

CAPOEIRA

ONDE O RITMO CARREGA HISTÓRIA.

WHERE RHYTHM CARRIES HISTORY.



PREFACE

In our first Song Book, we have gathered 15 songs that we regularly sing in our community. They form a versatile repertoire for our rodas, our training sessions, and for everyone who is at the beginning of their Capoeira journey.

Capoeira brings together movement, music, rhythm, and play in a very special way. In the roda, it becomes a dialogue between two people, guided by the berimbau, carried by the songs, and supported by the energy of everyone around them. It is playful and dynamic, but it also carries history, culture, and connection.

Through capoeira, we meet others, challenge ourselves, and become part of something bigger. We learn not only with the body, but also through music, tradition, and shared experience. Every game, every song, and every roda connects us to the roots of capoeira and to the people who keep it alive today.

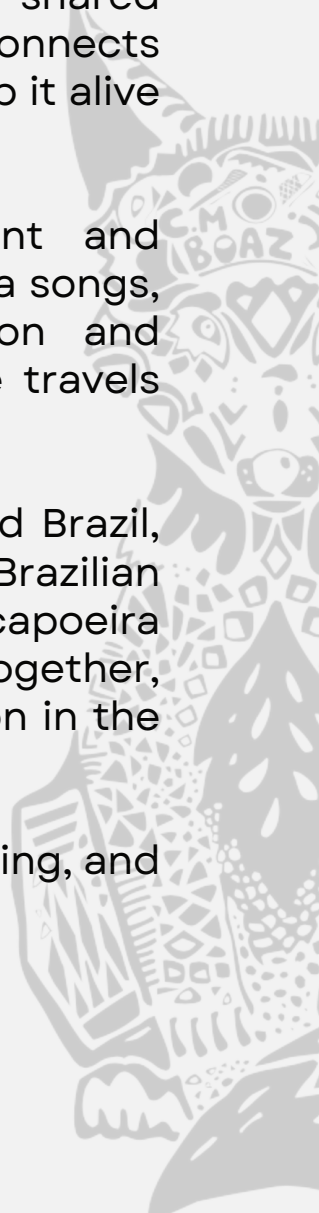
Capoeira has always been shaped by movement and exchange. The sea, which appears so often in capoeira songs, reflects this. It speaks of journeys, of separation and connection, and of the paths through which culture travels and continues.

Across the sea, the cultural roots of capoeira reached Brazil, where they grew and became part of a rich Afro-Brazilian tradition. That sense of movement is still part of capoeira today. It continues to grow, adapt, and bring people together, while staying connected to its roots. Its history lives on in the music, in the rhythm, and in the roda.

May this book accompany you in the roda, in your learning, and in growing together.

Axé.

Swiss Center for Capoeira



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MAIOR É DEUS

*TRADITIONAL LADAINHA
VERSION BY M. PASTINHA*



Iê!
Maior é Deus
Maior é Deus
Pequeno sou eu
O que eu tenho
foi Deus que me deu
O que eu tenho
foi Deus que me deu
Na roda da Capoeira
Grande e pequeno sou eu
Camará!



lê!
God is Great
God is Great
I am small
That which I have
It was God that gave me
That which I have
It was God that gave me
In the Capoeira Roda
I am big and small
Comrade!

Nice to know

A *Ladainha* is sung slowly, almost like a prayer. It often starts with a call for attention (“lê!”), signaling that the roda is starting. It’s typically sung before the first game of Capoeira Angola by one of the senior capoeiristas, accompanied by the berimbau. It ends with an invitation for the coro and the bateria (“...Camará”) to join the singing. From this point the singing is referred to as Louvação, with verses that honour any entity, such as a person, nature or capoeira itself (É hora é hora/Vamos embora/Viva a Capoeira/Água de beber...).

ANGOLA Ê

TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

Angola Ê Ê
Angola Ê
Angola

Coro:
Angola Ê Ê
Angola Ê
Angola

Jogo de Angola Ê Ê
Jogo de Angola

Coro...

