



The first record on Brazilian stingless bees published 450 years ago by Hans Staden

W. Engels

Departamento de Genética, Universidade de São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, SP, Brasil
and Zoological Institute, University of Tübingen, Germany

Corresponding author: W. Engels
E-mail: wolf.engels@uni-tuebingen.de

Genet. Mol. Res. 8 (2): 738-743 (2009)
Received December 12, 2008
Accepted January 26, 2009
Published June 23, 2009

ABSTRACT. Only a few decades after 1492, when Christopher Columbus arrived on a Caribbean island and Pedro Álvares Cabral claimed Brazil for Portugal in 1500, a German mercenary gave the first description of stingless bees in 1557. He got to know them when he was imprisoned for months by an anthropophagous tribe in the coastal region of Santos, today in the State of São Paulo. This rather short but nevertheless extremely exact record on stingless bees is hidden in the first book on Brazil. Three species and important aspects of their life history were treated. This early description has been completely overlooked by bee scientists until now. My note intends to close this evident gap.

Key words: Stingless bees; First record in 1557;
Hans Staden; Brazil