount of work the *hermandad* needs to do; a meaningful but exhausting process (which could be noticed when various persons who didn't have to work at that moment fell asleep on the wooden benches). Sunday the 9th of April would be the first procession of *La Merced* after which the *hermandad* would work again during the night, preparing the second *velación* for Jesus on Monday, a day the members have to work at their regular job. Jorge⁴¹ characterized this tiring process: ‘it is exhausting, but in a pleasant way, because it's a beautiful offering’.

Cuaresma and Semana Santa: ‘an exam of consciousness’

The period of Cuaresma, Lent, begins on Ash Wednesday, *Miercoles de Ceniza*. It is a period of forty days (with five Sundays), prior to Semana Santa, referring to the forty days Jesus spend in the desert. This year (2017) Cuaresma started on the 1st of March and Semana Santa began on the 9th of April⁴².

Cuaresma is to be seen as a time of spiritual preparation for Easter; for the Pasion, Dead and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, with the purpose of an ‘*acercamiento*’ (coming closer) towards the church. People are waiting for this time the whole year and on a mentally interior, personal level, a certain spiritual state of mind characterizes this period. The meaning of Cuaresma is described⁴³ as a time of reflection: to think about what one is doing, to look inside one's heart and to remember the great sacrifice Jesus made: ‘he lived for us and died

³⁸ Magazine of La Merced, *La Reseña*, 2015, 15th edition, page 7.

³⁹ Evangelizing biblical scene in the apse of the church, consisting of background paintings, icons and an *alfombra* in front. Chapter three will expand on this.

⁴⁰ As Oscar said: God had chosen me for being able to watch this process. Informal conversation, 06-04-2017.

⁴¹ Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, informal conversation, 06-04-2017.

⁴² Although Cuaresma and Semana Santa take place in the same months each year, the exact dates depend on the official calendar of the Catholic Church.

⁴³ The meaning of Cuaresma has been addressed in many interviews and explained by many participants, such as Marco Marinelli, interview, 22-03-2017; Miguel Ruiz, interview, 07-03-2017; Ligia Solorzano, interview, 22-03-2017; Marcel Chavez, interview, 19-03-2017.

for us’’⁴⁴. Therefore one tries to change, to become a better person, for being better in life, as conductor Hector Gomez explained: ‘’with mistakes and everything, it is very hard, but for me Cuaresma means a stage of change’’⁴⁵. It is a moment of meditation, full of emotions and feeling the connection with ‘’Him’’. One has to be well with oneself, with Jesus and with the people around him: ‘’*estar en paz con otras personas*’’ (to be in peace with others)⁴⁶. Hence Cuaresma means a period of change, of reflection, of penance and of mercy. It concerns an experience which is printed in the mind, forming a point of reference in life. During Cuaresma people exteriorize the inner path of their soul; their search and conversion to God⁴⁷. The core of Cuaresma is devotion to and the love for God: ‘’love is the most marvelous power of being human’’⁴⁸.

Besides the personal spiritual state of mind, certain acts are characteristic. People try to do charities and help their neighbors. They pray, visit church more often, watch the *velaciones* and processions and share those experiences with family and friends. An important act connected to Cuaresma concerns ‘*ayuno*’, which traditionally means an abstention of meat on Fridays, but generally is fulfilled by giving up something one really likes.

Cuaresma is seen as a beautiful, solemn tradition and again the importance of family is named, expressed in the words of Gabriël Vides⁴⁹: ‘’I am *Antigüeno*. Since childhood I experienced the tradition of Semana Santa. Not only is it a commemoration of the Pasion of Christ, it is about living the profundity of those forty days together with my family and as a member of the *hermandad*’’.

Semana Santa starts on the sixth Sunday of Cuaresma and ends the next Sunday, this year the 16th of April. Semana Santa is the religious celebration and commemoration of the Pasion, Death and Resurrection of ‘’*nuestro señor Jesú Cristo*’’⁵⁰. This week has a certain feeling; a ‘*sentido*’ or ‘*sentimiento*’. Semana Santa means this feeling and is a moment to get closer to God. The celebration gives the opportunity to create an identity within the faith of this religion. The core of the Catholic faith of the *Antigüenos* centers around the holy week, commemorating that Jesus saved the world⁵¹, as Marcel Chavez⁵² explained: ‘’Semana Santa

⁴⁴ Hector Gomez (conductor), interview, 21-03-2017.

⁴⁵ Interview, 21-03-2017.

⁴⁶ Fernando Vasquez, interview, 22-03-2017.

⁴⁷ *La Reseña*, 2015, 15th edition, page 6.

⁴⁸ *La Reseña*, 14th edition, page 4.

⁴⁹ Treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

⁵⁰ Manuel Estrada, interview, 05-03-2017.

⁵¹ The meaning of Semana Santa has been addressed in many interviews and explained by many participants, such as Manuel Estrada, interview, 05-03-2017; Victor Valle, interview, 05-03-2017; Luis Ixquiac, interview, 16-04-2017; José & Lucky Morales, interview, 09-03-2017; Enrique Berduo, interview.

is the most holy we have’’. The tradition forms the essence of the city and her people, connects them with the past, gives meaning to the present and allows hope for the future. This magic of Semana Santa in Antigua makes people better human beings, by connecting them with what is really important in life and bringing feelings anyone can feel⁵³.

Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs the time of Cuaresma and Semana has been introduced. A historical context was presented in order to interpret the current local identity of Semana Santa in Antigua, characterized by her elaborate processions and the *fe* of the *Antigüeños*: there exists an intrinsic connection between an *Antigüeno* being a *cucurucho*. Thereafter the organization of the events during this time came to the fore, whereby the *hermandad La Merced* was introduced. The organizational tasks have been described, tasks which perform the *socios* of the *hermandades*, who have become a member out of faith and family influence. Hereby their work effort and astounding devotion was demonstrated. Lastly the meaning of Cuaresma and Semana Santa was construed in the words of *Antigüeños*. Semana Santa, a celebration considered as *piedad popular*, commemorates the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is preceded by Cuaresma, a spiritual period of forty days meant for change, *ayuno* and reflection.

⁵² Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

⁵³ *La Reseña*, 2015, 15th edition, page 55.

Chapter three: The events and processions during Cuaresma and Semana Santa

Tears stream down her face, towards her bright red lips. Smiling and whispering, she looks down on her beautiful, black haired baby in her arms. Making comforting movements from her legs, she does not even look up when the *anda* slides into the sunlight, accompanied by the trembling sounds of the *banda* before her. Amidst the mass of people, standing in the church, she is alone with her child, crying, sobbing and smiling.

Although I did not know this woman, neither the essence of her emotion, it touched me deeply. Not only showing the power of feeling, it exemplified the indescribable strong combination of devotion and emotion, expressed during the events of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. This chapter describes those events and delineates the atmosphere in order to provide a context for the understanding of the experience of *cucuruchos* and the meaning of music.

The events of Cuaresma

Miercoles de Ceniza

Cuaresma starts on *Miercoles de Ceniza*, which therefore is the first event during this time. On this day services take place in all churches in Antigua. At 7 a.m. I sat in the [cathedral](#) amidst many devotees. The church has the shape of a ‘L’, with two entrances and a shining, gold altar. Decorated in purple cloths, since purple is the symbolic color of penitence, the church slowly was filled with people⁵⁴, who stroke a cross towards various icons when entering.

The service was characterized by an alternation between the sermon, prayers and singing (the last two concerning moments when people stood up⁵⁵), and by many people silently crying, marking the personal emotional impact of this event. The meaning of this day and Cuaresma was explained: “*polvo eres y en polvo te convertirás*” (dust you are and as dust you will return). It implicates a humble human position in the world with minor importance of material matters. Dust refers to ash, *ceniza*, and with the imposition of the ash⁵⁶ on the foreheads of the devotees, the time of Cuaresma was initiated: one has to remember the

⁵⁴ The church was completely full, with people even sitting on plastic chairs beside the church benches. Around 250 people were present.

⁵⁵ Often people answered the *sacerdote* repeatedly after certain parts of prayers. Common expressions that were used were: “*palabra de dios*” (word of God), “*misericordia señor, hemos pecado*” (Lord, have pity with us, we have sinned), “*sin nada*” (without anything, referring to dust, the minor importance of materiality) and “*te rogamos y oïmos*” (we pray to you and we listen).

⁵⁶ The ash is made from the burned *ramos*, branches, of *Domingo de Ramos* (the first day of Semana Santa) last year, as remembrance of glory that soon will be reduced to nothing (exhibition in museum *Sor Juana*). During the service ash was mixed with water and people formed rows inside of the church to receive the small cross, applied with two fingers.

inexorable passing of life and the vulnerability of being subjected to death. Prior to the imposition of the ash, the Eucharist⁵⁷ was performed, after which a special, unexpected moment made me emotional. People reached out to their neighbors in all directions, holding each other's wrists and wishing them "en paz con tu hermano" (in peace with your brother). With an indescribable glance of love they looked me in the eyes and wished me, an outsider who did not sing and pray, nor participated in the imposition of the ash and Eucharist, peace.

Via Crucis

On all Fridays during *Cuaresma* various churches organize a *via crucis*. A *via crucis* literally means 'the way of the cross', symbolizing the path of Jesus with his cross to Calvary, the place where he would be crucified. All *via crucis* are composed of fourteen stations, which exist of images, called *pasos*, that express passages of this path⁵⁸. At each station the corresponding bible passage is read by one person of the group who walks this *via crucis*, a volunteer interchanged at the next *paso*. At the beginning and end of the passage people pray together, first in an answering way to the foreman, then all together out loud. All prayers end with: "Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit". The participants strike a cross at each station, some participants kneel and one person stands in front of the chapel with a small, portable, wooden cross. In between the *pasos* they sing religious songs⁵⁹.

Via crucis are performed in different ways. The most famous and elaborate one is the *via crucis* of the church *San Francisco*. The first *avenida*, adjacent to this church, leads to the church *El Calvario* and on the left side of this straight street, the fourteen *pasos* in the form of paintings are located in yellow painted chapels⁶⁰. During a *via crucis* the fences of the chapels are open and flowers and candles occupy the altar. At the end of the *via crucis* a service takes in *El Calvario*. Other churches perform their *via crucis* inside the church building, where small *pasos* in the form of wooden reliefs are located high against the wall in the side aisles.

⁵⁷ Firstly the *sacerdote* ate the wafer and drank one sip from a silver cup. Then his helpers, the *ministros de la comuni3n* put the wafers into the mouths of the devotees who had formed rows. People stroke a cross when they received the wafer. Something remarkable concerned the covering of the silver bowls with wafers when walking.

⁵⁸ For example, when the Roman soldiers force Jesus to walk with the cross, when he meets his mother Mary, when he meets the woman Veronica, when he falls by the weight of the cross, when the soldiers beat him, when Simon helps to carry the cross and when Jesus is nailed to the cross.

⁵⁹ Mostly one in particular, with the frequent used words *sangre* (blood), *misericordia* (mercy), *perd3n* (sorry) and *pecados* (sins), each *paso* the same. When the way in between was longer than one song, another song was initiated.

⁶⁰ These chapels date from the 17th century and are located according to the same distances in the same route in Jerusalem, which has 2300 *pasos*, according to the tradition.

I encountered a *via crucis* in the church *La Merced*. Approximately fifteen men and women walked from *paso* to *paso*, candles in their hands. They filled the church with their clear singing voices.

Processions incorporating a *via crucis*, mainly on Fridays and Sundays, concern the last expression. Here the *pasos* are made in people's homes: a small table with painting, cross, flowers and candles, sometimes with an *alfombra* in front. These processional *via crucis* are more elaborate with elements as the carrying of an *anda* and sung music accompanied by a *banda*. The connection of voices marks the specialty of this event: all participants singing the same notes, pronouncing the same words, singing and praying together as one.

An important form of *via crucis* is the *madrugada*. During the *madrugada* one walks from the church *San Francisco* to *El Calvario*, on the last Friday and Saturday in de week before *Semana Santa*, called *Semana de Dolores*. For the men this *via crucis* begins at 3.00 a.m.⁶¹ on Friday, for the women at 5.00 a.m. on Saturday⁶². The *madrugada* takes place in complete silence; the difference with a normal *via crucis* is the absence of music, aimed at complete interior reflection and preparation for the coming week. A unique, special ambiance is created, through the combination of darkness, cold, candles and merely the sounds of moving feet. Approximately 1500 men, *barones*, participate in the *madrugada*, with twenty men carrying a little *anda*, only with the icon of Jesus and without decoration. Every corner the carriers change spontaneously. Approximately 1000 women participate on Saturday, simply bringing along a small portable cross. During the *madrugada* of the men, the women close the windows and stay inside the house, out of respect for this moment solely for them. The men do the same for the women. For the *Antigüeños* the *madrugada* means the beginning of *Semana Santa*, although the official start is on Sunday.

Processions

Processions concern the core events and main expression of this time. A procession consists of carrying the icons of Jesus and Mary (which normally stay inside the glass cases in the church) on large, wooden, decorated platforms (the *andas*) through the streets of Antigua. Participating men carry the icon of Jesus, participating women carry Mary. The meaning of the processions in *Semana Santa* coincide with the day and meaning in the story of the *Pasion*⁶³.

⁶¹ The time is part of the penitence.

⁶² Although for the first time a change of program took place this year, with both *via crucis* on Friday morning.

⁶³ These meanings will be explained in the next paragraph. Besides those referential meanings, every procession (also during *Cuaresma*) carries an evangelizing message through the decoration and a biblical text.

Numerous processions take place during Cuaresma and Semana Santa, all according a certain order of parts. Two sounds and instruments symbolize the beginning⁶⁴ of a procession; the *tsijolaj*, a pre-Hispanic, indigenous traditional Guatemalan flute, and the *tambor*, a cross drum adapted from the European drum. With a certain interval the same melody is played over and over⁶⁵. Conductor Hector Gomez⁶⁶ described the meaning of this sound: ‘‘it gives the character, the mysticism to the procession, to Cuaresma; Cuaresma cannot exist without these two instruments’’. Consequently, three persons holding silver staffs with flowers and a cross initiate the procession. Then approximately five to seven men, dressed as Roman soldiers, announce at certain moments the [advent of the procession](#) by playing trumpet and percussion. The [banner](#) of the *hermandad* executing the procession is kept in the air and hereafter follows a straight line of men carrying the *pasos* in the middle of the street. A large group of [Roman soldiers](#), holding lances and walking in rows on both sides of the street, wearing a Roman helmet, brown, high sandals, a nail chain and a red cape, form the last part in front of the *anda*. In between those elements, many participants walk in the middle of the street, waving the *incienso* and hereby dispersing scented smoke. This concerns the standard order of processional parts⁶⁷. However, depending on the wealth of the *hermandad* organizing the procession⁶⁸, additional elements are added. The already mentioned *pasos* generally consist of wooden poles with paintings. Yet churches like *La Merced* and *Escuela de Cristo* use *pasos* expressed in sculptures on small separate *andas* carried by four men, or even life size sculptures pushed forward on carts. Another element concerns the *palio*, a kind of fabric roof of different colors carried by six persons⁶⁹, which notes the fact that the icon has been consecrated⁷⁰. *Escuela de Cristo* also incorporates seven black banners with the last [seven words](#) spoken by Jesus, and the *coros angelicales*: small *andas* with angels that bear the

⁶⁴ Since this instrument concerns an indigenous instrument it is considered pagan, which is the reason that it is played in top front of the procession and not inside the procession. After all, non-liturgical religious music cannot take place inside religious activities and places. This is also the reason that during *velaciones* the same instruments and melody are played in the entrance of the church, just outside.

⁶⁵ This information was provided in interviews with Enrique Berduo, Hector Gomez, 21-03-2017 and Manuel Estrada, 05-03-2017.

⁶⁶ Interview, 21-03-2017.

⁶⁷ Although the Roman groups disappear on the Saturday in Semana Santa, (*Sábado de Gloria*), since Jesus then already died, and on the last Sunday (*Domingo de Resurrección*) almost all parts have disappeared This thus depends on the moment in the story of the Pasion and the coinciding expression of the procession, which will be elaborated on later.

⁶⁸ This is also to be seen in the richness of details, for example the materials used, with a lot of silver, gold and jewels on the decorations, cross and crowns.

⁶⁹ The carriers of the *palio*, as well as the carriers of the initiating cross and *pasos*, sometimes wear a very high [pointed headgear](#) covering their face. This refers to an old custom and symbol of penitence, since a person cannot be recognized (Enrique Berduo, interview).

⁷⁰ In earlier times the *palio* was used as indication for a person with an high function, such as the *sacerdote* or bishop (Enrique Berduo, interview).

symbols of the Pasion. On the final days of Semana Santa a wooden instrument, the *matraca*⁷¹, is used as a signal of proceeding, by making a clapping noise⁷².

After these parts, participants accompanying the procession walk in rows, the *filas*, on both sides of the street. Dressed in their tunics⁷³, the street colors purple as far as one can see. The *filas* are followed by the focal point of the procession: the decorated *anda* with the icon of Jesus. The *anda* is carried on the shoulders of many men (in the mayor processions eighty to hundred *cucuruchos*), cradling moving on the rhythm of the music, a movement characteristic of the view of an approaching procession, facilitating the advancement and resulting in the optical, solemn effect of the icon becoming alive⁷⁴. On each street corner these carriers are alternated with new *cucuruchos*, who are waiting in lines on both sides of the street according to their *turno* (the number of the place of the *turno* is marked on a portable, (sometimes electronic), pole) and *brazo*. When the *marcha* played by the *banda* has come to an end and solely the sound of the timpani and drummers, called the *marcadores de paso*, has taken over, the *anda*, still cradling, comes to a halt before the row of the new *cucuruchos*. A movement from forth to back can be seen with one participant stepping out, the other stepping in and placing his shoulder below the notch, his hand supporting the shoulder position. Then the new *marcha* sets in and the *cucuruchos* start walking again, their head and feet millimeters away from the person before them.

The *anda* is guided by members of the board of the *hermandad*, their position marked by their differently colored clothes. The *person in front*, his back and arms widespread against the *anda*, guards the straight direction and speed⁷⁵. Two people in the corners help to navigate through the narrow street turns and at the backside several men push the *anda*, since it tends to move backwards because of the weight. Sometimes these assistants even lift the whole *anda* a bit, to let the *cucuruchos* recover their position, since the weight bends them downwards. Finally, several participants walk beside the *anda* with a long *pole* with two hooks, to lift the electricity cables hanging over the street that possibly can damage the

⁷¹ It simulates the church bells, thereby symbolizing mourning and pain.

⁷² Enrique Berduo, interview, exhibition in museum *Sor Juana*.

⁷³ The clothing regulations differ somewhat per church. Although purple is the obligated tunic color in many processions, the headgear in for example a procession of *La Merced* consists of a white cloth with purple ribbon around, while in *San Francisco* the *cucuruchos* wear a small, purple, pointed headgear. In the processions of *Escuela de Cristo* on Friday and Saturday after the death of Jesus, the color changes from purple to black coinciding with the mourning meaning. The same applies for women, who at *San Francisco* wear a white headscarf, *madrileña*, and at *La Merced* a black one (Luis Ixquiac, informal conversation, 13-04-2017).

⁷⁴ Sometimes they move backwards as well, for an even more solemn effect.

⁷⁵ Sometimes, when the *anda* is light, the *cucuruchos* want to walk very slowly, and when the *anda* is heavy they want to walk very fast. Therefore the speed of the procession has to be regulated and lost time has to be compensated (Enrique Berduo, interview).

decoration or icon⁷⁶.

After the *anda* comes the music band⁷⁷, playing the *marchas funebres*. The musicians are always dressed in black pants, shoes, tie or bow tie and a white shirt⁷⁸. The *banda* is headed by the timpanist, walking behind his on wheels pulled timpani. Then the conductor moves backwards in front of the musicians, waving his baton. The musicians generally play in a fixed order with rows of the lira, piccolo's and clarinets, trumpets and trombones, percussion, and sousaphones. A rope encloses this group, demarcating the end of this processional part. Hereafter walk the *filas* of women before the decorated *anda* with the icon of Mary. After this second *anda*, two small *andas* with the icons of [saint John and Mary Magdalene](#) accompany the *anda* of the virgin⁷⁹. This part as well is followed by a *banda*, after which a [garbage truck](#) instantly cleans the streets, breaking the magical atmosphere.

Processions generally last twelve hours, sometimes less, sometimes more, with the longest being nineteen hours. The route that is walked depends on the location of the organizing church (since a procession begins and ends in the church), although certain central places are mandatory, such as the central park, the square of *La Merced* and the *pasos*-street adjacent to the church *San Francisco*⁸⁰. Every procession bears a certain biblical message through the decoration and the essence of a procession therefore is evangelization by using a biblical fundament of scripture, liturgy and doctrine in a graphical way. The ultimate result is an *acercamiento* to God, marking the devotional essence of a procession, expressed by Manuel Estrada⁸¹: ‘‘it is not merely a cultural tradition, it is part of our lives, it is emotional, with lots of fervor, faith and devotion’’.

According to tradition, the processional days are divided between *hermandades*, with *La Merced*, *San Francisco*, *Escuela de Cristo* and the village of *San Felipe* occupying the most desired and honorable ones⁸². Every Sunday during Cuaresma a procession takes place of a village nearby, walking to and through Antigua and back. These processions and their meanings are described in appendix 2.

⁷⁶ Enrique Berduo, interview.

⁷⁷ The place of the *banda* is behind the *anda* because in this way the sound is best heard in the whole procession.

⁷⁸ Often they bring a small bag as well, which need to be black to. Depending on the strictness of the conductor, musicians can wear caps against the sun. Conductor Guillermo Mendizábal doesn't allow caps, because of order and presentation.

⁷⁹ Sometimes more male and female saints accompany a procession on small *andas* (museum *Sor Juana*).

⁸⁰ Miguel Ruiz, interview, 07-03-2017, Enrique Berduo, interview, Eddy Diaz, interview, 07-03-2017.

⁸¹ Manuel Estrada, interview, 05-03-2017.

⁸² Enrique Berduo, interview.

Child processions and via crucis

Within the traditions of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, children have an important role to play as well. This already can be seen by the fact that many parents take their babies and little children with them while carrying: one shoulder and hand below the *anda*, the other holding their child. These aspirant-*cucuruchos* are sometimes already dressed in the official outfit and hold the *anda* with their tiny hands. Besides this sharing of experience, special processions and *via crucis* are organized for them⁸³. These events consist exactly of the same elements as the adult versions, except the expression in miniature form: the *andas* and *banda* are smaller and the decorations and icons are doll-like instead of life-size. A certain proudness surrounds these events: parents dressing their children and taking pictures of them; children tired but satisfied running towards their parents when their turn has ended. See appendix 3 for examples of child processions.

The reason for these specific processions and *via crucis* for children concerns the passing on of the tradition. It is about educating and preparing the children: they experience all aspects of a procession, they grow up with it and it will form a part of their identity. As a father⁸⁴ with two sons explained to me: ‘it is about teaching *la buena de la vida*’ (the good of life).

