

SOUNDMASKS IN
 RESOUNDING PLACES:
 LISTENING TO THE *CAMPANACCIO*
 OF SAN MAURO FORTE

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This chapter concerns the nocturnal parade of carriers of large cowbells in San Mauro Forte, a village of 1400 inhabitants, at 540m above sea level, within the hilly region west of the town of Matera. This event offers the opportunity to explore some crucial issues discussed in this book, in particular the role of sound in creating a sense of community beyond its symbolic functions, the function of rhythm and bodily involvement in the creation of a group identity, the relationship between sound and the space of the village where the event takes place, and the occurrence over time of processes of heritagisation. In response to the primarily sonorous qualities of this event, listening has been a principal research method.

In contrast to what usually happens in other rituals involving bells around the period of Carnival in Europe, in San Mauro the cowbells are not used to create a clash of chaotic clangs but rather a series of regular rhythmic sequences. The participants wear a costume but do not mask their faces. In existing research on festivals involving humans and animal bells, the role of face masks and of sonic chaos has always been a central focus of discussion. The case of San Mauro, where both these elements are absent, suggests that sound might take up a masking function, both at an individual and collective level. The sound of each cowbell becomes a soundmask for its carrier, who identifies completely with the sound. At the same time, each carrier's presence in space and their relationships with others are manifested in the soundscape. *Soundmask* is understood as the temporary taking up of a sonic identity, a disguise that is perceived aurally, superseding the visual one for both the participants and the visitors. At the gathering of 'anthropological' masks in Tricarico, for example, the members of the team from San Mauro are the only ones not wearing face masks. The concept of soundmask will be our starting point for a discussion of the role of sound and rhythm in redefining people's relationship with village space and animality.

Parades of people playing animal bells in conjunction with ritual actions on important calendar days are found throughout the Mediterranean basin during the winter and spring. These parades mostly take place during Carnival, as is the case in a number of situations in Italy, Greece and Slovenia. While Carnivals have long been the subject of ethnographic inquiry with regard to their performative and symbolic aspects, only recently has the sonic dimension become the subject of scholarly attention. These studies have often revolved around the role of bells (Blau et al. 2010; Corbin 1998; Frank 2008; Harlov 2016; Panopoulos 2003; Price 1983). Particularly important was the publication of Steven Feld's multisited ethnography of bells in the form of a series of CDs (Feld 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006).

In Basilicata there are a number of masked parades that feature animal bells. They happen for the most part on the day dedicated to St Anthony the Abbot, on 17 January, a date that conventionally marks the beginning of Carnival. In addition to being celebrated with masks and sonic rituals, this festivity is marked by nocturnal bonfires. In the rich repertoire of symbols attached to St Anthony the Abbot in folk Christianity, he is the guardian of the fire and protector of domestic animals. He often appears in images with a small bell hanging from his staff and next to a pig, an animal that was traditionally slaughtered in winter.

In Accettura, on the night of 16 January, a massive bonfire is lit where the leftover logs from the *Maggio* festival are burned. A statue of St Anthony is carried in procession, with an escort of children who clang animal bells. In Salandra teenagers and adults, wrapped in black cloaks, flood the village streets with the sound of their animal bells. One of the most famous events happens in Tricarico: on 17 January, at dawn, dozens of people masked as *Tori* (Bulls) – covered in black and red ribbons – or *Vacche* (Cows) – in multi-coloured ribbons – enact the transhumance of a herd on the village streets at the sound of their cowbells.

The event discussed in this chapter, called *Il Campanaccio* (the cowbell), happens in San Mauro Forte the night leading to the day of St Anthony the Abbot. The event is particularly interesting for the large involvement of the local population, and for the relevance of sound in its unfolding. What follows is based on listening and participation from the early 2000s to 2019, and on conversations with some inhabitants who are actively involved in the event: first of all Rocco Giammetta, blacksmith and maker of some of the cowbells used during the event; then Francesco Diluca, for many years mayor of San Mauro; and the members of the *Pro Loco*, in particular the former president Mimì Deufemia and the young and very active president Francesco Laguardia. These protagonists of the event and of its preparation, who

belong to different generations, provided important starting points for the reflection here proposed.

