

\* Original Article

## Prayers and healing rituals in Brazil's Mid-North region<sup>1</sup>

### Áurea da Paz Pinheiro

Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), Center for Humanities and Arts, Department of Geography and History (Universidade Federal do Piauí, Centro de Ciências Humanas e Letras, Departamento de Geografia e História), Piauí, Brazil  
aureapazpinheiro@gmail.com

### Pedrina Nunes Araújo

State University of Piauí (Universidade Estadual do Piauí – UESPI), Piauí, Brazil  
pedrinanunes@hotmail.com

DOI:10.3395/recis.v5i4.557en

### Abstract

We present part of a historic-ethnographic investigation on healing rituals practiced by female faith healers (*rezadeiras*) in Brazil's Mid-North region. We use oral history and ethnographic research methods to investigate the places where these faith healers practice their rituals, which, in many instances, correspond to their homes. We seek to understand the relationships between the sacred and the profane within these healing spaces. We analyze culture and religion as fields of knowledge between history and anthropology. This knowledge provides important contributions for historical-anthropological and historical-ethnographic studies. This knowledge is presented through multiple approaches and interpretations of the supernatural and divine that contribute to the analysis of cultural manifestations and reflect Brazil's cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** culture; religiosity; Healing Rituals

*[...] She came three days, I prayed, from there on she continued; once in a while, all of the sudden the women arrived asking me to pray. And I always said: - Look! I don't know how to pray for a child, I never prayed...  
- No! However, I know that you prayed for so and so's son, and he got better, pray for mine too; then I prayed, and the child would get better!* [Excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Virgilina, December 2005, city of Teresina – capital of Piauí state]

The aim of this study is to present reflections on historical-ethnographical research to understand the "religious motives" (Geertz, 1978) and the daily experiences of faith healers in Brazil's Mid-North region. This study attempts to construct an anthropological history similar to those proposed by Bloch (1993), Darton (2010) and Ginzburg (2006).

Healing rituals exist in different cultures and are marked by singular religious experiences. These rituals differ in the meanings attributed to them by the communities that create and recreate them daily (DARTON, 2010). *Faith healers* are identified by the rituals they practice in a specific cultural space, which mark their identities and bind them to a certain time, place and space (AUGÉ, 1994). Faith healers do not require rational explanations to carry out their craft. The rituals and practices are supported by what Michel de Certeau called culture: "To bring true culture, is not enough to be the author of social practices, it is necessary that these social practices have meaning for those who perform them" (1995, p. 25).

The meanings assigned to these practices inform their cultural relevance and their understanding within the group. It is worth noting that the meaning of a cultural manifestation is the sustainable basis for its permanence. The rational view of culture is neither unique nor perfect but provides one possible understanding of a given culture: "The anthropological writings are themselves second-hand interpretations, indeed [by definition, only a "native" makes first-hand interpretations: it is their culture]." (GEERTZ, 1978, p. 25).

The time frame of the investigation does not support linear or Cartesian determinisms. The nature of the research favors a long-term investigation controlled by the lifetime of the women. In this respect, Sirinelli's (2005) concept of generation is critical. We considered the length of prayer, the women's memories, the narratives of their life experiences, their available time and their experiences (BOSI, 1994). The women's life stories were the main sources for this study.

In the cities of Teresina, Piriipiri and Uniao in Piauí state, the presence of female faith healers is very important. In Teresina, we interviewed *Mrs. Virgilina*, *Mrs. Felicidade* and *Mrs. Odília*. In Piriipiri, we interviewed *Mrs. Marizu*. In Uniao, we interviewed *Mrs. Laura* and *Mrs. Raimunda*.

*Mrs. Raimunda* was 87 years old at the time of the interview. She lives in Uniao and is a mother and grandmother. She says that prayer brings her closer to God, the saints, the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

*Mrs. Felicidade*, known as Felicia, has lived in Teresina for 44 years, in the Picarreira district east of the city. She was 72 years old at the time of the interview (four years ago).