Velación

The *velación* by far is the most frequent event during Cuaresma and Semana Santa. A *velación* concerns a vigil in preparation of the death of Jesus. Every Friday during Cuaresma, and on many more days (especially in *Semana de Dolores*), a *velación* is organized by the church which procession takes place on the next Sunday. A *velación* is a representation of a biblical scene⁸⁵ with an evangelizing message, located in the apse of a with colored cloths decorated church. It consists of the main icon of Jesus or Mary (churches that have an economically privileged position have the opportunity to carry out a *velación* for Mary as well, often on Wednesday) with several additional icons around, a background painting, many

⁸³ Mostly the separation between girls and boys carriers is already made, with two *andas* with miniature icons of Jesus and Mary. The smallest already can participate, maybe being four years old. Economically well of churches like *Escuela de Cristo* sometimes even have a separate tiny *anda* for the very little ones. In that case grown-ups assist them, by actually carrying the *anda* in the corners.

⁸⁴ Informal conversation, 01-04-2017.

⁸⁵ The *alterero* is the person who invents these scenes. To become *altarero* one has to study the Bible and iconography (or it is passed on via inheritance), minding structure, composition, distribution, proportion and color management (exhibition in museum *Sor Juana*).

decorations, flowers and candles and an elaborate *alfombra*⁸⁶ in front. During the whole day people can visit the church and watch the *velación* (church benches are removed or relocated). The closer to Semana Santa and the more prominent the church, the bigger the *velaciones* and the more visitors. Appendix 4 shows examples of the attended *velaciones*, with descriptions, photos and meanings.

Services

Besides the more ‘popular’, public oriented events, almost every day during Cuaresma services⁸⁷ take place in churches. Moreover, many events are combined with a service, or at least some words are said by the *sacerdote*.

Concerts

Almost always a *velación* is combined with an outside evening **concert** of *marchas fúnebres*, the musical style played by the *banda* accompanying the processions. Instead of walking in the processions, the musicians sit on chairs before the church in stationary position (the players of the sousaphones cannot sit), although in the same instrumental order. The concerts are characterized by introductions of the **musical pieces**, whereby the name and author of the *marcha* is named and a reference is made to the meaning of the *velación* or the period of Cuaresma in general. The musicians are dressed in their typical black suits and their music papers are clicked onto their music standards (players of the sousaphones hold their music papers in one hand while playing) or onto their instruments. Before each concert the air is filled by a cacophony of tuning instruments. A festival-like atmosphere can be sensed through the smell of food stalls around and plastic toys and balloons that are sold.

Every musical piece starts with the timpani, after which the conductor counts till four, accompanied by the typical sideways and up and down arm movements. Then the *banda* sets in, producing powerful, melancholic sounds. With a wide swinging motion, the conductor ends the particular piece, after which he discusses some points with several musicians. During this short break, the next *marcha* is introduced, musicians talk, laugh or eat something and the sounds of movements of papers can be heard.

⁸⁶ This *alfombra* in general is a gift from a family.

⁸⁷ These services constitute general church services, only more frequent and liturgically connected to the meanings of this time.

On the 7th of April I sat on a little stair in front of the church *La Merced* pressed in between many other people. I enjoyed the atmosphere; the sight of the beautiful church with the bright moon above; the sounds of the square, the food stalls, the people and of course, the music. The *banda* played many famous *marchas*, which I almost recognized all. And I was lucky: the second *marcha* was '*La Caridad de Guadalquivir*' by Paco Lola, my favorite! I felt extremely happy, to be able to be at that place, at that moment, listening that *marcha*. The first time I heard it, it grasped my attention and I instantly loved it. The *marcha* begins softly with the clarinets accompanied by my favorite instrument, the euphonium. The building of the piece is beautiful, resulting in a climax of trumpets that play a different rhythm on top of the other instruments. Here I felt the effect of the music myself, in combination with this special atmosphere.

Acto de Traslado y Unición

The week before Semana Santa, *Semana de Dolores*, is filled with many activities like *velaciones*, *via crucis* (and the *madrugada*) and processions. The week culminates in one of the most exclusive, important moments, constituting the final preparation for Semana Santa, the *Traslado*: '*la puerta de semana mayor*' (the gate of the mayor week). Although this act takes place in many churches, *La Merced* broadcasts it on national and international television⁸⁸, with millions of viewers. Only family and people invited by the *hermandad* can attend this service in the church.

Around 3.00 p.m. a row of elegant dressed people, with men in suits and women in beautiful dresses and on high heels, was formed before the entrance of *La Merced*, all invitees holding a big white envelope in their hands, to show their formal invitation. I was brought to my place by a member of the *hermandad*, who was dressed in a suit as well, wearing a golden tie, gloves and a necklace with the emblem of *La Merced*. The purple decorated church was completely filled with people, to the point that invitees had to stand. Classical live music was played by a small string orchestra (also flute, piano and piano cymbals), accompanying a male and female singer.

When the 2,5 hour service began, everyone stood up and amidst the sounds of percussion, trumpet and classical music, amidst the smoke and smell of the *incienso* and amidst the lights of hundreds of camera's, two small *andas* with the famous icons of *Jesús Nazareno* and Mary were raised in the air. Carried by members of various *hermandades* dressed in their own characteristic tunics, they moved cradling through the nave towards the altar. When the *andas* were placed in the apse next to each other, the *unición*, an act of

⁸⁸ This is a recent development: some years before nobody except the invited people and members of the *hermandad* could watch.

veneration, began. Five men and women⁸⁹, elected by the *hermandad*, cleaned with a white, cotton cloth the hands⁹⁰ of the icons, a tremendous honor and recognition of a generations long tradition and devotion.

The rest of the service was characterized by words of various members of the *hermandad* and the *sacerdote*, prayers, singing and Bible readings⁹¹. At the end of the service the Eucharist took place in the same manner as on *Miercoles de Ceniza*, after which one wished each other peace. The final part concerned the *Traslado*: the music culminated in a climax, *incienso* filled the space and people moved out of the benches to see the placement⁹² of the icons on the long *andas* which would be used the next day. All preparations, all the work for Semana Santa had come to an end, as well as this emotional service, and slowly the church ran empty.

The events of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, though based on scripture and liturgy, thus concern public, devotional activities, described as *piedad popular*. The events are dynamic and involve many practices, as for example the participation in *via crucis* or processions, the going and listening to concerts, the visiting and watching of *velaciones* and the literally called ‘act’ of the *Acto de Traslado y Unición*. A dynamic character and the involvement of practices, elements described in the literature by Morgan (2010), McGuire (2008) and Chidester (2012), therefore define the tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa as lived religion. Moreover, the content of the events, as well as the processional parts, comprise the objects which constitute a central element in these expressions of lived religion. This means that the lived celebration of Semana Santa exists by its connection to material culture which makes it an expression of material religion (Morgan 2010; Meyer 2010; Brown 2013) too.

⁸⁹ For Enrique Berduo the moment was very special because his mother had been elected for this task.

⁹⁰ The hands have a special symbolic meaning; many miracles and gestures are made with the hands and liturgically speaking the hands have an important position as well.

⁹¹ The special, preferential, solemn character of this place and service was mentioned repeatedly, as well as the broadcasting on international television. The importance of the icons was named and the movement from suffer to light, to love and to peace. Manuel Estrada directly spoke to the icons of Jesus and Mary, posing the question how we can feel well knowing the suffering of Jesus. The faith, devotion and meaning of Cuaresma and Semana Santa was mentioned again, as well as the importance of children in this tradition. The *sacerdote* spoke in *voz alta*, a kind of talking/prayer in a high, singing manner. When praying the people stood. The growing of faith through the images, a ‘*profundación de nuestra fe*’ (a deepening of our faith) during this week concerned the central idea.

⁹² This was a technical process, with male members using a jack to lift the icons and a platform to move the icons sideways on the *anda*.

The days of Semana Santa

Domingo de Ramos

Semana Santa begins on *Domingo de Ramos*⁹³ and this processional day commemorates the entry of Jesus in Jerusalem. The *ramos* refer to the branches that people laid on Jesus' way and are sold everywhere in the city. The main procession⁹⁴ organized by *La Merced* is characterized by her baroque appearance, with many ostentatious elements like an embroidered tunic of the icon, a golden cross and crown and jewels⁹⁵.

This day was the first day of the most important fieldwork week and also my *first day as cucurucho*. At 11.00 a.m. the *salida* (the way out of the church) of the procession began and nervously I worked my way through the completely purple filled square and streets, asking information, avoiding beautiful *alfombras* and feeling warm in my participation outfit with black *madrileña*⁹⁶. Terrified to lose my beautiful turn⁹⁷, I finally found my spot, at the uneven side of the street in between number seventeen and twenty-one. First the large silver decorated *anda* with the icon of Jesus passed. In front it depicted a snake and lamb that would be slaughtered, with the text ‘here is de lamb of God’ and at the back an altar with the text ‘have mercy with us’. Then, when the *banda* of Hector Gomez had walked by, I saw the *anda* with the icon of Mary approaching, decorated in the same theme with the text ‘*hágase en mí según su palabra*’⁹⁸. The ordered row of women was formed on the street and nervously but curious I waited, my eyes tingling of the *incienso* smoke, afraid of the weight. Then the women around me kneeled and stroke a cross, while a female member of the *hermandad* said a prayer. When the *marcha* ended and the percussion started, we stepped forward and I placed my left shoulder below the notch. I felt relieved. I closed my eyes and tried to focus on my senses. I felt and thought of the weight, I touched the *alfombras* and cobblestone street with my feet and I heard the music. I completely lost track of directory perception, although we even had to make a turn. Sometimes we walked faster, sometimes slower and sometimes backwards. I occasionally touched the feet of the woman before me, since it was hard to keep the unpredictable rhythm. During my turn I felt happy because I realized that I was participating in something so important for so many people⁹⁹. What felt as a relatively short time, the next row of women was ready to take over. I continued walking in the *filas* where I had to focus on

⁹³ This procession is also called ‘*La Reseña*’, because it marks the processional way of Friday.

⁹⁴ Very early in the morning some small processions took place.

⁹⁵ Enrique Berduo, interview, Manuel Estrada & Victor Valle, interview, 05-03-2017.

⁹⁶ There are many ways to wear a *madrileña* and even different forms of the scarf itself. Some women wear it as a real headscarf, others let it begin halfway their heads and show a lot of hair.

⁹⁷ I carried very close to the church, which is considered as a beautiful place to carry.

⁹⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” It refers to the virtue of Mary who surrendered herself to the holy spirit to form Jesus. The back of the *anda* read: “blessed is the fruit of thy womb”.

⁹⁹ It is important to note that my experience is intrinsically different since I am not religious myself. It is special because of the knowledge about the experiences of others.

the stopping, connection and continuation of walking (‘*vamos avanzando!*’), instructed by members of the *hermandad*. I enjoyed the beautiful view of the purple trees, the many spectators at the sides of the street and the cradling *anda* behind me. While walking I felt warm and thirsty and my feet hurt from my shoes on the cobblestone streets, all forming part of this special experience.

As every procession, this Sunday ended with the most important moment of the *entrada* (entry), around 1.00 a.m. Silently Luis and I stood inside the church *La Merced*, noticing the tiredness of the people around us. When the first *anda* appeared backwards in the gateway, Luis and all attendees kneeled and stroke a cross. In silence, on wheels using *rails*, the *anda* was pushed inside, after which the men lifted the platform a bit. Fast, with tiny sideway steps they walked further inside. On the sign of a bell, they raised the *anda* on their shoulder: such an incredible power! At the same moment, the official *marcha fúnebre* of Frédéric Chopin set in. The low, slow, strong and heavy sounds filled the space of the church until the roof, accompanying the cradling illuminated *anda* in front. We both cried.

Lunes, Martes and Miercoles Santo

These days are mainly characterized by an innumerable amount of *velaciones*, processions in villages¹⁰⁰ outside Antigua and some child processions. Although constituting days within *Semana Santa*, they do not bear the same weight of meaning¹⁰¹.

Jueves Santo

On *Jueves Santo* the last supper and institution of the Eucharist are commemorated, which refer to the initiation of the Pasion. At 11.00 a.m. the *salida* of the procession of *San Francisco*¹⁰² took place. Amidst an innumerable amount of street vendors the exact route could be observed, marked by an unbroken line of diverse *alfombras*. A beautiful rust colored *anda* appeared in the gateway of the church with the message: ‘*la paz este con ustedes. Felices los que creen sin haber visto*’ (let the peace be with you. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed). Names and faces of saints covered the white-gold colored sides. The second *anda* was decorated in the same style, with red flower arrangements in vases at the edges and Mary wearing a rust red colored tunic. The text read: ‘*yo soy la reina de la paz*’ (I am the queen of peace) and therewith connected to the first *anda*.

¹⁰⁰ For example the one of *San Felipe* on *Miercoles Santo*. Here some different elements (like actors, colors, material, less ordered etc.) could be seen, proving the variations of expressions and identity in different places.

¹⁰¹ People work on these days as well, while they are free on Thursday and Friday.

¹⁰² On this day the procession of *San Cristóbal El Bajo* took place as well. Especially the wooden underside of the *anda* was very sophisticated: small holes accommodated tiny lanterns.

During the day and evening, until 12.00 p.m., another important activity took place: the visiting of the *sagrarios*. This means that in every church the wafer is exhibited in a special place, which people can approach closely. According to tradition, one has to visit at least seven *sagrarios*¹⁰³. A *sagrario* refers to the institution of the Eucharist (see appendix 5 about Hora Santa, explaining the importance of the Eucharist and wafer) and the Eucharist concerns the fundament of the Catholic faith: the wafer not just represents the body of Christ, but is considered to be the body of Christ, therefore imposing the exhibition with a profound meaning.

Viernes Santo

Viernes Santo exactly began at 12.00 p.m. Thursday night with the reading of the death *sentencia* of Jesus from a large white parchment by Pilatus, in different parts of the city. Pilatus' cavalry, men dressed as Roman soldiers riding strong horses, followed. Behind, the fast and heavy footsteps of two rows of Roman soldiers on both sides of the street could be heard, under guidance of an aggressive drum, their big torches in their hands. Many people almost ran after this group, thereby creating a powerful ambiance.

Besides the reading of the *sentencia*, the most elaborate, advanced and beautiful *alfombras* are created during this night¹⁰⁴. Because of the continuation of events nobody sleeps, although around busy, save places like churches one can notice people sleeping in the grass or in doorways, even together with their children.

Viernes Santo commemorates the way with the cross, crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. It is the focal moment of Semana Santa for all *Antigüeños*: on this day Jesus sacrificed himself to save the world. Because of this meaning the penitential procession on the first part of the day, organized by *La Merced*¹⁰⁵, is known for its austere character. The famous icon of the *Jesús Nazareno* is solely dressed in a simple, red, non-embroidered tunic¹⁰⁶ with a rope around the waist, carrying a rustic cross and thorn crown. In contrast to the decorations of other *andas* which change every year, this decoration stays the same, merely consisting of

¹⁰³ Luis and I visited three *sagrarios*: in the cathedral the wafer was shown in the altar itself; in *La Merced* the wafer was exposed in a room in the ruins, decorated with white and sea-green cloths, where instrumental spiritual music was played; in the church of San Pedro one could walk around the *sagrario* and a large image of Jesus was shown, as well as an *alfombra*. To enter the space of the *sagrario* one had to wait a long time. At every church rows of people, inside and outside the building, were formed in order to watch. Once entered, people stroke a cross, kneeled and prayed.

¹⁰⁴ *Calle Ancha* is a famous street for the *alfombras*. In contrast to the cobblestone streets in the center of Antigua, *calle Ancha* is made of asphalt which makes the making of *alfombras* easier.

¹⁰⁵ The *vignette* with which the thesis begins is based on my experience of this procession.

¹⁰⁶ The form of a butterfly is pinned on this tunic as well, as a sign of the resurrection.

some natural elements such as rocks, orchids and branches. It is the only procession which goes without lights, except the illuminated icon, causing the unique atmosphere characteristic of this combined procession and *via crucis* that starts at 4.00 a.m.¹⁰⁷.

On this special day I carried twice during the night and day¹⁰⁸. Without a whole night of sleep I experienced all events including the cold and warmth, being constantly alert and not losing any detail. Nauseous of the tiredness and the sun, I waited for my very last turn. I let go of everything, determined to enjoy this last chance. Until I felt the weight. Maybe I was too tired or maybe it was because I was much taller than the women around me, but I almost couldn't bear. Then I heard the famous *marcha* of *Cristo Rey* and a woman behind me counted to three, upon which we lifted the *anda* straight again¹⁰⁹. This gave me strength and I finished my turn, feeling satisfaction, energy and nostalgia already.

Around 3.00 p.m. the atmosphere of this day changes completely, together with the more somber state of mind of the people: ‘ya está el momento de la muerte de Jesús’¹¹⁰ (here is the moment of the death of Jesus (Jesus died approximately on this time)). Everyone goes home to change tunic: purple turns into black as a symbol of mourning.

Inside the church of *Escuela de Cristo* I attended a ritual on midday, whereby the icon of Jesus was crucified. Thereafter, the ritual of the descend from the cross began. The church was filled with many people standing, singing and prayer together, producing a mystical ambiance. Two ladders were placed against the cross and two men carefully lowered Jesus, wrapped in white cloths. While lying on a red pillow¹¹¹, his wounds were cleaned with cotton. Some public prayers were carried out, after which the processional *anda* was moved to the center of the church. Platforms were built around, on which four men stood to place the icon of Jesus inside the of gold and glass made coffin. Then on the sign of a bell the *anda* was lifted in the air, while the official *marcha* ‘*Cruz Pesada*’ set in. People kneeled, stroke a cross and kissed their hand. Cradling the *anda* moved back and forth inside the church. When the *marcha* ended, it was placed on the rails and pushed outside, into the light. The *cucuruchos* passed by, sighing, smiling, sweating, emotional and proud. The second *marcha* ‘*La Granadera*’ (in every procession played at this moment) accompanied the luxurious *anda*.

¹⁰⁷ Manuel Estrada & Victor Valle, interview, 05-03-2017, Enrique Berduo, interview, José & Lucky Morales, interview, 09-03-2017, Miguel Ruiz, interview, 07-03-2017.

¹⁰⁸ The meaning of the *anda* of Mary was: ‘you gave your son for the redemption of the world’.

¹⁰⁹ For Luis this is one of the most special experiences as a *cucurucho*: the feeling of strength and pride when you count and all other *cucuruchos* lift the *anda* on your sign.

¹¹⁰ Enrique Berduo (working at Cronista de la Ciudad de La Antigua, Guatemala, researcher and presenter), interview, 17-03-2017.

¹¹¹ The watching of this act shall be rewarded with ‘plenary indulgence’, as said a pope, marking the importance of being present at this moment (mother of Luis, informal conversation, 14-04-2017).

The text read the prayer ‘Our Father’: ‘*gloria al Padre, al Hijo y al Espíritu santo*’¹¹². The same course of events happened with the *anda* of the virgin, this time while the official *marcha* ‘*Dolor con Suelo y Alegria*’ played. The meaning of this processional part was: ‘*templo y sagrario de la santísima Trinidad*’ (temple and tabernacle of the holiest Trinity), hereby connecting to the first part.

The *entrada* of this procession concerns one of the most important moments during the week. When the church gates opened, waiting devotees ran inside (as did I), their sleeping children on their shoulders. At 4.00 a.m. a light bulb appeared and silently the *anda* came in, after which it was carried in the church, again under guidance of the official *marcha*. While the *anda* of Mary entered, four men climbed on the platforms and carefully performed the acts of opening the coffin. With the sound of the timpani, the icon of Jesus was removed from the glass case and replaced to the stationary case at the side of the altar. The passed away **Jesus Christ was laid down to rest**.

Finally, I experienced an atmospheric moment in the early evening, when the largest procession of San Felipe (**hundred *cucuruchos* carrying**) passed the central park. Amidst the minutes long walking by of in black dressed participants and the mystical smoke of the *incienso*, thin, white **candles** were handed out to the spectators close to the road. These tiny, orange lights formed the way where the richly decorated *anda* passed. White-brown colored, with curly ornaments, the icon of the passed away Christ was carried inside a coffin completely made of glass, supported by four eagles¹¹³. Although the park almost burst from all the people, it was completely silent, until the beautiful *marcha* ‘*Martirio*’ set in. This last procession would continue all night, entering San Felipe at 6.00 in the morning.

Sábado de Gloria

On Saturday the ambiance of Antigua changes completely. Although *Viernes Santo* commemorates the death of Jesus, it is more festive in the sense that all the expectation culminates on this day: the processions, the *alfombras* and the sharing of lunch in many families. As Enrique Berduo¹¹⁴ explained: ‘on Saturday Antigua dies. One can feel an atmosphere of nostalgia, almost depression’. The end of Friday means the separation of

¹¹² Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This text implies the close relation between God and his son, to the point of the interchanging of names. The death of Christ shows the infinite love of God for the world, opening the ‘new life’ for man. The *anda* was decorated with golden details and three sculptures of angels in front and at the back. Behind the coffin an imperial crown symbolized Jesus as the king of kings and the three sculptures the holy trinity.

¹¹³ The text on the *anda* read: ‘*Señor, no te dejes a mí*’ (Lord, do not abandon me).

¹¹⁴ Interview, 17-03-2017.

families another time, accompanied by a feeling of sadness: it will take one year to return together.

While the men store away their tunics, conserving the aroma of the *incienso* as if it were a relic, the women prepare themselves for the procession on *Sábado de Gloria*. Since Jesus has died, a mourning procession solely consisting of women (all dressed in black) takes place. Both *Escuela de Cristo*¹¹⁵ and San Felipe¹¹⁶ organize a procession with only one *anda* with the icon of Mary.

Since the men thus are not allowed to carry, they now participate with the *incienso*, which means that an incredible row of men dispersing smoke precede the processions. When the procession of San Felipe arrived in the central park, a mystical atmosphere was created: a curtain of white smoke filled the dark air, where the lighted *anda* passed through.

Domingo de Resurrección

Domingo de Resurrección commemorates the victory over death of Jesus Christ and thereby the redemption of sins of mankind. *Sábado de Gloria* ends with services in several churches and the sound of the church bells is the announcement of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. On this moment the solemn character, typical of Semana Santa in Antigua, ends as well. *Domingo de Resurrección* namely, is characterized by a festive ambiance¹¹⁷, with very small single *andas*, carried by both men and women in casual clothes. Moreover, one is surprised all day by the many firework bombs that precede the processions. Most noticeably, the music changes completely: the style of the *marchas funebres* is replaced by a faster and happier style. The *cucuruchos* almost dance with the *anda* on the rhythm.

Although liturgically spoken the resurrection concerns the most important commemoration, the public tradition is almost not celebrated. The squares are empty and only a handful of spectators watch the processions. Many people already have left since they have to work on Monday, but the main reason for this change concerns the recent history of the civil war, which atrocities people bear in mind, forever defined by these memories. Therefore they can better identify their pain with the solemnity of the processions than with the festivity on this last Sunday of Semana Santa.

¹¹⁵ The text on the *anda* read: ‘*Dolor, Consuelo y Alegría*’ (pain, consolation and joy).

¹¹⁶ A third one is organized by the cathedral. However, this procession is very small.

¹¹⁷ The procession for example is more chaotic, without *filas*, and many people walk beside the *anda*. Groups of people sing, make music and dance.

Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs the variety of activities, the magnitude and the importance of this time have been demonstrated. The events during Cuaresma and Semana Santa were described: *Miercoles de Ceniza*, *via crucis*, child activities, *velaciones*, services, concerts, the *acto de Traslado y Unición*, and, most importantly, the twelve to nineteen hours processions, which concern the main expression of this time. The processional elements have been outlined, such as the Bible-referring, evangelizing, decorated *andas* with the icon of Jesus or Mary, the *tsijolaj* and *tambor*, the Romans, the *pasos*, the people who incense, the *filas* and the *banda*. The *andas* are carried by the *cucuruchos* in their purple or black-white clothes, according to their *turno* and *brazo*. On each street corner the carriers are alternated with new *cucuruchos*. The devotional essence of a procession concerns an *acercamiento* to God. Furthermore, the days of Semana Santa, which coincide with the meaning of the processions, were illustrated. *Viernes Santo* is the central processional day. Important moments are the *entrada's* and *salida's* and next to the processions activities as *sagrario's*, rituals and the *sentencia* take place. Besides mere description, the atmosphere of the most important moments has been delineated in order to provide the context in which experiences are formed and in which the music is performed.

Chapter four: The music of Cuaresma and Semana Santa

“It is something in our blood, something to make life”

A large group of musicians, their copper instruments shining in the sun, approaches. In the distance the cradling icon of Jesus on the *anda* can still be seen. The timpanist starts to drum. The conductor waves his baton and counts to four. Suddenly a forceful wave of heavy sounds overflows me. The music draws into me, trembles in me, and I have to take a deep breath. For the first time in my life I hear a *marcha fúnebre* and an unexplainable feeling of meaning takes possession of me.

At this moment I realized that exactly this was the reason of my research, to investigate the meaning of this sound, in this context. As Blacking (1969, 57) argues, the true meaning of music will never be achieved when detached from the musical and cultural context. After having described the cultural context of the time and events of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, the musical context therefore will be touched upon in this chapter. According to the discipline of ethnomusicology, three interrelated fields will be analyzed: the musical style, the function of music (and its performers), and the intrinsic value of music pieces (Blacking 1969, 33). After presenting a short history of this type of music, the style of the *marcha fúnebre* is explained. The organization of the *banda* will be made clear, together with their musical role within the processions. Finally, the musicians and conductors are introduced and the meaning of the music in their lives is illustrated.

The history of *marcha fúnebre*

The style of the *música sacra* originated in Europe in the form of the ‘requiem’, meant to be played by a classical orchestra. In the 18th century the *marcha fúnebre* was developed in Spain. It diffused to other countries where mayor composers formed their own musical identity within this sentimental genre, developing national immaterial heritage. During the colonial time the *marcha fúnebre* was brought to Guatemala as well where Guatemalan composers started to invent their own melodies¹¹⁸, although the origin connects all *marchas* by their typical rhythm. After the introduction of this style in Guatemala, Guatemalan composers started to write *marchas* meant for marching bands and thereby for different instruments.

The processional music in the form of a *banda* which accompanies a procession was introduced in the beginning of the 20th century in Guatemala, to give the procession a more

¹¹⁸ Nowadays no one knows exactly how many *marchas* exist, but they definitely form part of the Guatemalan musical patrimony (*La Reseña*, 2015, 15th edition, page 59).

solemn sound and ambiance. In the early years a *banda* merely consisted of twenty musicians, while nowadays a mayor procession is accompanied by a sixty to hundred headed *banda*¹¹⁹.

The *marcha fúnebre* is a musical expression typical of Cuaresma and Semana Santa in Guatemala and one of the principal manifestations of the Guatemalan popular Catholic religion. Although every *marcha* has its own title, history and inspiration, distinct elements structure the style, which will be the subject of the next paragraph¹²⁰.

The style of *marcha fúnebre*

The word *fúnebre* corresponds to ‘funeral’, which directly delineates the style of the music. Through the frequent use of minor scales a melancholic and mournful effect is achieved, connected to the Pasion and Death of Jesus Christ. A *marcha* generally is divided into three parts, all with a beginning and end¹²¹. After the introduction the principal melody initiates the first part in minor scale. In the second part the music reaches its maximum, with the majority of instruments playing unison, described by conductor Hector Gomez¹²² as ‘the best quality, the most strident possible’. An intermediate part makes the transition to the third part, which is the most sentimental, the most serene, the most sublime and the most important part: ‘when the third part is bad, it breaks everything’¹²³. The *marcha* is counted in four (*cuadratura*) and the most common used scheme consists of eight bars in each section¹²⁴.

The *marchas* in Guatemala have an own unique character, just as Spanish or Italian *marchas*, according to Hector Gomez¹²⁵: ‘every *marcha* is different and every *marcha* is special’. Besides that, the style depends on the composer and the time in which it was written. However, how is a *marcha* to be recognized? The style of the *marchas* is characterized by the rhythm and described as solemn, beautiful, slow and spiritual¹²⁶. Moreover, a *marcha* is executed by a *banda* that solely consists of wind instruments and

¹¹⁹ Enrique Berduo, interview, 06-04-2017, Saúl Siquibache, interview, 05-04-2017.

¹²⁰ Gerardo & Ortiz 2007, 5-7. For more information about the chronology of the *marchas* in Guatemala from 1916 to 2006, about biographies of some mayor composers and about the history of important *marchas*, see the book: ‘*dias de muerte y gloria: las Marchas Fúnebres Cuaresmales*’, by Luis Gerardo and Ramírez Ortiz (first edition 2001, second edition 2007).

¹²¹ It resembles a grand overture, also divided into different movements. A *marcha* is like a compact version.

¹²² Interview, 21-03-2017.

¹²³ Hector Gomez, interview, 21-03-2017.

¹²⁴ Naturally many *marchas* exist which are not composed of three parts consisting of eight bars.

¹²⁵ Conductor, interview, 21-03-2017. In Spain for example, some other instruments are used and the *marchas* have a more marching character. Therefore the order of the *banda* is stricter (military-like), whereas a Guatemalan *banda* is organized according to an instrumental order, but the exact order of musicians does not matter. Moreover, the Italian and Spanish *marchas* are counted in two instead of four (Guillermo Mendizábal, interview, 11-03-2017).

¹²⁶ Eddy Diaz, interview, 07-03-2017, Victor Valle, interview, 12-03-2017, Kevin Mendosa, interview, 16-03-2017.

percussion¹²⁷.

The *banda* is headed by the *timbales* (timpani)¹²⁸. In general, the percussion indicates the rhythm and brings the strongest base sounds. A timpanist¹²⁹ described the timpani as ‘‘the fathers of the percussion’’, because it fills the whole sound. In the first row in front of the conductor, the piccolo¹³⁰, a small traverse flute with a high pitch, plays the counter melody. Especially on moments when the melody itself has not much activity, the piccolo expresses its speed, clearness and virtuosity: ‘‘it is like a birds song, it gives the taste to the music’’¹³¹. A special instrument to be seen in the front row is the *lira*¹³², which looks like a portable, vertical xylophone. It plays the principal melody, the part to which the *marcha* is recognized. The high sound of the *lira* fills the silences and reinforces the other instruments. The rest of the first rows are occupied by many clarinets who, together with the trumpets in the rows behind, form the largest instrumental group. The clarinets and trumpets¹³³ play the melody. In the back of the *banda* the sounds of the *euphonium* and trombone can be heard. These instruments support the melody, play counter melodies and mainly function as the harmony. Consequently, three types of percussion form the one but last instrumental group: *bombo*, *platos* and *redoblante*, the bass drum, cymbals¹³⁴ and regular drum. The *banda* is closed by the *sousaphones*, the largest, lowest and heaviest instruments (which have to be carried around for around 12 hours). Its function is the base force¹³⁵. Moreover, each instrumental group consists of a first and second voice (and sometimes third and fourth). For example, the melodic first voice can be supported by a second voice in the same register, resulting in a more beautiful sound. The instrumental order of the *banda* is based on the practical reason to hear each other well and on the aesthetic reason to get the best sound¹³⁶.

¹²⁷ These instruments are used since they bring the strongest sounds, which is necessary when marching on the streets. Moreover, they are easier to walk with. In previous times and also in other countries like Spain, Italy and Germany, saxophones, hobo and bassoon were/are used as well (Hector Gomez, interview, 21-03-2017) .

¹²⁸ Before the seventies, the timpani were carried the whole procession! Nowadays it is pulled forwards on a construction with two wheels.

¹²⁹ Informal conversation, 07-04-2017.

¹³⁰ Generally one or two piccolo’s are used, depending on the size of the *banda* (25/1, 45/2, 70/4).

¹³¹ Saúl Siquibache, interview, 05-04-2017.

¹³² Hector Gomez (interview, 21-03-2017) explained that he prefers only one *lira* in his *banda*, because of the extent of resounding of the *lira*, which will never be identical to a second *lira*. Moreover, as Rafael (interview, 07-04-2017) explained, not many people play the *lira* and *lira*’s differ in their sound depending on the material.

¹³³ The trumpets bring the power to the melody because the sound stands out.

¹³⁴ As Eddy Diaz (interview, 07-03-2017) explained, when playing cymbals you have to concentrate well, since the cymbals can be heard best!

¹³⁵ Within these general instrumental functions, changes can takes place and every instrument can play the melody at one point.

¹³⁶ Informal conversations, 08-04-2017, Hector Gomez, interview, 21-03-2017, Saúl Siquibache, interview, 05-04-2017, Eddy Diaz, interview, 07-03-2017, Guillermo Mendizábal, interview, 11-03-2017, Rafael, interview, 07-04-2017.

Many people love the style of *música sacra*¹³⁷. As *cucurucho* and *hermandad* member Gabriël Vides¹³⁸ explained: “there are many different *marchas*, but every *marcha* has a special meaning for the person who wrote it. To us the *marchas* are very important”.

Marchas arouse feelings and are intrinsically connected to the time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa: a procession without music would not be the same. Most importantly, everyone has his favorite *marchas*, which are related to memories. Marco Marinelli¹³⁹, who is teased by his friends because he listens *marchas* the whole year, described that he is mentally immediately transported to the time of Cuaresma when hearing a *marcha*: “I have been a *cucurucho* all my life. It is beautiful to be able to remember specific moments when listening a *marcha*”.

Walter Monge¹⁴⁰ for example, is through certain *marchas* reminded of the death of his father or the first time he made an *alfombra* with his cousins. Musician Rafael¹⁴¹, when listening the official *marcha* of San Bartolomé, thinks of his mother because she taught him everything about this icon and she is the reason of him being where he is now. These favorite *marchas* therefore evoke emotions as well. For conductor Saúl Siquibache¹⁴² an important *marcha* is the *marcha* that reminds him of the decision to become a conductor. And when Enrique Berduo¹⁴³ listens to a specific *marcha*, the exact place of the procession, its decoration, the icon and the atmosphere of that time come to mind. In this way music can be seen as diverse forms of communication, as Blacking (1969, 42-52) proposed. Music, in relation to cultural experience in a social context, stimulates physical states and heightens emotions. The act of carrying together with other *cucuruchos* and the evocation of emotions are strengthened by the *marchas*, which refer to memories and are played within the cultural, religious and social context of the holy processions. The *marchas* may even express consciousness of experience without a relation to this context, for example when *cucuruchos* hear a specific *marcha* at another time of the year, which evokes memories and past experiences in them.

Everyone thus has his own taste and favorite *marchas*, which besides memories are connected to official *marchas* and icons: every church has an official *marcha*, for both the icon of Jesus and Mary, which is played during the *entrada* and *salida* of that church’ procession and in front of the cathedral. See appendix 6 for the list of churches and their

¹³⁷ When the phone of one of the members of the *hermandad La Merced* rang, I heard his ringtone was a *marcha fúnebre*.

¹³⁸ Interview, 19-03-2017.

¹³⁹ Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

¹⁴⁰ *Colaborador* at the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

¹⁴¹ interview, 07-04-2017.

¹⁴² Interview, 05-04-2017.

¹⁴³ Interview, 06-04-2017.

official *marchas*. For many members of *hermandades* or other people devote to a certain church, the official *marcha* of that church evokes a special feeling, often associated with memories while carrying: ‘when the *marcha* of Chopin is played and the *anda* is lifted in the church, it is such a strong moment. It touches me and makes me cry’, as Marco Marinelli¹⁴⁴ explained. Furthermore, many *marchas* are dedicated to an icon. A *marcha* therefore can have a special meaning because it touches the devotion one feels towards this icon¹⁴⁵. In addition, the style and meaning of a *marcha* can be the reason of preference. For Hector Gomez, as a conductor and composer, a *marcha* needs to be well written and most importantly, needs to have a ‘because’, a reason: ‘it has to reach the heart’¹⁴⁶. Hence *marchas* are connected to (family) traditions, icons, churches and memories and therefore evoke feelings.

The organization and role of the *banda*

‘it is a musical ingredient to continue the rise of the traditions of Semana Santa’

The organization of the music is one of the most expensive parts. One commission of the *hermandad* contracts a conductor¹⁴⁷ and compiles the program of *marchas*¹⁴⁸ that have to be played. The conductor in turn contracts his musicians. Often he has his core *banda*, to which encountered good musicians occasionally are added. Sometimes musicians ask if they can be part of the *banda* and an audition¹⁴⁹ is held. Generally a *banda* consists of approximately 45 musicians. However, for mayor procession sixty to hundred can be demanded, in which case additional musicians need to complement. Apart from this a conductor has many other tasks concerning the preparation: organization of the music papers for all the instrumental groups; presentation; communication and logistics with the *hermandad*; transport of the instruments; payment of musicians; and the election of the *marchas* for each street. The latter means that since in every street, during every turn, another *marcha* is played, the length of the street needs to coincide with the length of the *marcha*. In general the duration of a *cuadra* (street/block) is eight to ten minutes. The possible time in between the end of the *marcha* and the end of the street is filled by the pace of the *redoblante*.

Besides preparation the execution during the procession brings many challenges. For

¹⁴⁴ Member of the *Hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

¹⁴⁵ Especially combined with seeing the face and gaze of the icon.

¹⁴⁶ Hector Gomez, interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁴⁷ He is chosen for his quality and responsibility, because the music is one of the important parts that attracts people.

¹⁴⁸ Several people who know almost all *marchas* choose the program, based on an estimation which *marchas* will arouse feelings in people. Often these are the most traditional *marchas*, connected to sentiments and faith towards icons. Moreover, the commission tries to coincide the identity of a procession with the elected *marchas*.

¹⁴⁹ An audition based on first look: they have never seen the music piece before.

example, all musicians know at least 25 *marchas* by heart, since when it rains they cannot use the papers. In this situation the instruments like the clarinet have to be protected¹⁵⁰.

Furthermore, the *banda* needs to be strictly directed (for example if a musician can leave to the bathroom) to keep the discipline, and unexpected problems have to be solved. A *banda* thus concerns much work with much responsibility towards the musicians and *hermandad*.

Normally a *banda* never practices together, since the diversity of musicians who come from different places does not allow this. Therefore the musicians need to rehearse themselves and need to be able to read the scores well, since they only play together during their two core activities: concerts and processions.

In the first place the [role of the *banda*](#) to play the *marchas fúnebres* in the processions contributes to the solemn character: the gentle rhythm and cradling movement. In the second place the music supports the message of the procession, since the name and melody of *marchas* refer to the life of Jesus Christ, thereby expressing religiosity. The *marcha*, dedicated to a certain icon, therefore concerns a method of evangelization. In the third place the music is one of the complements to connect people with the procession, as conductor Hector Gomez¹⁵¹ described: ‘‘the primordial function is aimed at a stronger feeling of closeness of the devotees towards that unique moment. This *acercamiento* happens through the opening of the senses’’. ‘Doing’ religion produces perceptions and sensations (Segal 2015), and the unique moment of carrying means that the senses are opened. This function of opening and *acercamiento* is achieved more intensely by a good performance of the music, which via sounds and non-perceived vibrations reaches the development of sentiments. Hence the role of the music is the *acercamiento* to the religious activity, the contact with the divine. It enlarges the space where this can be experienced, it improves the relation between this experience and the icon (which in its own way is a complement) and it makes the increase of this experience possible. The music breaks the purely physical and transcends the mind, heart and spirit. As Victor Valle¹⁵² described: ‘‘the *marchas* therefore connect the material with the divine. It is an instrument to bring people in a more spiritual feeling’’. A link between the material aspects (processional parts, *marchas*) and the spiritual (*acercamiento*) (McGuire 2008, 13) is thus achieved through the practices of carrying in the processions and listening to the music. The spiritual feeling concerns the last and most important role of the *música sacra*. It is an instrument to transmit sensations, causing reflection and identification: ‘‘music is the

¹⁵⁰ Sometimes it can be very cold as well, which is also not a good circumstance for the instruments.

¹⁵¹ Interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁵² Secretary of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 12-03-2017.

best instrument of transmission in the world. You and I do not see Jesus. But we know he exists. Through rituals, worship, processions, but most of all, through music’’¹⁵³.

Musicians and conductors

Musicians who form part of a *banda* generally come from different places, are mostly men (although recently a few *bandas* welcome women as well) and form a diverse group with respect to age, profession and background¹⁵⁴. The musicians all need to have a certain professional level¹⁵⁵, which does not mean that they have to be musicians as profession. However, they have studied many years¹⁵⁶ and apart from the level itself, they need to be processional musicians. This means that the musicians need and hence be able to walk and play at the same time for hours, enduring the sun, hunger, tiredness, cold and unexpected problems. Furthermore, the technique of the mouth and lips needs to persist a long time. Musicians need to know many *marchas* by heart and are able to play all the voices within the register. A processional musician thus has a high responsibility and needs to be sufficiently professional to play music in any circumstance, stated by Hector Gomez¹⁵⁷: ‘‘a musician always has to do his job’’.

To become a musician one has to like it, ‘‘to live the music’’¹⁵⁸, and to study. This already can start with children¹⁵⁹, who receive classes and go through the process of learning an instrument¹⁶⁰. Musician Kevin Mendosa¹⁶¹ remembers that he first had to study the technique of the *bocadilla*¹⁶², the forming of the lips and mouth (which is slightly different for

¹⁵³ Gabriël Vides (treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*), interview, 19-03-2017. This connects with what Rice (2014, 76) argued: music has the ability to move people emotionally and thus has often been regarded as the most directly emotional of the arts.

¹⁵⁴ And sometimes even different religions. However, this doesn’t matter, as Guillermo Mendizábal (interview, 11-03-2017) explained: ‘‘we are all one’’.

¹⁵⁵ This level depends on the requirements and quality of the *banda*. I have spoken with conductors and members of *bandas* which all have a relatively high standard.

¹⁵⁶ This can be in a conservatory but at home as well.

¹⁵⁷ Conductor, interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁵⁸ Saúl Siquibache (conductor), interview, 05-04-2017.

¹⁵⁹ Although some musicians have started very late and have learned auto-didactically.

¹⁶⁰ Guillermo Mendizábal, music teacher and conductor of a *banda*, wrote a music book for children, which shows the process of learning well. The book is called ‘*La Música, el Lenguaje Universal*’ (music, the universal language). In the introduction music is described as one of the most sublime manifestations of mankind, a means to express an infinity of feelings. First the note bars and keys are explained, after which the notes and rest signs are presented through images of a recorder. The book contains texts as well, about the national anthem of Guatemala (with information about the authors Rafaél Alvarez Ovalle and José Joaquín Palma), about national symbols such as the flag, Quetzal and marimba, about certain songs and about the instruments in an symphonic orchestra. In between the different parts, many note bars are drawn providing space to practice.

¹⁶¹ Interview, 16-03-2017.

¹⁶² Another technique concerns *diagrama*, which is about the way of breathing and tensing the stomach muscles. Every musician needs this technique in order to prevent stomach and back pain (informal conversation, 08-04-2017).

each wind instrument). His parents and grandfather bought him a trumpet and he started to learn the notes, scales and reading of scores. Finally he was taught different rhythms and types of music. Currently he is improving and studying many hours a week to realize his dream of becoming a permanent member of a *banda*.

The reason for many musicians to play in a *banda* is because they like the *música sacra*. They enjoy transmitting sentiments to other people and feel good themselves¹⁶³. For others playing in a *banda* concerns the realization of a dream they had since they were young. As musician Rafael¹⁶⁴ told me, he and his mother watched the processions since he was a child. He always walked in the back, to listen to the *marchas*: "I would carry and immediately return to the last part of the procession, thinking it would be beautiful to be in the *banda*". Currently he already plays eleven years and especially while playing in the procession of San Bartolomé for the icon to which his mother taught him to have devotion, he has the beautiful feeling of realizing a dream. Kevin Mendosa¹⁶⁵ as well has the dream of being part of a music group, a dream which he tries to accomplish at this moment. He fell in love with the *marchas* and decided that being a processional musician was what he wanted: "gracias a dios I can be where I want to be, playing the trumpet for Him".

The musicians carefully chose their instruments when they started playing, mostly because of subconscious ideas about the beauty of the instrument and the musical role within the *banda*. Their instruments mean a lot to them. For Rafael¹⁶⁶ his *lira* is the instrument through which he transmits his feelings. Depending on his mood, the *marcha* sounds different: "the *lira* identifies me". Musician Eddy Diaz¹⁶⁷ not even sees his instrument as an object: "it is like someone who is very important to me".

Each *banda* has a conductor¹⁶⁸, who has an important role. A conductor has to handle the baton well, looks at the musicians¹⁶⁹, directs the instrumental groups and indicates the rhythm and possible repetitions: "one has to have complete knowledge about every instrument. It is about seeing, hearing, knowing and conducting",¹⁷⁰. As Hector Gomez¹⁷¹ explains, the ultimate goal of the conductor is to express the sentiment and meaning of the

¹⁶³ I only talked to musicians who say they are musicians because they love the music. However, they all acknowledge the fact that many musicians play in *bandas* for economic reasons.

¹⁶⁴ Interview, 07-04-2017.

¹⁶⁵ Interview, 16-03-2017.

¹⁶⁶ Interview, 07-04-2017.

¹⁶⁷ Interview, 07-03-2017.

¹⁶⁸ Although when the *banda* is small and has a lower level, the conductor is absent and plays within the *banda*.

¹⁶⁹ Conductor Guillermo Mendizábal doesn't even need scores and therefore constantly looks at his musicians.

¹⁷⁰ Guillermo Mendizábal, interview, 11-03-2017.

¹⁷¹ Interview, 21-03-2017.

marchas to the *banda*, in order that a transmission of this meaning through the *banda* to the public is established. It concerns a process whereby first the conductor has to experience the music, after which a projection takes place, with the maximum effect of goosebumps throughout the whole body¹⁷². Several factors have to be taken into account to achieve this goal. A conductor needs to study and analyze the music pieces to be able to feel and express it. Furthermore, while conducting the energy level has to be and stay high since a reflection of tiredness projects this tiredness on the music¹⁷³. Lastly a conductor is a psychologist too, noticing needs and circumstances of the *banda*, helping the musicians and guarding the personal harmony, as expressed Hector Gomez¹⁷⁴: ‘we are a team. Without musicians I have nothing’.

Many conductors are composers too¹⁷⁵. To make a composition one needs to understand the instruments and divide their voices. The inspiration for a *marcha* often is based on an experience, memory or icon. At any moment and any place the idea for a composition can come to mind; fast moments which do not happen always and have to be used: ‘in those moments I hear everything in my mind’¹⁷⁶. The second way to make a music piece is to force the mind to create something. Depending on these moments of inspiration the time to compose ranges from twelve hours to six months. The ingredients for a good composition are faith, conviction, honesty, love for one’s job and the reflection of feeling, which causes emotion.

