

## JUNE FESTIVITIES: AN ELEMENT FOR THE FORMATION OF PIAUÍ'S CULTURAL IDENTITY



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev6n3-028>

Submitted on: 10/05/2024

Publication date: 11/05/2024

**Junia Motta Antonaccio Napoleão do Rego<sup>1</sup>.**

### ABSTRACT

The June festivities are folkloric events that begin with the commemoration of Saint Anthony on June 13, continue with Saint John on the 24th and end with Saint Peter on June 29. Although they are celebrated in various parts of the world, in Brazil, especially in the Northeast, they have a particular prominence. A special highlight of these festivities is the performance of Bumba-meu-boi, an allegorical dance in which the ox is the central character. All these manifestations are connected by a special bond: their character as a fertility rite. During the month of June, cities in Piauí are transformed with squares decorated with colorful flags, balloons and bonfires, recalling the yards of the old farms in these festive moments.

**Keywords:** June Festivals. Cultural identity. Piauí. Popular Traditions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. in History from UFF

Adjunct Professor-4 at the Department of Social Sciences at the Federal University of Piauí, working mainly on the following topics: culture, June festivals, anthropology, ritual, commerce and merchants

## INTRODUCTION

The June festivities are folkloric events that begin with the commemoration of Saint Anthony on June 13, continue with Saint John on the 24th and end with Saint Peter on June 29. Although they are celebrated in various parts of the world, in Brazil, especially in the Northeast, they have a particular prominence. A special highlight of these festivities is the performance of Bumba-meu-boi, an allegorical dance in which the ox is the central character. All these manifestations are connected by a special bond: their character as a fertility rite. During the month of June, cities in Piauí are transformed with squares decorated with colorful flags, balloons and bonfires, recalling the yards of the old farms in these festive moments.

The objective of this research was to analyze the importance of this cultural element in the formation of the identity of the people of Piauí. This is a qualitative research, of an ethnographic nature, as it is based on the researcher's observation of the traditions and customs that characterize the June festivals in Piauí. As a theoretical foundation, readings of texts that discuss the theme were carried out, such as Cascudo (2001), Bueno (2021), Ferreira (2016), Costa (2012) and others, as well as visits were made to websites that publish this type of cultural manifestation in the state or outside it, especially with the purpose of seeking imagery sources. The text is divided into three parts. In the first "The June Festivals and the Bumba-meu-boi: Tradition, History and Cultural Heritage in Piauí" presents how the June Festivals arrived in Brazil, their importance for the Northeast and how they were incorporated into the culture and folklore of Piauí. In the second part of the text, the June festivities in Teresina are discussed, highlighting their practices in the 1990s. Finally, its manifestations are presented in Campo Maior, one of the cities in the interior of Piauí with the greatest tradition in celebrating Saint Anthony.

## THE JUNE FESTIVALS AND THE BUMBA-MEU-BOI: TRADITION, HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN PIAUÍ.

According to Costa (2012), the June festival was introduced in Brazil by the Portuguese colonizers during the colonial period, when the country was a colony administered by the Portuguese Empire. Quickly, this celebration was assimilated to indigenous and Afro-Brazilian traditions, groups that at the time were subjected to slave labor and exploited to meet European economic interests.

Based on readings carried out in Vitalli (2008), the researcher states that in addition to the strong Portuguese influence, there was also, at the time, a notable presence of Chinese, Spanish, and French cultural elements, whose communities sought to profit in Brazil. This resulted in widespread racial and cultural miscegenation. Thus, the customs of the June Festivals, with European influences, spread throughout the country, brought by migrants from different regions, who went in search of work in the rubber plantations. In this way, the Festa Junina arrived in the North of Brazil, integrating itself with local customs. Over time, the name and original meaning of the party, initially called the Joanine Festival, underwent changes. The celebration was officially held in June, coinciding with the corn harvest season in Brazil, when the rivers are low and the soil is prepared for planting.