*Mrs. Virgilina* was born in Meruoca village in the municipality of José de Freitas. In Teresina, her craft won her notoriety. She is a strong woman with a deep voice that commands respect from the young. Due to the death of her husband, she raised nine children by herself.

*Mrs. Marizu* lives in Piriipiri. She is friendly but very suspicious, and she expressed surprise that someone would be interested in learning about her craft. However, once the conversation turned to prayer, her memories began to flow. She says it is a pleasure to pray and to speak of God in a world of cruel and malicious men. She spoke about her craft and other memories.

*Mrs. Laura* was dressed in white and sitting in a chair, waiting for someone to listen to her. A divine woman living in Uniao, a small town in Piauí, she was concerned: would it be possible to understand and transcribe her hoarse voice? We listened to her stories with heightened attention. The fragility of her voice and the slow timing of her speech expressed the strength of her knowledge and tradition.

*Mrs. Odília*, alone in a small world that could not see her, had, like *Mrs. Marizu*, snow-white hair that suggested fragility. During her interview, we found that our first impression of this faith healer was misleading; her fragility was limited to her physical appearance, the marks of a lifetime. Her knowledge of prayers and healing rituals, however, was intact.

The life stories of these women are fascinating. Listening to them was an indescribable experience. The faith healers' memories allowed us to interpret their experiences, including permanence and transformation in the healing rituals. Their reports included words, sounds and gestures ( HALBWACHS, 2006 ). Their testimonials revealed that these rituals remain contemporary and result from a secular tradition ( PINHEIRO; MOURA, 2009 ).

In the construction of the narratives and the research method, we adopted a historical-anthropological approach to the rituals. In particular, we used ethnography and oral history, which allowed us to observe the healing rituals as:

*A form of expression and translation of reality that is performed in a symbolic way, i.e., it is assumed that the meanings given to words, to objects, to actions and to the social actors present themselves in an encrypted form; therefore, there is already significance and value. (PESAVENTO, 2003, p. 15)*

The life stories of these women and the rituals that they performed allowed us to investigate the path of "meanings to words" and the "appraisal value" of these faith healers as "social actors." The historiographical process performed by a historian draws upon several fields of knowledge. Through this process, specific expertise emerges that is related to the cultural dimensions of the craft (CERTEAU, 2002). Religion and religiosity are part of the fields of history and anthropology. In recent years, these fields have contributed to historical-anthropological and historical-ethnographic studies that focus on multiple approaches to and interpretations of the supernatural and the divine. These approaches enable the analysis of important elements of cultural manifestations and the identification of diversity in Brazilian culture ( PINHEIRO; MOURA, 2008; 2009; 2010 ).

*Border practices can be marked by 'good neighborly relations,' in the fortunate expression of Robert Darnton in *The Kiss of Lamourette* (1990), but also, and often, are the stage of litigation. The space for the verification of limits and the demarcation of both sides is not always the object of consensus. In the delineation of geographical division, as well as in the separation of disciplines and objects, the criteria differ, the justifications are always multiple, as it is in this location that settles the game of alterity. (SCHWARCZ, 1999)*

The women's testimonies were an important part of an anthropological history of the rituals (BLOCH, 1993). Each testimony was carefully analyzed. We were attentive to the similarities and dissimilarities in their crafts, rituals and knowledge. We identified life lines, testimonies that described and defined the faith healers' life stories. We recognized the identifying marks that each woman established for

herself and her craft, the intimate relations between identity and memory, and their speech as a starting point for these women to determine how they would be perceived and share with others ( POLLAK, 1992; NORA, 1981; SEIXAS, 2004 ).

Oral history and ethnography allowed a careful examination of the women's prayers. We were able to see these women not as ordinary people but as sufficiently unique for us to attend to their narratives and their elderly and tired gestures, marked by lives based on traditions inscribed in a given time and space.

