

ABSTRACT

Rio de Janeiro's colonial and imperial gardens played an influential role on the work of modernist Latin American landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994). Burle Marx mythologizes the influence of his visit as a young man to the Berlin-Dahlem Botanical Garden's greenhouses, which displayed the tropical plants of his native Brazil in the ecological tableaux developed by the botanist Adolf Engler (1844- 1930). Engler had collaborated with Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1794-1868) on his monumental work Flora Brasiliensis, and developed the field of phytogeography, emphasizing the importance of geology on biodiversity. Burle Marx, credited as a pioneer in the use of native Brazilian flora in his designs, often cites his rejection of a significant preference for the use of imported European species in Brazilian parks. Yet many of the historic parks of his hometown of Rio de Janeiro incorporated native tropical flora, including most importantly the nineteenth century projects by Auguste François Marie Glaziou (1828-1906). Influenced by the work of von Martius and Engler, Burle Marx often worked with botanists to catalog ecological plant associations at his project sites. Two of Burle Marx's lesser known projects from 1961 are discussed in the context of these precedents: the Jardim Botânico, São Paulo, and the Parque Zoobotânico, Brasília. From 1967 until 1971, Burle Marx insisted on the protection and conservation of the Jardim Botânico of Rio de Janeiro. Fittingly, Burle Marx's own experimental botanical garden of Brazilian flora at Sítio Santo Antônio da Bica is now a national historic and artistic monument.