Although the June festivals are celebrated in different regions of Brazil, in the Northeast they have gained a special dimension, becoming an integral part of the local cultural identity. The celebrations are not just festive events, but manifestations that reflect the way of being and living of the people of the Northeast. During the months of June and July, states such as Pernambuco, Paraíba and Bahia and Piauí<sup>2</sup> become great stages of festivity, attracting visitors from different parts of Brazil and even abroad. During this period, the cities that have already acquired a tradition in holding these parties prepare large spaces, offering an infrastructure that moves the local economy and promotes a unique experience. With crowded hotels, areas dedicated to typical cuisine, stages for large concerts and regional craft fairs, the event becomes a true festival of culture, music and tradition.

Among the various manifestations, the June gangs stand out as one of the main symbols of the party. Hundreds of people, dressed in colorful outfits, such as swirled and very colorful dresses, plaid or brightly colored shirts, boots and straw hats, gather in lively presentations, marked by synchronized steps and fun choreographies. The music, composed mainly of the rhythms of forró, sertanejo and caboclinho, rocks the audience and maintains the atmosphere of constant joy. In addition to the dances, the color of the party is completed with the varied typical foods, which are part of the June identity. Dishes such as pamonha, hominy, pé de moleque and paçoca, made from corn and peanuts, are

---

<sup>2</sup> In Piauí, the June festivities are held in the "National Meeting of Folguedos". According to information from the website of the Secretary of Culture of Piauí, this event takes place between the months of July and August, bringing together performances by gangs and folkloric groups from all parts of Brazil. The tradition of Bumba-meu-boi is also present in the event, in addition to typical foods and musical shows. Available at: <http://www.cultura.pi.gov.br/encontro-nacional-de-folguedos-do-piaui-46a-edicao-comeca-com-grandes-atracoes/>. Accessed on: 10.17.2024.

indispensable and are a success among the participants. And, to warm up the atmosphere, the traditional quentão is the official drink, complementing the festive and welcoming character of the celebrations. The following is a sample of the gangs that perform at the National Meeting of Folguedos do Piauí.

Image 01 Quadrilhas in the "National Meeting of Folguedos" (PI)



Source: [cultura.pi.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/IMG-20160823-WA0009](http://cultura.pi.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/IMG-20160823-WA0009).

The National Meeting of Folguedos do Piauí is an important cultural celebration of the State, bringing together various folkloric manifestations and popular traditions of Brazil, with special emphasis on the cultural expressions of the Northeast. Held annually in Teresina, the event promotes a true immersion in the cultural roots of Piauí and Brazil, with presentations by Bumba-meu-boi groups, June gangs, as well as regional dances and music. The Meeting not only preserves and values intangible heritage, but also strengthens the cultural identity of Piauí, attracting tourists and participants from various parts of the country, which contributes significantly to the movement of the local economy and the promotion of cultural tourism.

As already mentioned, one of the outstanding traditions of the June-July period in Piauí is the dance of the Boi, the Bumba-meu-boi, which was recently officially recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage of the State through Law No. 8,170/2024. This law covers all cultural manifestations related to Bumba-meu-boi, such as dances, music, parades and

theatrical performances. The decision to declare this game as intangible heritage is based on the popular belief that this tradition originated in Piauí itself, where cattle ranches began to be installed from occupations originating in Bahia. This process was a direct consequence of the territorial expansion policy promoted by Portugal, which encouraged cattle raising in the hinterland, in response to the growth of sugarcane plantations on the northeastern coast. In this way, the Bumba-meu-boi became part of the local culture, symbolizing not only the June traditions, but also the history of the occupation and development of the region. We will deal with this cultural manifestation below.