The women in this study believed that they had received a gift from God and that they must freely share this gift with the people who seek them. The rituals were observed to identify and understand the continuities and ruptures and the production of meanings attributed by the faith healers to *plants, saints, prayers, and the house space*. To provide thick description of the rituals (GEERTZ, 1978), we allowed ourselves, as historians, to use ethnography to carefully observe the sacred space of the faith healers. In many instances, this sacred space was their own homes. We attempted to understand the relationships between the sacred and the profane within these healing spaces. In their testimonies, the healers say that they are able to heal and that prayers are used to obtain these cures.

We appreciate the challenges faced by historians as they traverse diverse places and languages to produce writing that reflects various choices of style and narrative aesthetic ( CERTEAU, 2002 ). It was not easy to write these women's life stories. Several times, we feared that we would miss their words. We felt immense anguish during the transcription of the testimonies: it was as if words that should be expressed in a conventional written text were lost in the analysis and interpretation ( PINHEIRO; MOURA, 2011 ).

To understand the healing rituals practiced by the faith healers, it is necessary to go back to the seventeenth century, when the Piauí territory served as a passageway for Christian missionaries. In 1696, the Freguesia da Mocha and Our Lady of Victory Parish, which is today the city of Oeiras and the former capital of Piauí, were established.

**Figure 1**



Narrow streets of Oeiras. Quiet life, typical of a provincial town in Brazil. In the background, the Church of Our Lady of Victory.

**Figure 2**



For over a century, the Good Friday procession occurs in the city of Oeiras before Holy Week (Procissão de Bom Jesus dos Passos). Devotees walk the narrow streets of the old city. In a Portuguese-style *via sacra* (sacred way), they retrace the last steps of Christ towards Calvary. Many devotees make promises, carry votive offerings and crosses and walk barefoot through the streets.

The Catholic Church precedes the colonial order and entered the wilderness of Piauí with the first cattle farmers (BRANDAO, 2004). The first religious functions were performed by the Company of Jesus congregation, an ally of the Portuguese Crown. The Jesuits spread the Christian faith in these regions, taking possession of land and converting the natives. The Portuguese patronage established a Catholicism that distanced itself from the precepts of the Council of Trent (PINHEIRO, 2001). The Company of Jesus was the landowner in the territory of Piauí. The clergy took possession of the endowment of the Portuguese frontiersman Domingos Afonso Mafrense, whose will in 1711 (revealing the religious fervor of some Catholics) left a significant portion of land to the Company. He left dozens of farms in Piauí and property in the city of Bahia, asking in return for the celebration every day, "until the end of the world, a Mass for the eternal repose of his soul."

The colonization of Piauí attracted many religious individuals because it was a passageway territory that lacked a defined social body. The Catholic religion was part of the cultural and political emergence of the Province, and the links between religion and administrative actions, over time, were defined by the local elite. "On February 20, 1901 through the *Bulla Supremum Catholicum Ecclesiam* from Pope Leo XIII" (PINHEIRO, 2001, p. 45) the Bishopric of Piauí was created. The church and state no longer shared decisions on religious matters. From the discovery of Brazil until the proclamation of the Republic, the Catholic Church was under the jurisdiction of the state, and Rome had little influence on the church in Brazil. The Ultramontane Reform can be considered a breaking point for Brazilian society and the Church, which struggled to follow the precepts of the Council of Trent.

Father Claudio Melo (1983) spoke about the actions of the settlers toward indigenous people during the settlement of these lands and the importance of the Jesuits in protecting the natives. The cleric noted the colonists' hostile treatment of the natives and observed that violence, contempt and abusive acts against women were pervasive practices. The priest described embarrassing situations that increased tensions between the settlers and the native Indians:

*[...] The more ambitious Portuguese saw the natives as income objects. They enslaved them, sold them and/or abused their power, showed violent behavior, including towards the natives' women. This caused great hatred of the Indians towards the white Portuguese. (Ibidem)*

According to Father Melo, the decimation of the indigenous populations of Piauí led to a lack of participation by native Indians in the cultural formation of the province: "Few of our Indians were assimilated into our culture; most were expelled or exterminated in the wars brought by whites" (Ibidem, p.39). Unlike the cleric Claudio Melo (1983), we believe in the indigenous contribution to the culture of Piauí. What remains is a memory of submerged wreckage, a false impression that indigenous peoples had no role in the cultural diversity of Piauí. According to Laura de Melo e Souza (1986), Brazilian religiosity in the colonial context was marked by the presence of religious elements from three ethnic groups, and the culture was permeated by hybridism.

