

BOTANY IN THE IDENTITY OF BRAZILIAN COAT OF ARMS: A RESCUE OF SYMBOLS FOR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine the plants included in the coats of arms of Brazil and its federated entities. This rescue is important for Brazilians to know the symbols with which they face official documents. The consolidation of this information is essential for the evidence of the emblem that makes up the coats of arms of the states of Brazil. Therefore, we analyzed which plants are illustrated in these national symbols and what this presents in the symbolic rescue of national sovereignty. Although not a physically palpable theme, it represents a little known story among Brazilians. The symbolic identity present in the coats of arms embodies the patriotism of a mature country that needs to strengthen its conceptual bases.

Keywords: Brazil. Flora. Heraldry. Patriotism.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Symbols are representations used by man to establish communication. This allowed the development of various forms of expression, oral and written, which allowed the development of cultural aspects, such as language, artistic, scientific, mathematical expressions, among others as expressed in symbols (CORSO, 2005).

In a more restricted aspect, culture is based on the symbolic function, that is, on the meaning that the individual establishes concerning the representations of the various areas that make up their daily lives (CORSO, 2005). In this sense, national symbols are elements that identify a nation to itself and other countries. The Brazilian National Symbols are the National Flag, the National Anthem, the National Weapons, and the National Seal (BRASIL, 1971).

The National Arms or National Coat of Arms represents the glory, honor, and nobility of Brazil and was created on the same date as the National Flag (BRASIL, 1971). According to the Priberam Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (2019), the term heraldry means the set of emblems on the coat of arms. In this sense, Frutiger (2007) and Consolo (2012) highlight that it is an auxiliary science of history that somehow expresses a code of a social system. The purpose of this work is to examine the plants that are included in the coats of arms of Brazilian federative entities.

To disseminate the heraldic descriptions of Brazilian federative entities, a search was carried out of all the norms (Constitutions, Laws, Decree-Laws, and Decrees) that institutionalize the coats of arms of all Brazilian states, so that the mention or indication can be identified. of flora in these national emblems. In some cases, specialized bibliographies were consulted to assist in designating the corresponding plant.

The nomenclature of specific plant names is per the classification adopted in the List of Flora Species of Brazil 2020 (THE BRAZIL FLORA GROUP, 2020), Tropicos - Missouri Botanical Garden (TROPICOS, 2019), and The Plant List (THE PLANT LIST, 2019). The name of the Families is in accordance with Angiosperm Phylogene Group IV (CHASE et al., 2016) and consulted in Indices Nominum Supragenericorum Plantarum Vascularium (REVEAL, 2020). For generic spelling, followed what was indicated in Farr and Zijlstra (2020) contained in the: Index Nominum Genericorum (Plantarum).

The purpose of this work is to make the public aware of the plants that are included in the coats of arms of Brazilian federative entities. Therefore, it was surveyed and analyzed which plants are illustrated in these national symbols. The symbolic identity present in the coats of arms embodies the patriotism of a mature country that needs to strengthen its conceptual bases so that the importance of Brazilian plant diversity can be recognized.

2 THE GENESIS OF COAT OF ARMS

Before determining the origins of the coats of arms of Brazil and its federated entities, it is interesting to refer to heraldic history.

According to Azevedo and Lacerda (2002), the word heraldic derives from the word heraldus from medieval Latin and means “proclaimer”, which designated the court official responsible for announcing tournaments, wars, and honorable titles and, above all, for designing and designating the coats of arms. In Portuguese, heraldry can also be translated as an armory or parasematography, and also refers to the art of forming and describing the coat of arms of a particular place, whether country, state, municipality, or institution (CONSOLO, 2012). Plants are very important elements in society's life that are eternalized in heraldic inscriptions.

Berg (2015) reports that heraldry and its representations fulfill a function associated with the role of national symbols, as part of a set of traditions that correspond to the “business card” of a nation.