## BUMBA-MEO-BOOK

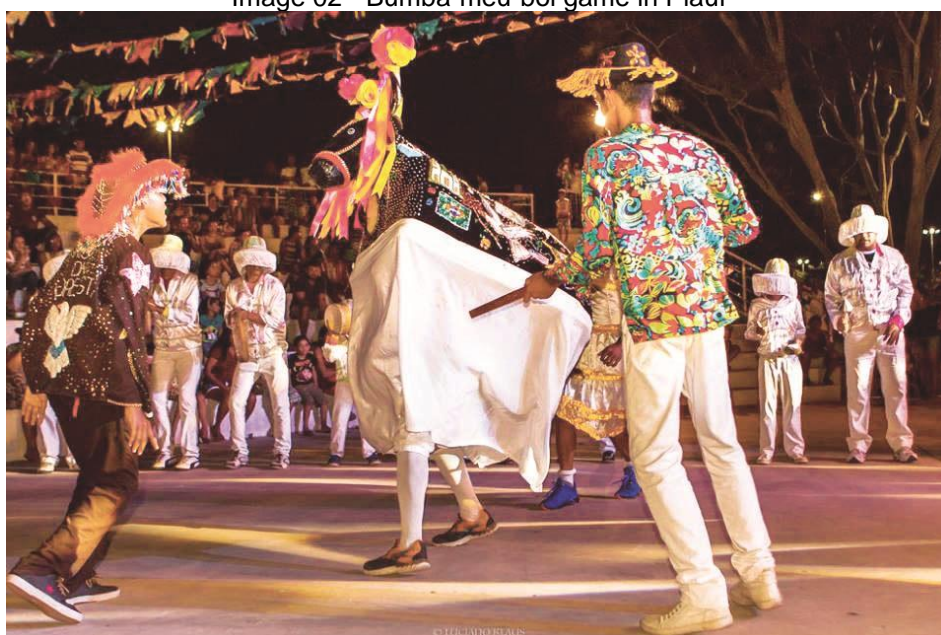
Disseminated throughout Brazil, the Bumba-meu-boi receives different names, such as Boi-Bumbá, Boi-de-Reis, Bumba-Boi, Boi-Surubi, Boi-Calemba and Boi-de-Mamão, depending on the region. Its history is linked to the implementation of cattle breeding in the seventeenth century, a fundamental activity to feed the large number of workers in the sugarcane plantations on the coast of the Northeast. As cattle raising was incompatible with plantations, the farms had to expand inland, starting from Pernambuco and reaching the south of Piauí, in the region of Floriano, today one of the largest cities in the state. In the courtyards of these farms, on June 23 and 24, black slaves danced around a bonfire with an ox made by them, under the gaze of the farmers. The center of the festival was the ox, called the Fire Ox, a tradition that no longer exists. In this regard, Ferreira (2016) states that:

We usually say in the conversation circles about Bumba-meu-boi and popular culture that the Boi de brincadeira was really born in Piauí. Such speculation can be based on the formation of an economic structure based on the cattle culture, slave labor, the history and mythical narratives of the popular culture of this state, whose lands and pastures during colonization, already in the second half of the seventeenth century, gave rise to the largest and first large cattle breeding center in Brazil. Thus, economic and social history, oral memory, narratives, legends and myths of foundations of black and indigenous origin related to the culture of the ox point to this fact that the Bumba-meu-boi was born in Piauí and from here the autopastoril would have migrated to Maranhão, Pará and other regions of Brazil (Ferreira, 2016, pp. 94 to 95)

In Piauí, the Bumba-meu-boi is danced on two main occasions: in December, between Christmas and Three Kings' Day, in honor of the birth of Jesus, and in June, during the June festivals, in honor of São João. The revelry has a text and a script followed by the players, who support the show of the ox. The story revolves around Catirina, Chico

Vaqueiro's wife, who, pregnant, wants to eat the tongue of the most beautiful ox on the farm. Chico, induced by Catirina, decides to kill the ox secretly from the boss. After the discovery of the ox's death, or in some versions, of its injury, the news spreads, and the boss searches for the culprit. Chico Vaqueiro is tried, but in the end, the ox resurrects, or never dies. In many versions, the ox belongs to a woman, Dona Maroquina, represented in the show by a man dressed as a woman. In fact, traditionally, all the characters are men, as it is said that "in an ox game, women do not enter".

Image 02 - Bumba-meu-boi game in Piauí



Source: <https://portalodia.com/noticias/torquato/bumba-meu-boi,-tradicao> (2019)

The cycle ends with the capture and symbolic death of the ox. Fleeing since the day before, the ox is recaptured by the cowboys and taken to the corral, from where it tries to escape several times. When he is finally arrested, he is bound and killed, with the blood symbolically distributed among the participants in the form of wine. The Bumba-meu-boi groups have varied formations, with some having more than 60 "brincantes", among which are characters such as the Boi, Negra Catirina, Negro Chico, cowboys, caboclos and others.