To become a conductor and composer one has to study many years. Styles of music, compositions and the art of directing all have to be learned at a conservatory. Often a conductor has started as a musician, like the three conductors I spoke to.

Saúl Siquibache¹⁷⁷ already had the dream of becoming a conductor when he was five years old. Formed as player of the piccolo he sometimes took the baton in order that the conductor could rest. Now he sometimes puts away the baton and plays the piccolo, because he loves the bird sound of this instrument. Today he has his own *banda*, integrated solely by young musicians from sixteen to thirty years old, based on his vision that they are the future in *música sacra*. For Guillermo Mendizábal¹⁷⁸ the piccolo is his favorite instrument as well because it has the most adorned function.

¹⁷² Only then the music can live, because when the conductor feels nothing, absolutely nothing will happen (Hector Gomez (conductor), interview, 21-03-2017).

¹⁷³ And when the energy diminishes, one has to eat or drink something.

¹⁷⁴ Conductor, interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁷⁵ And often they work as music teachers.

¹⁷⁶ Hector Gomez, interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁷⁷ Interview, 05-04-2017.

¹⁷⁸ Interview, 11-03-2017.

However, being a musician or conductor was not much like a dream but more an obligation. His father was a musician and director and Guillermo Mendizábal played in his *banda* from his thirteenth. He took over the position of conductor when his father suddenly died, not knowing that he would continue for 32 years until today. His *banda* is one of the largest *bandas* and one of the few that incorporates children and women. Hector Gomez¹⁷⁹, fascinated by the *banda* while participating as *cucurucho* in the processions, started to play when he was nine years old. After his study a member of the *hermandad La Merced* believed in him and there, eleven years ago, he started as conductor. Currently his *banda* consists of 45 musicians¹⁸⁰, who have been working with him for many years. It is the most hired *banda* during Cuaresma and Semana Santa. Accompanying one procession in the capital, three during Cuaresma in Antigua (Santa Catarina de Bombadilla, Santa Ana and San Bartolomé) and the five biggest during Semana Santa (*San Francisco*, two of *La Merced* and two of *San Felipe*) the amount of processional hours during many subsequent days is incomprehensible.

For the musicians and conductors the *música sacra* has an important meaning. It makes them feel good, it is a form of expression, it identifies them with Cuaresma and it evokes memories: ‘any *marcha* marks any person’¹⁸¹. *Música sacra* is the sacred of God and musicians live the music. For some the meaning of this music is almost indescribable, to the point of their life passion.

When I was sitting at the table in the small house of conductor Guillermo Mendizábal¹⁸², he told me he had diabetes. He showed me his leg, in which a large wound had become visible: ‘it is very dangerous. When I cannot be cured, my leg has to be amputated. From the outside I am happy, but from the inside sad. Only God, you and I know about my leg. It is very hard’. The next day he had to walk in an eleven hour procession, without being able to stop or exit the procession for a moment, not even for the bathroom. I asked him how this was possible: ‘because I love it! I am happy! With my pain but happy. The music strengthens me, I feel nothing when I am conducting and I forget everything’. For Guillermo Mendizábal the *música sacra* is hundred percent connected to his catholic faith and he calls himself ‘the number one catholic’. He listens 365 days a year to *marchas fúnebres*, because it helps him to relax. He is grateful that God still gives him the strength to conduct in the processions, since he loves the music more than anything. Laughing he whispered to me: ‘yo le quiero más a la música que a mi esposa’ (I love the music more than my own wife).

¹⁷⁹ Interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁸⁰ This is the fundament, consisting of seven clarinets, nine trumpets, eight tenors, four trombones, seven sousaphones, three *bombo* 's, two *platos*, one *redoblante*, one timpani, one lira and one piccolo. Depending on the demands of the *hermandad* less or more musicians can be demanded, to the point of seventy, in which case extra musicians have to be asked.

¹⁸¹ Rafael, interview, 07-04-2017.

¹⁸² Interview, 11-03-2017.

For conductor Hector Gomez¹⁸³ *música sacra* is the genre on which he can reflect his inspirations, his dreams and his feelings. The music causes emotion and relaxation in him and he realizes his gratefulness for the knowledge he has about this music¹⁸⁴. Hector Gomez believes that although mankind creates limits, the beautiful world of music itself does not have them and this inspires him every day: ‘I live with music from when I wake up until I go to sleep. To me *música sacra* means my whole life’.

Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs the musical context of the *música sacra* has been presented, based on the field of ethnomusicology that focuses on the musical style, the function of music and the value of music (Blacking 1969). After a short history about the *marchas fúnebres*, the style has been explained, delineating the structure, sound and meaning of the *marchas*, as well as the instruments that play it. The style is characterized by minor scales, the *cuadratura*, a solemn rhythm and a mournful, heavy, melancholic sound. The *marchas* are important for the *Antigüenos*, because the music is associated with the time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. Everyone has his favorite *marchas*, related to (family-)memories or a specific church, which arouse feelings. The *bandas* that perform the *marchas* consist of percussion and wind instruments, each with their voice, musical order and role: the *timpani*, *bombos*, *redoblante*, *platos*, *lira*, *piccolo*, *clarinets*, *trumpets*, *euphoniums*, *trombones* and *sousaphones*. Consequently the organization of the music has been described and the musicians and conductors were represented by illustrating their level, education, capabilities and motivation, whereby the importance of *música sacra* in their lives has been demonstrated. The conductor (who often is a composer too), contracted by a *hermandad*, contracts his musicians and performs many preparation and execution tasks. His role is to project the sentiment of the *marcha* through the *banda* to the public. During a procession the *banda* plays one *marcha* each street and in between the end of the *marcha* and the new *cucuruchos*, the sound of the *marcadores de paso* takes over. The *banda* is a diverse group of processional musicians, capable of enduring the hard physical circumstances, often having wanted to become a musician since they were young. The function of the music consists of providing the solemn character of a procession, with the optical effect of Jesus walking with the cross and a facilitation of advancement for the *cucuruchos*. Moreover, the music supports the

¹⁸³ Interview, 21-03-2017.

¹⁸⁴ Although he would have loved to have been able to talk with the world's greatest conductors.

evangelizing message, transmits feelings (causing reflection and identification) and is aimed at *acercamiento* towards the religious activity and the communication with God.

Chapter five: Participation in the processions during Cuaresma and Semana Santa

‘‘At the moment one starts to participate in the procession, everything becomes a mixture. It is something unbelievable. Smelling the *incienso*, hearing the *marchas*, seeing the icon, the decoration, the *alfombras*. All senses unite on the moment of carrying’’¹⁸⁵.

The experience of *cucuruchos* is defined by many sensorial elements. This chapter describes the essence and purpose of these elements, whereby one of these elements concerns the *música sacra*. In the light of the research question in which the music is placed at the central stage, chapter four has been devoted to the *marchas fúnebres*. Chapter five portrays the experiences and feelings of both *cucuruchos* and musicians. Since the experience is intrinsically connected to the senses and since music is part of this sensorial experience, this chapter concerns the last step for understanding the meaning of music within this experience.

Sensorial aspects of the processions

The characteristics of the processions in Semana Santa match the recent shift in scholarly literature towards a definition of religion in terms of materiality and experience (lived and material religion), which emphasizes the importance of objects, practices, emotions and senses (in Bowie 2005, in Meyer 2012, Tieleman 2011). Semana Santa concerns a religious expression based on experiential and material aspects. However, although this distinction is made in the literature, it is not recognized as such by participants of Semana Santa in Antigua. The material aspects form the fundament of the experience based on the senses, aspects which therefore are not seen as material but as sensorial. Accordingly, I follow the point of view of the participants, although an analytical distinction will be maintained.

Imagen

The focal point of a procession concerns the *imagen* (icon) carried on *andas*. The faith for an icon is the most important aspect for a *cucurucho*. The icon serves as an instrument of veneration¹⁸⁶, through which contact with God is established. Devotion towards an icon is based on this process and means the belief of reaching God through this icon.

Many people feel devotion towards a certain icon¹⁸⁷, based on family traditions, the icon itself or life experiences, which is often the reason of participating in specific

¹⁸⁵ Marco Marinelli, interview, 22-03-2017.

¹⁸⁶ This is an important point of nuance, since the icon itself is not worshipped.

¹⁸⁷ The meaning and specialness of icons could also be seen well during the preparation night of the *velación* in *La Merced*, when Victor Valle touched the icon gently, as if it were a person he cared about a lot.

processions. An important factor concerns the face or gaze of the icon, described by Gabriël Vides¹⁸⁸: ‘‘the eyes of icons will make you understand love, suffering, pain, happiness, solace, light and peace’’. The icon of San Bartolomé for example, expresses solace, which makes one feel sorry, meanwhile the world famous icon of the *Jesús Nazareno* of *La Merced*¹⁸⁹ pervades one with his suffering, accusatory gaze¹⁹⁰. The faces of icons therefore evoke emotions and make a connection with the personal: ‘‘it is the feeling of the eyes as a mirror of the soul’’¹⁹¹. Besides the icon itself, devotion can be based on life experiences¹⁹², as happened to Marcel Chavez¹⁹³:

‘‘five years ago I had an accident. Only God knew if I would live. The one who came to my mind was the *Jesús* of *La Merced*. From that day I serve him’’.

Furthermore, an icon can have a family meaning, because family members have/had an important function within a *hermandad*, family memories are connected to icons or homes are/were located near a certain church. The connection with an icon can be so strong that during a procession people can be heard who talk to the icons, confessing and asking for forgiveness.

Many icons carry the past participle of *consagrada* (consecrated), which indicates a symbol of exceptional devotion towards an icon, recognized by a bishop¹⁹⁴. These icons must have performed a certain amount of miracles and often are ancient and venerable. Moreover, there are four different kind of icons. The first is the *Jesús Nazareno*, Jesus walking with the cross. The second is the *Jesús Sepultado*, Jesus passed away. The third is the *María Dolorosa*, the grievous virgin, recognized by her open hands. The last is the *María de Soledad*, with interlaced fingers, expressing solitude after the death of her son¹⁹⁵. See appendix 7 for an overview of churches and their icons.

¹⁸⁸ Treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

¹⁸⁹ This icon is the first image one sees when arriving at the airport of Guatemala. Its *mirada* (gaze) is so famous because of the eyes. The icon transcends being a piece of art and has become part of families of *Antiguenos* and their religiosity (*La Reseña*, 2015, 15th edition, page 21).

¹⁹⁰ This gaze is the reason of popularity and is achieved by the eyes looking sideways. The icons of Mary have the same effect. The *María Santísima de la Soledad* of *Escuela de Cristo* looks gently, as a silent cry. This virgin Mary has a great impact on men, who think of their mothers whom they made cry. They ask for forgiveness.

¹⁹¹ Enrique Berduo, interview, 06-04-2017.

¹⁹² Kevin Mendosa (interview, 16-03-2017) knows that everything has been made possible for him by the same icon, which explains his faith to this *Jesús Nazareno* and his wish to play for Him as a musician.

¹⁹³ Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

¹⁹⁴ During a service a cross of oil is applied on the forehead, hands and feet of the icon (and after death as well on the flank. Often a golden cross is put on those places later.

¹⁹⁵ Sometimes Mary is depicted as a young woman, sometimes older. A sword or knife in the chest is to be seen, just as the twelve stars around her head. The *dolorosa* wears blue or red, the *soledad* white or black (exhibition in museum *Sor Juana*).

Túnica

The *túnica* concerns the tunic the icon wears. These tunics are expensive¹⁹⁶ because of the heavy fabric and antiquity, and often are gifts from wealthy families to the *hermandades*. The *hermandad La Merced* for example, has many tunics, exposed in wooden and glass cases next to the office in the convent.

The tunic of the icon is chosen and changed for important ecclesial activities, including the processions of Semana Santa: the tunic forms part of both the meaning and aesthetics of the procession and the surprise of how the icon is dressed forms part of the expectation of the holy days. The change of tunic concerns an intimate moment and is carried out in private by members of the *hermandad*. See appendix 8 for a description of various tunics.

Adorno

Connected to the icon is the *adorno*, the decoration of the *anda*. Every procession has a different decoration each year which centers around a certain meaning, based on a passage in the life of Christ¹⁹⁷. The purpose of the *adorno* is evangelization¹⁹⁸ and education of the public. The expression of a Biblical message is a way to show the love of Jesus and enables *acercamiento* and the evocation of sentiments as well. In this way the goal of an internal process of repentance is achieved.

A commission of the *hermandad* chooses the design for the *adorno* from several ideas made by groups of artists. Aspects which are taken into account are: colors, material, meaning, size, height and weight¹⁹⁹. The *adorno* that expresses the meaning in an easy to understand and beautiful way, thereby being the best evangelizer, is chosen²⁰⁰.

In turn the making of the *adorno* is assigned to a group of artists. Miguel Ruiz²⁰¹, member of such a group which made both the *adorno* for the procession of Jojotenango and San Felipe (on *Viernes Santo*, more than eighteen meters) told me about this process.

¹⁹⁶ The price can be 40 000/ 50 000 Quetzals.

¹⁹⁷ The descriptions of the processions during Cuaresma and Semana Santa in 2017 contain many meanings and decorations.

¹⁹⁸ This evangelization is directed towards the Catholic public. Evangelization is not based on conversion of people with another religion, but meant for the Catholics themselves. The *adorno* is a graphic way to express meanings from the Bible and to enable change in persons.

¹⁹⁹ The weight of the *anda* and *adorno* represent the weight of the cross, thereby contributing to the feeling of penitence.

²⁰⁰ Many *andas* are decorated with orchids, since this is a rare, special and expensive flower which grows in Guatemala. They die soon, especially in the sun on the *anda*, thereby coinciding with the meaning of the procession.

²⁰¹ Interview, 07-03-2017, informal conversation, 04-04-2017.

The group consists of sixteen men, including the main artist who designed the *adorno*. Every member has his task and specialty, for example the sculptures, faces, paintings, structure or decoration. During four months, for four hours each evening, they work on the *adorno*. Although the *adorno* itself is extremely costly, the artists work voluntarily, out of devotion and faith towards the icon. For Miguel the making of the *adorno* is a way of coming closer to God.

The materials used are fiberglass and foam plastic (the coffin of Jesus is made of glass and plastic). The *adorno* consists of many elements and sculptures with many details.

The *adorno* each year is one of the biggest kept secrets of Semana Santa. Nobody except this group and the *hermandad* knows the design, which therefore contributes to the expectation of the public²⁰².

Alfombra

‘‘An offering of love before the eyes of God and an offering of art before the eyes of men’’

These words of Manuel Estrada²⁰³ characterize one of the visually most beautiful aspects of the time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa: the *alfombras*. These are colored carpets on the processional streets²⁰⁴, as an offering for the icon which will pass over. *Alfombras* are made by families of which the houses are adjacent to a processional street. The most famous *alfombras* are made of painted *asserrín*, sawdust. Months before the design is invented and prepared: ‘‘creativity has no limits and flows from the hearts of the *Antigüerños*’’²⁰⁵. Small plastic bags with *añelina* of different colors are bought, after which this is mixed with sawdust and water. The first step in the execution process is the demarcation of the form with wooden or iron beams, based on precise measurements. On the cobblestone streets a ground layer of non-colored sawdust is needed to equalize the street level. Many people use a second ground layer of colored *asserrín* on which the other forms will be made. Large spaces of one color are applied with a sieve, carefully tapped against the hand. Consequently wooden or cardboard molds are placed on the ground layer, after which various colors in little bowls are located inside these forms, by hand or by spoon. When filled, the molds are carefully removed, cleaned and re-used, since generally an *alfombra* is symmetrical. During the whole

²⁰² Miguel Ruiz showed me pictures of the *adorno* in process, which is actually not allowed. The specialness of the *adorno* could be seen when the final *entrada* in *Escuela de Cristo* had taken place and some people carefully touched the *adorno*.

²⁰³ Interview, 05-03-2017.

²⁰⁴ Apart from the streets during processions, *alfombras* are part of *velaciones* and shown in churches in general during Cuaresma and Semana Santa.

²⁰⁵ Manuel Estrada & Victor Valle, interview, 05-03-2017.

process water is sprayed on top in order that the wind does not blow the *asserrín* away.

Alfombras can be made of other materials too, like colored [wood chips](#), [flowers and pine leaves](#)²⁰⁶ or [vegetables](#). Some stores even make *alfombras* with their own products, like the bakery that placed incredible animal forms made of [bread](#) in their *alfombra*, which dispersed a delicious scent.

In the early morning and nights before a major procession, the enormous bags with *asserrín* at the sides of the streets can already be noticed. In the darkness various bundles of lights mark the processional way, lamps which are used to see the work in progress. Voices are heard of people discussing the best approach and organization of forms and colors. Men lying in uncomfortable positions on ingenious constructions of wooden beams and plastic crates position the *asserrín* on hard to reach places. Neighbors, children and family members²⁰⁷ all populate the street in front of their houses, families united to create an *alfombra* together.

During many hours an *alfombra* is made, an *alfombra* which is wiped away within seconds when the procession passes. The reason and deep feelings connected to the making of an *alfombra* therefore can hardly be expressed. Precisely because of the vanity of work and material, an *alfombra* is an ‘*ofrenda de amor*’²⁰⁸ (offering of love), an act of faith and devotion. An *alfombra* is part of the penitence and the expressing of gratitude to God. As the uncle of Luis²⁰⁹ explained to me: ‘I make this out of love for God and my family. It is a way of thanking’.

Incienso

A fundamental, characteristic smell and processional part of Cuaresma and Semana Santa is the smoke of the *incienso*. The original meaning concerns the idea of all prayers rising to heaven and God, as the smoke of the *incienso*. The *incienso* in the procession is meant to purify the air for Jesus.

The process of *incensar* (to incense) begins with the placing of burning coals inside the iron censer²¹⁰. Added is the *incienso* itself, a mixture of substances which can be bought in a store, with the basic ingredient of myrrh²¹¹. Consequently, a little opening between the upper and down part is kept and the censer is powerfully swung back and forth which causes

²⁰⁶ The colocation of *pino* in straight lines is called *pino peinado*.

²⁰⁷ The art of *alfombras* is passed on in generations.

²⁰⁸ Manuel Estrada & Victor Valle, interview, 05-03-2017.

²⁰⁹ Informal conversation, 14-04-2017.

²¹⁰ These can be of different sizes.

²¹¹ Resin is a basic ingredient as well. Some people add extra ingredients like sugar to improve the smell even more.

the diffusion of smoke. When fire arises the censer repeatedly has to be opened and closed. Generally *incensar* is carried out in pairs, since the censer has to be filled with extra coals and *incienso* after some time. Anyone is allowed to *incensar* when wearing the correct clothes²¹², and these people can walk in the middle of the street in front of the procession, which is a beautiful point of view:

While Luis and I were walking with the *incienso*, a mystic, grey fog surrounded us. Behind in the distance we saw the illuminated, cradling *anda* and in front the beautiful *alfombras* which we had to avoid. Walking in between the processional parts I could feel the dangerous heat²¹³ of the censer close to my leg. My hands turned black of the coals and my clothes began to smell of the *incienso*.

The material culture (Kieschnick in Corrigan 2008; Morgan 2010; Brown 2013; Meyer 2010) of the processions comprises the sensorial aspects (as well as the processional parts), which address the senses. As Plate (2012, 173) argued, the senses are the media of the body. Through the creation of sensational forms (Meyer 2012) the senses constitute the media that through the use of materiality mediate emotions and experiences of the *cucuruchos*, aspects that are described in the next two paragraphs.

The cucuruchos of the processions

Anyone who wants to participate as carrier in any procession is allowed to, as long as he or she registers himself and buys his or her *turno* at the respecting *hermandad*. *Cucuruchos* therefore are all connected in their devotion towards icons but can be *Antigüeños*, can come from other cities, from abroad, or are members of *hermandades*²¹⁴. Furthermore, some people carry in as many processions possible and others make a deliberate choice which is often based on place of living²¹⁵, icon, past memories and family traditions²¹⁶.

Many *cucuruchos* have been *cucuruchos* almost their whole lives, since the moment they reached the required height²¹⁷. Enrique Berduo²¹⁸, for example, started as *cucurucho*

²¹² Meaning the clothes which the respecting church that organizes the procession prescribes for the *cucuruchos*.

²¹³ While walking on the streets with the censer you have to warn people when passing. While walking in the procession it is the responsibility of others to not touch your censer.

²¹⁴ Moreover, sometimes a *hermandad* that organizes a small procession with a too small amount of carriers, asks another *hermandad* to assist.

²¹⁵ For example, the procession that starts in the nearby village of Jojotenango consists of many carriers from Jojotenango.

²¹⁶ Sometimes certain family members have an important position within an *hermandad*, causing the participation of other family members in these processions. The grandfather of Enrique Berduo for example was president of the *hermandad* in San Felipe, and his father of *Escuela de Cristo*.

²¹⁷ The shoulder height needs to be around 1.24 meters. Often *cucuruchos* started when they were approximately ten to thirteen years old.

²¹⁸ Interview, 06-04-2017.

when he was twelve years old, now 55 years ago, and has carried ever since²¹⁹. Moreover, seeing various generations of the same family in the same procession is part of the mysticism of Semana Santa.

When I asked *cucuruchos* why they started to participate, they all mentioned the influence of family and named a family member who taught them the devotion²²⁰. Parents and grandparents took their children along while carrying, in their arms or hands. Victor Valle²²¹ described his participation when he was a baby: ‘I have been participating since the first months of my life. In the arms of my parents I watched the processions. Many parents who carry take their children, who wear purple clothes as well, with them. In this way an inheritance is created’’. The emotion, expectation and meaning of this time is passed on to children, who become excited and want to be close to the procession, to be ‘inside’, to participate as the adults do, to be part of the emotion²²². Enrique Berduo²²³ explained this feeling when he was a child.

‘Ever since I can imagine, my parents took me as a baby to the processions. There I started to walk. It generates expectation as well: - Cuaresma is almost there, the processions are coming! - As children we were waiting for the beginning of registrations, for the moment when the tunics would be taken from the places where they were saved. We wanted to feel like the adults. And when one receives his first turn, although being very small, you feel part of the community of adults. It is almost like an initiation rite in our society. In this way the interest and enthusiasm is awakened in everyone, the feeling of conscience, the belief that you are part of and responsible for a good course of the procession’.

Many people therefore are raised with the tradition, which is transmitted through families as Marco Marinelli²²⁴ explained: ‘my whole family, my grandfather and father, has carried at *La Merced*. So I as well continue with this. It is a family tradition, a devotion that goes from generation to generation’.

Hence on the one hand family inheritance is the reason of the desire and importance²²⁵

²¹⁹ He took his son in his arms while participating to arouse curiosity in him and currently his son already carries fifteen years in the procession of San Bartolomé. The families of *cucuruchos* thus often have carried in the same processions for generations.

²²⁰ The teaching of the tradition can already be seen on the streets, where parents want their children to strike a cross on important moments and explain them certain elements.

²²¹ Interview, 12-03-2017.

²²² Marvin (informal conversation, 07-04-2017) remembers his first tiny tunic and himself sleeping in his mother’s arms in the streets.

²²³ Interview, 06-04-2017.

²²⁴ Marco Marinelli, interview, 22-03-2017.

²²⁵ An anecdote of Jorge (informal conversation, 07-04-2017) illustrates the importance to participate. He told me about a procession of San Felipe which he attended with his young son. However, through an incredibly

of being a *cucurucho*. On the other hand, especially when one grows older, the reason of participation concerns devotion, conviction, penitence and identification with the procession and icon. The conscious idea of carrying the cross like Jesus did for mankind becomes a central experiential motive.