Together with Tricarico, the *Campanaccio* of San Mauro was the subject of team research carried out in 2003 and 2004. In addition to my essay, Steven Feld created a soundscape composition with DSM recordings and Stefano Vaja published a photographic sequence (Scaldfarri 2005). The photographs at the end of this chapter, by Vaja, were made in the context of that research.

In San Mauro Forte, following a trend common to many villages in southern Italy, the population has decreased by half since the 1970s, on account of migratory flows that bring away young people who struggle to find employment in the local economy. The *Campanaccio* has been, starting from the 1990s, the main event of the year in San Mauro. It has a strong identity value and emigrants come back especially to take part. It also attracts scholars and visitors engaging in cultural tourism. Lately, even composers and sound artists have visited to experience the unique acoustic qualities of the festival – for example the artist Yuval Avital, whose work will be discussed in chapter 6. The *Campanaccio* welcomes visitors on the homepage of the city council website, and is in other words the public representative of the village to the wider world.

The event starts at dusk, when the teams of bell carriers, made up of men, women and even small children, start clanking around the streets. Each participant carries a large bell, which is often significantly oversized compared with what would normally hang from a cow's neck. They sling it around the neck with a strap, and hold it with both hands. The players make it clang with a sudden movement of the hands, of the chest or even of the knees – depending on the size of the bell. Each team is made up of a variable number of participants, from a few to several dozens. The event in its totality involves dozens of teams, with overall numbers in the hundreds. The traditional costumes are black cloaks and animal hides; over time, others have been added, such as tunics, military uniforms, colourful wigs, flashy hats with bright decorations, and even costumes inspired by celebrities. Some teams are made up of people of the same gender and age, some are composed of groups of friends or relatives, or just of returning emigrants. Until late at night, the teams roam the streets of the village following paths established by tradition, repeatedly. They visit the two main squares, then a small church dedicated to St Roch and circle around it three times to honour the statue of St Anthony the Abbot that is kept inside, according to a praxis common in religious pilgrimages.

During this time of year the temperatures are usually very low in this part of Basilicata, especially at night, and often snow might be on the ground. The bell carriers drink abundant wine, stopping

periodically in family-owned wine cellars. When the bell-clanking rounds are over they put down the bells and take part in a collective meal that can take them all the way to sunrise.

Humans and animals

During the *Campanaccio* the participants often carry around, as if they were trophies, richly decorated pig heads, sausages, wine demijohns, animal hides, images of St Anthony, horns, baskets, yokes and other items of pastoral and agricultural origin. Sometimes one can see live animals, such as goats or donkeys, part of a mixture of animals and humans that is not just symbolically hinted but explicitly displayed. This mixture is part of the cowbell's own nature, which around the neck of animals has as its primary use that of acoustic branding. It is a mark of the human domestication of the feral. The animal generates sound involuntarily, while walking or grazing. In so doing, it is made by its master a sounding entity. Listening to the sound of animal bells allows the herders to check on individual animals and to govern the herd, helped by specific tunings that allow them to clearly identify the position of each animal. The sonic characteristics of the bells, which vary according to their shape, allow the herders to create soundscapes in which each ringing bell interacts with the others, with the environment and with the calls of the animals. This is a conscious process that is effectively a form of sound design (Maxia 2011; Ricci 2012). At times, and especially in southern Italy, these soundscapes are joined by *zampogna* pieces traditionally played especially for the transhumance (Scaldaferrì 2005).