In Piauí, the cultural-religious hybridism explains many of the practices incorporated by the faith healers. Hybridism is a part of many human activities, from architecture to language transformation, and religion is no exception. We find in hybrid practices the emergence of religious diversity ( BURKE, 2003; DARTON, 2010 ). The Catholicism established in Piauí was *imperfect*, distinct from the official religion and the precepts of the Council of Trent (QUEIROZ, 1973). It was a Catholicism that forged a type of popular culture, as understood by Carlo Ginzburg (1987), which expressed itself as a manifestation of the subaltern classes. However, it was not in opposition to the literate culture because there was - and still is - a relationship of exchange between the two classes—a reciprocity that historians call cultural circularity.

Some explanatory comparisons can help us to understand how this circularity manifests in daily life. *Mrs. Virgilina* always wanted to learn to read, but there were no schools in her community. The catechism “booklets” helped her to learn to read and write and allowed her to circulate between the literate culture and the oral tradition. Carlo Ginzburg (1987) examined the inclusion of the miller Menocchio into a system that did not accept alterity. The disruption caused by the sixteenth-century Reformation and the invention of the printing press allowed Menocchio to circulate within supposedly antagonistic cultures. Virgilina was like Ginzburg’s Menocchio: she was able to enter the literary world through religiosity, and she connected the Catholic prayers in the catechism booklets with her knowledge of the oral tradition.

The presence of an imperfect Catholicism in Piauí complicated the Catholic Church’s proposed evangelization. Marrying in the church and fulfilling the sacraments was important to the Church but not to the subaltern classes. The small number of parishes and the distance between them complicated a direct relationship between the faithful and the Church’s teachings. The only alternative for these individuals was to “live in sin” and to await the visit of a priest so that they could be forgiven by God or by the Catholic Church. They believed that sin was a temporary situation and that certain profane actions could be remedied by their own beliefs or expressions of faith – they believed that God “sees,” and the sin would be forgiven.

**Figure 3**



City of Oeiras, Good Friday procession.

Brandão (2004) and Pinheiro (2001) analyzed several factors in the inefficiency of the Catholic Church in Piauí, from difficulties in the Province’s religious unity to adaptations to the current colonial situation. The Catholicism practiced in the Province was proof of the uniqueness of religious experience. Laura de Melo e Souza (1986) states that Catholicism was reinvented in Brazil and lists characteristic features of the colonial era: native Indians, whites and blacks combined their faith and their culture; they created Oxalás, Christs, Maries and Saints and invented other forms of religiosity.

**Figure 4**



The Slaves of the Blessed Mother of Mercy (Escravos da Mãe de Deus da Piedade) celebrate the praises of Our Lady of Mercy at the end of June and early July in Igarape do Lago, an Afro-Brazilian community in the District of Santana, Amapá. The group reaffirms beliefs and perform rituals with various gestures and sounds in striking circumstances that communicate a visual and sonic landscape (PINHEIRO; MOURA, 2010).

With the separation of church and state, a new Catholic clergy order was established. The precepts of the Council of Trent were applied to renew Brazilian religious practice:

*The nineteenth-century Catholic Reformation was a movement of hierarchical character. There was special emphasis on reorganization and creation of new workshops, ethical reforms of the clergy, trying to distance the clergy from political life to devote them exclusively to the pastoral mission. The aim of the movement was to replace the image of the administrator and politician bishop, from the colonial period, with the figure of the apostle shepherd and saint. (PINHEIRO, 2001, p. 43)*

In Piauí, the intention was to transform devotional Catholicism to a Tridentine Catholicism. However, the area retained "the cult of saints and religious festivities [...]. The feast of the patron saint [...] was cause for gathering people [...]. Every day, at the novena's end, the people gathered around the church for the kermess" (COSTA FILHO, 2006, p. 59). Currently, devotional Catholicism continues to promote sociability.