Being a *cucurucho* forms part of someone's identity because of the devotional formation since childhood, as Ligia Solorzano²²⁶ illustrated: 'we grow up with Semana Santa. For me it would not make sense to not participate'. The participation in Semana Santa strengthens the connection with society and gives identity to the *Antigüeno*.

In order to better understand this devotional formation and the importance of family, the story of one *cucurucho*, Luis, will be presented here. His religious and family background serve as a context for his current participation in the processions of Semana Santa in Antigua.

Luis, studying physics and eighteen years old, was born in Guatemala City and although he has lived here his whole life, he visits Antigua every year with his extremely large family. His family members are the most important people in his life. They taught him many good things; values and principles to be a good person and to be aware of others. His family is Catholic and Luis was therefore raised with this religion. Especially his mother and grandparents explained to him who God is and they attended church services each Sunday. Moreover, he went to a Catholic school.

Luis experiences a close relation with God. Nobody can prove if God exists or not, but when Luis has doubts or asks something to God, he has received answers which forms the basis of his faith: 'when I am *en gracia de dios*, which means that when I am a good person, with a good heart, I can achieve anything I want. When I ask something, magical things can happen. I am a Catholic Christian, I believe in God and I am happy'. Luis talks about Jesus as his '*gran amigo*', and feels part of God, as if He is his father, because He helps him with everything he wants. Thanks to God his life is great and he can reach anything.

Every year Luis visits Antigua during Semana Santa. His uncle lives in one of the big ancient houses with view on the backside of the cathedral and in Semana Santa Luis' whole family stays here. During the week they watch the important processional moments together and carry as *cucuruchos*. In the nights they drink coffee in the kitchen and tell each other stories. Moreover, a large lunch is prepared as a tradition every year. Long tables are set up in the open garden space within the house, various typical dishes are cooked and many generations occupy all the rooms. For Luis this house is intrinsically connected to Semana Santa, since he has stayed here during this time his whole life, playing with his cousins when he was young.

Luis remembers that his parents carried him as a child during the processions.

strong rain he could not carry. This hurt him a lot and he cried the whole night. The next year the feeling while carrying was extra strong.

²²⁶ Interview, 22-03-2017.

He would sleep on the shoulder of his father, wake up and see the moving *anda* closely above him, after which he would fall asleep again. People always told him that Semana Santa in Antigua is celebrated the most elaborately and beautifully, which made him think that Antigua then should be the best place of the world: a beautiful children's thought, not knowing the world's variety of traditions.

When he was a little bit older, he held the hand of his father, while walking on the inside of the *anda*. This is one of the most amazing experiences according to Luis: feeling the strength of his father through his hand, seeing the clarity of the sun from the shadow of the *anda*, hearing the cracking noises of the wood in the corners and playing with the *alfombras* on the ground. Luis still lives the excitement of taking part in all the activities together with his family when he tries to remember those moments: he closes his eyes and his face and whole body express the reminded sentiments.

The first time Luis carried was at *Escuela de Cristo*. When I asked why he carried there, Luis described this church as 'our home church'. His grandparents, his parents, his uncles; all carry at *Escuela de Cristo*, and in the future his own children will carry there as well. The first time of being a *cucurucho* concerns an important memory for many people²²⁷. Luis²²⁸ remembers his first turn at *Escuela de Cristo* in a child procession. He felt excited and his mother gave him the advice to close his eyes and use the moment to talk with Jesus, to pray and to follow the rhythm. His happy emotion was caused by the feeling of initiation, to be able to do what the others did.

Every activity aroused many emotions in Luis, from being a *cucurucho* just like the adults and helping Jesus to carry the cross, to walking in the *filas*, making *alfombras* and dispersing the *incienso* with his cousins. Luis' most beautiful memory of Semana Santa concerns the first time when he entered the procession of *Escuela de Cristo*. The turn of the *entrada* is the most honorable turn to carry²²⁹: one has to check the turn of others who want to take over if it is really their turn and parents have to protect their children against other parents who otherwise will give the turn to their own child. Luis was carrying his turn, but nobody took over at the next street. Then a woman came with her son and said it was his turn. Luis' father asked for the turn, which was not valid, so Luis had the right to continue. Although after the third turn in a row he almost could not move his legs anymore, a combination of feelings took possession of him: seeing the church full with people and hearing his favorite *marcha*, he felt excited, emotional and proud.

Currently Luis carries in many processions, at least four during Semana Santa, just like his family.

The story of Luis gives insight in the constellation of the interrelated factors of background, upbringing, family, religion and importance and meaning of participation in the processions. Luis was raised with the Catholic religion and the meaning of God in his life defines his

²²⁷ Ligia Solorzano remembers her first time on Jueves Santo, marked by a strong pain in her legs the next day. She only wanted to carry again two years later!

²²⁸ Interview, 16-04-2017.

²²⁹ When Luis or his cousin had the turn of the *entrada*, they often would share: they then both carried half the turn.

religious background and worldview. The role of his family with regard to his religious upbringing and to the celebration of the religious tradition of Semana Santa is very important. His family is connected to memories and experiences of Semana Santa, which makes it a family tradition. Luis' story therefore exemplifies the meaning and importance of being a *cucurucho* during Semana Santa, seen within a context of religious and family tradition.

The experiences and feelings of cucuruchos, musicians and conductors

In the previous two paragraphs the sensorial elements and the *cucuruchos* themselves have been described. When looking at the literature, the sensorial elements comprise the material culture, the objects and practices, which centrality in lived religion is recognized by Brown (2013, 486-487): belief happens materially and belief is something people do. The processions of Semana Santa concern a public, religious activity based on materiality (icon, *adorno*, etc.), which forms the religious experience. Hence materiality comprises lived religion (Morgan 2010, 18) and the central elements of lived religion are practice and experience (McGuire 2008, 3-4), which therefore make sensation and feeling the medium of belief (Morgan 2010, 18). After having explained the religious activities of Cuaresma and Semana Santa and their material aspects, this paragraph therefore describes the experiences and feelings of *cucuruchos*, musicians and conductors. Although participants explained the difficulty of fully rationalizing and describing experiences, since these are lived, they externally analyzed their internal feelings and put words to them, in this way succeeding beautifully.

The cucuruchos

The experience as a *cucurucho* already begins with the preparation: wearing the tunic, pinning the *insignia* of the respecting *hermandad* on the chest and the generation of expectation about which turn one will get. Nobody namely chooses his place: one has to surrender himself and to accept his participation in a group which consists of whoever. As Enrique Berduo²³⁰ described: ‘we will all carry in the same way, in the same clothes’. This illustration of the experience of a *cucurucho* demonstrates the feeling of ‘*communitas*’, a concept formulated by Victor Turner (1969/1995). A feeling of great social solidarity, equality and togetherness characterizes the community spirit of the *cucuruchos* while carrying.

²³⁰ Interview, 13-03-2017.

Physically the experience is challenging. Both the weight while carrying²³¹ and the hours of walking, accompanying the procession in the *filas*, are part of the penitence. The tiredness, heat of the sun, possible rain and cold, cobblestone streets, hunger and thirst all contribute to this.

Besides the physical impact, the experience is marked by interior states of mind. In the first place one has to have confidence in the people around him since the perception of direction is absent. Furthermore, while carrying one has to let go, to enjoy the moment and carry within the feeling. This concerns a personal experience since every *cucurucho* has his own life circumstances and memories which arise²³². Although realizing a personal process of interiorization, all *cucuruchos* are collectively connected in the same moment.

The personal experiential part is connected to the religious part: the idea behind being a *cucurucho* concerns the carrying of the *anda*, as if it were the cross of Jesus. Hereby confessions and penitence are performed and love for the icon is shown. To carry the weight is an offering in front of Jesus for one's own sins²³³. While carrying one prays to and communicates with God, asking or thanking Him. As Luis²³⁴ explained: "you know that Jesus is there. When you carry in the procession it is like a moment of communication, because of the nature of the activity. You have the feeling you are closer to God while carrying and you pray and talk to Him".

The core of the experience as *cucurucho* therefore is the feeling of devotion; the connection with the procession, with what one is doing and the closeness and communication with God. Walter Monge²³⁵ affirmed this: "above all it should be done with faith". In the end the experience of the *cucurucho* therefore is of a religious nature: "realmente son experiencias religiosas"²³⁶ (they are real religious experiences). The processions of Semana Santa therefore are an expression of lived religion: practices and religious experiences (McGuire 2008) characterize this tradition besides beliefs, ideas and morals. The religious experience is mediated through the senses, a process called aesthetic mediation (Meyer 2012). The senses constitute the bridge between the practices and material aspects of the processions, and the evocation and strengthening of experiences and emotions of *cucuruchos*, whereby the

²³¹ Approximately halfway one starts to feel the weight and the necessary power needed belongs to the experience as well. Moreover, when by change one constantly has to carry with the same shoulder, it causes pain.

²³² A much-mentioned example of the latter concerns a person who died and who played an important role in past experiences of Semana Santa or the formation of religious identity.

²³³ Jorge (informal conversation, 07-04-2017) called this "limpia alma", a clean soul or spirit.

²³⁴ Interview, 16-04-2017.

²³⁵ *Colaborador* at the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

²³⁶ Enrique Berduo, interview, 06-04-2017.

latter (evocation of emotion) is explained below.

The religious and sensorial aspects create a unique atmosphere which one can only live and which generates moods, sentiments and emotions. As Kieschnick (in Corrigan 2008) argued, the material objects in a religious context can evoke emotions in believers: ‘in the interaction of religion and emotion, we find objects everywhere’. The material-sensorial aspects within the religious context of Semana Santa indeed generate emotions. Besides Semana Santa as lived religion, it thus can be called a ‘heart religion’, a concept Tallon (in Corrigan 2008) proposed: the essential defining element of religion is emotion. The *cucuruchos* of Antigua encounter a mix of deep sensations, emotions and memories while carrying. During a perceived short moment of hundred meters all feelings and thoughts are mixed, as Marco Marinelli²³⁷ affirmed: ‘all strong sentiments unite in this tiny moment’.

The exact explanation of this encountered mix of emotions is considered very difficult. According to Enrique Berduo²³⁸ it is ‘in the end a mass of people with one single feeling: devotion’. Within this framework of devotion, the emotions are personal, depending on various life events: ‘*como lo has vivido, tu lo vas a sentir*’²³⁹ (what you have experienced, you will feel). There are many problems in life and the unique circumstances of Semana Santa evoke memories or thoughts of people and situations, which can cause a deep pain that has been kept inside a long time. These things have to be ‘left in the hands of God’, as Fernando Vasquez²⁴⁰ said. During Cuaresma and Semana Santa many crying people therefore can be seen on the streets, people feeling melancholic or nostalgic for earlier times when their family was together, or people seeking consolation²⁴¹.

Despite the dependence on life situations, however, many *cucuruchos* experience Semana Santa very happily since *alegría* (joy/happiness) was the most used term when describing how one feels while carrying. This happiness coincides with the feeling of gratefulness and is caused by the awareness that God gives one the opportunity and capability

²³⁷ Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

²³⁸ Interview, 13-03-2017.

²³⁹ Fernando Vasquez, interview, 22-03-2017.

²⁴⁰ Interview, 22-03-2017.

²⁴¹ José Morales (interview, 09-03-2017), who himself feels indescribably sad during this time, told me something which I knew beforehand, but which still shocked and touched me since I was there to exactly perform this impossibility: ‘every person has his own history. And you will never understand the deepness’. Moreover, in general older people feel more worry or concern, since they have more life experience. For example, when Marvin (informal conversation, 07-04-2017) was young he just felt happy, whereas nowadays he sometimes feels worried or sad as well. Another José (informal conversation, 02-04-2017), a seventy year old man, illustrated this as well. During this Semana Santa he was really sad because his eight year old grandson had died a short time ago and José would walk together with him in the processions.

to participate in the procession and that one is alive and healthy²⁴². Luis²⁴³ explained this feeling: ‘‘it is someone I love so much, my great friend. It is like someone who helped you with a lot and you feel happy when you help him. To have the honor to help Him, that’s why I feel happy’’. While carrying a process of emotions takes place. First there is nervousness, when waiting in the row. On the moment that the weight of the *anda* with the icon of one’s devotion touches the shoulder, a feeling of peace and tranquility takes over, according to Marco Marinelli: ‘‘you feel really good to be there, completely within the devotion. It is a special connection between the icon and a *cucurucho*. It is a moment of peace, serenity, love and happiness. It is a great emotion and it is beautiful to feel that way’’²⁴⁴. While carrying, a connection with God is established (through the influence of the icon) which leads to inspiration. An internal, spiritual state of reflection about one’s life arises, evoking thoughts about personal improvement and memories about one’s past and family²⁴⁵. Moreover, especially members of the *hermandad* feel fervor, proudness and satisfaction for their collectively achieved work. The end of Semana Santa is characterized by a feeling of sadness: the *cucuruchos* have to wait another year.

The musicians and conductors

The experiences and emotions of musicians and conductors are partly similar and different. Physically the participation is even more challenging: in their black suits they walk all the processional hours in the sun, carrying their instruments, playing the music (musician Kevin Mendosa²⁴⁶ told me that his lips can hurt for days!), barely without breaks for eating, drinking or visits to the bathroom. The experience therefore is very tiring and concentration is needed to bring the music alive, which means that their attention is mainly focused on the scores, their execution and the sounds of other musicians. The notice of sensorial elements or the spiritual state of mind, characteristic for the experience of *cucuruchos*, consequently is inevitably less.

Moreover, the active participation is much longer²⁴⁷, which makes it more tiring but more beautiful as well, according to the musicians. Despite the hard circumstances, devotion

²⁴² Marvin (informal conversation, 07-04-2017) told an anecdote about a time when he carried while his father was very ill. He cried as a child because he did not know what would happen the next day. Luckily his father was cured. Since one never knows what will happen in a year, one therefore feels grateful to participate this year.

²⁴³ Interview, 16-04-2017.

²⁴⁴ Member of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 22-03-2017.

²⁴⁵ Luis (interview, 16-04-2017) for example, thinks of his family members who also carried here and this makes him feel belong even more to this place.

²⁴⁶ Interview, 16-03-2017.

²⁴⁷ *Cucuruchos* only carry one *cuadra* and have to use this moment, while musicians play the whole time.

forms equally the reason of participation, as Rafael²⁴⁸ explained: ‘‘many musicians play for the icon, to venerate their icon of devotion. We wait one year, and the day passes so fast, we don’t feel it. We can feel the tiredness, sleep or hunger, but we love to play. It is beautiful behind’’. The musicians love the *marchas*, they feel good while playing and through the music they communicate with God.

The playing and hearing of the *marchas* in the processions evoke emotions and sentiments in the musicians themselves²⁴⁹. While making music they feel happy and are filled with adrenaline. Terms as *alegría*, devotion and nostalgia characterized the experience of the musicians as well. The love for their work causes sentiments for what they are doing at that moment, which makes it a beautiful experience, as Kevin Mendosa²⁵⁰ explained: ‘‘I identify myself through the *marchas*. For me it is so beautiful, I am filled with emotions. I thank God for where I am now’’. Hence by playing with the soul²⁵¹ the *marchas* transmit feelings which reach the ‘‘*corazón*’’ (heart) of the musicians themselves, and the opportunity to accompany the procession, to perform penitence and to play for and communicate with God cause the feeling of happiness.

Finally, the experience of conductors is physically hard²⁵² too, since they have to be active and transmit the energy to their musicians. The body of a conductor is very important in order to achieve this. The movements of the hands, facial expressions and respiration communicate the meaning of the music to the musicians. When I watched Guillermo Mendizábal conducting, his strong, wide arm movements, his look to various instrumental sections, his tensed face and moving mouth all expressed his passion.

The experience of conducting is considered spectacular, because the *música sacra* is beautiful and for hours one has the privilege to be close to the icon. The seeing of and believing in the icon causes inspiration which makes the conductor live the emotion of the *marcha*. Hector Gomez²⁵³ described how he feels when conducting:

‘‘I feel very grateful to God, for having given me the opportunity to conduct. I feel very fortunate, because many believe in my work, in what I am doing. I feel very

²⁴⁸ Musician, interview, 07-04-2017.

²⁴⁹ One day before the procession they feel nervous, because it is quite something to play the whole day.

²⁵⁰ Musician, interview, 16-03-2017.

²⁵¹ ‘‘*Entregarse en cuerpo y alma*’’ (to surrender with body and soul), as a timpanist (informal conversation, 07-04-2017) said.

²⁵² Guillermo Mendizábal (interview, 11-03-2017) even takes a pill in the morning to not have to go to the bathroom during all the processional hours.

²⁵³ Interview, 21-03-2017. Hector Gomez as well gave some examples of unexpected problems during the procession which a conductor has to solve: the breaking of instruments; the breaking of wheels; illness; and change of program. To find solutions quickly, one has to have an open mind.

committed since they expect my work to be better each time. Moreover, I feel emotional, I am filled with emotions, with a lot of satisfaction. I have this function which a lot of people would like to have. That's why I have to protect this privilege and do the best I can. God gave me my musical talent and I have to express it. When I hold the baton, I take a deep breath, I drink a little bit of water, and I am ready! Nineteen hours, it doesn't matter. With power, although my arm hurts, I continue with the same motivation''.

For Guillermo Mendizábal²⁵⁴ the *marchas* have a tremendous emotional effect. While conducting he feels content and happy, his body is covered in goosebumps and he almost starts dancing: ‘when one works with love, it is like a revolution. The emotion is so deep that it has no explanation. *Música sacra* is my insulin’’.

The sensorial experience of participation in the processions

The religious experience is intensified by the sensorial elements²⁵⁵, which are seen as complements that form part of the mysticism of the experience and connect the *cucuruchos* in a closer way with the religious activity: ‘all are complements for the devotees. Everything conjugates and prepares the sentiments, contributing to the penitence, interiorization and impact’’²⁵⁶. The experience of participants in the processions therefore is mediated through the senses, which therefore constitute a fundamental connecting role. As Brown (2013, 486) argued, material culture is both about objects and what people do with those objects, which as a consequence means that practices with the objects involve material forms which engage bodies, sensations, feelings and experiences: ‘the body is the universal register of belief’’ (Brown 2013, 486). The material-sensorial aspects of the processions thus evoke emotions and form religious experiences, by engaging the senses of the participants.

For the musicians especially sight and hearing are the most important when they have to concentrate: they look at the scores and conductor and hear the music played. For the *cucuruchos* all senses are opened while participating. Although some close their eyes, sight concerns an important sense: the many devote people; the creativity of the *alfombras*; the color purple, especially the tunics and blossom of the *jacaranda* tree (the ‘tree of the *cucuruchos*’) which announces the time of Cuaresma; the face of the icon; the *adorno*;

²⁵⁴ Conductor, interview, 11-03-2017. Guillermo Mendizábal has diabetes, mentioned earlier in chapter four.

²⁵⁵ However, some *cucuruchos* close their eyes while carrying and only focus on their prayers and communication with God, as Ligia Solorzano (interview, 22-03-2017) explained: ‘I concentrate and forget the world. I pray, think and meditate’’.

²⁵⁶ Hector Gomez, interview, 21-03-2017, Enrique Berduo, interview, 13-03-2017.

everything which happens during this time can be seen. Enrique Berduo²⁵⁷ explained that Cuaresma and Semana Santa are very visual events, because the fundament of communicating the evangelizing message of the procession is through sight.

Smell is another important sense: the *asserrín*, flowers and vegetables of the *alfombras*; the *corozo*; the *incienso*; Typical food which is sold from the food stalls²⁵⁸; the trees; all form part of the ‘*olor de Semana Santa*’²⁵⁹.

One of the strongest senses concerns hearing, according to Gabriël Vides²⁶⁰: ‘*everything you hear fills you more*’. Within the soundscape of a procession, the *marchas* are the most important sound of this time, which makes one connect with the procession.

Finally, the sense of feeling is twofold. In the first place it concerns touch; the feet of the *cucuruchos* touching the softness of the *alfombras* by surprise, and the shoulder holding the weight of the *anda*. In the second place it concerns the described interior feelings, sentiments and emotions, caused by all aspects together.

These elements, together with the processional parts, constitute the material aspects which reach out to the senses, resulting in an *acercamiento* towards the religious activity, thereby forming religious experiences. In this way material culture has the potential of making the intangible transcendent reality present (Morgan 2010, 18). The material-sensorial elements unite in their nature, being an offering of faith of the devotees to God. All senses are addressed during the experience of *cucuruchos*: ‘*the senses play the most important role*’²⁶¹. The sensorial elements strengthen the connection with the procession and create the mystical atmosphere, which one can only live and feel.

Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs, the essence and purpose of the sensorial aspects (material in the literature) of the *imagen*, *túnica*, *adorno*, *alfombra* and *incienso* have been described, aspects which form part of the experience of the *cucuruchos*. Secondly, the reason and importance of participation for the *cucuruchos* were explained. The latter explanation was twofold: the family influence and context in which one grows up, and the devotional and

²⁵⁷ Interview, 13-03-2017.

²⁵⁸ Taste concerns another sense which has an important role during Cuaresma and Semana Santa. Eating typical dishes and candies together in families is part of the experience as well, reflecting this time and forming the ‘*sabor*’ of Semana Santa. Examples are *pescado seco* (dry fish), *empanadas*, *garbanzos* and much more. Although taste and food were not the focus of this research and less relevant with respect to the research question, it concerns an important part of Cuaresma and Semana Santa.

²⁵⁹ José & Lucky Morales, interview, 09-03-2017.

²⁶⁰ Treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

²⁶¹ Hector Gomez (conductor), interview, 21-03-2017.

penitential purpose of the procession. Many *cucuruchos* have been *cucuruchos* almost their whole life, by having been raised with the tradition. Through families the devotion is transmitted; a family inheritance of the emotion, expectation and meaning of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. The reason of participation concerns devotion, conviction, penitence and identification with the procession and icon. Moreover, the experiences and feelings of *cucuruchos* have been described. Interior states of mind and personal memories mark the experience, which centers around the devotional feeling: while carrying the *anda*, as if it were the cross of Jesus, confessions, gratitude and penitence are expressed. Although physically challenging, the *cucuruchos* consider the processional participation as beautiful, since a communication with God is established. The material-sensorial elements are the fundament and complements which strengthen and intensify this religious communication/experience and evoke a mix of profound emotions. While the nature of emotions depends on life situations, many *cucuruchos* feel peace, love, tranquility, serenity, inspiration, gratefulness, satisfaction, devotion and most importantly *alegría*. The emotions cause an internal, spiritual state of reflection.

The process described above is defined as the system of aesthetic mediation (Meyer 2012). Material objects, practices and the human body can become religious media for mobilizing religious experience (Meyer 2012, 22). This process of religious mediation is made possible through ‘sensational forms’, which generate emotions and lead to a ‘genesis of presence’ (Meyer 2012, 26-27). Plate (2012, 173) therefore calls the senses ‘the media of the body’. During Semana Santa participation in the processions and the processional, material-sensorial elements are the forms through which religious lived experience is constructed, by being figured through the senses which organize emotion.