In Italian the word *campanaccio* (cowbell or animal bell in general) is associated with a rustic and humble register, being the pejorative form of *campana* (bell). The latter is the higher register term for the bronze idiophone that is placed on top of bell or clock towers (Corbin 1998; Price 1983). *Campanaccio* and *campana*, therefore, create an oppositional couplet that draws on their materiality, their positioning and their context of use. The bronze cast bell is placed in what was one of the highest spots of a town, and is played in moments of high significance, as already remarked by Schafer, who highlights the role of church bells in defining the listeners' sense of community, as well as sound protection in frightening away evil spirits (1977: 54). The animal bell, on the other hand, is made of bent plated sheet metal and is kept close to the ground, attached to a moving animal. In the vernacular forms of Basilicata this opposition is preserved, while in other contexts there are more neutral expressions – in Sardina, for example, animal bells are called *su ferru* (the iron) (Maxia 2013). In various contexts animal bells are given gendered identities: depending on the shape – rounded

or elongated, with a large or smaller opening – they can be male or female. This distinction of gender often has a role in ritual contexts, as in the case of the masks of Bulls and Cows of Tricarico, where each mask should carry a male or female cowbell consistently with its gender (Spera 1982). In San Mauro, though, all bells can be used freely by the men and women who make up the various teams.

In classic interpretations of Carnival rituals humans who wear animal bells perform a typical inversion of roles, becoming animals in a proximity of human and non-human that is not a rigid opposition (Bakhtin 1968). The *Campanaccio* could seem, at first sight, to fall neatly into this category. However, a closer examination of the modes of performance, and the analysis of the sonic component, reveals a different situation. As we see in the following pages, sound and rhythm, in creating the identity of the group, overcome and incorporate not only the gender difference between the participants, but also that between the human and animal symbolic components.

Darkness and rhythm

The crucial peculiarity of San Mauro Forte's *Campanaccio* is that it happens after sunset. The teams of bell carriers parade in streets lit only by regular street light, and where this is lacking – as in some alleys – they perform in the dark. In this situation, vision is inevitably less pre-eminent than other sensory modalities such as hearing and touch, which come into play thanks to the vibrations of the bells and the resonance of the surrounding spaces.

Furthermore, the participants, even though they wear a variety of costumes and disguises, do not wear masks on their faces. This is a crucial difference with respect to what happens in other similar occasions, for example in Tricarico, or in the better known cases of Skyros in Greece (Blau et al. 2010; Panopoulos 2011) or in Sardinia, where the masks are often visually characterised as animals (Spanu 2014: 88–98). In San Mauro, the darkness keeps the faces of the participants in half-light, so that they are not easily recognisable. On the other hand, each participant's identification with a large bell ensures that the real cover is a sonic one. The whole person becomes a mask as a sounding entity. The participants interpret their role with concentration, walking slowly and rhythmically, their gaze ever facing in front and without display of emotion, immersed in the sounds all around with an estranged stance – the bell becomes their voice. These voices are not distinct from the point of view of gender identities: men, women and children choose their bells simply according to their weight, their decision based on whether they feel they have the endurance required to parade it for the night. Stronger participants will carry larger bells and will be able

to project stronger, deeper sounds. So the force and pitch of the sounds that resonate in the streets are a direct reflection of each participant's strength, which is perceived through listening.

Another characteristic of the *Campanaccio* is the way the components of each team clank their bells in a synchronised manner, playing on the same beat. Each team plays rhythms of 4/4, at speeds around 90–100 bpm. The sounds of the *Campanaccio* are not about producing a random and chaotic cacophony, they are disciplined according to a precise rhythmic pattern thanks to the role of a team leader who dictates the movements of their group, and who therefore has rhythmic control over their sound. The team leader can carry out this role in various ways: with a handful of small bells hanging from a staff, with which they periodically hit the ground in the double function of acoustic and visual signal, or using a whistle, a snare drum or a bass drum. Sometimes they simply place themselves at the head of the group, leading as a herd leader, dictating the pace with their bell.

A good starting point to frame the *Campanaccio* is Blacking's definition of music as 'humanly organized sound' (1973). This reference, as important as it is, is not without its limits. In recent debates within sound studies it has emerged how sometimes the principle of organisation and an explicit social purpose are not enough to consider sounds musical, especially where we face situations without a central organisation, or interactions between humans and non-humans – be they animals or machines (Sakakeeny 2015).