**Figure 5**

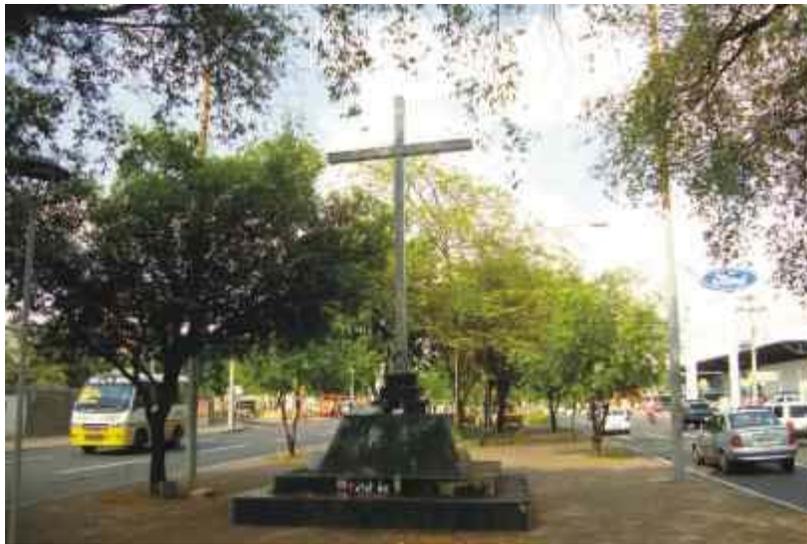


Picture of the Procession of St. Anthony, which marks the beginning of the celebration of the Holy Glorious between

Luiz Mott (2006) drew upon research in the collection of the Torre do Tombo National Archives in Lisbon to study heretical religious manifestations during the colonial period. The analysis of the Inquisition, witchcraft and bigamy highlighted Piauí: "On the verge of our independence, this abominable religious court was finally destroyed [...]." Mott describes the repressive actions that the Church used in the territory of Piauí. He speaks of an *Inquisition in Piauí* and presents cases relating to tribunal actions. One such case involved a Jew who lived in Piauí in the mid-seventeenth century, a fugitive from the crisis plaguing the sugar captaincies in Brazil. His name was Dionisio da Silva. After leaving his home state of Paraíba, he settled in Piauí, started a family and built a small inheritance for his daughters. Because of his Jewish origins, his habits attracted the attention of informers, who denounced him to the Holy Office Tribunal as a heretic. According to Mott, this was the first Inquisition case in Piauí.

Nunes' (1994) investigation of religiosity in Piauí analyzes numerous practices that continue to exist in the daily life of religious people. The exercise and existence of the sacred seem, to the historian, to be cognitive factors that can inform and explain the socio-cultural relations in Piauí. The sacred manifests in many ways and signals the permanence of ancient religious practices. The sacred disrupts the profane. An example is the Cross of the Frei Serafim Avenue in Teresina city, a sacred place that has been transformed into a pilgrimage and devotional space. The visibility of the Cross on the Avenue distinguishes it from other objects; there is no continuity of forms and frameworks that makes it similar to other architectural elements on the Avenue. The space is sacred and full of meaning expressed through the votive offerings left there, which create another spatiality that differs from that which prevails in the Avenue. The religious individual recognizes the Cross as a sacred space.

#### Figure 6



The Cross, located at Frei Serafim Avenue in Teresina, is considered a sacred space for devotees. Water, candles and votive offerings symbolize their beliefs.