3 SYMBOLOGICAL BOTANY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF RECOGNITION

Before the arrival of the Portuguese, our country was known among the natives as Pindorama or Terra das Palmeiras (RIZO; HENRY, 2016; STAM, 2019). Thus, the lands of Portuguese America were named in the Letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha on May 1, 1500 “Terra de Vera Cruz” (SOUZA, 2001), the symbolic element “Cruz” was present in various forms in the squadrons of Pedro Álvares Cabral, from the heirs of the Order of the Templars or Pauperes commilitones Christi Templique Salomonis (Brothers Soldiers of the Temple and Poor Knights of Christ of the Temple of Solomon) whose emblem was the Cross of the Order of Christ, in which they were very close to royalty in Portugal (SILVA, 2011).

The name Brazil comes from the wood that is widely explored and appreciated as a red or ember red colorific, a very abundant tree on the coast of the new Portuguese colony. This plant was at the heart of the first economic exploitation, which almost decimated the species: *Paubrasilia echinata* (Lam.) Gagnon, H. C. Lima & G. P. Lewis.

With centuries of exploration, pau-brasil began to become scarce, and its removal was only authorized by the King of Portugal. As Brazil was being shared by the Portuguese elites, the natives were exterminated, much of the cultural wealth existing here was suppressed to the detriment of a “new identity” arising from the colonizers. From this construction, the symbols began to be part of the coats of arms, which, like the process, was the result of evolution according to historical facts of certain places.

With the decline of the pau-brasil economic cycle, the transition to the Sugar cane cycle took place.: *Saccharum officinarum* L., from the Poaceae family, was already cultivated in other Portuguese colonies, such as Madeira Island. This species was introduced in Brazil, guaranteeing Portugal three-centennial supremacy as an economic activity (CANABRAVA, 1981) in the international sugar market, so much so that this grass is present in the coat of arms of the states of Alagoas, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Norte.

With other countries that started exporting sugar, Portugal encouraged the promotion of the cotton cycle, a plant of the Malvaceae family, of the species: *Gossypium hirsutum* L., mainly for export. This element appears in the coats of arms of the states of Alagoas, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, and Rio Grande do Norte. Despite the introduction of cotton cultivars from the East, native species already existed here, before 1,500 the Indians already used cotton flakes for various purposes, such as adornments or for fire production. (GONÇALVES; RAMOS, 2008).

With the expansion of the coffee cycle, a plant of the Rubiaceae family, the species introduced and most cultivated in Brazil is *Coffea arabica* L., which to this day is recognized as one of the most important Brazilian economic activities (CAMARGO; CAMARGO, 2001), it is the most present plant in coats of arms, being found in nine states.

The rubber cycle that provided the Amazon with economic growth never seen before in the Brazilian Amazon (PONTES, 2014), was carried out through the extraction of latex and vulcanization of the Rubber Tree, a plant of the Euphorbiaceae

family, of the species: *Hevea brasiliensis* (Willd. ex A.Juss.) Müll.Arg., the referred plant appears in the coats of arms of Acre, Mato Grosso, and Pará.

Brazil is one of the main tobacco producers in the world, the organization of production was encouraged by American businessmen (BOEIRA, 2006). The tobacco originates from the plant of the Solanaceae family, of the species: *Nicotiana tabacum* L., this plant is present in coats of arms of four states.

In Amapá, the coat of arms is composed of elements from the tree popularly known as Blond Mahogany, from the Apocynaceae family, of the species *Parahancornia fasciculata* (Poir.) Benoist, very present in the Amazon forests, formerly known by the Indians, and widely used medicinally.

The recognition of these plants, which greatly contribute to the economic development of Brazil, especially native, naturalized and exotic plants, must be worked on rationally, to maintain Brazilian biodiversity.

