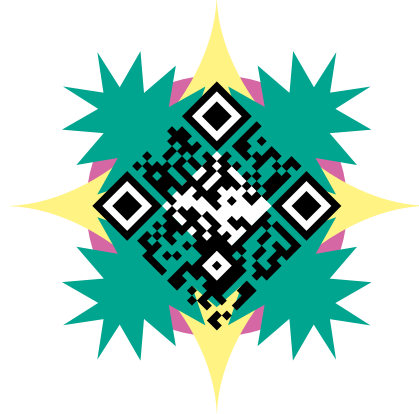


Traces of Africa in Leiden

During this walk you will become acquainted with events, persons and buildings from Leiden's history with Africa. From the Lakenhal, where textile that the Dutch used as a medium of exchange for slaves from West Africa was inspected, to the awarding of an honorary doctorate to Nelson Mandela. The walk has been composed by the African Studies Centre Leiden.



1. National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde), Steenstraat 1
2. Transvaal neighbourhood - Paul Krugerstraat
3. African Studies Centre, Rapenburg 45
4. Academy Building, Rapenburg 73
5. Temple of Taffeh, National Museum of Antiquities (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden), Rapenburg 28
6. Honorary doctorates, Pieterskerk, Kloksteeg 16
7. Wall poem "Danse Africaine", Nieuwe Rijn 46
8. Office of the Boycott Outspan Campaign, Oude Vest 79
9. Lakenhal, Oude singel 32

Text: Fenneken Veldkamp, Jos Damen and Edith de Roos / African Studies Centre Leiden, Leiden University

Photos: Pim Rusch

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**Universiteit
Leiden**
Geesteswetenschappen



1 National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde), Steenstraat 1

Museum Volkenkunde has an extensive Africa collection. It houses statues from the ancient kingdom of Benin (in present-day Nigeria), which were captured by the British Army during a military expedition in 1897. In the past few years, there has been talk of returning these Benin Bronzes to Nigeria. In addition, the museum has the oldest textiles from sub-Saharan Africa and historical objects brought back by travellers from South Africa and traders from Congo, including a rich collection of power statues.

Outside the museum a permanent exhibition by South African artist Andries Botha is on display: *Openluchtarchief* or *Oranje Blanje, Bleu*. In 2000, Botha assembled objects in the Netherlands for an exhibition about the 'tribal' characteristics of the Dutch. The objects are displayed in steel cases in the museum's garden. In the accompanying texts, Botha comments on the alleged Dutch national character in his native language, Afrikaans, which is largely descended from Dutch.



2 Transvaal neighbourhood, Krugerstraat

Like a dozen other cities in the Netherlands, Leiden has a 'Transvaal neighbourhood'. The streets are named after leaders and places from the former Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State in South Africa. During the Second Boer War (1899-1902), many Dutch people felt a kinship with the Boers, who fought against the British in South Africa to preserve these Boer republics.

However, the British Empire was too powerful. After the lost war, Dutch cities named their streets after the Boer leaders, whom they saw as heroes. Queen Wilhelmina arranged for Paul Kruger, then president of Transvaal, to travel safely to Europe.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a movement emerged in the Netherlands in solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle in Southern Africa. Some streets previously named after the Boer leaders were renamed after anti-apartheid fighters. In Leiden, too, streets were named after leaders of the resistance struggle, such as Steve Biko, Albert Luthuli and Eduardo Mondlane. However, these streets are not in the Transvaal neighbourhood, but in the Koppelsein district.



3 African Studies Centre, Rapenburg 45

The 'Study Centre' of the Africa Institute was established in 1947. The Africa Institute consisted of a scientific documentation centre in Leiden and a trade office in Rotterdam, which later moved to The Hague and changed its name to Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC).

The Board was originally comprised of three people: Professor Baron van Asbeck, professor and lawyer at Leiden University; Professor Idenburg, lawyer and researcher of Africa at Leiden University; and Karel van der Mandele, who was committed to trade and the reconstruction of post-war Rotterdam.

Due to its academic character, the study centre ended up in Leiden, initially at Rapenburg 45 (the 'Teldershuis', where Princess Beatrix would live as a student), then at Rapenburg 8, later at Stationsplein and finally at its current

location on Wassenaarseweg 52. Today, the African Studies Centre Leiden is the only institute in the Netherlands that focuses exclusively on research and education about Africa. It is an interfaculty institute of Leiden University and has a library that is open to the general public.



4 Academy Building, Rapenburg 73

i Jacobus Capitein

On 10 March 1742, Jacobus Elisa Johannes Capitein received his doctorate in the Academy Building. He was one of the first West Africans to study at a European university. Born in 1717, in present-day Ghana, Capitein was taken from his parents around the age of eight and sold to the Dutch captain Arnold Steenhart. The latter gave him as a gift to merchant Jacobus van Goch of the West India Company.