To the faithful, sacred places represent a connection with God:

*Feelings of fear: fear of physical or moral pain, fear of unemployment, harassment, assault, starvation or death. However, accompanying this fear there is something very special: the faith and hope that each one of us has placed in God. The daily life requires strong moments for people to overcome the difficulties of the everyday life, finding thus means to manage the fear of suffering and to continue living. (NUNES, 1995, p. 9)*

Another site of memory that reveals the cultural-religious nature of the city is the monument to Gregorio Pereira Santos, known as the Driver Gregorio, who was murdered on the banks of the Poti River in Teresina in 1927. It is a place of pilgrimage for devotees who appeal to "the people's saint" to ask and repay promises.

#### Figura 7



Monument to the Driver Gregorio.

The permanence and continuity of life and religious experience in Piauí are inscribed in places, signs and symbols filled with sense and meaning and social spaces that connect people to each other. Ultimately, we can say that Portuguese Catholicism, Afro religious rites and Indigenous traditions forged different religiosities, exemplified by the healing rituals practiced by faith healers in Brazil's Mid-North region.

### **Bibliographic references**

AUGÈ, Marc. **Não-Lugares: introdução a uma antropologia da supermodernidade**. 7. ed. Campinas, SP: Papyrus, 1994.

BLOCH, Marc. **Os reis taumaturgos**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993.

BOSI, Ecléa. **Memória e sociedade**. Lembranças de velhos. 3. ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994.

BRANDÃO, T. **A Religiosidade no Piauí Colônia: catolicismo adaptado ao modo de vida**. In Revista CLIO, série História do Nordeste, nº 22. 2004. p. 249-260.

BURKE, P. **Hibridismo Cultural**. São Leopoldo, RS: Editora UNISINOS, 2003.

CERTEAU, M. de . **A Escrita da História** . Rio de Janeiro: Florense Universitária, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. **A Cultura no Plural** . Tradução: Enid Abreu Dobránszky. 4. ed. Campinas, SP: Papyrus, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. **A invenção do cotidiano**. Tradução: Ephraim Ferreira Alves. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2008.

COSTA FILHO, A. **A escola do sertão: ensino e sociedade no Piauí, 1850-1889** , Teresina, Fundação Cultural Monsenhor Chaves, 2006.

DARNTON, Robert . **O beijo de Lamourette . Mídia, cultura e revolução**, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010 (Edição de Bolso).

GEERTZ , C. **A interpretação das culturas**. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1978.

GINZBURG, C. **O Queijo e os Vermes: O cotidiano e as idéias de um moleiro perseguido pela Inquisição** . São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987.

HALBWACHS, Maurice. **A Memória Coletiva**. São Paulo: Centauro, 2004.

MELO, Cláudio. **Os jesuítas no Piauí**. Teresina [s/e; s/d]

MOTT, L. **A inquisição no Piauí**. In: NASCIMENTO, A. (Org), VAINFAS, R. (Org), História e historiografia. Recife: Bagaço, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Piauí Colonial – população, economia e sociedade.** Teresina, projeto Petrônio Portela, 1985.

NORA, P. **Entre memória e história: A problemática dos lugares.** Projeto História; Revista do programa de Estudos Pós-Graduandos em História do Departamento em História da PUC – SP. São Paulo, 1981.

NUNES, M Cecília de Almeida. **Motorista Gergório um santo do povo.** Cadernos de Teresina, Teresina, ano XI, n. 19, p. 8-12, abril de 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Religiosidade popular em Teresina.** Cadernos de Teresina, Teresina, ano VII, n. 18, p. 11-13, dezembro de 1994.

NUNES, Pedrina Araújo. **SENHORAS DA FÉ: histórias de vida de rezadeiras do Norte do Piauí [1950-2010],** 2011, 140f. Dissertação [Mestrado em História] – Centro de Ciências Humanas e Letras, Programa de Pós-Graduação em História. Teresina, Piauí, 2011.

PESAVENTO, SANDRA JATAHY. **História e História Cultural.** Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2003.

PINHEIRO, A da Paz. **As ciladas do inimigo: As tensões entre clericais e anticlericais no Piauí nas primeiras décadas do século XX.** Teresina: Fundação Cultural Monsenhor Chaves, 2001.