4 THE LEGITIMATION OF BRAZILIAN STATES' COAT OF ARMS

To make a space-time-object cut, it was necessary to define the criterion of presenting a plant or part of it in the heraldic description and in the very symbol that designates the coats of arms of federative entities. Among the 27 units, 24 had one or more plants symbolized in the emblems. Of these, 15 states published in laws, 4 in decrees, 2 in decree-laws, and 1 in the Constitution formalized their respective coats of arms (Figure 1; Tables 1 and 2). The 24 states are: Acre; Alagoas; Amapá; Ceará; Espírito Santo Holy Spirit; Goiás; Maranhão; Mato Grosso; Mato Grosso do Sul; Minas Gerais; For; Paraíba; Paraná; Pernambuco; Piauí; Roraima; Rondônia; Rio de Janeiro; Rio Grande do Norte Large northern river; Rio Grande do Sul; Santa Catarina; São Paulo; Sergipe; Tocantins.

Figure 1 – Coats of arms of Brazilian states that have plant symbology



Source: ADAPTED FROM VRIES (2020). FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: AC; AL; AP; CE; ES; GO; MA; MT; MS; MG; PA; PB; PR; PE; PI; RR; RO; RJ; RN; RS; SC; SP; SE; TO.

Table 1 - Federative Unit with the respective validating standard of the Coat of Arms, 2020

| UF | Rule (Reference) | Plant |
|----|--|---|
| AC | Law number. 1173, of December 22, 1995 (ACRE, 1995) | Coffee Tree, Rubber Tree, and Tobacco. |
| AL | Law number. 2628, of September 23, 1963 (ALAGOAS, 1963) | Cotton Tree and Sugar cane. |
| AP | Constitution of the State of Amapá, December 20, 1991 (AMAPÁ, 1991) | Blond Mahogany. |
| CE | Law number. 13,878, of February 23, 2007 (CEARÁ, 2007) | Carnauba Palm. |
| ES | Decree-law number. 16,618 of July 24, 1947 (ESPÍRITO SANTO, 1947) | Coffee and Sugar cane |
| GO | Law number. 650, of July 30, 1919 (GOIÁS, 1919) | Rice, coffee, sugar cane, and tobacco. |
| MA | Law number 416 of August 27, 1906 (MARANHÃO, 1906) | Laurel. |
| MT | Decree number 5.003 of August 29, 1994 (MATO GROSSO, 1994) | Herb Tree and Rubber Tree. |
| MS | Decree number 2 of January 1, 1979 (MATO GROSSO DO SUL, 1979) | Coffee and Herb Tree. |
| MG | Decree number 6,498, of February 5, 1924 (MINAS GERAIS, 1924) | Coffee and tobacco. |
| PA | Law number 912 of November 9th, 1903 (PARÁ, 1903) | Cacao Tree and Rubber Tree. |
| PB | Not found (MONTEIRO; SANTANA, 2019) | Cotton Tree and Sugar cane. |
| PR | Decree-Law number 5.713, of May 27, 2002 (PARANÁ, 2020) | Herb Tree and Paraná Pine. |
| PE | Law number 75 of May 25, 1895 (PERNAMBUCO, 1895) | Cotton Tree e Sugar cane. |
| PI | Law number 1,050, enacted on July 24, 1922 (PIAUÍ, 1922) | Cotton Tree, Babaçu Tree, Buriti Tree, Sugar cane, and Carnauba Palm. |
| RJ | Law 5 588 of October 5, 1965 (RIO DE JANEIRO, 1965) | Coffee Tree e Sugar cane. |
| RN | Decree number: 201, of July 1, 1909; Law 2160, of December 3, 1957 (RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 1909; 1957) | Cotton Tree, Carnauba Palm, Coconut Tree, e and Sugar cane. |
| RS | Law number 5.213, of January 5, 1966 (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1966) | Fleur-de-lis, smoke, Herb Tree. |
| RO | Law number 4,158 of October 24, 2017 (RONDÔNIA, 2017) | Cacao Tree and coffee. |
| RR | Law number 133 of June 14, 1996 (RORAIMA, 1996) | Rice. |
| SC | Law number 17,308 of November 6, 2017 (SANTA CATARINA, 2017) | Wheaten and coffee. |
| SP | Law number 145 of September 3, 1948 (SÃO PAULO, 1948) | Oak Tree, Coffee Tre,e and Laurel. |
| SE | Law number 2 of June 5, 1892 (SERGIPE, 1892) | Coconut Tree. |
| TO | Law number 92 of November 17, 1989 (TOCANTINS, 1989) | Laurel. |