The boy attended Latin school and studied theology in Leiden from 1737 to 1742. He was the first African to be ordained as a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. His translations of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments into Ghanaian Mfantse are considered the first written texts introduced in Ghana. Noteworthy: in the dissertation he delivered at the Academy Building, Capitein defended slavery, on theological grounds. Later, Capitein returned to Ghana to become a missionary at Fort Elmina on the Gold Coast. However, the conversion of compatriots was not very successful and Capitein died at the age of thirty.

ii Herman Coster memorial stone

As a student, Coster was president of the Leiden student fraternity. When his family went bankrupt, he left for South Africa, where he became a lawyer and acted as State Attorney for a few years at Paul Kruger's request. Coster fought in the Second Boer War in Northern Natal under Boer general De Kock and is said to have died 'heroically' at the Battle of Elandsplaagte in 1899. In 1901, he was given a memorial stone in the courtyard of the Academy Building, which can still be seen there today. At Coster's reburial in Pretoria in 1961, the university also received the funerary cross that had previously been placed at his grave on the battlefield.

5 The Temple of Taffeh, National Museum of Antiquities, Rapenburg 28

In 1960, the Egyptian government began building a dam on the Nile. This required flooding a large area of land in southern Egypt. Many ancient cultural treasures were in danger of being lost. The Netherlands contributed to a UNESCO rescue plan. In gratitude, the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) received an authentic temple from the village of Taffeh, in Nubia, from the Egyptian government. The more than six-metre-high temple was built some 2,000 years ago by order of Roman emperor Augustus and was part of a fortress.

In 1960, the temple was dismantled brick by brick, and, after a necessary renovation by the RMO, it was transferred to the Netherlands in the 1970s. The temple was officially opened in 1979. As it was a gift to the entire Dutch population, President Nasser demanded that the temple be accessible to everyone for free. The temple can be viewed (free of charge) during museum opening hours.



6 Pieterskerk, Pieterskerkhof 1a

Three South Africans and a Mozambican received honorary doctorates from Leiden University here.

i Honorary doctorate Jan Smuts 1948

After his secondary school days in Stellenbosch, farmer's son Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950) studied law at Cambridge. Back in South Africa, Smuts fought in the Boer War on the side of the Boers against the British, but after that war he became more and more focused on England. During the First World War (WWI), he commanded Allied forces against the Germans in East Africa. He then became a member of the British War Cabinet. After WWI, he served as a minister and prime minister of South Africa a number of times. Smuts played a key role in the founding of the League of Nations (1920).

He believed that South Africa could not remain neutral during the Second World War either, and that South Africa had to fight against Germany and Italy – countries with significant interests in Africa. In 1941, the British appointed him Field Marshal. Under his leadership, South African army units fought in Ethiopia and Somaliland. Later, South African troops were deployed in North Africa and Italy. The honorary doctorate from Leiden University followed on 18 June 1948.

ii. Honorary doctorate Nelson Mandela 1999

South Africa's former president, Nelson Mandela (1918-2013), received an honorary doctorate from Leiden University in 1999. The university rarely awards an honorary doctorate to non-academics, but makes exceptions for people who have made an exceptional contribution to upholding the university's motto: Bastion of liberty. The then rector magnificus, Willem Albert Wagenaar, argued that Mandela, who was instrumental in the abolition of apartheid, was pre-eminently someone who deserved this designation. Moreover, the university wanted to honour the South African people with the honorary doctorate. To this end, the university established the Mandela Scholarship Fund. This fund allows South African students to study in Leiden for a year.

iii. Honorary doctorate Lungisile Ntsebeza 2020

During apartheid, South African Lungisile Ntsebeza spent more than five years in prison. He was arrested for participating in underground reading groups and membership of student movements opposing the apartheid regime. While in prison, he managed to graduate in political science and philosophy through correspondence. After his prison sentence, he was exiled to a rural village in the Eastern Cape in 1981. He received his PhD from Rhodes University in 2002. Since 2008, he has been Professor of Sociology and African Studies at the University of Cape Town, and director of the Centre for African Studies there. Ntsebeza studies the democratisation of rural South Africa, where many traditional and unelected leaders still hold sway. He also researches land rights, poverty alleviation and South Africa's pre-colonial history. At the presentation of his honorary doctorate on 7 February 2020, Ntsebeza was moved by the presence of South African John Dugard, professor emeritus of Public International Law at Leiden University. In 1977, Dugard had defended him during his imprisonment.

iv Honorary Doctorate Graça Machel 2021

Graça Machel received an honorary doctorate on 8 February 2021 for her efforts for children's and women's rights in Africa and beyond. Machel (1945) grew up in Mozambique and studied literature at the University of Lisbon. After graduating, she worked as a teacher and began her lifelong mission for child development. After Mozambique's independence, she became minister of education in 1975, after which the number of children enrolled in primary and secondary schools increased significantly. Machel also worked in other areas to protect the rights of children and women. She is one of the founders of The Elders, an independent group of former world leaders working together for peace and human rights. She founded this group with her husband Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, who died in 2013. Machel is also committed to Girls Not Brides, an organisation fighting against forced child marriages. She advises the UN on the impact of armed conflict on children.

