

### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper examines the type and sources of data concerning Cannabis sativa in Brazil, and presents the terminology used in the various regions of Brazil. The types of users of cannabis, methods of use, and a brief examination of the reasons offered for the use of cannabis are presented. The paper ends with suggestions and observations concerning future research in Brazil on this topic.*

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In a recent article Schultes (1973) pointed out that Cannabis saliva has been used throughout its history for five principal purposes: for hempen fibers; for its oil; for its achenes, or "seeds," which man has consumed as a food; for its narcotic properties; and as a therapeutic agent in folk medicine and modern pharmacopoeias. (Ten of the papers in the first session of this conference mentioned cannabis use for pleasure-escape, therefore I think we can add this to Dr. Schultes' list.) In its 400-plus years' history in Brazil it apparently has served primarily for fiber, its narcotic properties and in folk pharmacopoeia as well as pleasure-escape.'

Before going any further, I must make a few remarks concerning the data on Cannabis saliva in Brazil. There are two striking factors here: 1) the paucity of data concerning the relationship of Cannabis saliva and the indigenous population, i.e., Tropical Forest and Marginal Indians: the entire Colonial and Imperial Period, 1549 through 1899; and contemporary Brazil, 1899 to the present. 2) the types of data available: these consist of medical, psychiatric, botanical, and "law and order" data. There is a conspicuous lack of social science data, written by either Brazilian or foreign authors. Furthermore most of the data is prejudiced against cannabis.

Let us first look at data concerning the use of cannabis by indigenous peoples. There is a general consensus that cannabis was imported to Brazil sometime in the early sixteenth century, probably by slaves brought from the west coast of Africa and particularly from Angola. This would indicate, and many authors have substantiated the fact, that cannabis is not a plant native to the New World, at least to South America. However, it must not be forgotten that South American Indians had a wide range of hallucinogenic drugs, especially tobacco, which they used in ritual and medicinal instances. There is very little mention of Tropical Forest Indians having adopted cannabis even much later on in the acculturation period. An examination of the Human Relations Area Files reveals little or no mention of cannabis use amongst Indians living in what is now Brazil. The same is true for the Handbook of South American Indians. One mention of the use of hashish is made by Wagley and Galvao (1949) in their study of the

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Tenetebara. For the remainder of this paper, we will have to disregard the use of cannabis among Brazilian indigenous peoples.

As for the Colonial and Imperial Periods, the data although scarce is interesting from a diffusionist point of view. The major stream of thought held by Brazilian authors on the subject, as exemplified by Rosado (1958), indicates that cannabis was brought to Brazil from Africa starting at approximately 1549, if not before. 1549 is the outstanding date used by most authors because of a decree issued by Don Joao III of Portugal authorizing newly established sugar cane planters to import up to 1200 slaves per sugar mill. Rosado (1958), quoting Pio Correa, indicates that cannabis seeds were brought to Brazil in cloth dolls which were tied to the rag tag clothing worn by the slaves. He further states, that cannabis was planted and adapted itself well to the entire area from the state of Bahia all the way up to the state of Amazonas. (This is, in part, because slaves went to the states of Bahia, Alagoas, Sergipe, and Pernambuco in great numbers. No explanation is offered for the implantation of cannabis in the states of Ceara, Rio Grande del Norte, Maranhao, Para and Amazonas. It should be noted that Maranhao, Para and Amazonas had exceedingly little African influence through the medium of slavery.) Most authors disclaim cannabis use in southern Brazil until this century, in spite of evidence to the contrary.

There are two other scraps of information pertaining to the Colonial Period which are of interest. The first is a brief piece of information cited by Lucena, Ataide and Coelho (1958). This concerns the work of one Garcia de Orta, a Portuguese writer who made one of the first descriptions of cannabis use in India as early as 1556. (I do not know where this was first published, however a second edition of his works was re-edited in 1872 by the National Press, Lisbon, Portugal.)

A second scrap of information is even more interesting. It concerns the use of cannabis in the Portuguese Royal Court in Rio de Janeiro and in Lisbon. The reference is brief; it concerns Dona Canota Joaquina, the wife of Emperor Don Joao VI, King of Portugal and Brazil. In 1808, the Portuguese Royal Court, threatened by Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, escaped to Brazil, settling in Rio de Janeiro. The court spent approximately six years in Brazil, returning to Portugal at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Queen Carlota Joaquina was dying in 1817. Her favorite Negro slave, Felisbino, who had accompanied her to Portugal, usually provided her with cannabis. On her death bed, she asked Felisbino to "bring me an infusion of the fibers of diamba do amazonas, with which we sent so many enemies to hell." Felisbino made an infusion of cannabis and arsenic and gave it to her. It is recounted by Assis Cintra (1934) that upon taking the infusion, Dona Canota felt no pain because of the analgesic action of diamba, "thereupon taking up her guitar and singing," later dying. (Her slave Felisbino had the same end, drinking diamba infusion with arsenic.)

