

# The Rescue of the Documentation from the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino relating to Brazil (1986-2004)

*José Jobson de Andrade Arruda\**  
USP – Universidade de São Paulo  
mtristao@usc.br

*“As an initial work, it is essential to undertake a patient, continuous and painstaking study of the papers of the Overseas Council... They encapsulate the true social and economic history of colonial Brazil.”*

Oliveira Lima, 1913

Almost a century has now elapsed, but Oliveira Lima’s judgement still rings true. A substantial part of the documentation that is indispensable for composing Brazilian history in the first centuries of the country’s existence is still to be found in Portuguese archives and, most particularly, at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Overseas Historical Archive) in Lisbon. Or, rather, it used to be found there. The dream of many is now becoming a reality, for the documentation relating to São Paulo – including Paraná – is to be made fully available to researchers. Not only indexes, guides or excerpts, but the whole document: microfilmed, reproduced in the form of a CD-Rom and catalogued. To a certain extent, the prophesy of Capistrano de Abreu has come true when he said that it would be “necessary to spend many years there [at the Arquivo Ultramarino] without anything else to do, in order to finish the task.”<sup>1</sup>

If we do not count the rare individual initiatives, the final effort to bring to a conclusion the “Barão do Rio Branco” Rescue Project is a clear example of a national research team acting on behalf of science and culture in a task lasting more than a decade. This is almost no time at all, if we recall that, ever since its foundation in 1838, the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute) had already determined that one of its main priorities would be the recovery of those documents relating to the History of Brazil that were to be found overseas. There were many missions sent abroad with this end in mind, most frequently in the form of personal

---

\* Full Professor of Modern History at USP/UNICAMP/USC.

<sup>1</sup> The references to Oliveira Lima and Capistrano de Abreu are quotations taken from RODRIGUES, José Honório. *A pesquisa Histórica no Brasil*. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Nacional, 1969. p. 85 and p. 95, respectively.

requests and tasks attributed diplomatic legations. In official terms, the poet Antônio Gonçalves Dias was the first Brazilian to be put in charge of the arduous mission of compiling an inventory of the documents in foreign archives. Overwhelmed by the immensity of his task, he did not feel greatly disappointed when he was replaced by João Francisco Lisboa in 1856, but nor did he inform him of what he had done or which documents he had copied. Acting under the advice of Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagem, the new missionary concentrated his efforts on the Arquivo do Conselho Ultramarino (Archives of the Overseas Council), where, he claimed, there was a whole collection gathered together that did not exist in Brazil. In fact, marveling at the great wealth of the archives, João Francisco claimed to have found a genuine “treasure trove”, an entirely scandalous chronicle of “weddings, kidnaps, concubinages, adulteries, thefts, mutinies, lampoons.”<sup>2</sup> But his original mission was to copy chronicles, memoirs, official documents, especially legislative acts and administrative deeds, statistics. A disagreement between copiers, a war of deafness and rivalry as to primacy, did not, however, prevent the arrival of the first reams of documents from serving as foundations for the national memory as planned by the Instituto Histórico.

The dream did not flag at all in São Paulo. The Committee for the Organization of the Festivities for the 4th Centenary of the City’s Foundation acted quite objectively. It hired Alfredo Mendes Gouveia, researcher and officer at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, to draw up the catalogue of the entries relating to the Captainship of São Paulo. 66 boxes and 5,113 documentary items were inventoried, the first of them referring to the year 1618 and the last one to 1823. In a rigorous and painstaking fashion, he distinguished the entries that merely deserved a mention from those that, because of their importance, ought to be reproduced in whole or in part. Between 1956 and 1959, the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (IHGB) published the results of the research in 15 special volumes, 13 with the entries and 2 with their indexes. What seemed to be the finishing touches to a successfully completed task later turned out to be an unfinished work.

In fact, almost half a century has elapsed since the commemorations of the 4th Centenary. And, as had been the norm, the celebrations were emulatory, producing some unique moments, in which the interest in the past was revived, galvanizing attention, motivating researchers, stimulating the critical spirit of intellectuals, creating the opportunity for action on the part of the public administration, producing a kind of necessary catharsis, a settling of scores with the present through its intersection with the past. This was the perfect moment to recover the collective memory, which had been petrified in the documentation. This was how things were in 1988/1989. Unusual years, for there were commemorations, in the best sense of the word, of the Abolition of Slavery, the *Inconfidência Mineira* and the Proclamation of the Republic, of the centenary of important milestones in our history. We included ourselves amongst those who sought more than to just create a symbolic representation, a living lesson of memorization that might rekindle the pedagogics of civility.<sup>3</sup> It was also necessary to create conditions whereby the historical reflection could be deepened, so that certainties could be discussed and dogmas questioned. But how could this be done?

---

<sup>2</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. CATROGA, Fernando. *Ritualizações da História*. In: TORRALBA, Luís Reis; MENDES, José Amado; CATROGA, Fernando. *História da História em Portugal sécs. XIX-XX*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 1996. p. 547.