Source: THE AUTHORS, 2020.

Table 2 - Scientific names of plants indicated on coats of arms

| No | Vernacular | Scientific name | Coat of arms |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Amaryllidaceae J. St.-Hil. | | | |
| 1 | Fleur-de-lis | <i>Sprekelia formosissima</i> (L.) Herb. | RS |
| Apocynaceae Juss. | | | |
| 2 | Blond Mahogany | <i>Parahancornia fasciculata</i> (Poir.) Benoist | AP |
| Aquifoliaceae Bercht. & J.Presl | | | |
| 3 | Herb Tree | <i>Ilex paraguariensis</i> A.St.-Hil. | MT; MS; PR; RS |
| Araucariaceae Henkel & W.Hochst. | | | |
| 4 | Paraná Pine | <i>Araucaria angustifolia</i> (Bertol.) Kuntze | PR |
| Arecaceae Schultz Sch. | | | |
| 5 | Carnauba Palm | <i>Copernicia prunifera</i> (Mill.) H.E.Moore | CE; PI; RN |
| 6 | Buriti Tree | <i>Mauritia flexuosa</i> L.f. | PI |
| 7 | Babaçu Tree | <i>Attalea speciosa</i> Mart. ex Spreng. | PI |
| 8 | Coconut Tree | <i>Cocos nucifera</i> L. | RN; SE |
| Euphorbiaceae Juss. | | | |
| 9 | Rubber Tree | <i>Hevea brasiliensis</i> (Willd. ex A.Juss.) Müll.Arg. | AC; MT; PA; |
| Fagaceae Dumort. | | | |
| 10 | Oak Tree | <i>Quercus faginea</i> Lam. | SP |
| Lauraceae Juss. | | | |
| 11 | Laurel | <i>Laurus nobilis</i> L. | MA; SP; TO |
| Malvaceae Juss. | | | |
| 12 | Cotton Tree | <i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> L. | AL; PB; PE; PI; RN |
| 13 | Cacao Tree | <i>Theobroma cacao</i> L. | PA; RO |
| Poaceae Barnhart | | | |
| 14 | Sugar cane | <i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L. | AL; ES; GO; PB; PE; PI; RJ; RN |
| 15 | Rice | <i>Oryza sativa</i> L. | GO; RR |
| 16 | Wheaten | <i>Triticum aestivum</i> L. | SC |
| Rubiaceae Juss. | | | |
| 17 | Coffee Tree | <i>Coffea arabica</i> L. | AC; ES; GO; MS; MG; RJ; RO; SC; SP |
| Solanaceae A.Juss. | | | |
| 18 | Tobacco/ Smoke | <i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> L. | AC; GO; MG; RS |

Source: THE AUTHORS, 2020.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present work sought to evaluate the identity of plants in the coats of arms of Brazilian states and their symbolic function for the construction of the plural Brazilian identity. This rescue is necessary for Brazilians to get to know the national symbols they face daily in the face of official documents.

The consolidation of this information is important so that the understanding of these emblems is evidenced and that this represents a rescue of national sovereignty, which is so much in need of consolidation. Despite not being a physically palpable topic, it represents a little-known story among Brazilians.

Therefore, the identity present in the coats of arms embodies the patriotism of a mature country that needs to strengthen and use its conceptual bases to value biodiversity resources.

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