From this perspective, the organised patterns of clangs made by the teams of bell carriers in the streets of San Mauro, with the accompanying whistles and drums, are closer to rhythmic-musical performances than to the chaotic sound of the bells of a moving herd, which is the reference for most Carnival bell festivals. Even though it is still within the frame of a ritual event, in San Mauro the animal bell is transformed from its original role of sonic object from a pastoral context, which produces sound as a by-product of movement, into a musical instrument, thanks to a domestication of the movements in order to obtain rhythmic sequences. This specificity has fascinated musicians, producers and sound artists who have used the isochrone sequences of the *Campanaccio* as rhythm tracks in a number of music pieces. One example is Canio Loguercio's composition *Miserere*, which uses a series of beats from a recorded track as a loop that provides a percussive accompaniment for the whole song (2006: tracks 9 and 13). However, other elements differentiate the *Campanaccio* from performances with a clear musical character: among them, the absence of a defined target audience, the automatic repetition of gestures bordering reflex action and a mode of experience that involves the immersion of the whole body in the soundwaves.

Listening to what happens during the *Campanaccio*, more than observation or other forms of investigation, allows understanding of the dynamics of the ritual. Participants organise their actions and negotiate their identity mainly within the acoustic dimension. This can be grasped in particular in the function performed by the rhythm during the parade. A team's synchrony gives each group a sonic identity made of rhythmic cohesion, one that is stronger than the effect of wearing similar costumes. In part this is favoured by the scarcity of light, which brings sound in the foreground, but also because of the body's role in generating rhythmic action in a constant process of listening and feedback. The group's rhythmic sound is the outcome of a listening process that controls the unanimous movement of the team members, and its importance lies more in its role for the group's identity than in its musical significance. This is especially evident when two teams of bell carriers meet in the streets, creating a clash of rhythms. Instead of trying to synchronise the beats, each team stubbornly keeps playing its own tempo and increases the volume of its clanking. The danger is not so much one of losing a loudness duel, but of getting lost in the other team's beat, risking sonically disintegrating as a group or, even worse, of shifting the tempo to correspond with that of the opposing team – and therefore being assimilated.

However, the world turned upside-down of these humans who are sonically transformed into animals is never upside-down enough to degenerate into excess. At the *Campanaccio* one is unlikely to witness behaviour that is common in Carnival rituals, such as lascivious actions, sexual references or forms of aggressivity more or less ritually codified. The *Campanaccio*'s rhythmic discipline governs the proximity between the roles of humans and animals, limiting excesses and crossovers, and giving to the participants a ceremonial posture, hieratical and solemn. Even though its sounds are produced through actions that are mechanical in their repetition, the participants keep themselves focussed on controlling the tempo, which is sometimes no easy task because of the size of the cowbell.

Sounding masks in resounding places

As a whole, the teams of bell carriers create a densely sonorous atmosphere that takes control of the streets until late at night and can be heard across the areas surrounding the village. This sonorous atmosphere is also achieved thanks to the places, especially the streets and the buildings, which reverberate this river of sounds. Place, understood in the sense of 'presence permeated with culturally constituted institutions and practices' (Casey 1996: 46), fulfils an important role in any performance it hosts. During the *Campanaccio* streets, alleys and

buildings resonate under the powerful soundwaves of the bells and reflect the vibrations onto the participants. The teams are immersed in sound, whose materiality is perceived by the whole body as physical resonance and vibration. The soundwaves produced by the bells, as a whole, make up the flow inside which the performance takes place, as a sort of *performing in sound* inside the environment made of vibrations and reflections of the buildings, in the chilly January air. The parade can last for hours, and the effort, the repetition of the movements, the inescapable and enveloping presence of deafening sounds, combined with flowing alcohol, all contribute to the participants' experience of the *Campanaccio* as intense sensory and emotional involvement. Visitors too, who come to San Mauro every year to 'see' the *Campanaccio*, often with cameras and smartphones, are enveloped in this sonorous atmosphere. Rouget's terminology, which inside musical rituals distinguishes 'musicants' and 'musicated' ([1980] 1985: 132), can be usefully applied to the case of San Mauro. Here the visitors are musicated, being incidental elements that remain on the periphery and are hit by the sonic deluge; the soundmasks of the performers, on the other hand, are at the same time musicants and musicated.