Mamãe é de Angola
Angola
Eu também quero Angola

Coro...

Eu vim de Angola Ê
Eu vim de Angola



Angola Ê Ê
Angola Ê
Angola

Coro:
Angola Ê Ê
Angola Ê
Angola

Game of Angola
Game of Angola

Coro...

My mother is from Angola
I also want Angola

Coro...

I came from Angola
I came from Angola

Nice to know

Capoeira has its roots in (West-)Africa, one of which is Angola.

Angola is also the name of one of the three main styles of Capoeira and symbolizes the roots of many enslaved people.



PARANÁ UÊ

TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

Vou dizer (p'ra) minha mulher, Paraná
Capoeira me venceu, Paraná

Coro:

Paraná uê

Paraná uê, Paraná

Vou-me embora, vou-me embora
Como eu já disse que vou, Paraná

Coro...

Eu aqui não sou querido, Paraná
Mas na minha terra eu sou, Paraná

Coro...

Quem não pode com Mandinga, Paraná
Não carrega Patuá, Paraná



I'm going to tell my wife, Paraná
Capoeira got the best of me, Paraná

Coro:

Paraná uê

Paraná uê, Paraná

I'll be on my way, I'll be on my way
As I said I would, Paraná

Coro...

I am not loved in here, Paraná
But in my home, I am, Paraná

Coro...

If you can't handle Mandinga, Paraná
Don't carry a Patuá, Paraná



Nice to know

One of the main interpretations of the word Paraná connects it to a southern state in Brazil, which was fought over in a war with Paraguay in the 1860s.

Many enslaved people (among them, capoeiristas) were sent to fight in this war, with the promise of earning their freedom.

As such, Paraná has come to represent freedom and is used symbolically in many capoeira songs.

The phrase “Quem não pode com Mandinga, não carrega Patuá” is a very old expression, originated in Slavery times. The Mandingas were a tribe in West Africa, mostly muslims, with knowledge of the Arabic language. They were often put in higher positions and were allowed to carry a necklace (Patuá) with a piece of the Quran, as a symbol of protection. The enslaved people destined to work the fields sometimes would try to escape disguised as a Mandinga, carrying a fake Patuá. If they were caught, they would be addressed in arabic; if not able to answer, they would be killed on the spot. Nowadays, this expression is used as a metaphor not to take on more than you can handle.

Ê CANOEIRO

CAPOEIRA SONG BY M. PERNA & M. VARÃO

Ê Canoeiro

Canoa virou no mar

Canoa virou no mar, Canoeiro

Canoa virou no mar.

Coro:

Ê Canoeiro

Canoa virou no mar

Canoa virou no mar, Canoeiro

Canoa virou no mar.

Ê Canoeist

The canoe has turned upside down in the sea.

Coro:

Ê Canoeist

The canoe has turned upside down in the sea.



Nice to know

In Capoeira, songs often mention canoes because the ocean was central to the history of the Afro-Brazilian people who created the art. Enslaved people were brought to Brazil across the Atlantic in ships, and coastal life later involved fishermen, sailors, and canoe workers. In the songs, the canoe becomes a symbol of the journey and struggle, while the boatman (“canoeiro”) represents the one navigating through danger.



TEM AREIA

TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

Tem, tem, tem areia
Tem, tem, tem areia no mar

Tem areia
Tem areia
Tem areia
No fundo do mar tem

Coro:
Tem areia
Tem areia
Tem areia
No fundo do mar tem areia

No fundo do mar tem pedra
Debaixo da pedra tem areia
Onde mora lemanjá
Minha mãe, minha Sereia

Coro...



