

## The Discovery of Cabo Verde-550 years in Paintings

On the first of October 2010, the Cape Verdean Ambassador to Portugal, Arnaldo Andrade Ramos, visited the Mayor, Luis Gomes of VRSA (Vila Real de Santo Antonio), prior to speaking at the Inauguration of the painting exhibit at the municipal library (Bibliotheca Municipal Vicente Campinas) to commemorate 550 years of CV history. The Ambassador was accompanied by the Deputy Mayor, José Carlos Barros at the inauguration of the exhibit. The Deputy Mayor welcomed the Ambassador and introduced him to the audience. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation to the city of VRSA for hosting the exhibit to commemorate 550 years of CV history.

The Ambassador also told the audience that he had known me for a long time and he stressed the importance of my research about CV history. Due to time limitations the introductions were brief and the Deputy Mayor recognized me as being a local resident and expressed the importance of explaining the discovery of Cabo Verde 550 years ago to the people of VRSA, he also offered the services of his office to assist me if needed.

I then spoke for about an hour and explained my rationale for commemorating CV history in paintings. I also mentioned that CV was commemorating 35 years of independence and that it was necessary to learn about our past if we wanted to have a better understanding of our future. I analyzed about 50 paintings with brief comments and suggested that more details were posted alongside the paintings so they could be read later if desired. Finally I showed them the web pages for [www.adenoli.wordpress.com](http://www.adenoli.wordpress.com) and [www.cvntv.com](http://www.cvntv.com) while explaining the importance of both sites.

The exhibit was organized and sponsored by the city hall of VRSA under the authority of the Mayor, Luis Gomes and the Deputy Mayor, José Carlos Barros. The organization and execution of the details were carried out by Dr. Maria Assunção Constantino and Dr. Mariana Ornelas de Rego and their staff.

The audience was very attentive throughout the lecture and gave an enthusiastic round of applause at the end. Several people remained for a few minutes to express their personal gratitude for the lecture, for example one Portuguese woman who appeared to be in her mid 70's, said that she was married to a Cape Verdean and learned more about Cabo Verde during the lecture than all her years of marriage. The Ambassador also explained a few details to some of the people regarding some of the paintings, based on his personal knowledge.

I did not know it at the time; but learned later; that the Ambassador and the Mayor were both very interested in developing a Sister City Program between VRSA and Cabo Verde since there are a lot of Cape Verdeans scattered throughout the Algarve region and that negotiations on this issue are expected to begin shortly. I also learned that the Mayor had made a recent trip to Cabo Verde and was in the process of strengthening ties with Portugal's former colony, while the Ambassador had expressed a keen interest in VRSA's experience in the tourist sector and the various sporting installations and other equipment that has been made available for the service of the community. I had the feeling that the Mayor's recent trip to Cabo Verde and

the Ambassador's visit to VRSA were both very impressive experiences that could be used to build strong ties between the two countries for future programs.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, I also lectured to middle school students and their teachers about the history of Cabo Verde.

(M.G. Balla-Oct 2010)