Chapter six: The experiential effect of *marcha fúnebre*

On *Jueves Santo* the rustic, red colored *anda* enters the square of *Escuela de Cristo*. A row of waiting *cucuruchos* takes over their turn amidst the *filas* and many spectators. With the weight on his left shoulder and a peaceful, serene expression on his face, Luis has his eyes closed. The sounds of the percussion accompany the *anda* to the middle of the square, where the official *marcha* of *Escuela de Cristo* begins. The moment of the first tones coincides with a change of Luis' facial expression: slowly but clearly a broad smile emerges, showing intense happiness.

When I told Luis what I had seen, he explained the moment to me, although unconscious about his own smile. The place where he carried made him think of his past, because he has already been carrying for *Escuela de Cristo* since he was a child. Combined with the *marcha* it reminded him of the time when he carried the turn of the *entrada* in *Escuela de Cristo*, a precious memory. The music connected Luis with past memories and evoked emotions of happiness in him, expressed in his beautiful smile. In this moment Luis embodied the effect of *marcha fúnebre*.

Music has the ability to move people. However, as Brown (in Corrigan 2008) and Nussbaum (in Corrigan 2008) already proposed, these emotions do not need to be only about the music because music can contain beliefs and emotions about something other than itself. Music refers to memories, thoughts and experiences and as a sensorial element consequently evokes feelings, in turn forming experiences, as Luis demonstrated.

This chapter is about these assets of music. Important topics within the field of ethnomusicology are addressed, such as the relations between music and worldview and experience and music (Titon 2009, 15,19-20). First the religious meaning of *música sacra* is explained, after which the effects of *marcha fúnebre* for the experience of *cucuruchos* is disclosed. In the combination of music, memories, emotion and experience the effect and meaning of *marcha fúnebre* for the religious experience will be made clear.

The religious meaning of *música sacra*

Música sacra intrinsically contributes to the religious Catholic cosmivision of the *cucuruchos*. The music is connected to the time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, referring to the Passion and passages in the life of Jesus Christ. Moreover, many *marchas* are dedicated to icons or religious experiences. Therefore, since the meaning of *marchas fúnebres* are of a religious nature themselves, they have a religious meaning for the Catholic *cucuruchos* as

well. Conductor Saúl Siquibache²⁶² explained this: “religion always goes in hand with this type of music. My belief is my faith and the music”.

Besides the intrinsic religious connection, the meaning of *música sacra* is determined by its function. The *marchas* cause spiritual states of mind in *cucuruchos*, in the sense of reflection, devotional *acercamiento*, inspiration, contemplation, interconnection with all aspects of the experience and the conjunction with sensations. The *marchas* express and transmit feelings, “to reach the hearts of as many persons possible”²⁶³. According to Gabriël Vides²⁶⁴, the *marchas* communicate sadness (referring to Jesus’ death), happiness (referring to Jesus’ resurrection) and most importantly love: the love of Jesus for mankind, which one has to pass on to his fellow men.

Hence *música sacra* is defined by its meaning, its instrumental function, its evocation of emotions and its effect. As musician Rafael²⁶⁵ explained, “in the music religious sentiments unite”, sentiments which forms the basis of music as a complement for religious experience. As Wyness (2008, 4) argued: by experiencing the music, music itself creates meaning, leading people to knowledge about themselves and the world they inhabit; in relation with contextual time and place, material practices like music have the ability to create, articulate and sustain religious meaning. Music in the context of processions in Semana Santa indeed creates religious meaning, both because of the intrinsic religious reference and the effect. The effect of *marcha fúnebre* within this creation of religious meaning and experience will be the subject of the next paragraph.

Marcha fúnebre and religious experience

The effect of *marcha fúnebre* for *cucuruchos* congregates within all elements discussed: the style of the music and its function; the variety inside the unity of *marchas*, connected to memories; the events and components of the processions of Semana Santa; the sensorial aspects and religious meaning, expressed in the communication with God; and the experience of *cucuruchos* with the evocation of emotions. The music therefore is located deep inside the overall versatile, complex and “unique”²⁶⁶ experience. This deepness is caused by the capability of music to explore levels of awareness that elude words, which makes music so powerful in the realm of feeling and experience (Brown in Corrigan 2008, 200; Rice 2014,

²⁶² Interview, 05-04-2017.

²⁶³ Eddy Diaz, interview, 07-03-2017.

²⁶⁴ Treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

²⁶⁵ Interview, 07-04-2017.

²⁶⁶ Eddy Diaz, interview, 07-03-2017.

59).

In the first place, the music concerns a feeling. As Gabriël Vides²⁶⁷ explained, all processional factors cause an effect. However, what touches one the most, is the music: ‘*la música llena adentro, te llena el corazón*’²⁶⁸ (the music fills inside, it fills your heart).

This primordial, self-contained musical effect is connected to the functions of the *marchas fúnebres*: they are attached to life memories, which makes the music an instrument for reflection. Specific *marchas* are associated with personal memories²⁶⁹, life experiences and the past. The music makes one think about anterior processional moments, family, achievements and future goals. The earlier described feeling of *communitas* (Turner 1969/1995) between the carrying *cucuruchos* is thus combined with individual reflection. This relates to Blacking’s (1969, 68) consideration of the capturing of the force of individual experience with the form of collective cultural experience as the aim of music.

The memories evoked by the *marchas* in turn cause emotions, especially when the *marcha* is a favorite *marcha* of the *cucurucho*. These emotions and sensations are personal and depend on one’s state of mind: ‘the music brings out the sentiments every person has in his heart’²⁷⁰. As Hector Gomez²⁷¹ explained, the music is the main cause of emotional effect and ‘each of the *marchas* will cause a different effect in each person’. This musical effect is achieved through the projection of the feeling of a *marcha* via the conductor and the quality of the *banda*. The combination of *marchas*, memories and emotion relates to the idea of an extramusical expression of music, whereby music communicates something beyond the music itself. However, according to Blacking (1969, 39), this can only be done if the experience to which music refers already exists in the mind of the listener. This means that music can make people more aware of feelings that they have experienced. The already-existing-experience thus concerns the memory, evoked by the music, which in turn strengthens emotions: ‘it impacts the feeling more’²⁷².

Besides the above described interiorization, a reflection about the processional meaning is achieved. This connects the music with the sensorial aspect of the *adorno*. Moreover, along with the instrumental function of reflection and the evocation of past

²⁶⁷ Treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 19-03-2017.

²⁶⁸ Gabriël Vides (treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*), interview, 19-03-2017.

²⁶⁹ As Gabriël Vides (interview, 19-03-2017) said, humans, men and women, are always remembering. One thinks for example about the time when one was young, walking in the procession, holding the hand of his father. Or members of the *hermandad* think about their work and reflect on the purpose of showing the love of Jesus for everyone.

²⁷⁰ Rafael (musician), interview, 07-04-2017.

²⁷¹ Conductor, interview, 21-03-2017.

²⁷² Enrique Berduo, interview, 06-04-2017.

memories, the *marchas* help in creating new memories, on the present moment of carrying, thereby forming new experiences. The music namely helps *cucuruchos* to experience more, to move closer inside the participation of the religious activity. Jorge²⁷³ described this as the completion of a puzzle, when all pieces come together and connect. Through the solemn style of the music combined with the moment of carrying, the heart beats of the *cucuruchos* start coinciding with the rhythm of the *marchas*, which causes a strengthening of feeling, excitement and enjoyment of the *turno*. The consciousness of ‘‘being able to carry Him’’²⁷⁴ while listening the *marcha* creates an unexplainable strong feeling. As Luis²⁷⁵ described: ‘‘it is as if the music gives you something, like energy and happiness’’. The music therefore forms the base of the mystical and spiritual atmosphere.

On behalf of the latter spiritual part, the *marchas fúnebres* give the gentle, respectful and solemn character to the procession. This provides the context for the establishment of the communication with God, a moment defined by praying, asking and thanking. In this way the music can be seen as a spiritual guidance within this process of praying. When looking at the literature, Beck (2006, 14) explains the reason why music is an effective means of communicating with a God. The elusiveness of music in form and content constitutes the capability of music of conveying levels of complexity in the same way as religion does. Therefore music is a ‘‘vehicle par excellence for carrying the religious impulse’’ (Beck 2006, 14). Music thus offers experiences of consciousness of the self and the immanence of God (Blacking 1969, 60), expressed during the processions by the interior reflection and religious communication.

Victor Valle²⁷⁶ described the above explained effect: ‘‘on the moment you start carrying, the *marchas fúnebres* connect you more with the procession in a spiritual way. It is solely your space, together with the music and knowing that you carry Jesus on your shoulders’’. Exactly this demonstrates the effect of music within the combination of processional and sensorial aspects. The belief in and communication with Jesus Christ and God are the most important during Cuaresma and Semana Santa. The icon therefore, as an instrument of veneration, reflects this process and concerns the focal sensorial aspect of the procession. The music has the effect of strengthening the relation. As Marcel Chavez²⁷⁷, *cucurucho* and member of the *hermandad La Merced*, explained: ‘‘through the music I feel

²⁷³ *Cucurucho* and member of the *hermandad La Merced*, informal conversation, 07-04-2017.

²⁷⁴ Marco Marinelli (*cucurucho* and member of the *hermandad La Merced*), interview, 22-03-2017.

²⁷⁵ Interview, 16-04-2017.

²⁷⁶ Secretary of the *hermandad La Merced*, interview, 12-03-2017.

²⁷⁷ Interview, 19-03-2017.

devotion towards the consecrated icon. By hearing the music I am drawn to the icon. It is like an inspiration''. The music thus intensifies the relation between the icon and the *cucuruchos*, thereby enhancing the connection with the religious activity of carrying and the religious experience. Through the *marchas* this *acercamiento* causes even more sentiments, touching the *cucuruchos* strongly, to the point of crying. This connection between religion, music and emotion has been addressed by Brown (in Corrigan 2008): emotions are aroused by music offered in a service to God, because music conveys a deeper sense of spiritual realities, thereby being a form of communication with the 'Supreme Being'. This relates to the above described connection between the processions and *marchas* causing *acercamiento* and emotions.

Accordingly, the *marchas fúnebres*, as a sensorial element themselves, cause emotions through the evocation of memories and the effect of *acercamiento* with the processional activity, thereby directing divine communication which forms the religious experience. The place of music in religion thus is demonstrated here, in the literature strongly recognized by Laack (2015, 242) who states that human beings both rely on intellect and emotions, sensations and the body. In consequence the art of music has the capability to reach deep levels of aesthetic sensibility, to express the experience of the sacred and to direct spiritual emotions (Beck 2006, 5).

In conclusion, the effect of *marcha fúnebre* concerns the fundamental complement in a procession. In the literature Blacking (1969, 59) states that 'the world of music is a world of human experience'' because the function of music is to enhance the quality of experiences. For *cucuruchos* the *marchas* indeed help them to have a special experience, full of memories, reflection, feelings and religious meaning, as many²⁷⁸ described: 'it is a primordial effect. The music is very fundamental to have the experience, to be able to feel the experience. Without the *marchas* the procession would be totally different. Music is one of the most important complements in the procession, because the *marchas* bring us closer to and connect us more with our belief''.

Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs the experiential effect of the processional *marchas* for the *cucuruchos* has been delineated. First the meaning of *música sacra* was discussed, whereby its direct connection with religiosity has been made clear: the meaning of *música sacra* is of a

²⁷⁸ Miguel Ruiz (artist and *cucurucho*), interview, 07-03-2017, Hector Gomez (conductor), interview, 21-03-2017, Gabriël Vides (treasurer of the *hermandad La Merced*), interview, 19-03-2017.

religious nature because *marchas* are connected to life passages of Jesus Christ and dedicated to icons or religious experiences. Moreover, its instrumental function of transmitting and evoking emotions and the causing of spiritual states of mind in *cucuruchos* (reflection, devotional *acercamiento*, inspiration, contemplation, interconnection with all aspects of the experience, the conjunction with sensations) defines its meaning, as well as the effect. The latter congregates within all elements discussed and the music therefore lies deep inside the unique *cucuruchos*' experience. The music is a feeling, connected to life memories, which cause reflection and the evocation and strengthening of emotions. Furthermore, the *marchas* enhance the relation between the icon and *cucurucho* and help them to experience more, to move closer inside the participation of the religious activity. The *marchas* can be seen as spiritual guidance, providing the context for the establishment of the communication with God, a moment defined by praying, asking and thanking. This *acercamiento* causes even more sentiments.

The relation between the religious meaning of *marcha fúnebre* and the religious experience places the *marchas* fundamentally within a web of music, religion and emotion. Precisely about this connection has been written by Brown (in Corrigan 2008): emotions can be aroused by the sound, shape and design of music offered in the service to God. An important part of the religious experience through music is the evoking of emotions, which can be achieved because music conveys a deeper sense of spiritual realities, thereby being a form of communication with the 'Supreme Being'. In this construction the processions of Semana Santa are the religious services. Music in the form of a favorite *marcha* evokes personal memories and contributes to the experience of carrying at that moment, being an instrument of *acercamiento* towards the religious activity and icon, hereby intensifying devotion and the religious experience of the communication with God. In this way the *marchas* cause emotions.

Hence the *marchas fúnebres* concern a fundamental (material-)sensorial complement, connected to all other sensorial-experiential complements and lies deep at the heart of the experience of *cucuruchos*. In a beautiful constellation of musical style, participatory moment, devotion and faith towards the icon, feelings and memories, the *música sacra* stimulates emotions and mediates religious experience.

Chapter seven: Conclusion

Cuaresma and *cucuruchos*; *Antigüeños* and *alfombra*; processions and purple; flowers and feelings; icons and *incienso*; music and *marchas*; *fúnebre* and food; *adorno* and *anda*; trees and tunics; mysticism and *madrileña*; faith and *filas*; experience and emotion; decoration and devotion; Semana and Santa.

The world of Cuaresma and Semana Santa has many scents, colors and sounds. The celebration of this religious tradition is characterized by numerous events, sensorial aspects and processional elements, which all form part of the experience of the *cucuruchos*. A fundamental processional-sensorial complement concerns the music. This fieldwork-based anthropological research studied the meaning of the *marchas fúnebres* for the *cucuruchos*' religious experience in the processions during Cuaresma and Semana Santa in Antigua, Guatemala.

In order to reach an understanding of the experience and musical meaning, a broad context about the time under study and the *música sacra* was needed. Therefore the history, meaning and organization of Cuaresma and Semana Santa were presented, including a description of all events during this time. The atmosphere felt amidst these activities was brought to the fore, to delineate the mysticism which inevitably has to be seen in conjunction with the experience. Consequently, the history, style and purpose of the *marchas* were explained. Moreover, the material-sensorial aspects of the processions have been illustrated, a category in which the music is placed as well. These subjects form the context in which the experiences and feelings of the participants were formulated, a religious experience characterized by emotion and interiorization. Finally, the meaning and effect of the *marchas* for this religious experience have been portrayed.

Semana Santa commemorates the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is preceded by Cuaresma, a period of forty days meant for change, *ayuno* and reflection. The tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa in Antigua is characterized by many practices connected to all events that take place during this time: *Miercoles de Ceniza*, *via crucis*, child activities, *velaciones*, services, concerts, the *acto de Traslado y Unición*, and, most importantly, the twelve to nineteen hours processions which concern the main expression of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. During this time the carrying in the elaborate processions therefore is the central practice of the devote *Antigüeños*. Their *fe* forms part of their identity and this intrinsic connection of an *Antigüeno* being a *cucurucho* defines Semana Santa in Antigua. The practices form the experiences of the *cucuruchos*, experiences influenced by the

material elements which constitute the tradition, such as the processional parts (the Bible-referring, evangelizing, decorated *andas* with the icon of Jesus or Mary, the *tsijolaj* and *tambor*, the Romans, the *pasos*, the people who incense, the *filas* and the *banda*).

The meaning of *música sacra* for the religious experience of the *cucuruchos* places material culture and experiential aspects at the center of religion. The centrality of materiality, practices and experience indicates a movement away from definitions of religion as ideology, scripture or doctrine towards a lived and material religion, proposed by Smart, Tieleman and Orsi (in Bowie 2005, Tieleman 2011, in Meyer 2012).

The religious expression of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, although based on scripture and liturgy, is described as *piedad popular* and characterized by many public events in which participants engage in practices, which form their experiences. The carrying in a procession must be seen in this light. *Cucuruchos*, dressed in their purple or black-white clothes, carry the *andas* according to their *turno* and *brazo* and on each street corner the carriers are alternated with new *cucuruchos*. The participation in processions results in emotional and religious experience, which defines Cuaresma and Semana Santa as an expression of lived religion. Lived religion refers to religion as one of the things people do in order to organize their worlds into coherent domains of experience (Morgan 2010, 18). Accordingly, practice and (religious and emotional) experience are the central elements of lived religion (McGuire 2008, 3-4) and the practice of carrying in the processions with the devotional essence of an *acercamiento* to God results in religious experience.

What people do is linked with things, which intrinsically connects lived religion to material religion: “the material culture of religion is the total range of objects and practices that engage the human body in acts of belief” (Brown 2013, 486). The acts of belief concern the participation in the processions, which involves the engagement of *cucuruchos* through material culture: the *anda* with the icons (dressed in tunics), the *adorno*, *alfombras*, *incienso*, all processional parts and the *música sacra*. Cuaresma and Semana Santa must therefore be seen as an expression of material religion as well. However, although in the scholarly literature the distinction between lived and material religion is made, the *cucuruchos* do not perceive the material aspects as material but as experiential, since these aspects form the experience through a mediation of the senses. In this way material religion turns into lived religion and material aspects become sensorial aspects.

The music, the *marchas fúnebres*, constitutes a fundamental component within the lived and material tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. As one of the material-sensorial aspects, it addresses the senses and mediates religious lived experience. This musical effect

exists by various characteristics of the *marchas fúnebres*: the specific style, the religious meaning and the capability of evoking emotions. Firstly, the style is characterized by minor scales, the *cuadratura*, a solemn rhythm and a mournful, heavy, melancholic sound. The *marchas* are played by percussion and wind instruments, each with their own voice, musical order and role: the *timpani*, *bombos*, *redoblante*, *platos*, *lira*, *piccolo*, *clarinets*, *trumpets*, *euphoniums*, *trombones* and *sousaphones*. Secondly, the *marchas* have an important meaning in the lives of the *Antigüerños*. The music is associated with the religious time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa and the meaning of *música sacra* is of a religious nature because *marchas* are connected to life passages of Jesus Christ and dedicated to icons or religious experiences. Thirdly, the style of the music and its religious meaning are connected to the practice of carrying, which results in the evocation and strengthening of emotions. According to Rice (2014, 76), Nussbaum (in Corrigan 2008) and Brown (in Corrigan 2008) the ability of music to move people emotionally is based on the reference of music to something other than the music itself. The ability of the *marchas* to move the *cucuruchos* emotionally is based on this too. Every *cucurucho* has his/her favorite *marcha*, which can be related to a specific church (in the case of the official *marchas*) and to memories of past experiences of Semana Santa, often connected to family members. Many *cucuruchos* have been *cucuruchos* almost their whole life, by having been raised with the tradition. Through families the devotion is transmitted; a family inheritance of the emotion, expectation and meaning of this time. This family-devotional formation marks life experiences of Semana Santa and are associated with and remembered through specific *marchas*. Besides the projection of the sentiment of the *marcha* via the conductor through the *banda*, the *marcha* played by the *banda* for the *cucurucho* carrying in the street of his *turno* thus evokes personal and family memories, which lead to strong emotions. The extra-musical expression of the *marchas* is made possible through an already-existing-in-the-mind-experience to which the music refers (Blacking 1969, 39), which in the case of the *marchas* are memories, resulting in an enhancement of consciousness of feelings by the music. This combination of memories, emotions and music forms part of the religious experience.

The experience of *cucuruchos* is characterized by various elements. The reason of participation is based on devotion, conviction and identification with the procession and icon, with the central purpose of penitence. The experience, although physically challenging, is considered as beautiful, characterized by memories and interior states of mind. Most importantly, the experience is defined as a religious experience, because on the moment of carrying a communication with God is established. In this devotional feeling and moment,

while carrying the *anda* as if it were the cross of Jesus, confessions, prayers, gratitude and penitence are expressed. Within the experience of *cucuruchos*, the music plays several roles aimed at several effects. The *marchas* provide the solemn character of a procession, with the optical effect of Jesus walking with the cross and a facilitation of advancement for the *cucuruchos*. Moreover, the music supports the evangelizing message and transmits, evokes and strengthens emotions, which causes spiritual states of mind (reflection, identification, inspiration, contemplation, interconnection with all aspects of the experience and the conjunction with sensations) in the *cucuruchos*. Ultimately, the *marchas* strengthen the religious experience, by enhancing the relation between the icon and *cucurucho* and providing the context for the establishment of the communication with God. In this way an *acercamiento* towards the religious activity and the contact with God is achieved, which causes even more sentiments. The music is thus seen as a spiritual guidance which moves the *cucuruchos* closer inside the participation of the religious activity: the *marchas* connect the *cucuruchos* more intensely with what they are doing and bring them closer to God. Blacking (1969, 59) argued that music enhances the quality of experience, which exactly does the *música sacra* in a spiritual way.

The above described process of *acercamiento* functions by the existence of the concept of aesthetics. Lived and material religion both comprise objects and practices with those objects, which involve the engagement of bodies, sensations, feelings and experiences (Morgan 2010, Brown 2013, 486). Humans, by mobilizing material aspects and by engaging in practices, create religious media. Through the senses (which are the media of the body (Plate 2012, 173)), materiality generates emotion which leads to a genesis of presence, a lived religious experience (Meyer, 2012, 22-27). The practice of carrying in the processions and the material forms of the processional parts and the sensorial elements (*imagen, túnica, adorno, alfombra, incienso* and the fundamental element of the *música sacra*), address the senses, thereby mediating and intensifying divine communication. In this creation of sensational forms and this process of aesthetic mediation (Meyer 2012), a mix of profound emotions and feelings is aroused. While the nature of emotions depends on life situations, many *cucuruchos* feel peace, love, tranquility, serenity, inspiration, gratefulness, satisfaction, devotion and most importantly *alegría*. The emotions cause internal, spiritual states of reflection and characterize the *cucuruchos'* experience.

In the process of aesthetic mediation (Meyer 2012) the *marchas fúnebres* must be seen as a fundamental material-sensorial complement in the processions. The musical effect congregates within all elements discussed and the music therefore lies deep inside the unique

cucuruchos' experience. The meaning of *marcha fúnebre* is placed in a triangle of religion, music and emotion: emotions can be aroused by music offered in a religious service and both religion and music convey levels of complexity which is the reason why music is an effective means of communicating with a God. As a consequence people's religious experience can be triggered by music and music can facilitate contact with the numinous (Brown in Corrigan 2008); Beck 2006, 14; Laack in Segal 2015). The processions of Semana Santa are the religious services in which the *música sacra* causes emotions and an *acercamiento* towards the religious activity and communication with God.

In conclusion, the *marchas fúnebres* are the fundamental complement for the experience of *cucuruchos*. The *marchas* refer to extra-musical family memories which evoke emotions. They provide the context for and strengthen the *acercamiento* towards the communication with God, hereby intensifying feelings. As one of the sensorial elements and processional parts, the music therefore concerns the material culture that by the engagement of the senses mediates emotions and lived religious experience.