Let us return to the sources. This was the first maxim of the Committee of Historic Events of the Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa (CNPq – National Research Council)<sup>4</sup> created by its Chairman, Crodowaldo Pavan, in 1986, two years before the triple celebration. Besides making it possible to publish a hundred or so books, organize dozens of conferences, the Committee's *primum mobile* was centered on the reconstitution of the documentary heritage of Minas Gerais, and most particularly the valuable collection existing at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, for, unlike other regions such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco and Bahia, about which more or less complete surveys had been made, the documentation referring to Minas Gerais remained untouched. It was the financial resources obtained by the Committee from the office of the President of the Republic, when it was able to rely upon the special sensitivity of the President José Sarney, and the steps taken by his special adviser on cultural matters, Virgílio Costa, that made the programmed activities viable. Such extra, non-budgeted funds made it possible, for example, to proceed with the project designed by Professor Caio Boschi in close conjunction with the Arquivo Ultramarino, allowing for visits to and from Lisbon and the organization of local research teams, and instituting (not always easy) relations with the Portuguese functionaries, who were naturally jealous in their guarding of the valuable documentary treasure. In short, experience was gained in dealing with papers and people who had shown themselves to be useful throughout the previous process. Even so, it was necessary to engage the supplementary support of the Minister of Culture and of the Fundação Vitae to ensure that the documentation could be recorded on microfilm and CD-Rom, and, finally, indexed in a catalogue,<sup>5</sup> more than a decade after the works had first begun.

But it was undoubtedly after 1994 that the work undertaken with the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino acquired a national dimension, fully assumed by the minister Francisco Weffort, in both institutional and personal terms, by transforming the “*Barão Do Rio Branco*” *Project for the Rescue of the Historical Documentation about Colonial Brazil Existing Abroad* into one of the priority aims of the Minister's period of office. For this purpose, he enjoyed the support of the great experience of Ambassador Wladimir Murtinho and Esther Caldas Bertoletti, a first-class cultural agitator, without whose efforts, spirit of initiative, capacity for enlisting people's help and attracting resources, we would not now be commemorating the completion of the project. A *tour de force* that would merit in itself a special chapter in the book *A Pesquisa Histórica no Brasil*, by José Honório Rodrigues, were he still with us. A minimal idea of what this collective effort amounted to may be gained by reading the chapter “Brasil-Portugal. Um mar-oceano de documentos”, by Esther Caldas Bertoletti, a special issue of the *Revista Convergência Lusíada*,<sup>6</sup> in which a description is given of the painstaking work carried out by Brazilian and Portuguese technicians and researchers in ordering and definitively cataloguing

---

<sup>4</sup> The CNPq's Committee of Historic Events was composed of Professors Fernando Antônio Novais, Francisco Calazans Falcon, Francisco Iglesias, Manuel Correia de Andrade, Caio César Boschi and José Jobson de Andrade Arruda (Chairman).

<sup>5</sup> BOSCHI, Caio Cesar (Coord.). *Inventário dos Manuscritos Avulsos Relativos a Minas Gerais Existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisboa)*. Belo Horizonte: Fundação João Pinheiro, 1998. 3 vols. Coleção Mineiriana.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. BERTOLETTI, Esther Caldas. “Brasil-Portugal. Um mar-oceano de documentos”. In: *Brasil e Portugal: 500 anos de enlacs e desenlacs*. *Revista Convergência Lusíada*, Real Gabinete Português da Leitura, 17, Rio de Janeiro, pp. 102-109, 2000. Special issue.

the manuscripts of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino relating to Brazil. A rare example of cooperation between the public sector, across ministries, funding agencies, state governments and offices, and the private sector in the form of foundations, companies, entrepreneurs and citizens.

The project's numbers are quite startling. In the first section of the Archives, which contains the collections referring to the period from the 16th century to 1833, 1,824 boxes are filled with 242,800 documentary items about Brazil. To be added to this is the collection of maps, charts and engravings with 600 specific codices and 200 others, in which Brazil appears together with the other Portuguese colonies of Asia, Africa and the islands, amounting to a total of roughly 50,000 documents. Of this vast collection of documents, no more than 40% were inventoried and only 20% had been published. Until now, access to this huge pile of documents had been the privilege of few people, only those who had obtained institutional support to undertake their research abroad. Statistics about the registration of researchers in the reading rooms of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino show that most of them were Brazilian. There were 2,214 Brazilians as against 1,513 Portuguese between 1990 and 1996, almost 50% of the total, for, if we add together all the other nationalities represented, including the Portuguese, then we have a total of 2,204 researchers.<sup>7</sup> This means that an average of 316 Brazilian researchers frequented the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino per year, most of them with travel expenses and living expenses paid for out of Brazilian public resources. Through these numbers, we have a preliminary assessment of the extraordinary gains in the cost-benefit ratio brought about by the investments made. However sizeable they may have been, they mean nothing in the light of the immediate short-term returns, from both the strictly financial and academic viewpoints, through the absolute democratization of the access to information.

### **Rescue of the São Paulo Documentation**

It is within this auspicious context that one should place the *Project for the Rescue of the Sundry Manuscripts referring to São Paulo existing at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisbon)*, of the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP – the São Paulo State Research Support Foundation), which was under our coordination and enjoyed the supervision of Esther Caldas Bertolotti, the guidance of Heloísa Liberalli Bellotto as an archivist, and the collaboration of the researchers Gilson Sérgio Matos Reis, José Roberto de Souza, Eliane Bisan Alves and Paula Cristina dos Santos. But, above all, the vision of the foundation's Scientific Director, José Fernando Perez, was decisive in ensuring that the project was implemented and, with the approval of the appropriate consultants, making the necessary institutional support possible: resources so that the specialist technicians could organize the documentation abroad; interventions with the CNPq to ensure that grants were given to researchers under the scope of interagency cooperation agreements; a postdoctoral scholarship allocated to the project in Portugal; resources for microfilming at the Arquivo Ultramarino; funding for the transformation of the microfilms into CD-Roms in Rio de Janeiro; support for the completion of the documentary indexes and those of place names, proper names and subject-matters; co-publication of catalogues and, finally, the reception of Portuguese and Brazilian researchers at the closing conference: *The History that is born from the Rescue Project*, which had its

