

VISITOR REPORT

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## VISIT PROPOSAL

In 2002 the **Programa Cultural Alagoas Holanda** (Alagoas-Dutch Cultural Programme) was set up with the aim of promoting studies and exchanges between the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL) and cultural and educational institutions in the Netherlands. However, the programme was never put into effect and as one of the members of this programme, in the capacity of coordinator of Research Group Landscape Studies, I wonder if one of the ways to re-start it could be to form contacts in the Netherlands with a view to encouraging cooperation and mutual support in the future.

My idea is to establish a network of experts on the history of Dutch Brazil, in various fields such as urbanism, architecture, landscape, design and cartography. A further aim is to contact professionals and institutions engaged in the question of mutual heritage, one of the main focal points of our Research Group in Brazil. It would involve making architectural interventions in sites of historic importance, and undertaking projects to publicize the mutual heritage of the two countries such as exhibitions, designing products devoted to education and other cultural aspects of heritage.

The programme had been planned before my visit and given the kind support of Barbara Consolini, the contact person for Erfgoed Nederland. A [timetable] schedule was worked out and the results are discussed below.

## CONTACT WITH SCHOLARS

The proposed schedule comprised various meetings and was fully carried out. Most of them were very successful as, for example, the meeting with Dr Michiel van Groesen, from the **University of Amsterdam**. This assistant professor in Early Modern History, has based his current research on Dutch representations of Brazil and it was possible to exchange ideas and academic issues arising from his research. The professor also showed an interest in forming a partnership, and welcoming undergraduate students from Brazil.

The visit to Prof. J.E. Bosma, at the **Vrij Universiteit Amsterdam**, was less successful as he was not running any programmes involving international cooperation, However, it was possible to talk about historical and architectural subjects that link

the Netherlands and Brazil and to get information about the CLUE group at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, as well as the Belvedere Project.

The third visit took place with Professor Erik de Jong, who works on the subject "Landscape and Nature" at the **University of Amsterdam**. It was a very stimulating conversation, as one of the research subjects concerning Dutch Brazil being conducted by the professor, is the botanical garden designed by Johan Maurits, the first of South America. It is one of our research topics in Brazil as well. He is also engaged in the project of refurbishing the Zoological Gardens of Amsterdam and it was possible to exchange ideas about how to use history as a means of arousing interest in museums and places where the value of the heritage is recognized.

The fourth meeting was at **TU Delft** with Eric Luiten, Professor of Cultural History and Spatial Design. **TU Delft** welcomes programs of international exchange, possibly in the case of the institutional conditions of universities in Brazil, in post graduation studies. Again, the main points discussed were the idea of employing history as a tool in new projects of architecture and also including the landscape as a topic for discussion in urban and architectural studies.

In all these meetings there were presentations of the results of research projects concerning Dutch Brazil, carried out by the Research Group of Landscape Studies of the Federal University of Alagoas. The presentation of our results was conducted with the aid of Powerpoint and the display of various items that we had produced with the aim of encouraging an interest in the heritage, such as primers of educational heritage, folders etc.

## **CONTACT WITH INSTITUTIONS AND RESEARCHERS**

The visit to the installations of the **Erfgoed Nederland** was followed by a meeting with Astrid Weij, Benedict Goes, Secretary of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Netherlands and Shared Built Heritage, Eric Dil and Barbara Consolini, the AWAD coordinator. The conversations enabled the visitor to become aware of the ideas of the Institute and, at the same time, to discuss current research and design products in progress at the University of Alagoas.

Another meeting took place with Paula Assunção dos Santos, Oscar Hefting, Lodewijk Hulsman and Barbara Consolini. This discussed the importance of outlining plans for work to be done in common during the next years. Paula dos Santos and Jorn Konijn of Culturalia Foundation are coordinators of the **Campaign Exhibition of Brazilian-Dutch Mutual Heritage** and there was a suggestion that the group from Alagoas should be involved in preparing this exhibition.

Oscar Hefting from the New Holland Foundation, responsible for the Atlas of Dutch Brazil, was also a good contact, as we had already had discussions with him about research projects in meetings in Recife and Maceió.

The third meeting was in the **Nationaal Archief** (National Archives) with Mara de Groot (Mutual Heritage Programme) and Ron Guleij (National Archives). There was a useful exchange of ideas and it was also possible to visit this institution and consult selected material from the archives such as 17<sup>th</sup> century maps from Dutch Brazil.

The visit also included a tour around the city of Amsterdam, to see the West India Company quarter and other buildings. In The Hague, it was visited the permanent exhibition of **Mauritshuis**.

## Value of the trip

It was very important to start a process of bringing together the University of Alagoas and the institutions concerned with Dutch Brazil. In fact, the North-East, especially the current states of Pernambuco and Alagoas, was the area where the Dutch chose to settle its administrative staff in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, both states constituted the previous Captaincy of Pernambuco.

During this trip, I believe we managed to make contact with the main universities and institutions interested in Mutual Heritage. Clearly, the process is still in its early stages and much effort needs to be made to strengthen those initial relationships. However, I believe that it will be possible to give continuity to these contacts by arranging new visits in the future.

## RESULTS

Although I have been in the Netherlands for research reasons before, it was the first time that I had effectively visited the universities and made contact with professors that work with Dutch Brazil and exploring our mutual heritage. In this way, it was a valuable new experience.

Now I am preparing to give a presentation at the Faculty of Architecture in Alagoas to share the information that was gathered during the trip. Moreover, since my return, Barbara Consolini has kindly continued to send me information about the sites and virtual addresses that I should make contact with in the near future.

On the whole, the contacts I made were of great value , and the next step is to give continuity to the process already embarked on. After I returned to Brazil, contacts were made with Victor Fonseca, of the National Archive of Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro, to discuss the project of organizing Brazilian archive material concerning the Dutch presence in Brazil, not only involving the experience of the 17<sup>th</sup> century , but including recent exchanges such as, for example, immigration in the 19th and 20th Century .

## **FUTURE PLANS AND CONCLUSION**

I am currently engaged in making other contacts that the scope of this trip did not allow before, such as with Paul Meurs, Professor of Restoration at the **Faculty of Architecture of TU Delft** . He has undertaken several cooperation projects in Brazil and coordinated the project “World Heritage Site Olinda, Brazil. Proposals for Intervention”.

In Brazil itself, I have re-established contact with Professor Marcos Galindo, at the Federal University in Pernambuco, which could be useful in helping to reorganize the Alagoas-Dutch Cultural Programme).

I will continue to carry out research through the Internet to find out more information about scholars and universities working in fields where it is feasible to form partnerships. I will also seek to help teachers and students to obtain grants to allow them to make new trips and thus strengthen and give continuity to the contacts already formed in this first visit. I realize that it is essential to encourage new students and professors to become engaged in this field of mutual heritage.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the **Erfgoed Nederland** for their financial assistance to enable me to spend a further 4 days in Netherlands. It was an excellent experience. I should stress the extreme kindness and friendliness of all of the people whom I made contact with and last, but not the least, I would like to express my thanks to Barbara Consolini, for being such a wonderful hostess. She was always extremely courteous and at the same time well-organized and efficient throughout the trip. I hope to continue to establish contacts and strengthen all the agreements already in progress.