PINHEIRO, Áurea; MOURA, Cássia. **Celebrações/Celebrations.** Teresina: Educar; Brasília: Unesco/BIRD/MinC Programa Monumenta, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Senhores de seu ofício: a arte santeira do Piauí.** Teresina: Superintendência do Iphan; Brasília: Iphan, 2010.

PINHEIRO, Áurea; MOURA, Cássia. **A inscrição de um olhar.** ANAIS SNH, São Paulo: ANPUH, 2011

POLLAK, M. **Memória e identidade social.** *Estudos Históricos.* Rio de Janeiro, CPDOC-FGV, v.5, n.10, 1992, p.200-215.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Memória, esquecimento, silêncio.** *Estudos Históricos.* Rio de Janeiro, CPDOC-FGV, v. 2, n. 3, 1989, p.3-15.

QUEIROZ, Maria Isaura Pereira de. **O catolicismo rústico no Brasil.** In: \_\_\_\_\_. *O campesinato brasileiro.* Petrópolis: Vozes; São Paulo: Ed. da USP, 1973, p. 72-99.

SCHWARCZ, Lilia K. **História e Etnologia. Lévi-Strauss e os embates em região de fronteira.** *Revista de Antropologia,* v.42 n.1-2, São Paulo, 1999.

SEIXAS, Jacy Alves de. **Percursos de memória em terras de história: problemáticas atuais.** In: BRESCIANI, Stella; NAXARA, Márcia (orgs.). *Memória e (Res) Sentimento. Indagações sobre uma questão sensível.* Campinas, SP: Editora da UNICAMP, 2004, p. 37-58.

SIRINELLI, Jean-François. **A geração.** In: FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes; AMADO, Janaína (org.). *Usos & abusos da História Oral.* 6. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2005. p. 131-137.

SOUSA, L. de Melo. **O diabo e a terra de Santa Cruz: Feitiçaria e religiosidade popular no Brasil colonial.** São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1986.

## Filmography

PINHEIRO, Áurea; MOURA, Cássia. *Passos de Oeiras.* Documentário Etnográfico. Rio de Janeiro: Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular/Associação Cultural de Amigos do Museu de Folclore Edison Carneiro/Minc/IPHAN/Petrobras, 2008. 26min.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Congos: rito e devoção.* Documentário Etnográfico. Teresina: Educar; Brasília: Unesco/BIRD/MinC Programa Monumenta, 2009. 15min.

\_\_\_\_\_. *As escravas da mãe de deus.* Documentário Etnográfico. Rio de Janeiro: Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular/Associação Cultural de Amigos do Museu de Folclore Edison Carneiro/Minc/IPHAN/Petrobras, 2010. 26min.

## Sources [Interviews]

Interview conducted by Pedrina Nunes Araujo with Mrs. Virgilina. December, 2005, in Teresina,

capital of Piauí.

Interview conducted by Pedrina Nunes Araujo with Mrs. Odília. May, 2006, in the municipality of União.

Interview conducted by Pedrina Nunes Araujo with Mrs. Felicidade. May, 2006, in Teresina, capital of Piauí.

Interview conducted by Pedrina Nunes Araujo with Mrs. Marizu. May, 2010, in the municipality of Piripiri.

Interview conducted by Pedrina Nunes Araujo with Mrs. Laura. May, 2010, in the municipality of União.

Interview conducted by Pedrina Nunes Araujo with Mrs. Raimunda. June, 2010, in the municipality of União.

## **Note**

1 This research resulted in a master's dissertation submitted in 2011 to the Graduate Program in History of the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), titled "LADIES OF FAITH: life stories of female faith healers (faith rezadeiras) in the North of Piauí." The research is part of the project "Saints and Devotees in the Brazilian tradition," from the Research Group CNPq "Memory, Education and Cultural Heritage," led by Prof. Dr. Aurea da Paz Pinheiro. Funding: Foundation for Research Support/(Fundação de Apoio à Pesquisa) FAPEPI; Capes/Min / Pro-Cultura.