There's sand
There's sand in the sea

There's sand
There's sand
There's sand
At the bottom of the sea there's sand

Coro:

There's sand

There's sand

There's sand

At the bottom of the sea there's sand

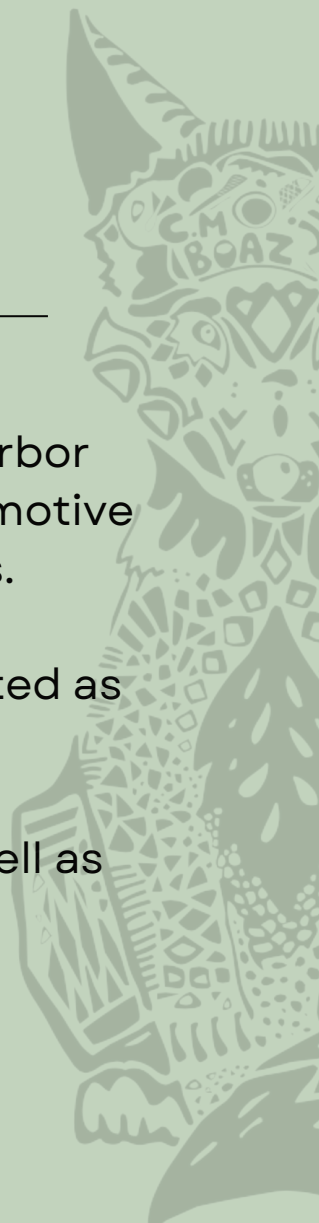
At the bottom of the sea there's a stone
Under the stone, there's sand
Where Iemanjá lives
My mother, my mermaid

***Coro...**

Nice to know

Many capoeiristas in early days were fishermen, harbor workers or sailors. The sea is therefore a common motive in capoeira songs and can have different meanings. Iemanjá is the Candomblé Goddess of the Sea, the protector of those crossing it. She is also represented as a mermaid, often referred to as Janaína.

*Optional coro: last segment can be repeated as well as the coro (No fundo do mar...)



VIM NO BALANÇO DO MAR

CAPOEIRA SONG SUNG BY M. TAMANDUÁ

Vim no balanço do mar lá de Angola
Vim no balanço do mar lá da Guiné
Vim no balanço do mar de
Moçambique
Só quem veio sabe como é

Coro:

Vim no balanço do mar lá de Angola
Vim no balanço do mar lá da Guiné
Vim no balanço do mar de
Moçambique
Só quem veio sabe como é

Vim no navio negreiro
Com uma corrente no pé
Vim trabalhar como escravo
Na colheita do café

Coro...

Hoje sou negro liberto
A escravidão acabou
Mas ainda sinto saudades
Da terra que lá ficou



I came on the waves of the sea from Angola
I came on the waves of the sea from Guinea
I came on the waves of the sea from Mozambique
Only those who came know what it's like

Coro:

**I came on the waves of the sea from Angola
I came on the waves of the sea from Guinea
I came on the waves of the sea from Mozambique
Only those who came know what it's like**

I came on the slave ship
With a chain on my foot
I came to work as a slave
In the coffee harvest

Coro:

Today I am a free black man.
Slavery is over.
But I still miss
The land that was left behind.

Coro:

Nice to know

The sea is symbolic to Capoeira, as it was the medium through which millions of people from different African countries were brought to be enslaved in Brazil by the Portuguese colonisers, as well as a symbol of what stood between the enslaved people in Brazil and their homeland; it is the path they would have to cross to get back home.



MARANHÃO

CAPOEIRA SONG BY M. AZULÃO BAIANO

Maranhão, Maranhão oh
Que saudades do meu Maranhão oh

Coro:

**Maranhão, Maranhão oh
Que saudades do meu Maranhão oh**

Menina solta os cabelos
Por baixo do limoeiro
Se o limoeiro quebrar oh
Eu pago com o meu dinheiro oh

Coro...

Debaixo do rio tem peixe dourado
Menina bonita, sou seu namorado
Debaixo do rio tem peixe de escama
Menina bonita sou eu quem te ama

Coro...