The Bumba-meu-boi festival is cultivated with special importance in some cities, gaining its own characteristics over time. Groups organize the party with different "accents", that is, using different musical instruments: the Boi de pancadaria uses zabumba and tambourine; the Boi de matraca uses ratchets, and the Boi de orquestra incorporates wind and accordion instruments. These accents give the oxen unique names and identities, such

as the Boi Riso da Mocidade, Boi Terror do Nordeste, and others. The Boi Riso da Mocidade, for example, also known as Boi do Matadouro, began performing in 1930 and maintains its tradition alive to this day, with a school for children between 2 and 15 years old. Thus, as the Bumba-meu-boi has diversified over the years, so have the June festivals in general, which, despite their rural characteristics, are celebrated in the cities, each one highlighting a saint or the Bumba-meu-boi as the center of the celebrations (Silva, 1988)

### **THE JUNE FESTIVITIES IN TERESINA -PI**

In Teresina, the June festivals, in official or non-official programs, involve thousands of people. They are part of both the official calendar of the city and the commemorative calendar of the Church. They are celebrated in houses, streets, clubs, neighborhoods, shopping malls, churches and in the waters of the Poti River. As a public festival, the city administration began by promoting, in the cultural space Parque Poticabana, contests of square dances, of Bumba-meu-boi, making available to the public stalls with traditional food and drinks, without missing music and shows by local artists.

The city's clubs also had a tradition of organizing their festivals (Tabajaras Club, Yacht Club, Jockey Club, Producer Classes Club, Military Club, Economy Club and many others). The main attraction was the square dances with prizes for the couple who presented the best typical costume, or who danced the best forró. The typical food stalls were also awarded for the best decoration or best delicacies.

People also celebrate the June festivities in their homes. They light bonfires in front of them, decorate streets and patios with flags, demarcate places for fireworks. Bonfires, flags and fireworks are essential components of the June festivals. In all neighborhoods, the inhabitants are encouraged to organize their parties, their bonfires, gathering neighbors who collaborate with typical dishes and drinks of their farm. One of the most important components is typical foods. Some of the typical foods of the party are made exclusively on this occasion, not appearing at other times of the year. The most important are those of vegetable origin: based on corn, cassava (cassava), coconut, gum flour, others are based on beef, such as paçoca, (shredded meat flour) and Maria Isabel (rice with meat). Many sweets are also prepared for this occasion: cocada, pé de moleque, maçã do amor (Brandão, 1989)

Image 03 - Typical foods of the June festivities



Source: <https://g1.globo.com/pi/piaui/noticia/2020/06/24/arraia-denticasa>

Especially in the neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city, it was possible to find people, especially children, attending the party dressed as "caipira" (the poor farmer). For men and boys, the costume was basically "too short" pants, with patches and scraps applied to them to give the impression of old clothes, widely used. The costume was completed with a clumsy straw hat, the face paint of a funny mustache (too small or too big) and goatee. In his mouth a straw cigarette or a pipe. Women and girls wore swirled dresses of "calico" (very cheap fabric) with small flower prints). Her hair was arranged in braids and on top a straw hat. Among the characters was a young couple, "the bride and groom" of the party. It was a shy, clumsy "couple", whose gestures and especially speech, were reasons for laughter and fun, as they symbolized simplicity, poverty and ignorance, as the "hillbilly" and his rural world were represented at that event.

Image 04 Old June Festival, with rural costumes and choreography



Source: <https://bloggoalerta.com.br/as-festas-juninas-de-antigamente-em-mipibu>

Another fascinating aspect of the June festivals is the strong connection with popular beliefs related to marriage, especially aimed at single girls. During the festivities, various sympathies are held with the aim of attracting a husband, reinforcing the faith and popular tradition around Saint Anthony, known as the "matchmaker saint" (Martins, 1983). Among the most common sympathies is the practice of placing the image of Saint Anthony upside down, usually inside a well or vase, as a way of "pressuring" the saint until the request is granted. The belief is that, in this way, Saint Anthony would "help" the girl to find a good marriage. This ritual reflects not only popular devotion, but also the playful character of the June festivals, where religious tradition mixes with games and superstitions, creating a festive atmosphere full of symbolism for those who participate.