By giving insights into the meaning of music for the religious experience of the *cucuruchos* in the processions during Cuaresma and Semana Santa in Antigua, Guatemala, this research contributes to the theoretical connection of the phenomena and concepts of music and religion. Especially since their relation has not been given a lot of attention in anthropological literature, this research demonstrates the important place of music within the lived religious tradition of Semana Santa and the significance of studying this place to grasp experience. Since both religion and music rely on emotions and sensations (Laack 2015), religious and musical feelings can result in similar experiences towards the numinous (Otto in Beck 2006, 4; Otto in Laack 2015, 223). Both the religious activity of carrying in the processions and the *marchas* evoke emotions and direct religious experiences, whereby the *marchas* strengthen this divine communication. This research thus proves the argument that music often lies at the heart of religious cosmologies (Laack in Segal 2015) and that it is impossible to effectively penetrate a religious tradition without the musical dimension (Beck 2006). The fundamental role of the *marchas fúnebres* in the processions of an *acercamiento* towards God demonstrates the intrinsic connection between music and religious celebration and makes the experience of the religious tradition of Semana Santa understandable.

Moreover, by having recognized music as a fundamental material-sensorial element in the processions of Semana Santa (and by having explained all other material-sensorial aspects and processional parts which form part of the experience), this research places the recently

developed theory of material religion at the central stage. The recognition of music in the religious tradition of Semana Santa as material religion has increased the anthropological literature about the link between music and recent developed concepts within the anthropology of religion. This study on the tradition of Semana Santa demonstrates that the attraction, meaning and importance of this celebration can only be understood by using a more experiential and materially oriented definition of religion, together with a central role for aesthetics.

Furthermore, this research contributes to a diffusion of knowledge about the beautiful tradition of Semana Santa and specifically the role and meaning of the *marchas fúnebres*. This contribution forms both an academic relevance, since little literature exists about Semana Santa and her music, and a social relevance of introducing this religious celebration to a broader, foreign public. Through the systematic documentation and analysis of the meaning and events of Cuaresma and Semana Santa, of the style, organization, function and effect of the *marchas fúnebres*, of the experiences and feelings of *cucuruchos* and musicians, and of the meaning of the music for the religious experience, the knowledge about this tradition has been made accessible to a broader public and the *Antigüehños* themselves.

Lastly, the academic concepts of lived religion, material religion and aesthetics have been applied in a Catholic research context. This research therefore contributes to the completion of the material turn, by having used the theory of the material dimension of religion with a focus on Catholicism.

Finally, since this research is only one research, based on a relatively short period of fieldwork, much more and extended research about Semana Santa can be done. Semana Santa exists in diverse places of the world and therefore has many local variations with elaborate, interesting and relatively unknown elements. Moreover, with respect to the *música sacra*, a whole world of music is ready to be discovered. From various academic perspectives there still are many possibilities to study numerous musical themes within the tradition of Semana Santa.

This research offered insights into the religious worldviews and experiences of *Antigüehños* as *cucuruchos* in the processions of Semana Santa. It demonstrated the meaning of music inside religious experience: it described the tradition of Semana Santa, which has a tremendous importance for many devotees around the world and it showed the power of music, which plays an important role in human feelings and experiences. Already a long time ago Blacking (1969, 68) formulated this musical force: ‘the aim of music is to make people

more aware and thus more human’’. Therefore this research is also a plea for curiosity and open mindedness, aspects that define the scientific anthropological discipline. In our current rapidly changing world incomprehension, boundaries, fear and suspicion dominate human communication. This is the reason that I call for an opening of the senses: to listen to each other, to see the beauty in each other and to feel the point of view of each other. Mutual curiosity and respect will open the context for an inclusive communication, where trust, appreciation for cultural diversity and faith can be build, as the *cucuruchos* of Antigua have shown.

Now, in The Netherlands, my fieldwork in Antigua, Guatemala resides in my body, I
still smell the flowers
see the vivid purple flooding the city
feel the enormous weight on my left shoulder
smell the smoke of the *incienso*
see the cradling movement of the *anda* in the processions
feel the soft touch of the *alfombras*
smell the *corozo*
see the icons
feel the devotion, emotion and experience of the stories of the *cucuruchos*
And when I close my eyes, I still hear the
Sound of Semana Santa

Glossary

Acercamiento: Coming closer, approach, closer connection

Acto de Traslado y Unición: Service in *La Merced* whereby the hands of the icons are cleaned with cotton cloths and they are placed on the processional *andas*

Adorno: Evangelizing decoration with biblical meaning on the processional *anda*

Alegría: Joy, happiness

Alfombra: Carpet made of *asserrín*, flowers or vegetables

Alterero: Person who invents the design of the *velación*

Anda: Wooden platform carried in the processions, with on top the *adorno* and icon

Añelina: Paint used to color the *asserrín*

Antigüeños: Inhabitants of Antigua

Asserrín: Painted sawdust

Avenida: Avenue

Ayuno: Abstention

Banda: Musical band consisting of wind instruments and percussion, accompanying the procession and playing the *marchas fúnebres*

Barones: Men

Bocadilla: Technique of forming the lips and mouth for playing a wind instrument

Bombo: Percussion, bass drum

Brazo: Arm, place at the processional *anda* while carrying

Calle ancha: Famous street outside the center of Antigua where beautiful *alfombras* are made on *Viernes Santo*

Calle: Street

Ceniza: Ash

Cofradías: Former *hermandades*

Colaboradores: Young boys who help the *socios* and want to become member of the *hermandad*

Color: Color

Consagrada: Consecrated, recognition by a bishop of exceptional devotion towards an icon

Coros angelicales: Processional element, angels which bear the symbols of the Pasion

Corozo: A special formed plant with a recognizable smell, typical for the time of Cuaresma and *Semana Santa*

Cuadra: Streetblock

Cuadratura: The counting of four of a music piece

Cuaresma: Lent

Cucuruchos: Carriers in the processions

Custodia: A golden instrument in the form of the sun, containing the wafer

Diagrama: Technique of breathing and tensing the stomach muscles for playing a wind instrument

Domingo de Ramos: (literally) Sunday of branches, first Sunday of Semana Santa

Domingo de Resurrección: (literally) Sunday of resurrection, last Sunday of Semana Santa

Entrada: The entry of the procession in the church, end of the procession

Fe: Faith

Fila: (literally) Row, processional walking line of *cucuruchos* to accompany the procession

Flagelación: Flagellation

Guatemaltecos: Inhabitants of Guatemala

Hermandad: Fraternity

Hora Santa: (literally) Holy hour, church service in which the *custodia* is shown

Imagen: Icon

Incensar: To incense

Incienso: Scented smoke containing myrrh, dispersed through an iron instrument

Insignia: Card indicating the *hermandad*, *turno* and *brazo*, pinned on the chest of *cucuruchos*

Jacaranda: Tree with purple blossom, typical for the time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa

Jesús Nazareno de la Caída: (literally) Falling Jesus of Nazareth, icon of San Bartolomé

Jesús Nazareno: (literally) Jesus of Nazareth, the icon depicting Jesus carrying the cross

Jesús Sepultado: The icon depicting a passed away Jesus

Jueves Santo: Holy Thursday

Ladino: Opposite of indigenous, mixed descent

Lunes Santo: Holy Monday

Madrileña: head scarf, part of the outfit for women who carry in the processions

Madrugada: Silent *via crucis* on the last Friday and Saturday before Semana Santa

Marcadores de paso: Percussionists who play in between the end of the *marcha* and the next turn

Marcha fúnebre: (literally) Funeral march, the style of music understood as *música sacra*

Martes Santo: Holy Tuesday

Matraca: Processional element, wooden instrument used as signal of proceeding

Miercoles de Ceniza: Ash Wednesday

Miercoles Santo: Holy Wednesday

Ministros de la Comunión: Persons who help the *sacerdote* to perform the Eucharist

Mirada: Gaze, often referring to the face and eyes of the icon

Música Sacra: Holy music

Obispo: Diocese

Olor: Smell

Palio: Processional element, fabric roof carried by six persons, denoting a *consagrada* icon

Paso: Station in the *via crucis*, images of passages of the way of Jesus with the cross

Piedad popular: Public/popular devotion

Pino peinado: Pine leaves collocated in straight lines

Pino: Pine leaves

Pintura: Acrylic paint, background of the *velación*

Platos: Percussion, cymbals

Ramos: Branches, sold on *Domingo de Ramos* and burnt for *Miercoles de Ceniza*

Redoblante: Percussion, regular drum

Sábado de Gloria: (literally) Saturday of glory

Sabor: Taste

Sacerdote: Priest

Sagrario: Exhibition of the wafer in a special place of the church on *Jueves Santo*

Salida: The exit of the procession outside the church, begin of the procession

Semana de Dolores: (literally) Week of pain, week before *Semana Santa*

Semana Santa: Holy Week

Sentencia: The reading of the death sentence of Jesus by Pilatus

Sentido: Meaning

Sentimiento: Feeling

Socios: General members of the *hermandad*

Sonido: Sound

Tambor: Cross drum adapted from the European drum, initiating the procession

Timbales: Timpani

Traslado: The movement of the icon, placement of the icon on the *anda*

Tsijolaj: Pre-Hispanic, indigenous traditional Guatemalan flute, initiating the procession

Túnica: Tunic

Turno: Turn in which one will carry

Velación: Veiling, evangelizing biblical scene in the apse of the church with *alfombra*

Via Crucis: The way of the cross

Viernes Santo: Holy Friday, most important day of Semana Santa

Virgen de Dolores: The icon of the virgin of sorrows, recognized by open hands

Virgen de la Soledad: The icon of the virgin of solitude, recognized by her interlaced hands

Voz alta: A prayer by the *sacerdote* in a singing manner

Resumen

El tema de esta investigación antropológica es el significado de la música (marchas fúnebres) para la experiencia religiosa de los participantes (cucuruchos) en las procesiones durante la Cuaresma y Semana Santa en Antigua, Guatemala. Semana Santa conmemora la Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección de Jesús Cristo. Semana Santa está precedida por Cuaresma, un período de cuarenta días para cambiar, ayunar y reflejar. La tradición de la Cuaresma y Semana Santa en Antigua está caracterizada por muchas prácticas, conectadas a todos los eventos que tienen lugar durante este tiempo: *Miercoles de Ceniza*, *via crucis*, actividades infantiles, *velaciones*, servicios, conciertos, el *acto de Traslado y Unición* y, más importante, las procesiones que duran de doce a diecinueve horas, que son la expresión principal de la Cuaresma y Semana Santa. Por lo tanto cargar las andas a hombros en las procesiones elaboradas es la práctica central durante este tiempo para los devotos Antigüños.

Una procesión consiste en cargar las imágenes de Jesús y María en grandes andas de madera por las calles de Antigua. Los hombres que participan cargan la imagen de Jesús y las mujeres la imagen de María. Cada cuadra los cargadores son relevados con nuevos cargadores. El significado de las procesiones en Semana Santa coincide con el día y significado en la historia de la Pasión. La esencia devocional es el acercamiento a Dios.

Las procesiones incluyen muchos aspectos materiales, como sus partes y elementos sensoriales: las andas decoradas con una referencia Bíblica para evangelizar junto con las imágenes de Jesús o María; los instrumentos de tsijolaj y tambor que simbolizan el inicio de una procesión; hombres vestidos como soldados Romanos; los pasos; la gente que incensan con el incienso, dispersando un humo perfumado; las filas de cucuruchos vestidos con sus túnicas moradas o negras-blancas, que acompañan la procesión; el adorno; las alfombras de aserrín, flores y verduras que cubren las calles procesionales como una ofrenda para la imagen que pasará; y la banda que acompaña la procesión, tocando las marchas fúnebres.

El significado de las marchas fúnebres para la experiencia de los cucuruchos sitúa cultura material y aspectos experienciales en el centro de la religión. Las prácticas forman las experiencias de los cucuruchos, experiencias influenciadas por la cultura material de las procesiones. La participación en las procesiones resulta en una experiencia emocional y religiosa, y por lo tanto la centralidad de la materialidad, de las prácticas y de la experiencia define la tradición de la Cuaresma y Semana Santa como una expresión de la religión vivida y material.

La música constituye un complemento fundamental dentro de la tradición vivida y

material de la Cuaresma y Semana Santa. La música, como aspecto material y sensorial, se dirige a los sentidos y media la experiencia religiosa vivida. Este efecto musical existe por varias características de las marchas fúnebres: el estilo específico, el significado religioso y la capacidad de evocar emociones. Primero, el estilo está caracterizado por escalas menores, la cuadratura, el ritmo solemne y un sonido pesado, intenso y melancólico. Las marchas son tocadas con percusión e instrumentos de viento: timbales, bombos, el redoblante, platos, la lira, el piccolo, clarinetes, trompetas, baritonos, trombones y sousafones. Segundo, las marchas tienen un significado importante en las vidas de los Antiguieños. La música está asociada con el tiempo religioso de la Cuaresma y Semana Santa. El significado de la música sacra tiene una esencia religiosa porque las marchas están conectadas a pasajes de vida de Jesús Cristo y están dedicadas a imágenes o experiencias religiosas. Tercero, el estilo musical y el significado religioso de la música están conectados a la práctica de cargar, que resulta en la evocación y el fortalecimiento de las emociones. La capacidad de mover emocionalmente a los cucuruchos se basa en una referencia extra-musical a los recuerdos. Cada cucurucho tiene su marcha favorita, que puede estar relacionada con las marchas oficiales de las iglesias y con recuerdos de experiencias anteriores de Semana Santa, a menudo conectados con miembros de la familia. Muchos cucuruchos han sido cucuruchos por casi todas sus vidas, debido a que han crecido con esa tradición. Las marchas, tocadas por la banda para la imagen que va cargando el cucurucho en la calle de su respectivo turno, evocan recuerdos personales y familiares, que llevan a emociones fuertes. Esta combinación de los recuerdos, de las emociones y de la música forma parte de la experiencia religiosa.

La experiencia de los cucuruchos está caracterizada por varios elementos. La razón de la participación se basa en la devoción, convicción e identificación con la procesión y la imagen. La penitencia es el objeto central. La experiencia, aunque físicamente desafiante, es considerada como bonita, porque esta se define como una experiencia religiosa. En el momento de cargar se establece una comunicación con Dios y en ese sentimiento y momento devocional, cargando el anda como si fuera la cruz de Jesús, se expresan confesiones, oraciones, agradecimientos y penitencias.

Dentro de la experiencia de los cucuruchos, la música desempeña varios roles, dirigidos a varios efectos. Las marchas dan el carácter solemne a la procesión, con el efecto óptico de Jesús caminando con la cruz y el efecto de la facilitación de avanzar para los cucuruchos. Además, la música apoya el mensaje evangelizador y transmite, evoca y fortalece emociones, que causan estados espirituales de la mente (reflexión, identificación, inspiración, contemplación) en los cucuruchos.

Por último, la música es una guía espiritual que acerca a los cucuruchos más adentro en la participación de la actividad religiosa. Las marchas fortalecen la experiencia religiosa debido a que producen un acercamiento en la comunicación con Dios.

Este acercamiento funciona por el proceso de mediación estética. Las marchas fúnebres, como uno de los elementos materiales y sensoriales fundamentales y parte de las procesiones, dirigen los sentidos de los cucuruchos en el momento de cargar, de este modo mediando e intensificando la comunicación divina. Este proceso despierta una mezcla de emociones y sentimientos profundos. Mientras la esencia de las emociones depende de las situaciones de la vida, muchos cucuruchos sienten paz, amor, tranquilidad, serenidad, inspiración, gratitud, satisfacción, devoción y, más importante, alegría.

En conclusión: como uno de los elementos sensoriales y parte de las procesiones, la música es la cultura material que, por dirigir los sentidos, media emociones y experiencias religiosas vividas.

Summary

The subject of this fieldwork-based anthropological research is the meaning of music (*marchas fúnebres*) for the religious experience of participants (*cucuruchos*) in the processions during Cuaresma and Semana Santa (holy week) in Antigua, Guatemala. Semana Santa commemorates the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is preceded by Cuaresma, a period of forty days meant for change, *ayuno* (abstention) and reflection. The tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa in Antigua is characterized by many practices connected to all events that take place during this time: *Miercoles de Ceniza*, *via crucis*, child activities, *velaciones*, services, concerts, the *acto de Traslado y Unición*, and, most importantly, the twelve to nineteen hours processions which concern the main expression of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. During this time the carrying in the elaborate processions therefore is the central practice of the devote *Antigüeños*.

A procession consists of carrying the icons of Jesus and Mary on large, wooden, decorated platforms (the *andas*) through the streets of Antigua. Participating men carry the icon of Jesus, participating women carry Mary. On each street corner the carriers are alternated with new *cucuruchos*. The meaning of the processions in Semana Santa coincide with the day and meaning in the story of the Pasión and the devotional essence of a procession concerns an *acercamiento*, a coming closer, to God.

The processions comprise many material aspects, such as the processional parts and the sensorial elements: the Bible-referring, evangelizing, decorated *andas* with the icon of Jesus or Mary; the instruments of the *tsijolaj* (flute) and *tambor* (drum) which symbolize the beginning of the procession; men dressed as Roman soldiers; the *pasos*, images that depict passages of the way of the cross of Jesus Christ; the people who incense with the *inciense*, waving an iron instrument back and forth, hereby dispersing the scented smoke; the *filas* consisting of the *cucuruchos* dressed in their purple or black-white tunics who accompany the procession and walk in rows on both sides of the street; the *adorno*, the decoration of the *anda*; the *alfombras*, colorful carpets made of sawdust, flowers and vegetables, covering the processional streets as an offering for the icon that will pass over; and the *banda*, the marching band that accompanies the procession by playing *marchas fúnebres*.

The meaning of the *marchas fúnebres* for the religious experience of the *cucuruchos* places material culture and experiential aspects at the center of religion. The practices form the experiences of the *cucuruchos*, experiences influenced by the above described material culture of the processions. Participation in the processions results in emotional and religious

experience, and the centrality of materiality, practices and experience therefore defines the tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa as an expression of lived and material religion.

The music constitutes a fundamental component within the lived and material tradition of Cuaresma and Semana Santa. As one of the material-sensorial aspects, it addresses the senses and mediates religious lived experience. This musical effect exists by various characteristics of the *marchas fúnebres*: the specific style, the religious meaning and the capability of evoking emotions. Firstly, the style is characterized by minor scales, the *cuadratura* (the counting in four), a solemn rhythm and a mournful, heavy, melancholic sound. The *marchas* are played by percussion and wind instruments: the *timpani*, *bombos*, *redoblante*, *platos*, *lira*, *piccolo*, clarinets, trumpets, euphoniums, trombones and sousaphones. Secondly, the *marchas* have an important meaning in the lives of the *Antigüeños*. The music is associated with the religious time of Cuaresma and Semana Santa and the meaning of *música sacra* is of a religious nature because *marchas* are connected to life passages of Jesus Christ and dedicated to icons or religious experiences. Thirdly, the style of the music and its religious meaning are connected to the practice of carrying, which results in the evocation and strengthening of emotions. The ability of the *marchas* to move the *cucuruchos* emotionally is based on an extra-musical reference to memories. Every *cucurucho* has his/her favorite *marcha*, which can be related to official *marchas* of churches and to memories of past experiences of Semana Santa, often connected to family members. Many *cucuruchos* have been *cucuruchos* almost their whole life, by having been raised with the tradition. The *marcha* played by the *banda* for the *cucurucho* carrying in the street of his *turno* (turn) evokes personal and family memories, which lead to strong emotions. This combination of memories, emotions and music forms part of the religious experience.

The experience of *cucuruchos* is characterized by various elements. The reason of participation is based on devotion, conviction and identification with the procession and icon, with the central purpose of penitence. The experience, although physically challenging, is considered as beautiful, because the experience is defined as a religious experience. On the moment of carrying a communication with God is established and in this devotional feeling and moment, while carrying the *anda* as if it were the cross of Jesus, confessions, prayers, gratitude and penitence are expressed.

Within the experience of *cucuruchos*, the music plays several roles aimed at several effects. The *marchas* provide the solemn character of a procession, with the optical effect of Jesus walking with the cross and a facilitation of advancement for the *cucuruchos*. Moreover, the music supports the evangelizing message and transmits, evokes and strengthens emotions,

which causes spiritual states of mind (reflection, identification, inspiration, contemplation) in the *cucuruchos*. Ultimately, the music is a spiritual guidance which moves the *cucuruchos* closer inside the participation of the religious activity. The *marchas* strengthen the religious experience through the *acercamiento* towards the communication with God.

This *acercamiento* functions by the process of aesthetic mediation. The *marchas fúnebres*, as one of the fundamental material-sensorial elements and processional parts address the senses of the *cucuruchos* on the moment of carrying, thereby mediating and intensifying divine communication. In this process a mix of profound emotions and feelings is aroused. While the nature of emotions depends on life situations, many *cucuruchos* feel peace, love, tranquility, serenity, inspiration, gratefulness, satisfaction, devotion and most importantly *alegría* (joy/happiness).

In conclusion: as one of the sensorial elements and processional parts, the music concerns the material culture that by the engagement of the senses mediates emotions and lived religious experience.

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Appendices

The appendices are meant for elaboration on a topic or for displaying examples. Moreover, audiovisual material is connected to certain words in the text of the whole thesis.

Appendix 1: Preparation of the *velación* in La Merced

Firstly, wooden construction frames (including the processional *anda*) were carried inside by many men. One of the early tasks was to build the various levels of structures in the apse for the different levels of paintings that were hung up, showing the backgrounds of the biblical scene. The meters long *pintura*'s²⁷⁹ (acrylic paints) were made by Oscar, his brother and nephew during 15 hours of hard work and had to be unrolled and lifted at the same time by using a pulley. Meanwhile, the immense purple curtains with white cloths were brought in, connected to wooden beams and through ropes and a pulley lifted to a height of the edge of the vault. With a group of at least ten persons, the curtain had to be maneuvered past columns and decorations; a precise, nerve-racking task. Together with other members I closed my eyes out of fear when a flexible, strong, young men climbed to this edge and started running, in order to check whether the decoration hung straight (he even started calling standing on this edge!). Later the same boy, climbing as a monkey, attached all the vertical, heavy flower pieces against those curtains, using an iron construction of five meters.

In the middle of the proceedings the members suddenly fell silent and stopped working: a *traslado* took place, when a group of women holding candles carefully removed the icon of Mary from the glass case. The men stroke a cross when she passed and the work continued while the women dressed up the icon in a separate room. On the sound of a bell the group was silent again and watched the placement of the in white dressed Mary within the biblical scene of the *velación*, which represented the 'contemplation of the virgin when she saw her son's face'.

Other tasks that had to be performed were the dressing up of other icons which were to be used in the biblical scene, the technique (colored lights) and the making of the *alfombra* during the second part of the night. One commission of approximately eight people, their hands blue of the *asserrín* (sawdust) made this butterflies and insects figured carpet, using advanced techniques of overlapping colors. Previously, numerous trolleys with an unthinkable amount of fruits and vegetables was brought in, to be located above the figure of the *asserrín*-part at the final phase of the whole preparation process.

²⁷⁹ The idea of this *pintura* was selected the best out of five by the *hermandad*.