Maranhão, Maranhão oh
How I miss my Maranhão oh

Coro:

**Maranhão, Maranhão oh
How I miss my Maranhão oh**

Girl, set (let) your hair down
Under the lemon tree
If the lemon tree breaks down oh
I'll pay with my own money oh

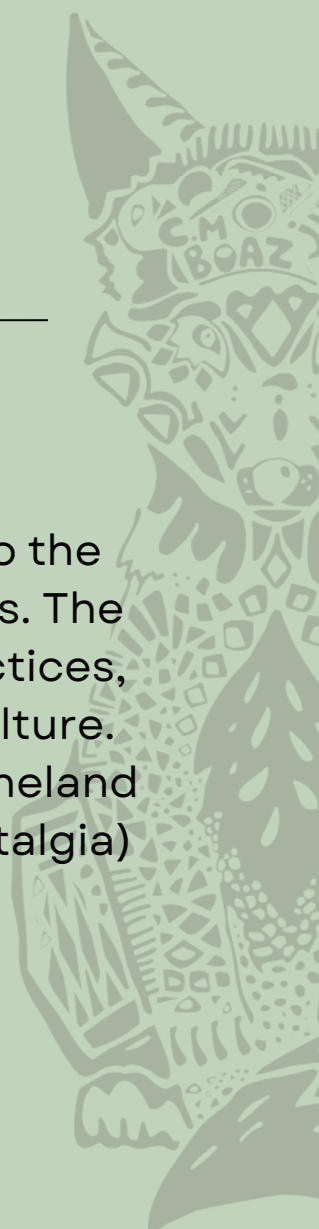
Coro...

In the river there are golden fish
Pretty girl, I am your boyfriend
Under the river there are fish with scales
Pretty girl I'm the one who loves you

Coro...

Nice to know

Maranhão was a major coastal region connected to the Atlantic slave trade and Afro-Brazilian communities. The state developed strong Afro-Brazilian cultural practices, which share rhythms and themes with capoeira culture. Because of this, Maranhão became a symbolic homeland in capoeira songs, often sung with “saudade” (nostalgia) for the place, its culture, and its people.





VADEIA

*TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG
PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS*



Vadeia sinhá e sinhô
Vadeia laiá loiô
Vadeia que tem Axé p'ra vadiar

Coro:

**Vadeia sinhá e sinhô
Vadeia laiá loiô
Vadeia que tem Axé p'ra vadiar**



Vadeia sinhá e sinhô

Vadeia laiá ioiô

Vadeia because we have Axé to vadiar

(Also: Come play, because there is axé energy to play with)

Coro:

Vadeia sinhá e sinhô

Vadeia laiá ioiô

Vadeia because we have Axé to vadiar

Nice to know

The term “Vadiação” (the noun from which the verb “Vadiar” derives from) means to play a game in a relaxed way, to have fun, to “chill” together.

“Sinhá” and “Sinhô” are short forms of the terms “Senhora” and “Senhor”, respectively. Referring to the owners of the plantation house. “laiá” and “loiô” are also short forms of the same words but refers to the children of the “Sinhá” and “Sinhô”.

“Axé” means good energy, vital force, in the Yorubá language. It is intrinsically connected to Afro-Brazilian religions like Candomblé and Umbanda, which many capoeiristas (to this day) used to practice or believe in.

MEU BARCO MINHA CANOA

VERSION BY M. PERNALONGA

Meu barco, minha canoa
Não paro de remar
Eu remo a favor da maré
Não deixe essa fonte secar

Coro:

**Meu barco, minha canoa
Não paro de remar
Eu remo a favor da maré
Não deixe essa fonte secar**

My boat, my canoe
I won't stop rowing
I row in favor of the tide
Don't let that fountain dry out

**Coro: My boat, my canoe
I won't stop rowing
I row in favor of the tide
Don't let that fountain dry out**

Nice to know

Like “Ê Canoeiro”, this song also presents the sea as a symbol of memory, hope, movement, and connection in Capoeira.