In addition to this, there are other sympathies, such as sleeping with three papers under the pillow, each with the name of a suitor, and the role chosen when waking up would indicate the future spouse. These practices, passed down from generation to generation, show how the June festivals not only celebrate faith and the harvest, but also keep alive the social traditions and personal desires of the people who participate in them.

Thus, the initiative on the part of the municipal public administration to support and promote the holding of June festivals deserves special attention. If, on the one hand, the initiative offers the opportunity to present with a wealth of refinement the most diverse folkloric manifestations, on the other hand, it encourages the creativity of the organizers of the groups presented in a way that is far from the original forms. Thus, as in other states of

the Northeast, the government of the State of Piauí, through the State Cultural Foundation, began to promote in the 1970s, in Teresina, the aforementioned "National Meeting of Folguedos do Piauí", a moment in which local folklore groups and those from other states are presented, with their bold costumes and bold choreographies that are very different from the representations held until the 1990s, about the rural world and its people. The closing of the 46th National Meeting of Folguedos, held in 2024, had a participation estimated by the State Department of Culture at 30 thousand participants, who danced to the sound of local artists and national names such as Joelma, Elba Ramalho and Raquel dos Keyboards and Marcus Julião.

In turn, the Municipality of Teresina holds the "Cidade Junina", in June. In 2024, the event held its 30th edition, with four days of celebration at Arenado Teresina Shopping. Throughout this period, the event toured the city, being held as the São João for the square, when it took place at the João Luiz Ferreira square or, as the festivities were called, "Forró na Praça". According to Professor Cecília Mendes, when president of the Monsenhor Chaves Cultural Foundation, "this was another way for the population to strengthen the tradition even more". Forró na Praça lasted three days and included in its program folkloric attractions such as Bumba-meu-boi, quadrilhas, violists, forró and typical foods. After its end, the festivities continued in the Workers' Village Square with the June Festival of Teresina. Other parties were organized in the neighborhoods, with the participation of the communities, such as the one organized by the community of the Bela Vista and Dirceu Arcoverde neighborhoods.

In the midst of the changes that had been occurring in the ways of carrying out this cultural tradition, there was a disagreement between the participants and the Municipal Department of Sports and Leisure (Semel) that occurred in the 1990s, which judged that it was inopportune to mischaracterize some "morning gangs", with which it suspended the tournament called Champion of Champions, in which it was supported by the press, by the viewers, by the artistic class. They all unanimously claimed that the way in which they were replaced was not acceptable: the music and its rhythm; the choreography and dance steps of the traditional genre by others of the most varied; by hazing with a lot of foot and hand beating, with exaggerated shouting.

The protests were vigorous and, in an immediate attempt to rescue the quality of the traditional festivities, only the quadrilhas that portrayed the morning dance, sporting the typical costumes of the "caipira junino" and, in the square dance, the regional music, the

choreography and steps considered indispensable such as the formation of the tunnel, the snail, the rain, of the passage of the pinguela, etc. He also paid attention to the correctness of the steps, songs and texts when expressing "the story of a wedding, with its characters: the bride and groom (the pregnant bride), the priest, the sacristan, the delegate, etc.

Despite the manifestations of resistance, the clothing that was inspired by rural life, with swirled dresses, plaid flannel shirts, straw hats and colorful patches, symbolizing the country universe and the simplicity of the countryside, over time, began to be reinterpreted in a more stylized and commercial way, integrating modern and glamorous elements, such as more sophisticated fabrics and more elaborate props. Likewise, the choreographies of the quadrilhas, which previously followed simple and traditional steps, became more complex and choreographed, often with influences from other styles of dance and with insertions of scenic effects and themed costumes. Despite these changes, the June festivals still preserve the essence of their origins, being a space of cultural resistance where tradition reinvents itself to dialogue with new generations, without losing the link with its popular roots. This evolution demonstrates the ability of parties to adapt to modern times, while remaining relevant and attractive without leaving aside their cultural identity.

