

Historical Research and Artifacts for Set Decors

Portuguese heraldry encompasses the modern and historic traditions of the Portuguese Empire. Portuguese heraldry is part of the larger Iberian tradition of heraldry, grants coats of arms to individuals (usually members of the Portuguese Royal Family or the Portuguese nobility), cities, Portuguese colonies, and other institutions. Heraldry has been practiced in Portugal at least since the 11th century, however, it only became standardized and popularized in the 16th century, during the reign of King Manuel I of Portugal, who created the first heraldic ordinances in the country. With the beginning of the Age of Discovery in the 15th century, many coats of arms came to include charges related to Portuguese overseas expansion.

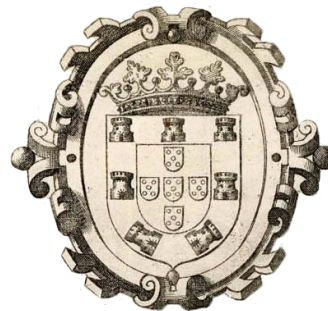
These included *padrões*, ships, flags and weapons, Moorish and African heads, exotic animals and other motifs.

Coat of Arms

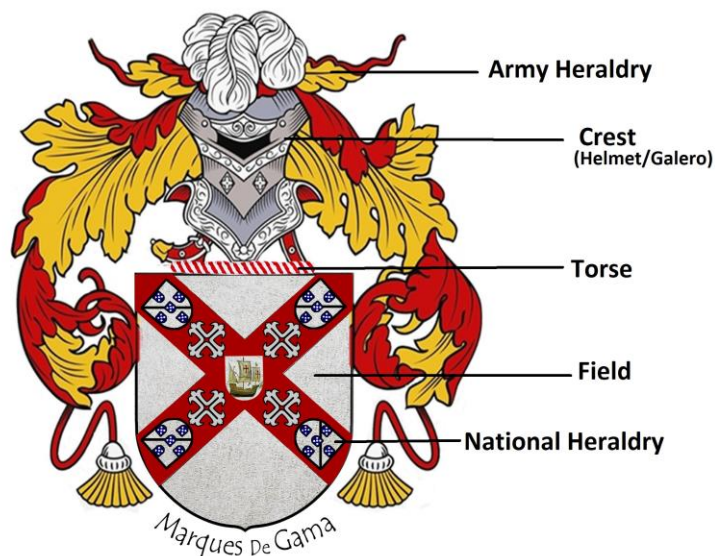
The coat of arms on an escutcheon forms the central element of the full heraldic achievement which in its whole consists of shield, supporters, crest, and motto. A coat of arms is traditionally unique to an individual person, family, state, organization or corporation.



Examples of Coat of arms



Portuguese Coat of arms



Description of Coat of arms

The **Portuguese Coat of Arms represents** has five smaller **coat of arms** in the center, **representing** the 5 wounds of Jesus Christ when crucified, these are also a symbol of the D. Afonso Henriques gratitude for the divine victory during the battles to conquest **Portugal**. Since very early, the round bottom shield has been the preferred shape to display the coat of arms in Portugal, causing this shape to often be referred to as the "Portuguese shield".

Heraldry / Coat of arms / Family Crests. It is a question asked out of snobbish pride (or envy). Coat of arms proves one of the most interesting demonstrations of the centralization of power in the person of the monarch before 12th century.

The device on the shield was also repeated on the knight's surcoat – giving rise of the term coat of arms – as well as on his horsecloths and his banner.

Heraldic devices – that is, emblems of a particular color and shape used for military and personal identification which were passed on from father to son and were unique to the individual within each realm.

Having a coat of arms was a mark of belonging to the warrior class and being entitled to knighthood, even if one was so poor that one could barely afford sword, armor, and horse.

Flags

Silk was used for military and ceremonial flags. They often bore complicated allegorical or heraldry embroidered or painted on by master artists often with different designs on each side.



1638 Victory Flag, Portuguese over Dutch at Marmugao Fort

The flag is made up of silk satin material, with 'trim' embellishments around the edge of the flag. There is also a lot of hand embroidery in gold thread " Bullion wire" (similar to present day 'zardosi' embroidery) and applique work to decorate the flag. Also the designs on both sides of the flag are different.

Woolen bunting is a lightweight thin fabric prized for Nautical use because of its fly ability and resistance to rot from exposure to seawater. Linen was used often for the header and designs on such flags. Linen was also used for some 'service' flags because of its inexpensive (at the time due to being the most common home spun) nature.