QUEM VEM LÁ SOU EU

*VERSION BY M. BOCA RICA &
M. BIGODINHO*



Quem vem lá sou eu
Quem vem lá sou eu
Berimbau bateu
Capoeira sou eu

Mas sou eu, sou eu

Coro: Quem vem lá

I'm the one who's coming
I'm the one who's coming
The Berimbau played
I am Capoeira

But it's me, it's me

Coro: Who's coming



Nice to know

Beyond its literal words, this song expresses identity, pride, and belonging, drawing on traditions that emphasize personal presence in communal spaces, and exists in many regional variations that show how capoeira songs are living, evolving expressions of culture.



MARACANGALHA

VERSION BY M. CURIÓ

Eu vou p'ra Maracangalha Ê Ê
Eu vou p'ra Maracangalha Ê A

**Coro: Eu vou p'ra Maracangalha Ê Ê
Eu vou p'ra Maracangalha Ê A**

Olha lá Maracangalha
Terra de grande valor
A terra da Capoeira
Onde Besouro andou, Maracangalha

Coro...

Olha lá Maracangalha
Terra boa hospitaleira
A terra dos engenhos
Onde nasceu a Capoeira, Maracangalha

Coro...

Olha lá Maracangalha
Terra boa de tradição
Todos com o uniforme branco
Com o seu chapéu na mão, Maracangalha

Coro...



I'm going to Maracangalha Ê Ê
I'm going to Maracangalha Ê A

**Coro: I'm going to Maracangalha Ê Ê
I'm going to Maracangalha Ê A**

See there, Maracangalha
A land of great value
The land of Capoeira
Where Besouro roamed, Maracangalha

Coro

See there, Maracangalha
Good land of hospitality
land of the sugar plantations
Where Capoeira was born, Maracangalha

Coro

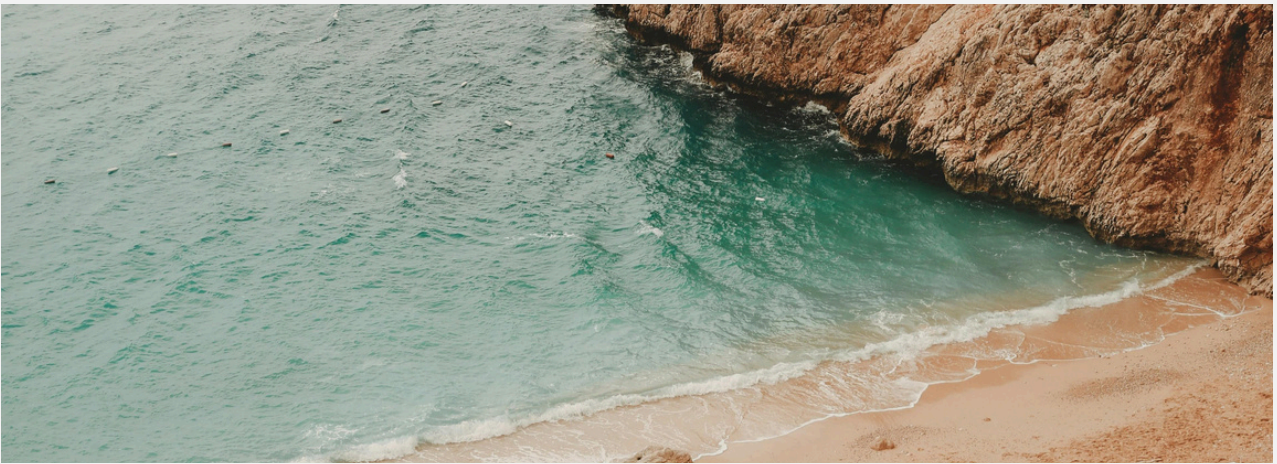
See there, Maracangalha
Good land of tradition
Everyone wear white uniform
Holding their hats in the hand, Maracangalha

Nice to know

Maracangalha is a famous place in Bahia, where Besouro de Mangangá (a famous capoeirista from Bahia whose fighting skills won him a “legendary status”) was killed there. In Capoeira culture, the town represents the struggle against oppression.