#### THE FESTIVITIES OF ST. PETER IN THE OLD POTI

The Poti Velho neighborhood, one of the oldest in the city of Teresina, has its origin related to the creation of the city. Located in the North Zone, at the confluence of the Parnaíba and Poti rivers, it was an important region of passage for navigators and merchants who transited through Vila do Poti, maintaining part of its cultural traditions through its constructions, economic and cultural practices. Currently, within several cultural legacies, it houses the Ceramic Pole, which brings together a rich variety of handicrafts made by local artists and sold in workshops and stores located in the neighborhood.

Image 05 - Ceramic Pole of the Poti-Teresina Neighborhood



Source: <https://piaucult.com.br/?p=cultura&asscodigo>

In addition to material culture, the Poti neighborhood also presents a rich intangible culture. The festivities of São Pedro, held between June 19 and 29, attract many people from the surroundings and the central region of the city. This party is organized by the neighborhood residents' association and begins with a procession that takes the image of St. Peter from the parish of the Mafrense neighborhood to the chapel of the Poti Velho neighborhood. In the church square, typical food stalls are set up by the residents. Gang performances, artistic shows and auctions take place on site. In the church, masses are held in the morning and in the evening, the novena (the expression is used as a reference to days or nights of prayer, but does not necessarily refer to nine days of prayer). In this regard, Pereira and Moraes state that:

Just as pottery, ceramics and fishing activities are identity markers of Poti Velho, related to each other and, at the same time, requiring understanding of their specificities, another identity dimension of Poti is demarcated by religiosity, triggered by residents and visitors. In particular, by popular Catholicism: annually, in the month of June, the aforementioned festivities in praise of St. Peter take place. On this occasion, on the 29th of the same month, a fluvial-terrestrial procession takes place, which begins in motorboats and boats, on the waters of the Poti, departing from the pier of the Yacht Club, also in the urban area of Teresina, in the Matinha neighborhood, and ends in the streets of Poti, when the image of Saint Peter arrives at the local Church (Pereira and Moraes, 2014)

On July 29, St. Peter's Day, in the morning the program begins with the Fishermen's Colony Regatta Tournament. The winners of the Tournament are awarded with canoes, fishing nets and fishing accessories. After the regatta, the women's and men's swimming championship will take place. Competitors have to cross the Poti River, round trip. Another competition is to stay underwater as long as possible. The winners of both categories receive, offered by the neighborhood colony, awards, a trophy and medals. On the eve of the 29th, fishermen spend the night fishing to compete in the Fishing Championship. The result is reverted to lunch, with all the fish-based dishes that, at 1 pm, are offered by the Fishermen's Colony to special guests and political personalities, in addition to being franchised to its members.

Image 06 Procession of St. Peter in the Poti Neighborhood - Teresina/PI



Source: Reproduction/Archdiocese of Teresina<sup>3</sup>.

The great attraction of the closing day is the river procession in honor of St. Peter that attracts a large audience. The speedboat with the image of St. Peter leaves at 5 pm from the pier of the Parnaíba River bound for Porto do Pesqueirinho, from where it goes in procession to the chapel of the neighborhood for the celebration of mass. In Teresina, the June festivities consist not only of the celebration of the dates of the three Saints of the Catholic Church – Saint John, Saint Peter and Saint Anthony, as seen in this article, they integrate elements of popular culture such as dances, food and other cultural forms that

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://portalodia.com/news/Teresina/festejos-de-sao-pedro-no-poti-velho>. Accessed on 10.18.2024.

represent the construction of the identity of the people of Piauí and, aspects that were adapted to the particularities of the city.

## **JUNE FESTIVITIES IN CAMPO MAIOR**

Campo Maior is a municipality located in the state of Piauí and stands out as the seventh most populous in the state, with a population of approximately 50 thousand inhabitants. Recognized as the main city of the Carnaubais Region, its history dates back to the colonial period, when it was founded by the Portuguese in an area whose main economic focus was cattle raising. In 1761, Campo Maior was elevated to the status of district, and the following year, on August 8, 1762, it was officially created as a village, a date that is still celebrated today as the city's anniversary. Over time, the municipality has undergone several economic transformations, and currently its economy is largely supported by commercial activities, agriculture, livestock and extractivism.