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ABRANTES, Maria Luíza Meneses. Fontes para a História do Brasil Colonial existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino. In: *Acervo*, Revista do Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, vol. 10, No. 1, p. 24, Jan./Jun. 1997.

natural counterpart in the event entitled *The History Agenda for the New Millennium*. For, whilst the documentation was being made available to researchers, reflections were being made at the same time about the possible avenues to be followed in its application in terms of scientific and cultural cooperation between Brazilians and Portuguese.

The result of the research that is now being published is a clear demonstration that Alfredo Mendes Gouveia's Herculean effort is still incomplete. Besides the 66 boxes with 5,113 documents, which had been inventoried by him and have since been reduced to seventy rolls of microfilm, another thirty boxes were located giving rise to another 33 rolls of microfilm, containing 1,383 documents, the first referring to the year 1664 and the last to 1830. This is the same as saying that 27% of the documentation had not been inventoried, much less published, and therefore represented a most important provision. In total, the known documents about São Paulo increased from 5,113 to 6,496, and this repertoire is now available to researchers in full, on 103 rolls of microfilm deposited at the Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo; on CD-Roms, which will be donated by FAPESP to all the State Public or Private Universities that have History or similar courses and, at best, will lead to absolute democratization via electronic means through the SCIELO Project. Let us remember that the documentation was reproduced in its computerized entirety through the use of modern technologies and not just copied. It is therefore error-free.

In order to make knowledge about the dossiers even more accessible and widespread, a three-volume catalogue was compiled. The first will contain the new entries, which provide references to 1,383 documentary pieces and their respective indexes; the second and third volumes will contain the revised entries included in the catalogue produced by Alfredo Mendes Gouveia, with the indexes of proper names and place names that had been prepared by him.

The first volume of the catalogue was quite notably enriched. Besides the entries, its basic raw material, it contains a color insert referring to the Iconographical and Cartographic Documentation, also including the indexes and various appendices: the listing of the Commanders of the Captainship of São Paulo; the control of the units of installation, which gives an account of the number of boxes, as well as their chronological limits and the number of documents contained in each of them; an explanation of the methodology, drawn up by Gilson Sérgio Matos Reis and Heloísa Liberalli Bellotto; a specific text on the Conselho Ultramarino, by Gilson Sérgio Matos Reis, the administrative body that was the main repository for the great mass of documents; and, finally, a glossary of the types of document by Heloísa Liberalli Bellotto, which is a fundamental instrument for finding out about the types of documentation and is accompanied by actual examples taken from the primary sources. The Catalogue of Iconographical and Cartographic Documentation is a most valuable inclusion. There are 34 plates reproduced in their original colors in a special insert. Only two of them were included in the book *Imagens de vilas e cidades do Brasil colonial*, the recently published and very sophisticated album of pictures by Nestor Goulart Reis.<sup>8</sup>

### **Documentos Manuscritos da Capitania de São Paulo (1618-1830)**

---

<sup>8</sup> REIS, Nestor Goulart. *Imagens de vilas e cidades do Brasil colonial*. São Paulo: EDUSP/ IMPRENSA OFICIAL, 2000. The first reproduction contains the façade, the interior and exterior ground plan of a church (c. 1746), p. 192; the second reproduction shows a map of the town of Santos. Original by João Massé, c. 1714, p. 197.

ARRUDA, José Jobson de Andrade Arruda (Coord.). Catalogue I, vol. 1, 2000. 340 pp. Catalogues II and III – summarized re-edition of the Catalogue by Alfredo Mendes Gouveia. vol. 2, 2002. 804 pp.; vol. 3 (in print).

Editora da Universidade do Sagrado Coração / IHGB/ FAPESP

Rua Irmã Arminda, 10-50 CEP 17011-160 Bauru – SP Caixa Postal 511

Tels.: (14) 3235-7111 3235-7219 (fax) [www.edusc.com.br](http://www.edusc.com.br)

### **Rescue of the Minas Gerais Documentation**

At the time of the bicentenary of the *Inconfidência Mineira*, the historian Caio Boschi designed the project for the organization and microfilming of the 13,969 documents on the Minas Gerais captainship existing at the Arquivo Ultramarino. The project was approved by the CNPq's Committee of Historic Events, set up precisely with the aim of promoting a survey of the sources, publishing and republishing important books, organizing scientific events, related with the commemorations of the Abolition of Slavery (1888), the Mining Indiscretion (1789) and the Proclamation of the Republic (1889). The resources originating from the Office of the President of the Republic and passed on to the CNPq, created the conditions for the project to be developed in Portugal. Until then, it had simply been a question of recovering documents from the Arquivo Ultramarino, without the title of Rescue. This name came into existence after 1994, when the Ministry of Culture, under the management of Professor Francisco Weffort, took responsibility for the rescue of all of the Archives' documents, thereby turning it into a project on a national scale. At this moment, the essential stage of registering the entries of the documents had already been completed, a task that was performed between 1989 and 1991. This preliminary work was essential, since the procedure that was later applied to the other captainships was developed from this. The three-volume catalogue was published in 1998 with the support of the Fundação João Pinheiro, containing summarized entries about the original documents that were particularly important for facilitating the researcher's work, besides detailed indexes that directed attention to the documents referred to in the catalogue's first two volumes. All of the documents were recorded onto 174 rolls of microfilm and then condensed into 54 CD-Roms. All this means that, even without its being given the title of a Rescue Project, such action did in fact effectively begin in 1989 under the auspices of the Committee created by the CNPq in 1986.