The participants in the *Campanaccio* thus become strongly identified in their role of soundmasks, which gives them a new individual and collective identity, especially as a team thanks to the cohesion provided by the shared rhythm. They are liminal entities, projected towards other domains such as non-humanity, especially that of animals, with which the bell itself, as an object and for the sound it produces, creates a point of contact. This proximity is continuously reinforced by the presence of gestures and objects, such as ox yokes and dead animals. At the same time, the participants' immersive listening, their sensory overload and physical effort, foreshadow a state of 'trancing' (Becker 2004). The participants are aware of this, as emerges especially from conversations with the young people of the village. During the January 2020 event, a local cultural association introduced an initiative that allowed visitors to participate in the event, immersing themselves in the rhythmic and sound flow, instead of just attending from the sidelines. Significantly, the programme on the city council's Facebook page describes the initiative in these words: 'The Experiential Campanaccio: get to the heart of the event and take part first hand in the rhythm that will charm you.'

Washing through sound

The *Campanaccio* also fulfils a magic and protective function, which the participants ascribe to their performance not so much as a consequence of the symbolic qualities of sound, but of its materiality and resonance.

People from San Mauro Forte often mention the protective value they attribute to the waves of sound that the animal bells wash onto the streets. They consider them a sort of sonic membrane that spreads over the whole village. Such an idea is probably influenced by Spera's work in the 1980s, which the younger generations of San Mauro took up and integrated in the accepted wisdom of the village, similarly to what happened in Accettura with Bronzini's work, as seen in chapter 1. In an article, Spera linked the deepest meaning of the *Campanaccio* with the massive number of pigs killed at that time of winter:

a cathartic practice (without discounting the physical sense of an actual acoustic shielding) aimed at dispersing the adverse forces that fill the air ... Only those who witnessed the excruciating death of a pig by throat-cutting and exsanguination, in a house or backyard, can better grasp the sense of this proposed interpretation. (Spera 1982: 327)

Pigs, in a rural context, were the mainstay of home food and were traditionally kept at home, often in close cohabitation in the spaces of humans. They were then killed in the coldest months of winter to create a reserve of cured meat for the rest of the year. It was very common, in the past, to witness the open-air slaughtering of pigs during winter. The 'ritual' of the slaughter and the ensuing celebration were inserted in practices of exchange that had great impact on the structuring of family relationships (Marano 1999). The killing procedure was quite gory, especially because the blood had to be gathered in order to make the main ingredient for *sanguinaccio* (a pudding also including chocolate, nuts and raisins). It was an intense emotional experience for those who were present, a sensory overload made of agonising screams, rivulets of blood and water, and the pungent smell of entrails that lingered over the village for days.

The *Campanaccio* as a ritual could then be understood as a collective and purifying washing: the push from the deafening sounds of the bells, endowed with an almost abrasive power, would be meant to wash away the cries of the slaughtered animals that had bounced off those same streets and walls. But the sounds would also take away from the participants, through immersion in a thunderous wave of sounds, the sensations associated with the experience of butchering, whose memory is particularly vivid among the older generations.

Pigs have all but disappeared from the streets of San Mauro and other Lucanian villages. They have been moved to breeding farms and the screams of their killing are relegated to slaughterhouses, which use perhaps less grisly methods. In local narrative, though, the protective and cathartic function of the sound of the animal bells has not disappeared. On the contrary, once separated from its direct origin it has

assumed an even broader shielding function: the bells, projecting a steady rhythmic cadence down towards the ground, almost seem to be affecting the whole village, protecting it from any harmful influx. The teams of bell carriers become then a sort of disinfection units, in their almost military uniforms and measured steps.