Campo Maior is also recognized for its great potential in goat and sheep farming, thanks to the adaptability of the breeds to the edaphoclimatic conditions (soil and climate) of the region. This ability to take advantage of local natural resources has been an important factor for economic development and the sustainability of agricultural practices in the municipality. The city keeps its agricultural tradition alive, but also seeks to modernize, exploring commerce and other activities that generate income for the population, without losing sight of its historical and cultural roots, such as the traditional Festejos de Santo Antônio.

According to the local Diocese<sup>4</sup>, the image of Saint Anthony Aparecido, one of the main symbols of Catholic devotion in Campo Maior, remains shrouded in mystery. For more than 300 years, this sculpture has been revered by the inhabitants of the Land of Carnaubais, and, due to the scarcity of historical records about its origin, the legend of its supernatural appearance has gained strength and consolidated itself as an indisputable truth among the faithful.

Saint Anthony is the patron saint of the city, and the festivities held in his honor are considered the largest religious manifestations in all of Piauí. The city hall estimates that more than sixty thousand people pass through the city during this period, every year,

---

<sup>4</sup> Learn about the hypotheses about the origin of the image of Saint Anthony Aparecido. Available in <https://diocesedecampomaior.org.br/conheca-as-hipoteses-sobre-a-origem-da-imagem-de-santo-antonio-aparecido>. Accessed on 10.18.2024.

including visitors from neighboring municipalities and tourists from other states such as Maranhão, Ceará and especially Brasília. The opening of the festivities, which last thirteen days, takes place on June 1st and is marked by the procession of the "Mastro de Santo Antônio". A carnauba trunk of approximately 60 meters, bearing at the top a "flag" that is another framed picture with the image of Saint Anthony is taken from the Church of the Santa Rita neighborhood to the Cathedral of Saint Anthony. Those who place their personal hopes in this act and those who come to pay their promises for graces obtained participate in the transfer of the mast.

Image 07 Procession of the mast of Saint Anthony in Campo Maior-PI



Source: <https://cidadeverde.com/campomaior/84548/>

Arriving at the cathedral square, it is hoisted with the assistance of a large audience, to the sound of the bells of the Mother Church. It is at this moment that promises are made that will have to be paid next year: politicians hug the mast and ask for electoral victory, single girls jump around her to touch the mast (or "pick up the stick", as the people say) to get a husband. The opening night ends with a fireworks show.

Each subsequent evening is sponsored by a professional category or institution, such as religious and pastoral associations. There is also the night of the Antônios and Antônias, that of the couples who meet, those of the groups that bring together young Catholics, civil servants, bank employees, economists, the one that represents the absent Campo Maiorenses; that of the Cowboys, agricultural technicians, farmers and rural landowners; that of liberal professionals, drivers, motorcyclists, tractor drivers and public transport companies.

Teachers and students, workers, carters, ushers, fishermen and washerwomen are also represented. The representatives of each of these categories collect donations (gum cakes and other special treats, roasted capon, heifers, etc...) to be auctioned in the square, after the novena. The dedication of all is great because the auction is the main source of revenue for the maintenance of the Parish. The religious commission, also responsible for organizing the party, discloses, on the last day of the festivities, the result of the collection. In general, the most profitable night - and the most popular - is the last one, that of the cowboys, a prominent figure in the celebrations.

The party incorporates almost the entire population, and there is always an organized place for all participants. In addition to the professional categories, parishioners, promise payers, sponsors, party judges (generally state authorities and large donors), "butlers" (Catholic faithful and church volunteers), religious and lay organizers, auctioneers with a team of note-takers and jewelry receivers are present.

In the square there is everything. Numerous stalls of all kinds are installed, stalls with gambling, sweets, target shooting, rings, cards, and alcoholic beverages. Photographers, sellers of colorful balloons and other small goods circulate. The spatial organization in the square indicates a social organization according to its most important social classifications and categories. It is possible to verify how the social relations, roles and functions of the "social actors" in the different spaces of the festival are expressed in this festive space.