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Another interesting piece of information during the Colonial Period concerned the prohibition of "the sale and use of pito do Pango as well as keeping it in public establishments." This was an edict of the Municipal Council of Rio de Janeiro issued in October, 1830. Although most authors point to the concentration of cannabis use in northeastern Brazil, it would appear to have been in considerable use in Rio de Janeiro to have had the Municipal Council pass restrictive measures. The Edict of 1830 in Rio also prohibited the importation of marihuana but whether from other countries/colonies or Brazilian provinces isn't clear.

A last indication of the use of cannabis in Brazil during this Colonial Period is offered by Gilberto Freyre in his book *O Nordeste*. He points out that throughout the northeast of Brazil in the principal period of the sugarcane engenho, during the yearly periods of inactivity between harvests, "the White man filled his empty days with perfumed cigars while the Black man smoked maconha for its dreams and torpor!" The senhor de engenho allowed the Blacks to plant and grow maconha in between the rows of sugarcane (Moreno 1958).

At this juncture, I would like to propose that cannabis perhaps had two routes of entry into Brazil rather than only one. It may well be that African slaves brought cannabis seeds to Brazil; perhaps even the Portuguese sailors brought it as well, and perhaps the habit did grow among slaves and spread to the free peoples in the northeastern part of Brazil.

Perhaps, however, the Portuguese themselves brought cannabis from India either directly to Portugal where it was already in use by the Portuguese Court; or else the Portuguese took it to Brazil and introduced it to the Court during its short stay in Brazil. If not, they probably would not have referred to it as *diamba do amazonas*.

In terms of what I'm calling contemporary Brazil, i.e., the twentieth century, the amount of data increases and becomes somewhat more specific. If we attempt to group the data for this latter period it seems to fall into four categories: 1) botanical, 2) medical, 3) psychiatric, 4) law and order.

The major source of data for this period is "A collection of Brazilian writings on Maconha," a compilation of original research and reports dating from 1915 through 1956. This collection was re-edited in 1958. The collection consists of 29 reports. Three things should be pointed out about this outstanding collection of materials:

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1. It spans a long period during which maconha was taken for granted as being a "vice." The adjectives most used are "viciados," "criminosos," "vagabundos" and "maloqueiros" (crazy people).
2. A second trend demonstrated by this particular collection is that the works spanning the period 1915 through 1956 tend to be highly incestuous: i.e., to a great extent the authors of succeeding articles quote almost verbatim the authors who preceded them, each adding only a little to the gradual accumulation of knowledge.
3. A third phenomenon demonstrated by this collection of data is that interest in activities surrounding the growth and expansion of cannabis use has always come in cycles. We can see this starting in 1830.  
Coming up to this century, there have been several cycles of interest in the phenomena surrounding cannabis. The cycles can be dated at 1915, the late 1930's, the mid-1940's and the 1950's. (Late materials available to us from the sixties and the early seventies follow the same pattern.) The cycles alluded to tend to follow periods of culture stress, such as war, depression and its aftermath, and rapid socio-economic development.

At this point, I would like to move on to a list of the terminology for cannabis found in contemporary Brazil. A list of thirty major synonyms follows, some of those synonyms carrying variations in spelling, such as a change from 'd' to 'r' to 'l' or to 't,' etcetera. These minor changes I would suggest are local dialect changes.

*Local Brazilian Terms for Marihuana or Cannabis sativa*

maconha (maconha and makiah in West Africa — maconha in Brasil)		moconha	cangonha
fumo d'Angola		maconha-fumo de Angola	
diamba	- r - L	Tiamba	
riamba			
liamba			
pango	-	pungo	
cânhamo	-	cânhamo da India	
planta da felicidade			
dirijo			
birra	-	cha de birra or bilra	
Tiquira			
umburu	-	umbaru	
atchi e erva			
mariguana			
rafi			
fininho			
basiado			
morrao			
cheio			
entorpecente			
erva			
fumo brabo			
gongo			
malva			
fêmea			
maricas			
Rosa Maria			
D. Juanita			
bang			
Kif			
Haschich			
fumo de caboclo			

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