As much as it is meant to be connected to old rural ways of life, the core of this interpretation has reached the digital domain, and is repeated on the city council's own website next to a photograph of some cowbells and a pig head. In this version, pigs are given evil connotations, so that their slaughter is under the auspices of two saints. In particular, the protective function of sound is extended to any possible form of calamity:

Animal bells have an apotropaic and propitiatory function: they are given the decisive task of averting any sort of mishap, such as hailstorms, and favour the fertility and yield of the fields ... Another fundamental component of the festival is the pig, and it is not by chance if the 15th of January, the festival of the patron St Maurus the Abbot, marks the beginning of the traditional rite of slaughtering pigs, which ends exactly on the evening of the 17th. In folk religion the pig is a symbol for evil and in St Anthony's iconography it embodies the devil's many temptations.¹

Making sound into heritage

According to Spera, the *Campanaccio* was also closely related to the festival of the patron saint St Maurus, which used to be celebrated on 15 January but has now been abandoned. For local historians, a procession of oxen for St Maurus with the function of 'marking' the village would be the foundation of today's *Campanaccio* festival (Mirizzi 2005; Spera 1982). However, despite its continued apotropaic symbolism and its clear origins in the pastoral lifeworld, today the *Campanaccio* reveals clear traces of processes of invention of tradition. Practices that some local narratives describe as ancestral often reveal themselves to be the result of recent decisions, made for practical reasons. The *Campanaccio* in its current format derives from a campaign of heritagisation started in the 1980s by the council administration, which turned it into the village's public face and inserted it in the regional administration's programmes in support of Basilicata's intangible heritage.

The council's intervention came during a period of decline of the festival. The participation of the local population had been dwindling during the 1970s and 1980s, when only a few inhabitants would parade with their bells, becoming sometimes the target of mockery

and being associated with a backward and superstitious past. Starting in 1987 there was a change of direction, when the council started to sponsor the festival, giving it a visual identity through designing posters and other publicity, or offering refreshments to the bell carriers and to visitors. As a way to encourage participation, the council started sponsoring an award ceremony that hands each team a certificate and a trophy. In the days surrounding the ‘parade of free bell ringers’ – as the event is described in the official posters – there are conferences about the role of bells in folklore, in addition to concerts and theatre plays, and even a food festival, based around wine and sausages, which attracts numerous tourists. Over the years, San Mauro has created a network of twinned towns that share traditions revolving around bells, for example in Sardinia and Sicily, but has also invited visiting teams of flag throwers of medieval inspiration, as long as they are accompanied by drums that relate well to the rhythmic component of the *Campanaccio* (Scaldfarri 2009).

The *Campanaccio* is also part of a ‘network of Lucanian Carnivals’ started in 2014 with the aim of gathering ‘Carnivals with a recognised anthropological and cultural value’.² The term ‘anthropological’ in this use evokes an ancestral aura, capable of attracting the interest of cultural tourists. These processes, in addition to attracting more tourists, have had the effect of bringing the inhabitants of San Mauro face to face with the specificity of their festival, mainly thanks to the comparison with other events and to the contribution of experts and scholars, which all resulted in an increasingly active contribution of the local residents. During the 2000s the council also tried to move the *Campanaccio* to the Saturday closest to the eve of St Anthony’s day, though still providing the possibility of having a parade on the 16th, as happens traditionally. The move was initially received with hostility by the most conservative inhabitants, to the point that in 2004 there were two parades – called ‘St Anthony’s’ and ‘the mayor’s’, which took place on the following Saturday. As the years have passed, though, thanks to the convenience of having the festival on the night before a Sunday, many have settled on the new date. In 2019, the *Campanaccio* was even moved to the 12th, to avoid coinciding with events connected to the opening of Matera European Capital of Culture.