There is the space of the "rich", in the most central part of the square, of the "poor" in the periphery and the space for the circulation of young people. The configuration of the participants' transit is also clearly demarcated, highlighting the sacred spaces (the celebrations inside the church, the procession route) and the profane (the square, the streets), which on the occasion demonstrate their strength or weakness, as they are transgressed or reaffirmed. Political power is made explicit by the presence of politicians who take attitudes and flaunt those social relations that are typical of them; Matchmaking intentions animate the circulation and play of young people who organize themselves, spontaneously, according to their social classes and so on.

Through this brief description, one can perceive the richness of the June festivities, the popularity and, especially, in Piauí, the strength of its symbolic universe. An immense, rich and very strong symbolic universe. We can see that there is not only an attachment to tradition, but a collective emotional background working to motivate the continuity of

tradition. Due to its intensity and resistance, it must be anchored among the fundamental symbols of culture.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The June festivals are much more than simple folkloric manifestations. In the Brazilian Northeast, especially in states such as Pernambuco, Paraíba, Bahia and Piauí, these festivities gain a special dimension, transforming cities into vibrant stages of culture and faith. During the months of June and July, these regions attract visitors from all over Brazil and even from abroad, consolidating themselves as important cultural and tourist events. In Piauí, for example, both the capital, Teresina, and cities such as Campo Maior, are taken by the joy of square dances, Bumba-meu-boi and religious processions that unite the population around their traditions and symbols.

These June celebrations, in addition to preserving historical customs, such as the Bumba-meu-boi and the processions in honor of the saints, also adapt to the new realities, mixing modernity and tradition. The cultural and symbolic richness of these festivals, especially in Piauí, reflects the deep emotional connection that the population has with its roots, functioning as a link that keeps the local cultural identity alive. The continuity of these traditions, anchored in a strong collective symbology, demonstrates not only the attachment to the past, but also the resistance and importance of these festivals as fundamental elements of northeastern culture, which perpetuate memory and reinforce community ties.

In addition to preserving tradition, the June festivals in Piauí reveal the ability to adapt and innovate without losing their essence. In recent years, these celebrations have reinvented themselves, integrating new elements and urban spaces, such as shopping malls, clubs and squares, while keeping alive the connection with the rural and the religious, fundamental to their origin. This expansion reflects the growing popularity of parties and the way they manage to reinvent themselves, involving from the older generations to young people. This capacity for transformation, without losing the strength of its symbols and the religious devotion that sustains them, is what keeps the June festivals so alive and essential for the cultural identity of Piauí.

## REFERENCES

1. Amaral, A. (1982). Tradições populares. São Paulo: Hucitec.
2. Brandão, C. R. (1989). A cultura na rua. São Paulo: Papirus.
3. Bueno, A. P. (2001). Bumba-boi maranhense em São Paulo. São Paulo: Nankin Editorial.
4. Cascudo, L. da C. (2001). Dicionário do folclore brasileiro. São Paulo: Global.
5. Costa, C. A. da. (2012). Festa junina: síntese de uma mistura cultural (Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso, Departamento de Artes Visuais, Instituto de Artes, Universidade de Brasília).
6. Alvarez Ferreira, A. E. (2013). Dicionário de imagens, símbolos, mitos, termos e conceitos bachelardianos. Londrina: Eduel.
7. Ferreira, E. (2016). O Bumba-Meu-Boi do Piauí: poesia afro-brasileira, cantigas, gênese, memórias e narrativas de fundação do Boi de Né Preto de Floriano Piauí. Vozes, Pretérito & Devir, 3(6), 92-106. ISSN: 2317-1979.
8. Martins, J. (1983). Santo Antônio. São Paulo: Martin Claret.
9. Pereira, L. C., & Moraes, M. D. C. de. (2014). Entre “Teresina nasceu aqui” e “Aqui no Poti e lá em Teresina”: identidades e alteridades na memória oral do bairro Poti Velho. Trabalho apresentado no Simpósio Temático “Cidade: histórias, memórias e história oral” do XII Encontro Nacional de História Oral, Universidade Federal do Piauí, Teresina-PI.
10. Silva, P. (1988). O Piauí no folclore. Teresina: Fundação Cultural Monsenhor Chaves.