### **Inventário dos Manuscritos Avulsos relativos a Minas Gerais existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino. Lisboa (1680-1832).**

BOSCHI, Caio C. (Org.). 3 vols., 1998.

Fundação João Pinheiro/ Centro de Estudos Históricos e Culturais/ Secretaria de Estado do Planejamento

Alameda das Acácias, 70 São Luís – Pampulha CEP 31.275-150 Belo Horizonte – MG

Tels.: (31) 3448-9722 3448-9696 (Fax)

**Rescue of the Espírito Santo Documentation**

In the 1970s, a first experiment was carried out into the organization of the documentation relating to the Espírito Santo captainship by the researcher João Eurípedes Franklin Leal. In the context of the Rescue Project, it fell to the paleographer Gilson Sérgio Matos Reis to begin the reordering of all the material in order to make it available over the Internet on the home page of the Arquivo Público do Espírito Santo. The respective catalogue, published in 1998, was accompanied by the indexes through which documents are searched for. Besides the support of the Office of the State Secretary of Culture for the publication of the catalogue, the project also received funding from the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, in Portugal.

**Catálogo de Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania do Espírito Santo (1585-1822)**

LEAL, João Eurípedes Franklin (Org.). 1 vol., 2000. 170pp.

Arquivo Público Estadual/ Secretaria do Estado da Cultura e Esportes

Rua Pedro Palácios, 76 Cidade Alta CEP 29015-160 Vitória – ES

Tels.: (27) 3223-2952 e-mail: [ape@coplag.es.gov.br](mailto:ape@coplag.es.gov.br) versão on-line: [www.ape.es.gov.br](http://www.ape.es.gov.br) (sold out)

**Rescue of the Sergipe Documentation**

Just as had happened in the case of Espírito Santo, the documentation corresponding to the Sergipe captainship had been given preliminary treatment in the 1970s by Professor Maria Thetis Nunes, who devoted her attention to reading and summarizing the entries referring to all the documents that had already been located. The final task fell to the historian Gilson Sérgio Matos Reis, who added to the original documents new sets of documents located in the course of the survey undertaken at the Arquivo Ultramarino, amounting in total to 619 documents, microfilmed and scanned onto CD-Roms, with the support of the State Government, the Ministry of Culture, the CNPq and the Fundação Clemente Mariani.

**Catálogo de Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania de Sergipe (1619-1822)**

NUNES, Maria Thetis; SANTOS, Lourival Santana (Orgs.). 1 vol., 1999. 185pp.

Editora da Universidade Federal de Sergipe

Avenida Marechal Rondon, s/n Cidade Universitária CEP 49100-000 São Cristóvão – SE

Tels.: (79) 212-6786 212-6922

**Rescue of the Mato Grosso Documentation**

The documents relating to the Mato Grosso captainship existing at the Arquivo Ultramarino were given a preliminary examination by Professor Maria Cecília Guerreiro de Souza, a task that was commissioned by the Regional Historical Information and Documentation Center of Mato Grosso Federal University. From the nine documents found in the Archives, it was possible to enlarge and consolidate the initial collection, arriving at a total of 2,221 pieces of document, with their respective summarized entries, a task that was led by Lélia Rita Euterpe de Figueiredo Ribeiro, with the support

of various institutions, but, above all, with the help of the Casa da Memória Arnaldo Estevão de Figueiredo.

### **Catálogo de Verbetes dos Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania de Mato Grosso (1720-1827)**

FIGUEIREDO, Arnaldo Estevão de (Org.). 1 vol., 1999. 527pp. (sold out – currently being reprinted).

Casa da Memória Arnaldo Estevão de Figueiredo

Avenida Calógeras, 2163 Centro CEP 79002-001 Campo Grande – MS

Tels.: (67) 324-2093 [www.casadamemoria.org.br](http://www.casadamemoria.org.br)

### **Rescue of the Ceará Documentation**

The first work undertaken in relation to the documentation from the Ceará captainship was carried out in the 1970s by Professor Maria Célia de Araújo Guarabira, who, with the support of the Fundação Gulbenkian, compiled a catalogue containing the summarized entries listed in an index. This catalogue served as a basis for later work, when the documentation was completely reorganized, for many documents were moved from their original positions, placed in chronological order, enlarge with the new materials found and, finally, re-entered on the basis of a new paleographic reading and standardized in accordance with the criteria established for the Rescue Project as a whole. Because there had been a 30% increase in the documentation, a new index had to be made, compiled by Professor Gisafran Nazareno Mota Jucá, amounting to a total of 22 rolls of microfilm for all the documents, which were recorded onto 3 CD-Roms.

### **Catálogo de Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania do Ceará (1618-1832)**

JUCÁ, Gisafran Nazareno Mota (Org.). 1 vol., 1999. 358pp.