7 Wall poem 'Danse Africaine', Langston Hughes, Nieuwe Rijn 46

Langston Hughes's (1902-1967) first collection of poems, *The Weary Blues*, was published in 1926. It included 'Danse Africaine', in which already the main theme throughout his work can already be found: black awareness. Hughes's father offered him the chance to study architecture at Columbia University, but the young Langston preferred writing over studying. He could be found frequently in the New York district of Harlem, and after quitting college in 1922 he held a variety of jobs. One of them was being a sailor, which led to him visiting Europe and West Africa.



Back in the US, he lived in various places. After finishing his studies in Lincoln, he moved back to Harlem, where his writing flourished. 'Danse Africaine' came about in this period. Langston was 20 years old when he wrote it. His poetry is characterised by the rhythm of (jazz)music: jazz poetry. Hughes was an inspiration for the négritude movement, which included black awareness writers from Africa and the African diaspora, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal) and Aimé Césaire (Martinique).

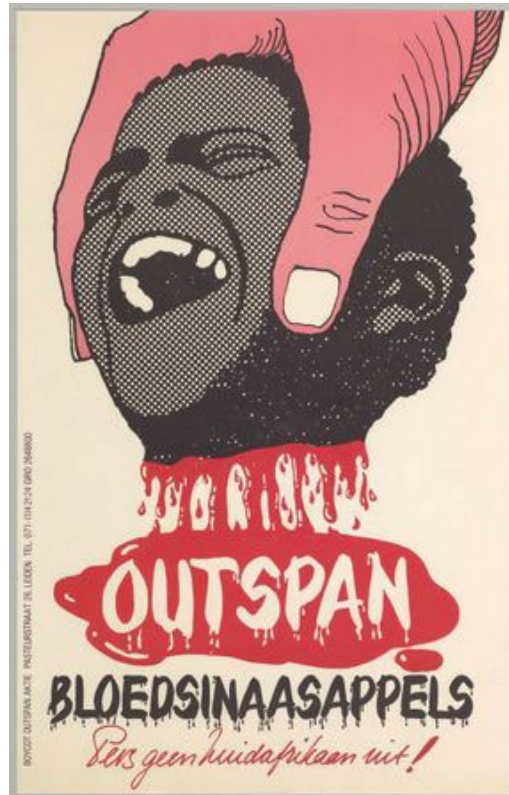
**[Option 1 for walkers:
End the walk here]**

[Option 2 for walkers: continue walking, making it a circular route. Walk along the Nieuwe Rijn, Sint Jansbrug, Jan Vossensteeg, to:]

8 Office of the anti-apartheid group 'Boycot Outspan Aktie', Oude Vest 79

This is where the office of the anti-apartheid group Boycot Outspan Aktie (Boycott Outspan Campaign) or BOA used to be. Outspan is a South African brand of citrus fruits. In the 1970s, an economic boycott against the South African apartheid regime started. BOA member and professional designer Rob van der Aa made a poster showing the head of a black South African being squeezed on a citrus press like an orange. The text read: *Pers geen Zuid Afrikaan uit (Don't crush any South African)*.

The Boycott Outspan Campaign was founded in 1970 and was dedicated to fighting South Africa's apartheid system and racism in Europe – an indivisible struggle according to BOA. The founder and leader was Esau de Plessis, who also worked briefly at the African Studies Centre. BOA was officially disbanded in 1992. South Africa's first free elections were held in 1994.



Ontwerper affiche: Rob van der Aa

9 Lakenhal, Oude Singel 32

From the seventeenth century, Leiden textiles were inspected in 'De Laecken-Halle'. 'Laecken' stood for different textiles. They were sold with the Leiden hallmark all over the world. Dutch merchants used textiles as currency for the Africans they bought as slaves on the West African coast. In 1874, the building became the city museum.

One notable work on display here is by Pieter van Ruyven (1651-1719). He painted four ceiling pieces depicting the four continents - Asia, America, Europe, and Africa - for the house of Pieter de la Court at Breestraat 14. De la Court was a cloth trader, a pamphleteer and, as an investor in the Dutch West India Compagnie, involved in the slave trade. The allegorical representations depict the continents with symbols and personifications. A black woman represents the *Afrika* continent. It did not become common to depict Africa with a dark skin colour until the late sixteenth century. It is noteworthy that there are no explicit references in *Afrika* to slavery. (You can visit the Lakenhal after purchasing an admission ticket.)

Return to Museum Volkenkunde (via Beestenmarkt and Steenstraat)

Leiden City World Walk by the African Studies Centre Leiden / Leiden University in collaboration with the Faculty of Humanities and LeidenGlobal.

Read more:

- * *Walking Guide to African Leiden (2017)*
- * *Traces of Slavery in Leiden (2017)*
- * *More information about the Andries Botha exhibition outside Museum Volkenkunde*
- * *More information about the wall poem 'Danse Africaine' and other wall poems from Africa in Leiden*
- * *More information about the history of the African Studies Centre Leiden*

Non-digital source:

Norbert Schneeloch, *Aktionäre der Westindischen Compagnie von 1674* (Klett-Cotta, 1982)