Frictions and models of heritagisation

Between this apparatus of collateral events set up by the council administration and the parade of bell carriers there are inevitable conflicts. The offering of free food and drinks along the path of the parade has reduced the role of stops in the participants’ wine cellars. These occasions were opportunities to offer hospitality to friends and visitors,

who would be invited to the meals taking place after the parade. But the number of tourists has made these forms of spontaneous hospitality impossible. While at the beginning of the 2000s the visitors reaching San Mauro for the *Campanaccio* were limited and were regularly invited to the wine cellars, fifteen years later these invitations are a rarity, or are limited to close friends.

Listening to what happens during the ritual allows the changes introduced as a consequence of processes of heritagisation to be grasped. In fact, the main point of friction between the council and the bell carriers concerns the soundscape of the festival. In later years the council has set up forms of musical entertainment, with bands playing on stage the night of the *Campanaccio*. The sound systems of the music bands come into conflict with the teams of bells, limiting their movements. This is a typical scenario in Monastero square, where the evening concerts often take place but also a traditional meeting point for the teams. While usually the bell carriers would dominate the acoustic space of the area with no competition, in 2004 the soundcheck of the band *I Tarantolati di Tricarico* interfered with the groups of bell carriers, forcing them to alternative routes, as is clear in the soundscape composition that Feld recorded that year (track 10 in Scaldaferrì 2005). In fact, these folk revival music groups are in themselves excellent demonstrations of the link between commodification of traditional music and ethnographic research, since they make explicit reference to the phenomenon of Tarantism made famous by De Martino's research ([1961] 2005). The music festival *La Notte della Taranta* (The Night of the Taranta), based in Apulia, is the centre of an international circuit that makes it an important economic factor for the region (Pizza 2004). It is understandable that San Mauro might be drawing inspiration from this model, although on a smaller scale.

In San Mauro Forte the 'archaic' and 'ancestral' value attributed to the sound of the bells plays an important promotional role. Thanks to sound recording it can be integrated in World Music circuits, where it can reach new audiences and help promote the festival. During the Matera 2019 Open Sound Festival, for example, recordings of bells from San Mauro were sampled as part of a live set of electronic dance music while the promotion of the event made large use of images of St Anthony the Abbot.

Conclusion

Despite the transformations of the event across time, the frictions arising from the expansion of the festival and its presence in the digital domain thanks to the internet, the *Campanaccio* seems to have retained its deepest core meaning as a sonic self-referential ritual with a strong

identity value for the community of San Mauro Forte. People take part for themselves, for the community and for the village, and masks, groups and places end up resonating in synchrony. The animality that the sonic mask brings to the carrier of the bell is domesticated by the rhythmic discipline imposed by each team. This rhythmic element, which continuously reaffirms humans' control of the soundmask, defies simplistic interpretations centred on the ritual exchange of roles between animals and humans. It also defies any simple oppositions between music and sound since in this case the boundaries between them are blurred.

The investigation undertaken on the *Campanaccio* has revolved around careful participatory listening. It has demonstrated how a close examination of the sonic component can generate an original contribution to our understanding of the functions and the transformations of this ritual. Given how much it lends itself to symbolic interpretations, the event has been the object of scholarly attention centred on its meanings. However, its performative characteristics, particularly its immersive soundscape, require supplementing previous approaches by putting sound in the foreground through listening.

Notes

- 1 www.comune.sanmauroforte.mt.it/csanmaurof/detail.jsp?otype=100101&id=101653 (accessed 31 March 2020).
- 2 www.prolocotricarico.it/lemaschere/la-rete-dei-carnevali-lucani/ (accessed 31 March 2020).

Photographs

Stefano Vaja, 2003–7

































Sound-chapter 2 – *Rhythms in the dark*

This sound-chapter is a composition of field recordings made during the night of the 2002 *Campanaccio* in San Mauro. It builds a sonic narrative which highlights the obsessive rhythmic component of the *Campanaccio*, the clash between the different teams of participants and their sonic identities. This event is contrasted with the sound of cowbells in a pastoral context, recorded as they ring from around the neck of cows during transhumance.