Nautical Flags on Portuguese ships

Drapes (European Drapery)

Curtains were certainly not as lavish as bed hangings, and were often made of sarsnet, a thin silk taffeta in the grander houses, and a dark worsted wool in simpler homes. A large range of fabrics imported from France, Italy and Flanders was available.

Drapery was, however, used to partition off parts of the great hall in which the lives of the large households centred. The hangings would be both decorative and practical. Rings on rods attached to the walls or to columns suspended these hangings. Wall hangings were also popular.

Curtains over doors were common, and were frequently made from tapestry to match the wall hangings and give some decorative cohesion to the room.

French and Italian curtains during this period were rather more elaborate, made from velvet or brocade and hung in pairs.

Beds and Bed Hangings

The bed was the most important piece of furniture in the household, it was considered a symbol of the wealth and status of the owner.

The bed curtains were usually made of expensive imported fabrics like tapestry, rich velvet or brocatelle (a type of silk strengthened with linen)

In France bed drapery was quite sophisticated in the 16th century, drawing its inspiration from the antique drapery in churches. The valances were shaped, fringed, tasseled and ornamented. The draperies were frequently rich and extravagant, with patterns in gold on black or red velvet.

Fabrics

Beautiful silk velvets had been produced in Italy since the 14th century, but by the 15th century the Italians found themselves competing with the French in the production of these exquisite fabrics.

Asymmetrical patterns replaced symmetrical patterns during the early part of the Renaissance, with pictures showing movement becoming popular, e.g., floral scrolls, birds in flight and running animals.

Damask was a favourite material of the period. Although traditionally made of silk or linen, damask was also woven in wool or a mix of fibres. Linen damask evolved when the Flemish linen-thread weavers of Bruges copied the patterns of the Italian silk damask in linen thread.

The first indiennes - brightly coloured hand-blocked and hand-painted calicoes (Chintz) which were colourfast - were introduced into France from India at the end of the 16th century, and were immediately popular. Holland matting and unlined Indian calico were also used for this purpose. White damask blinds shot with gold thread were used at Versailles, and later in the century the French introduced external slatted blinds.

A major innovation was pull-up curtains; curtains which were pulled up by cords to hang in festoons or swags. Usually made of silk, they were unlined, and hung flat against the window when they were pulled down.

Hanging curtains were still in use, however, and pelmets and valances were introduced. Stiffened, shaped and ornamented pelmets were highly fashionable, and were usually trimmed with tassels for definition. Portieres were often combined with flat, shaped, stiffened pelmets called lambrequins.

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Sashes were also used as a sunblind. The fabric was stretched on a wooden frame and soaked in oil or turpentine for a translucent look. They were tinted a dark colour and frequently decorated with paint.

The hangings and valances were richly decorated with crewelwork or embroidery and often lined in a contrasting colour. Turned knobs were often fitted above the tester and could be carved, gilded or covered with fabric and trimmed. Feathers or ostrich plumes, or small bouquets of silk or metal flowers could also cap the tester. Beds, curtains and chairs were all decorated "en suite" (in the same fabric).

The simpler fabrics included tickings, linen, and sackcloth. Cotton and needlepoint was regularly used for upholstery. Indiennes were initially used as table carpets and stool covers, and later as curtains, bed and wall hangings and bed covers.

Damasks of silk, linen or wool were still much in favour, and silks of all types abounded. The French particularly favoured heavy taffetas and moires. The silk industry in England was developed by French and Dutch weavers and advanced by the Huguenot refugees from France. Spitalfields became the main British centre for silk damasks and brocades.

Expensive, bold-pattered Genoa velvets, and gaufrage velvets with the pattern stamped on with heated metal were top of the range fabrics. Brocatelle and tapestry were primarily used for wall hangings, which could alternatively be printed, painted or flocked.

Leather was widely used for wall hangings and chair coverings. It was frequently embossed with a wooden mould or punched with small patterns, then the main part of the pattern would be painted, and the unpainted sections varnished resulting in a gilded effect.

Trimmings

Ropes and tassels in a variety of shapes and sizes were used to hold back bed curtains, and add decorative effect to bed pelmets and portieres (door curtains). The pelmets were often decorated with embroidery appliquéd onto the surface of the fabric. Lace was also used as an edging material.

Seventeenth century trimmings, which were made primarily in wool, silk and linen, had clean lines and became increasingly delicate and complex as the century progressed. Trimmings exhibited a variety of effects and clever combinations. There were velour braids decorated with stylised flowers, fringes with braided tops, and campaign fringe with bell-like tufts. Most tie-backs were of rope cord with tassels for definition.



Indo Portuguese bed cover 17th century