VIM NO NAVIO DE ARUANDA

*TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG
PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS*



Vim no navio de Aruanda, Aruanda ê
Vim no navio de Aruanda, Aruanda
Por quê me trouxeram de Aruanda?
P'ra quê me trouxeram de Aruanda?
Vim no navio de Aruanda, Aruanda ê

Coro:

**Vim no navio de Aruanda, Aruanda ê
Vim no navio de Aruanda, Aruanda
Por quê me trouxeram de Aruanda?
P'ra quê me trouxeram de Aruanda?
Vim no navio de Aruanda, Aruanda ê**



I came on a ship from Aruanda, Aruanda ê
I came on a ship from Aruanda, Aruanda
Why did they bring me from Aruanda?
What for did they bring me for from Aruanda?
I came on a ship from Aruanda, Aruanda ê

Coro...

Nice to know

Aruanda refers to the spiritual dimension of the Umbanda religion.

The word "Aruanda" is a linguistic variation of Luanda, the capital of Angola. Luanda had one of the most significant ports for the slave trade, where countless Africans saw their homeland for the last time.

A BANANEIRA CAIU

TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

O (meu) facão bateu em baixo

Coro:

A bananeira caiu

Cai, cai bananeira

Coro:...

The knife cuts low

Coro: The banana tree fell down

Fall, fall, banana tree

Nice to know:

A “Facão” is a big knife, a sort of machete, used to cut plants and small trees in the plantations or forests. This song can be used as a metaphor for a moment in the game where one Capoeirista was taken down by their game partner, encouraging them to learn from this, or asking them to be careful next time.



MANDAR LECÔ CAJUÊ

TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

Mandar lecô, Cajuê
Mandar loiá
Mandar lecô, Cajuê
Mandar loiá

Coro:

Mandar lecô, Cajuê
Mandar loiá
Mandar lecô, Cajuê
Mandar loiá

Vou mandar lecô

Coro:

Cajuê

Mandar loiá

Coro...



I'll send (someone) there, to the cashew tree
I will send (someone) to go look (there)

Nice to know

During the period of slavery, planting cashew trees was very common, and it was common for the enslaved people to spend the little resting time they had under one of those trees. When they were needed, someone would go to look for them under the cashew tree.

“Cajuê” is a shorter form of Cajueiro (cashew tree).

“Lecô” means Ir lá / to go there.

“Loiá” is a form of ‘olhar lá’ / ‘to look there.



SAMBA LÊLÊ

TRADITIONAL CAPOEIRA SONG PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

Samba Lêlê bateu na porta
Samba Lêlê vai ver quem é
Samba Lêlê é meu amor
Samba Lêlê samba no pé

**Coro: Samba Lêlê bateu na porta
Samba Lêlê vai ver quem é
Samba Lêlê é meu amor
Samba Lêlê samba no pé**

Samba Lêlê knocked on the door
Samba Lêlê goes to see who it is
Samba Lêlê is my love
Samba Lêlê (has) samba in/on his/the feet
(Alternatively: dances samba with the feet)

Nice to know:

Samba Lêlê is a character in a typical Brazilian folk song, usually sung by (for) children.





OBRIGADO

Our appreciation goes to all the people who have preserved, lived and carried Capoeira forward through generations. Without their knowledge, their voices and their dedication, these songs would not exist and Capoeira would not be what it is today.

We thank our community and all Capoeiristas who are part of this journey with energy, openness and respect.

Our acknowledgment goes to our instructors, who share their knowledge with commitment, patience and responsibility. They bring their songs into our rodas and inspire each other. Through all of us Capoeira remains alive.

A special thank you goes to our Inst. Grida for her content-editorial work: the texts, the translation and background research. She is an important musical source for our community.

We are also grateful for the work of our in-house media person: Inst. Surpresa. Her hard work is what led to this beautifully designed book we all get to enjoy now.

May this book bring you joy in singing, in learning and in growing together. the first of many to come!

The SCC team
Axé