Fundação Demócrito Rocha/ Jornal *O Povo*

Avenida Aguanambi, 282 CEP 30.055-402 Fortaleza – CE

Tels.: (85) 255-6270 255-6276 (fax) e-mail: [fundacao@povo.com.br](mailto:fundacao@povo.com.br)

### **Rescue of the Alagoas Documentation**

Only one CD-Rom was needed to record all the documentation from the Alagoas captainship, with its 532 summarized entries. The researcher Lourival Santana Santos was responsible for the organization of the documents at the Arquivo Ultramarino, a task in which he enjoyed the support of Alagoas Federal University and the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico do Estado (State Historical and Geographical Institute).

### **Catálogo de Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania de Alagoas (1680-1926)**

SANTOS, Lourival Santana (Org.). 1 vol., 1999. 190pp.

Editora da Universidade Federal de Alagoas/ Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Alagoas

Rua João Pessoa, 382 Maceió – Alagoas

Tel.: (82) 223-7797



**Rescue of the Rio Grande do Norte Documentation**

The documentation from the Rio Grande do Norte captainship existing at the Arquivo Ultramarino was organized in the 1970s by Professor Ivoncísio Meira de Medeiros, when he made an inventory of a total of 400 documents that served as the basis for the definitive survey undertaken by the Rescue Project. Entrusted with this task, Professor Fátima Martins Lopes devoted her time to searching in the piles of documents from other captainships for documents relating to Rio Grande do Norte, in other words for pieces that had been mistakenly placed or relocated in the bundles of documents of the Captainship of Rio Grande de São Pedro, or of adjacent or neighboring captainships, such as Pernambuco and Bahia. The final result of her efforts was the discovery of another 284 documents which, when added to the original 400 documents, formed a collection of 684 pieces, recorded onto 12 rolls of microfilm and stored on a CD-Rom, with the support of the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico (Historical and Geographical Institute) of Rio Grande do Norte.

**Catálogo de Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania do Rio Grande do Norte (1623-1823)**

LOPES, Fátima Martins (Org.).

Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte

Campus Universitário s/n Lagoa Nova CEP 59.078-970 Natal – RN

Tel.: (84) 215-3236 215-3206 (fax) *e-mail:* [edufnu@editora.ufrn.br](mailto:edufnu@editora.ufrn.br)

**Rescue of the Santa Catarina Documentation**

In the 1970s, the historian Walter Piazza read and microfilmed the documentation from the Santa Catarina captainship, specially geared towards the study of the Azorean colonization of the region. This survey served as the basis for the work undertaken at the Arquivo Ultramarino by Professors Élio Cantalício Serpa and Maria Bernadete Ramos Flores, which resulted in 619 documents recorded on 11 rolls of microfilms and one CD-Rom. Besides the support of the Fundação Vitae and the Ministry of Culture, the project also enjoyed the support of FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo – the São Paulo State Research Support Foundation) given that, in the colonial period, the documentation listed there was also of interest to researchers from São Paulo.

**Catálogo de Documentos Avulsos Manuscritos referentes à Capitania de Santa Catarina (1717-1827)**

FLORES, Maria Bernadete Ramos; SERPA, Élio C. (Orgs.). 1 vol., 2000. 174pp.

Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

Campus Universitário Trindade Caixa Postal 476 CEP 88010-970 Florianópolis – SC

Tels.: (48) 331-9408 331-9605 331-9686 331-9680 (fax) *e-mail:* [edufsc@editora.ufsc.br](mailto:edufsc@editora.ufsc.br)

### **Rescue of the Goiás Documentation**

Nothing had been done with regard to the organization of the documents relating to the Goiás captainship. Starting from scratch, several researchers pored over the documents, enjoying the support of the Bank Boston, Goiás Catholic University and the Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos do Brasil Central (Central Brazil Research and Study Institute). The work resulted in the CD-Roms and catalogue that includes 2,950 summarized entries.

### **Catálogo dos Verbetes dos Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania de Goiás existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa-Portugal (1731-1822)**

TELES, José Mendonça (Org.). 1 vol., 2001. 529pp.

Sociedade Goiana de Cultura/ Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos Históricos do Brasil Central/ Universidade Católica de Goiás/ Apoio UNITINS

Avenida Universitária, 1069 Setor Universitário Caixa Postal 86 CEP 74.605-010 Goiânia – GO  
Tel.: (62) 227-1311 e-mail: [ipehbc@bol.com.br](mailto:ipehbc@bol.com.br)

### **Rescue of the Rio Negro Documentation**

This was the former name of the present-day State of Amazonas and the documents referring to it were mixed with the documents from the captainships of Pará and Maranhão. For this reason, the task was undertaken by an experienced researcher, Professor Caio Boschi, who had already dealt with the Minas captainship, resulting in a painstaking work that required successive revisions. 750 summarized entries credited to the Rio Negro captainship were recorded on 21 rolls of microfilm.

### **Catálogo do Rio Negro: Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania do Rio Negro (1723-1825)**

SANTOS, Francisco Jorge (Org.). 1 vol., 2000. 249pp.