Appendix 2: The processions on the five Sundays of Cuaresma

The procession on the [first Sunday](#) of Cuaresma (05-03-2017) began in the church of Santa Catarina de Bombadilla, a village nearby. This was the first procession I would see and in search of a place where it would pass by, I followed the vendors and streams of purple. Together with many other viewers I waited on the curb in the burning sun, not even able to imagine the heat the *cucuruchos* should feel, wearing their tunic on top of their normal clothes. Before me the *filas* of *cucuruchos* started moving, I smelled the sharp, sweet smell of the *inciense* and far away I could hear the music already. I felt tensed, excited. Then, for the first time in my life, I saw the huge platform turning towards me amidst the mystical smoke. Serene and elegant it cradled above the heads of the people, almost like a dance. Golden decorations adorned the *anda*, with angels' heads on the sides and corners and white vases on the edges. The icon of Jesus walking with his cross was placed in the middle, faced by an icon of a kneeling woman with little girl and behind him an icon of a man with little boy. The weight was expressed by the tensed expressions of the *cucuruchos*, their heads slightly bowed forwards. Approximately forty musicians superseded. The second, smaller *anda* showed the icon of Mary with nimbus before a cross, an icon of a woman kneeling before her as well and was again followed by a *banda*. The meaning of the procession was explained to me by Jorge, a man who stood next to me while watching. It welcomed the ones who had been persecuted for 'the good cause'; their religion.

The procession on the [second Sunday](#) of Cuaresma was organized by the church of Santa Inez, a village on walking distance from Antigua. I therefore walked to the church, seeing fathers putting on their tunics at the side of the road, together with their sons. An enormous *alfombra* covered the ground towards the church gate, surrounded by Roman soldiers, enclosing the place with their lances. I could barely move and breath. Sweating, pressed between other viewers I heard the collective prayer of everyone around me, after which the music inside the church began. Slowly the *anda* moved outside, directly showing its meaning: Adam and Eva, half-naked, their hands covering their eyes out of shame, constituted the front part of the *anda*, depicting the sinfulness and mortality of man. The same text as on *Miercoles de Ceniza* was used. A lying bible, carried by the symbolic animals of the evangelists, provided a platform for the icon of Jesus with his cross. On the back of the *anda* a text could be read: "creo en un solo bautismo, bautismo para el perdon de los pecados" (I believe in one baptism, baptism for the forgiveness of sins). In this way the three parts were connected in meaning: the cause of sins, the sacrifice of Jesus for this sins and the way to be

forgiven. The *anda* of the virgin read: ‘‘Mother Mary, here is your son’’ and ‘‘Son, here is your mother’’.

The procession on the [third Sunday](#) of Cuaresma began in the village of Jojotenango. Around 8.00 p.m. I sat in the central park, together with two young *cucuruchos*, who were resting from all the walking and preparing for their second turn. [Central park](#) in front of the lighted cathedral concerns the most special place, the most important moment, they told. Every *cucurucho* dreams of carrying here.

The giant square was filled with people who had come to watch and live religious music was performed by two singers until the beautifully illuminated *anda* appeared. Some words were spoken by the *sacerdote* about the meaning of the procession, which in this procession was the power of God to destroy anything, even stones, if He wants to. The meaning referred to the passage in the Bible when God destroyed a temple within three days because of idolatry. A new temple originated, with Jesus as leader, where we all belong. The dark colored *anda* therefore depicted broken pieces of temple stones, with Jesus carrying his cross on top of a thorn crown. The second *anda* showed the icon of Mary with a long, black tunic, draped over short columns.

The procession on the fourth Sunday of Cuaresma is organized in Santa Ana²⁸⁰.

The procession on the [fifth Sunday](#) of Cuaresma begins and ends in the church of San Bartolomé. This concerns one of the biggest processions during the whole period of Cuaresma and Semana Santa and is characterized by many visitors and participants from outside Antigua²⁸¹. The reason for this is twofold: the icon of the *Jesús Nazareno de la Caída* concerns the only icon that depicts the moment when Jesus falls by the weight of the cross. Many people therefore have a special devotion towards this icon²⁸², which is the reason they come to Antigua. Secondly, in no other place a procession takes place on this day, which gives the opportunity to carry in this one. Because of this influx the procession is more chaotic, in contrast to the traditional processions of the *Antigüeños* (such as *Escuela de Cristo*, *La Merced*, *San Francisco*), which are therefore stronger connected to the identity of the city. *Cucuruchos* for example, don't need any words for keeping the order: a movement from back to forth, with one touch on the back, means to stop walking. When someone is distracted for a split second, the key is ‘‘*vamos señores*’’, to start walking again: ‘‘it is a non-written code,

²⁸⁰ I was not able to attend this procession, which is the reason that I do not have information about this day.

²⁸¹ Out of maybe eight/nine million *cucuruchos*, only 2,5 million are *Antigüenos* (Enrique Berduo, interview).

²⁸² Because it is the only one of this kind and has performed many miracles, as people say.

part of being a *cucurucho*,²⁸³.

For the procession of San Bartolomé the most beautiful *alfombras* during Cuaresma are made. On every little space on the curbs whole families are waiting to see the procession, all sorts of vendors passing by in front of them. The central park only consists of people, crammed together behind the outlet gates. Although walking is almost impossible, it is the best option since the traffic is completely blocked: rows of cars as far as one can see stand for hours in immobile positions.

From my balcony, I could see the colored street, shrouded in smoke of the *incienso*. During many consecutive minutes an inexhaustible amount of *cucuruchos* in *filas* walked by. Then, far away, I heard the *música sacra*, a sign that the procession is close. The biggest *anda* so far, with the largest amount of musicians behind, cradled below my balcony. The meaning was: ‘*de la misericordia a salvacion*’ (from mercy to salvation), expressed by a sea-theme, showing a boat with the icon and angels who saved glass-made persons out of the water. The *anda* with Mary was based on the same theme, with the text: ‘*salve reina y madre*’ (hail queen and mother).

Appendix 3: Velaciones

I attended almost all *velaciones* in the churches in Antigua and, especially in the evenings, I tried to see these artistic pieces, pressed between the people, slowly shuffling forward, moved by the crowd, avoiding the innumerable camera’s.

01-03-2017: *velación San Felipe*

San Felipe is a village nearby Antigua, also executing major processions during Semana Santa. In the center of the village a yellow church contained a *velación*, the first of Cuaresma. The meaning was: ‘*la fe de una mujer cananea*’ (the faith of a Canaanite woman). The biblical passage is about a woman from Canaan, who begs Jesus to help her daughter who is possessed by demons. Jesus’ disciples say to him that he should help because otherwise she will come after them. Consequently, Jesus says: “first let the children eat all they want, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.” “Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs. Thereafter Jesus thinks she has a great faith and cures her daughter.

The scene in the altar depicted a desert-like background with little houses. Colored cloths surrounded the altar. Several paper figures including the sitting Canaanite woman

²⁸³ Enrique Berduo, interview.

formed the representation of the passage. The *alfombra* of *asserrín* in front could be watched and smelled, the flowers around mainly colored in white, red and blue.

03-03-2017: velación cathedral

This concerned one of the first *velaciones* as well. The background of the scene consisted of papers simulating layered cloths. Painted persons were portrayed in the background landscape and solely one icon was shown: the icon of Jesus, the central figure, on the cross. The explanation, displayed below the scene, was: “*uno de los soldados le abrió el costado de una lanzada y al instante salió sangre y agua*” (one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water). The scene depicted Jesus and the two prisoners on the crosses, Roman soldiers, of whom one injured Jesus, and mourning people around. Visitors stroke a cross when entering, watched, took a picture or knelt and prayed in the benches. The *alfombra* in front exhibited symmetrical placed birds and a crucifixion among sunset. Fruits and vegetables surrounded the *alfombra* (for example lime, pineapple, melon and banana) in turn surrounded by various colors of flowers in vases, which were enclosed by rows of candles.

10-03-2017: velación Santa Inez

Santa Inez is a small village very close to Antigua. This means that many *Antigüeños* are able to walk from the city to Santa Inez, resulting in crowds moving on one side of the closed down road, with many food stalls on the side. Just next to the road, a steep, high staircase leads to the yellow church of Santa Inez. Being the only blond haired person, I walked through the dense crowd and I stood in one of the two rows which already started outside, waiting to enter the big wooden doors of the church (there also was a separate exit).

The scene referred to the institution of the Eucharist: “*tomad y comed, esto es mi cuerpo, Que es entregado por vosotros*” (take and eat, this is my body that is surrendered for you); while eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, divided it and give it to his disciples, expressing these words. Then he took a cup and gave it to his disciples, saying: “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

On the explanation paper the reflection concerns a guide how to live, referring to this passage: we have to be like Jesus, in our treatments of Him, in acts of reconciliation, in charity towards others, in the love for the Eucharist. Jesus thus instituted the Eucharist with

the words: “*mi cuerpo entregado, mi sangre derramada*” (my body surrendered, my blood shed).

11-03-2017: velación Jojotenango

Jojotenango as well is a village nearby Antigua, executing one procession on a Sunday during Cuaresma. Together with Miguel I visited this village and beautiful, dark orange, white detailed decorated church. As always, the square was filled with people and food stalls. This church constitutes a rich church, to be noted since this *velación* was dedicated to the virgin, while the next Friday would dedicate a second one to Jesus. The scene represented “the pain the virgin experienced when Jesus was sentenced”. The background painting consisted of several layers and the *alfombra* was long and pretty.

31-03-2017: velación San Bartolomé

On Facebook the image of the *velación* of San Bartolomé could be seen. It depicted the *flagelación*, the flagellation of Jesus: kneeling, tied to a column with a Roman soldier behind him with the whip. In the background Pilatus sat on his throne, next to him a black slave. The scene was half-circular formed, with on the left side the gate with a fence through which many people were looking, and on the right side three persons: the two Mary’s and saint John.

01-04-2017: velación cathedral

This scene represented the moment when Jesus was already descended from the cross and when he is laying on a white small bed with Mary standing next to him, mourning. The background showed a pink and dark blue colored sky with angels in the left corner and a big dove in the middle. The *alfombra* was made up of an outer line consisting of an alternation of various sorts of fruits and vegetables, with zucchinis in the form of a cross in front, filled with white unions and carrots around. Located at the top was the famous *corozo* ; a kind of special formed plant with a recognizable smell, typical for only this time of the year. The *asserrín* in the middle showed five vertical squares with birds.

01-04-2017: velación San Fransisco

During this *velación*, the church was overloaded with people! It concerned the first *velación* in which the other figures than the main icon not merely were displayed as flat images in the background painting, but as icons themselves, constituting an independent

scene. It depicted the crucifixion, with a Roman soldier, saint John and two Mary's at the bottom of the cross. The background painting showed a kind of sunlight. The particular smell of the *alfombra* could be sensed from far, mainly because of the use of fruits and vegetables. As often, this *alfombra* was formed perfectly symmetrically, with a semi-circular bow in front. Especially the melons were cut in an artistic way. This *velación* was the first as well with cages in which birds were singing: five white, symmetrically placed cages with two birds inside of each provided the sounds of the *velación*.

01-04-2017: velación Escuela de Cristo

Surprisingly, this *velación* did not contain an *alfombra*. This scene as well depicted the crucifixion, with several independent icons. The background solely consisted of dark blue cloths. Two big candle holders and two angels flanked the scene.

05-04-2017: velación Escuela de Cristo

This *velación* on the Wednesday in *Semana de Dolores* was one of the busiest visited scenes. Especially in the evening, the square in front of the church was filled with people, eating food from the green roofed stalls or selling goods. The streets, covered in fallen blossom of the purple *jacaranda* tree, were closed down for traffic. Inside the church the gold, black and red cloths of decoration started already halfway the building which are the typical colors of *Escuela de Cristo*. It was the first time that music could be heard: a woman's voice sang religious songs. The scene was completely independent, without any paintings. The background consisted of a black cloth surrounded by the multiple layered typical colored cloths. This *velación* was dedicated to Mary, depicted below an enormous crown which functioned as a roof. A text described her as: "la reina de los angeles" (the queen of the angels). All colored cloths around her were red and she herself wore blue (as often). A stairway led to the crown; a stairway on which angels stood on both sides, holding cloths as well. In front, a low, white wall was seated on by little, chubby angels. The *alfombra* was stunning: green formed the central color and everything sparkled because of the use of little glass pieces. The *alfombra* showed circles of *asserrín*, surrounded by lines of fruits and vegetables, in turn surrounded by candles, flowers and two banners of the *hermandad*. Even in between de candles and flowers icons of angels were located.

On an explanation paper²⁸⁴ the meaning of the *velación* was described: hail queen of

²⁸⁴ On this paper, two black and white colored images of Mary are shown, tears streaming from her eyes. Texts of several popes are referred to and on the back a prayer is written (*Salve, reina de los cielos, y señora de los*

heaven and lady of the angels. The kingship of Jesus and Mary is not from this world, though it is connected to human history since the Son, made from God, came as man through the Holy Spirit via Mary. This kingship is rooted by means of the cross. All societies of the world experience the maternal kingship of Mary which comes closest to the kingship of Jesus Christ. Mary is the queen of all angels and men, because Jesus placed her above everything created. Mary is queen for her intimate relation with the royalty of Christ. It constitutes an union between God, Jesus and Mary.

06-04-2017: velación cathedral

The meaning of this *velación* was: “*Jesús bendice a los niños*” (Jesus blesses the children). The scene depicted children who want to touch Jesus. Mothers with their children stood around him. The background showed a desert-like landscape with the sun, a road and houses.

The explanation paper describes that according to the story, the disciples wanted to rebuke the children, but Jesus said: “*dejen que los niños vengan a mí*” (let the little children come to me) “and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them

The reflection about the scene refers to the evangelist Marcus who wrote that all people should be like children. To enter the kingship of God we have to be obedient to the commands of God, to respect our parents and to help all the brothers who are in need. Like this we live as a child.

07-04-2017: velación La Merced

Around 7.30 p.m. the square in front of *La Merced* was so full of people that it was almost impossible to work my way through the crowd. The typical, green roofed food stalls diffused a strong smell and other stalls sold candy's and plastic toys. Because of the amount of people, a ribbon marked the separation between rows for entering and leaving the church. Inside the church benches were located at the sides on which many people sat. I barely could move to the front, but since this *velación* depicted the scene on which was worked on during the night of preparation that I attended, this was not necessary.

angeles; salve raíz, salve puerta, que dio pasa nuestra luz. Alégrate, virgen gloriosa, entre todas la más bella; salve, agradecida doncella, ruega a Cristo por nosotros.), as well as the program of the concert which took place on the same day.

The scene thus depicted the contemplation of the virgin when she saw the face of her son. Mary looks at the image of Jesus on a paper hold by another icon. The *alfombra* was less traditional and less symmetrical, with butterflies outside of the circular lines, overlapping colors and insects half on top of other parts. An enormous amount of fruits and vegetables was located above the *asserrín*-part. Additionally, the text with the subject of the *velación* was placed, just as candles and bird cages.

07-04-2017: velación cathedral

This *velación* depicted Mary on a cloud in front of a painted background of the sky. In her hand she held a rope, which was tied around the neck of the devil. The rope in turn was held by an angel below. The *alfombra* displayed birds again and many sorts of fruit were located together.

10-04-2017: velación La Merced

Again on this day in *Semana de Dolores*, many people visited the *velación*. When entering the crowd in order to see in front, I was locked in from behind within seconds and when I had seen the scene it was extremely difficult to move back against the stream of people.

The *velación* depicted ‘‘*La Via Dolorosa*’’, (the painful way), referring to the way of Jesus with his cross. On the explanation paper the history of the sentence by Pilatus was described, as well as that the weight of the cross is like our sins. The encounter with his mother Mary on the way is explained, which made the pain of both worse. Lessons that can be taken from this passage are that we have to get up with humility and in trust look for His help and mercy, and if anyone wants to come after Him and to deny himself, that he has to carry his cross every day and follow Him.

The background painting of the representation depicted a building, through which gate a landscape painting could be seen one level behind. Many icons populated the scene, with two Roman soldiers, Mary and Jesus (who was going to walk with the cross). The *alfombra* was square formed, again with asymmetrically placed fruits and vegetables. It constituted a kind of scene in itself, not solely geometrical, showing the modern artistic expressions of *La Merced*.

11-04-2017: velación San Francisco

On the with walls surrounded square in front of the church *San Francisco*, many stalls with goods and food occupied this place. The *velación*, in contrast to others, was not located in the apse of the church but on the right side of the nave. One big cloth formed the star-sky background. Trees, bushes and rocks constituted the scene of “*la oración de Jesús en el huerto*” (the prayer of Jesus in the garden (Gethsemane)): the icon of Jesus prayed on a rock, with in the corner, laying under the trees, sleeping men. A small, long track of mostly blue *asserrín* surrounded the scene on the inside, with fruit on the outside. The ends of the track led to half-circular formed vegetable parts. Bird cages were also located within the scene.

12-04-2017: velación Escuela de Cristo

This was the last *velación* that I visited. It concerned the most elaborate and crowded one as well. Around 8.00 p.m. the square was loaded with people eating in the grass and on the edges of the streets. I barely could cross.

The meaning of the *velación* was: “*santo eres en verdad señor, fuente de toda santidad*” (you really are holy Lord, fountain of all holiness). The explanation paper described that the holiness is great and man is small. The love of God makes us holy, to live a “*vida santa*” (holy life).

Never before I experienced a church that full of people. Church members in black suits demarcated the exit, which led to a different part of the building. Never before I waited that long to see in front. Locked in between the people I became afraid of being crushed. Never before I felt a sense of victory when I could see the scene.

Escuela de Cristo is known for their modern approach²⁸⁵. Only this church uses the newest technical tricks to impress the public. The light technique was imposing, changing colors every five minutes. Music was played, both instrumental and with voice. In the altar the icon of Jesus, after his death, lay in an enormous fountain with real water. God floated on a cloud above him, the world in his hand. Golden angels with candles flanked the fountain and a big staircase was populated by several women and other angels. In front of the staircase chubby baby angels sat in a small basin and the fountain showed pictures of the face of Jesus. The *alfombra* was beautiful; geometrical and shining of glass pieces.

²⁸⁵ Some people therefore think that the meaning disappears within all this ostentation.

Appendix 4: Child processions

11-03-2017: child procession Jojotenango

The meaning of this procession was: the conversation of saint Paul: Paul was walking and suddenly heard a voice: ‘Saulo, why did you persecute me?’ Paul asks who is speaking. It was ‘Jesus, who you did persecute’.

01-04-2017: child procession Escuela de Cristo

The meaning of the first red colored *anda* was: ‘*de nuevo vendrá con gloria*’ (in glory He will return). The meaning of the second *anda* was: ‘*hay dolor, dolor dolor*’ (there is pain, pain, pain).

Appendix 5: Hora Santa

06-04-2017: La Merced

On a Thursday I attended a special service in the church of *La Merced*, the *Hora Santa* (holy hour). At a certain moment all attendees stood up and moved towards the aisle. The first thing I saw was an orange glow amidst the smoke of *incienso*. Two white dressed children with the instruments to *incensar* and two black dressed adults with candles were followed by the *sacerdote* who with a white cloth held the *custodia*: a golden instrument in the form of the sun, containing the wafer. The instrument indeed referred to the sun, symbolizing Jesus even being brighter. The *sacerdote* walked by all attendees, who stroke a cross when the *custodia* passed. The level of emotion was incredible. Sounds of sobbing and tears characterized those moments. As Felix explained to me, the wafer is the body of Christ, the maximum of faith. I watched these people in the presence of Jesus, in his amity, asking, thanking and talking to him. That is why they became emotional: this moment touched the core of their lives and faith. The atmosphere was filled by emotion, devotion and meaning and inexplicably I became emotional myself. The *Hora Santa* therefore shows the importance of the wafer and Eucharist, which helps to understand the meaning of *Jueves Santo*.

Appendix 6: Major churches and their official marchas

La Merced:

Jesus: *Marcha Fúnebre* (Frédéric Chopin)

Mary: *La Dolorosa* (Salvador Rojo Chacón)

Escuela de Cristo:

Jesus: *Cruz Pesada* (Luis Alberto Velázquez C.)

Mary: *Dolor Consuelo y Alegria* (Claud. V. Lattan)

San Felipe:

Jesus: *Martirio* (Alberto Velázquez Collado)

Mary: *Soledad* (José Vicente Cruz Rojo Chacón)

San Francisco:

Jesus: *Jesús del Perdon* (Manuel Antonio Ramírez Crocker)

Mary: *Salve Madre Dolorosa* (Manuel Antonio Ramírez Crocker)

²⁸⁶Santa Catarina de Bombadilla:

Jesus: *Tú eres mi salvación* (Antonio Padilla)

Santa Inez:

Jesus: *Jesús de Santa Inez* (Vicente Salazar)

Jojetenango:

Jesus: *Divino Nazareno de Jojetenango* (Carlos Humberto Mendizábal Gallardo)

Santa Ana:

Jesus: *Jesús de Santa Ana* (alfredo dávila rendón)

San Bartolomé:

Jesus: *Jesús de San Bartolo* (Manuel Antonio Ramirez Crocker)

Appendix 7: Churches and their icons

²⁸⁷The making of icons began in the 16th century in Spain and was transmitted to Guatemala. The peak happened in the 17th and 18th century with famous workshops of among

²⁸⁶ Magazine 'Qué pasa', magazine 'Incienso 2017'.

²⁸⁷ Magazine 'Qué pasa', magazine 'Incienso 2017', general information folder 'Cuaresma de Antigua 2017'.

others Juan de Aguirre, Anton Roda, Quirio Cataño, Pedro Mendosa, Alonso de la Paz y Toledo and Mathew de Zuñiga²⁸⁸.

Santa Catarina de Bombadilla: *Jesús Nazareno de la Salvación*, made in 1817 by Pedro Mendoza.

Santa Inez: *Jesús de Santa Inéz*, by an unknown author.

Jojotenango: *Jesús Nazareno 'El Dulce Rabi'* and *Virgin de Dolores 'Dulce Madre de Jojotenango'*. Made by an unknown author.

Santa Ana: *Jesús Nazareno de la Dulce Mirada*. This icon is special because of her carved hair instead of real hair. Made in 16th century.

San Bartolomé: *Jesús Nazareno de la Caída*, made in 1640 possibly by Pedro de Mendoza.

San Felipe: *Señor Sepultado de San Felipe*, made in 1921 and *Virgen de Soledad*, possibly made by Pedro Mendosa.

La Merced: *Jesús Nazareno de la Merced*, made in 1650 by Alonso de la Paz.

San Cristóbal El Bajo: *Jesús Nazareno de la Humildad*, made in 1578 by Juan de Aguirre.

San Francisco: *Jesús Nazareno del Perdón*, made in 1630 by Don Carlos de Bolaños.

Escuela de Cristo: *Señor Sepultado de la Escuela de Cristo* and *María Santísima de la Soledad*, made by Pedro Mendosa.

Appendix 8: The tunics of La Merced

One of the tunics concerns a tunic in the colors emerald green, light ocher, dark Corinth, dark sea blue and sea blue, all made in corduroy. The antique garments are embroidered with silver and gold with a technique called '*altorrelieve*'.

Another tunic has the color of moss green, with a French embroidery decorated with forms of rocks, roses, palms and wheat. Threads of gold are used as well. The original tunic has been repaired with emerald green fabric.

A third one is a tunic of light ocher fabric, ornamented with forms of plants like leaves

²⁸⁸ Exhibition in museum *Sor Juana*.

and roses. The embroidery technique is French. One of the details of the garment is the anagram of 'JHS' on the inside of the tunic²⁸⁹.

²⁸⁹ *La Reseña*, 14th edition, page 16.