Editora da Universidade do Amazonas/ Museu Amazônico

Avenida General Rodrigo Octávio Jordão Ramos, 3000 Bl. L Minicampus Aleixo CEP 69.077-000 Manaus – AM

Tels.: (92) 644-2242 234-3242 e-mail: [edua@fua.br](mailto:edua@fua.br)

### **Rescue of the Rio Grande do Sul Documentation**

The set of documents labeled as Rio Grande do Sul existing at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino included documents referring to Rio Grande do Sul itself, but also documents on the Colony of Sacramento and the border regions. It was a complex task to disentangle the documentation in such a way as to sort it into the right pigeon-holes, requiring painstaking paleographic work on the part of the researchers, for there were documents written in Spanish and French, which called for special attention on the part of the professors given the task of dealing with the Rescue of the Rio Grande do Sul Documentation, Helen Osório, Susana Bleil de Souza and Ana Regina Berwanger. As had been the case with the Santa Catarina captainship, FAPESP joined forces with the Fundação Vitae and the Ministry of Culture to make the project possible, considering it to be of important historical interest for the São Paulo captainship.

**Catálogo de Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos referentes à Capitania do Rio Grande do Sul existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa**

BERWANGER, Ana Regina; OSÓRIO, Helen; SOUZA, Susana Bleil de (Orgs.). 1 vol., 2001. 239p.

CORAG – Companhia Rio-grandense de Artes Gráficas

Avenida Aparício Borges, 2199 CEP 90680-570 Porto Alegre – RS

Tel.: (51) 3339-4242 e-mail: [corag@via-rs.net](mailto:corag@via-rs.net)

**Rescue of the Maranhão Documentation**

The team led by Professor Caio Boschi organized the 13,118 summarized entries relating to the Maranhão captainship, a task that, as we have seen, involved separating the documents relating to Maranhão from the captainships of Rio Negro and Pará. The support of the state governments, together with that provided by the Committee of Portuguese Discoveries and mainly by AUVÉPAR/MA, made it possible to complete the rescue of the documentation of the three captainships, which was stored on almost 200 rolls of microfilm.

**Catálogo dos Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos relativos ao Maranhão existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (1614-1833)**

BOSCHI, Caio C. (Org.). 1 vol., 2002. 662pp.

Co-edition of the Fundação Cultural do Estado do Maranhão/ Academia Maranhense de Letras

Arquivo Público Estadual

Rua de Nazaré, 218 Centro CEP 65010-410 São Luís – MA

Tel.: (98) 232-4544

Academia Maranhense de Letras

Rua da Paz, 84 Centro CEP 65.020-450 São Luís – MA

Tel.: (98) 231-3242

**Rescue of the Pará Documentation**

Documentation catalogued by the same team as the one that worked on Rio Negro and Amazonas, led by Professor Caio Boschi. 13,000 documents were identified relating to Pará, according to the criteria adopted for the three kindred sets. Besides the support of the institutions already referred to in the Rescue of the Maranhão Documentation, the State Public Archives also took part in the case of Pará.

**Catálogo dos Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania do Pará existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino de Lisboa**

BOSCHI, Caio C. (Org.). 3 vols., 2002.

Editora SECULT (Secretaria da Cultura)/ Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará

Travessa Campos Sales, 273 Comércio CEP 66.019-050 Belém – PA

Tel.: (91) 219-1111

**Rescue of the Piauí Documentation**

These documents were still untouched and their cataloguing was only possible thanks to the support of the Rector of Goiás Catholic University and the collaboration of the various researchers who worked on other captainships. They amount to 1,716 summarized entries stored on 37 rolls of microfilm.

**Catálogo dos Verbetes dos Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos da Capitania do Piauí existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa-Portugal (1684-1828)**

TELES, José Mendonça (Org.). 1 vol., 2002. 350pp.

Sociedade Goiana de Cultura/ Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos Históricos do Brasil Central

Rua 233, 141 Setor Universitário CEP 74.605-120 Goiânia – GO

Tel.: (62) 227-1143 e-mail: [ipehbc@bol.com.br](mailto:ipehbc@bol.com.br)

**Rescue of the Paraíba Documentation**

In the 1970s, preliminary cataloguing work was undertaken by Professor Elza Régis de Oliveira. Under the scope of the Rescue Project, she was joined by Mozart Vergetti Menezes and Maria Vitória Barbosa de Lima, who completed the summarized entries of the 3,523 documents located in the Arquivo Ultramarino.

**Catálogo dos Documentos Manuscritos Avulsos referentes à Capitania da Paraíba existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino de Lisboa**

OLIVEIRA, Elza Régis de; MENEZES, Mozart Vergetti de; LIMA, Maria da Vitória Barbosa de (Orgs.). 1 vol., 2001. 655pp.

Editora Universitária/ UFPB

Caixa Postal 5081 Cidade Universitária CEP 58.051-970 João Pessoa – PB

Tel.: (83) 216-7339 [www.editora.ufpb.br](http://www.editora.ufpb.br)

**Rescue of the Documentation relating to the Colony of Sacramento and the River Plate Region**

As we have already said, the part of the documentation relating to the Colony of Sacramento and the River Plate Region, contained in the boxes existing at the Arquivo Ultramarino that were labeled as the border regions, Uruguay, Paraguay and Buenos Aires, was mixed in with the specific documentation relating to Rio Grande do Sul. Professor Sérgio Conde de Albite Silva took charge of its organization, with the support of the Fundação Vitae and the Real Gabinete Português de Leitura.

**Catálogo de Documentos da Colônia do Sacramento e Rio da Prata existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa (1618-1843)**

OSÓRIO, Helen (Org.). 1 vol., 2002. 375pp.

Editora Vitae/ Real Gabinete Português de Leitura

Information: Projeto Resgate – [resgate@mincrj.gov.br](mailto:resgate@mincrj.gov.br)

### **Rescue of the Pernambuco Documentation**

The team led by Professor Maria do Socorro Ferraz Barboza was one of the largest working at the Arquivo Ultramarino. Not only because of the volume of documentation, but especially because the boxes had been excessively rummaged through, which had resulted in the displacement of the covers of documents or part of them, the work took some time to be completed. Catalogues are still awaiting publication by Pernambuco Federal University, which have reproduced more than 33,000 summarized entries recorded on 350 rolls of microfilm.

### **Catálogo dos Documentos Avulsos da Capitania de Pernambuco.** (in print).

Editora da Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco

Rua Dom Manoel de Medeiros, s/n Dois Irmãos CEP 52171-900 Recife – PE

Tel.: (81) 3302.1011

### **Rescue of the Bahia Documentation**

A part of the documentation relating to the Captainship of Bahia was catalogued between 1910 and 1950 by Eduardo de Castro e Almeida and Luisa da Fonseca, in a total of 30,000 documents originating from 185 boxes existing at the Arquivo Ultramarino. There still remained 248 boxes with 20,093 documents, whose summarized entries were made by a team of six researchers. All the documents were listed in a consolidated catalogue, since the documents of the different series complemented one another.

### **Catálogo da Documentação Avulsa da Bahia.** (in print).

Editora da Universidade Federal da Bahia

Rua Augusto Viana Canela CEP: 40110-060 Salvador – BA

Tel.: (71) 263-7075 263-6160 *e-mail:* [edufba@ufba.br](mailto:edufba@ufba.br)

### **Catálogo de Eduardo de Castro e Almeida dos Documentos da Capitania da Bahia e do Rio de Janeiro**

Anais da Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro. 9 vols.

Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro

Avenida Rio Branco, 219 CEP 22040-008 Rio de Janeiro – RJ

Tels.: (21) 2220-9367 2220-4173 (fax)

### **Catálogo de Luisa da Fonseca dos Documentos da Bahia**

Instituto Histórico e Geográfico da Bahia, 1950.

Instituto Histórico e Geográfico da Bahia

Avenida Sete de Setembro, 94 A Piedade CEP 40060-001 Salvador – BA

Tels.: (71) 329-4463 329-6336 (fax)

**Rescue of the Rio de Janeiro Documentation**

The cataloguing of a small part of the documentation was carried out by the same Eduardo de Castro e Almeida who had worked on the cataloguing of the documents about Bahia. From 1910 onwards, the Biblioteca Nacional (National Library) published the detailed and extensive entries, corresponding to 88 boxes. Another 350 boxes remained containing an enormous mass of documents, worked on by a team of 6 Brazilian researchers supported by another 3 Portuguese researchers. The full availability of the documentation on Rio de Janeiro is essential not only for understanding the history of the state today, but also for the rest of Brazil, for many of the documents relate to other captainships as Rio was the capital of the colony for a very long time.

**Catálogo dos Documentos Avulsos do Rio de Janeiro.** (under preparation).

Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro

Avenida Rio Branco, 219 CEP 22040-008 Rio de Janeiro – RJ

Tels.: (21) 2220-9367 2220-4173 (fax)

**Rescue of the Codices, Iconography and Cartography**

Besides the separate documents, the Arquivo Ultramarino preserves almost 800 Codices, which were gathered together on 230 rolls of microfilm by the researcher José Sintra Martinheira, who works for the archives. His work incorporated new entries, comparing them with the old entries made by the archives' former director, Alberto Iria. This documentation is extremely important for completing the group of documents forming the Rescue Project, for it consists of drawings and illustrations, many of them in color.

The iconography and cartography included in the separate documents or in the Codices amount to a special project within the Rescue Project itself. Because of their nature and quality, they have been reproduced in card form, for which the complete series will consist of 1,200 pieces with maps or sketches of cities, fortresses, buildings, drawings reproducing flora and fauna, watercourses and even pictures of the region's inhabitants.

**Catálogo dos Códices do Fundo do Conselho Ultramarino relativos ao Brasil existentes no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino**

MARTINHEIRA, José Joaquim Sintra (Org.). 1 vol., 2001. 183p.

Real Gabinete Português de Leitura/ Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/ Editorial Nórdica

Tel.: (21) 2221-2960 *e-mail*: [nordica@iis.com.br](mailto:nordica@iis.com.br) / [resgate@mincrj.gov.br](mailto:resgate@mincrj.gov.br)

**Catálogo dos Documentos Manuscritos da Secretaria do Conselho Ultramarino(1642-1833).** REIS, Gilson Sérgio Matos (Org.). 1 vol., 2002. 298p.

Real Gabinete Português de Leitura/ Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Tel.: (21) 2221-2960 *e-mail*: [resgate@mincrj.gov.br](mailto:resgate@mincrj.gov.br)

**Catálogo da Documentação Iconográfica-Cartográfica.** (under preparation).

Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro.

Avenida Rio Branco, 219 CEP 22040-008 Rio de Janeiro – RJ  
Tels.: (21) 2220-9367 2220-4173 (fax)

### **Future prospects of the Rescue Project**

Based on the information provided by Esther Caldas Bertoletti, the national coordinator of the Rescue Project, there are many aims included under the scope of this project. As far as microfilming activities are concerned, work is expected to be either completed or started at the French, Dutch, Spanish, British and North American archives, whilst the investigative activity at the Torre do Tombo, in Portugal, is also due for completion. Publication of the Guides to the Sources of the Italian and British Archives has reached the phase of translation or final revision; publication of the Guide to the American Archives is in print at the Universidade do Sagrado Coração (EDUSC); publication of the Catalogue of the Documents of the Vatican's Secret Archive is at the stage of microfilming, revision of the entries and completion of the indexes; thematic catalogues are being prepared based on the collection of documents brought together by the Rescue Project, involving the definition of specific extracts from the documentation relating to Indians, blacks, women, the Church, education, taxes, etc.

The ultimate aim is to make all the entries and scanned pictures available online, a project that is already taking shape with the appearance of the Centro de Memória Digital (Digital Memory Center) at the Universidade de Brasília, which, on 19 April 2004, placed the documentation relating to São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul on the Internet and is shortly due to complete the transfer of the 280 CD-Roms that have already been made and the remainder that are yet to be prepared.

### **Rescue Project – Digital Memory Center**

[www.resgate.unb.br](http://www.resgate.unb.br)

### **The History that is born with the Rescue Project**

It is undeniable that the core of the documentation has to do with the political and administrative relations between the metropolitan government and the colonial authorities. It therefore lends itself to the historical reconstruction of the relations of power between the world of the Metropolis and its Colonies, the actions taken by the State in relation to its captainships and by these amongst themselves. For this reason, a substantial part of the documentation refers to the organization and exercise of metropolitan bureaucratic power in the colonial space: the filling of official posts, pensions, licenses, litigation; the structuring of military bodies, applications, confirmations, letters patent. But it was not just this. The colonial administration was omnipresent: it saw and heard everything, reporting everything to the powerful authorities overseas, a kind of Foucault-like panoptic society acclimatized to the new world, capable of invading all aspects of life in the colonies, from the public to the private, craftily drawing up collective rules for living together under such singular conditions of existence as those presented by “life in the colonies”. The documentation consequently has a high level of historical density that can obviously be completed with information from other sources. It tells us about the land, a vital element in the process of territorial occupation, because it

deals with land grants. It tells us about men, by bringing us the correspondence of the Senado da Câmara (Municipal Council), allowing us to glimpse population maps, the conflicts expressed in lawsuits and official inquiries, the condition of convicts, slaves, Indians and women. It tells us about production, the essential question of food, trade, the different ways of appropriating surpluses through tithes and taxes, the meticulous organization of the system for the mining of precious metals, timber extraction. It tells us about the mapping of the territory, roads and waterways, the unrestrained activity of smugglers at the entrances to harbors. It tells us about religious life, the behavior of the clergy, their relations with the authorities, amongst themselves and with the population in general. It tells us about everything, in short, about men and angels.

The *Catálogo Geral da Documentação Iconográfica-Cartográfica* (General Catalogue of Iconographical and Cartographic Documentation) is undoubtedly an original compilation of great historiographical value, as well as important in terms of images and aesthetics. It is divided into three main parts. The maps, numbering 15 in total, express the need for exercising control over space and dominating the territory, which because of its immeasurable vastness could only be circumscribed and comprehended through the almost imaginary lines of their authors, even though these nonetheless reveal certain strategic dimensions in the exercise of power in relation to their competitors. Indeed, the skilled Portuguese cartographers, working in their studios, cunningly and deliberately distorted dimensions for geopolitical purposes, shortening or lengthening distances whenever this suited them,<sup>9</sup> providing a magnificent example of the ideological manipulation of cartography.<sup>10</sup> These cartographers, capable of defining with great accuracy the strategic places for including Portuguese fortresses on their maps, despite contending with immense landmasses and vast coastal perimeters with jagged outlines, were essential pieces in the project for colonization, nerve centers for the exercise of power. Town planning is shown through the detailed plans for hospitals, barracks, prisons, town halls, churches and public buildings, although these could also be used for a project whose profile is easily identifiable in the enclosures to be found throughout rural Brazil, an example of the durability of material culture, which simultaneously exhibits the foresight of the planners and the great wealth of the documentation itself.

The appearance of a vast mass of documents, of the size offered by the Rescue Project, places fresh challenges before the historical researchers of Brazil and Portugal. Indeed, it recovers the meaning of the classical *métier* of the historian, a person who was inadequately classified as “traditional” and tended to work above all with written records. By renewing historiographical horizons through the incorporation of new objects and approaches, the New History has expanded the range of supports for research: literary and artistic works, plays, popular festivities, architectural monuments, artifacts from the material culture. By broadening the documentary base used by the new generations of historians, in which the universe of images is equivalent to the world of written texts, it is easier to construct the interplay of representations, mentalities and imagery.

The documents originating from the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, produced according to the immediate needs of public managers, have brought about a kind of protohistory, in so far as they

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. ROCHA, Luis Francisco Bitton Teles. *Práticas imagéticas nas retratações da Amazônia: séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII*. (Master's Degree) Dissertation, São Paulo: PUC, 1999. especially p. 92, 115 and 252.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. BLACK, Jeremy. *Maps and Politics*. New York: Reaktion Books, 1998.



provide guidelines for possible interpretation, as a result of their condition as anchor-texts and guides for the direction of analyses. From now on, the real question lies in the incentive that these documents will provide in the *milieu* of historians, now faced with the problem of the multiplicity of available resources and a variety of analytical possibilities. Undoubtedly, these compilations will cause some disquiet, that kind of feeling that normally opens the doors of creative imagination, a renewing breath of fresh air that is so good for restless minds.

*Copyright 2004, ISSN 1645-6432-Vol.2, number 2, Winter 2004*