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The Tulipana Project – a Brazilian-Dutch shared heritage experience

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Today is a good opportunity to talk about shared cultural heritage between the Netherlands and Brazil, in particular Holambra. I will not talk about the historical background of Holambra and the Dutch migrants, because researchers like Mari Smits are specialists on this. Instead I will focus on the value of shared cultural heritage that is small in scale and not managed by institutions. There are some challenges we face when we want to preserve and publish this online to reach a greater audience. For heritage institutions like the National Archives, State or Provincial Archives and Museums it is their prime objective and paid job to manage the cultural heritage of society and to preserve it for future generations. Archivists and curators decide about the cultural value of heritage every day, act according to rules and regulations and decide what to keep and what to discard. This is not only a concern to the institutions with their large collections and archives, but it applies also to relatively small ones. It may be even difficult for you yourself to decide what to keep in your family as personal heritage. It may be difficult for a professional archivist or curator what to keep as national heritage.

I keep the 1954 radio of my grandfather at my home. It was a very modern and expensive novelty back then. And I keep a wooden chest that travelled to Australia with him when he migrated two years later with my grandmother and four of my uncles, leaving my parents behind who decided not to join them on this journey. The radio and the chest are the only

tangible memories of this adventurous journey together with some photographs that my dad received years later showing my family in Adelaide just after they arrived. Recently I came across the website of the National Archives of Australia and I was able to download the 56 page immigration file of my grandparents. Some information in that file was even unknown to my father and we spend time together to share memories and stories. And that is what heritage is about. It is about people and their stories, about our ancestors and what they did before us. But stories will be lost and objects will be discarded when we do not actively try to preserve them, revalue them and share them. This is our common responsibility.

Before setting up the Tulipana team together two years ago with Mara de Groot, Annemarie van der Knaap and Mari Smits (all present here today) I knew nothing about the Dutch migrants to Brazil. Learning about it by visiting Holambra and hearing the stories I gained much respect for the people who decided to move abroad to a unknown future in a new homeland.

The Museu Holambra is a local museum run by volunteers. It shows the history of Holambra with an exhibition consisting of photographs, inventory, agricultural equipment and much more. The Museum has the archives of the Cooperatie, the social club and other local institutions, private donations, there are periodicals, books and magazines. So when we look at it, we see a museum, an archive and a library all together in a cultural heritage center for local education and study. The Dutch language is still present, tulips and windmills are visible in the streets and you can eat really good stroopwafels. It is Dutch heritage in Brazil, and shared between the two nations. How to promote this to a wider audience of tourists, researchers, local community and relatives in Holland?

The first initiative originates actually from 2011 when the directors of the National Archives of both the Netherlands and Brazil were present at a meeting and were talking about shared heritage. The Dutch migrants became the subject of the talk and it was suggested that some research projects could be initiated. Roelof Hol and Mara de Groot of the Shared Cultural Heritage team of the National Archives of the Netherlands organized to create a research guide on archival sources in the Netherlands on the Dutch Migration to Brazil. This guide was written by Lodewijk Hulsman of the New Holland Foundation and it is freely available. Later on when Mara started working for the Center for Global Heritage and Development at the Leiden University she initiated a follow-up project to see if it was feasible to digitize and publish heritage of Holambra and other communities. At that point I joined the team.

My background is in software engineering and digitization and I have been working for the Corts Foundation and the National Archives of Indonesia, publishing VOC archives. I was interested from the beginning in working with a community museum that is run by volunteers, different than working with government organizations. So I became a volunteer in this project myself and we were ready for some challenges. Because there was already a Europeana and a Braziliana heritage initiative, we ambitiously chose Tulipana for our project name to refer to the Dutch roots of the migrants. Annemarie van der Knaap joined and immediately became a very important team member because she lives currently in Holambra, is very active in the museum and she also speaks Portuguese. Without her the Tulipana project would not be possible.

The main reason to digitize, preserve and publish heritage is to make it available to a wider audience. We focus not only on scholars who want to write history, but also on the general public, interested in family backgrounds, and journalists looking for stories. A good example is the recent request received by the Tulipana team of a Dutch reporter to contact someone in Holambra because of an interest in their celebration of Sinterklaas. I was personally surprised when visiting Holambra that a life size Zwarte Piet, wearing wooden shoes, was posted outside a restaurant for everyone to take a selfie with. Which we also did by the way.

Shared cultural heritage immediately leads to some debate on the use of language when it comes to preservation and publication. The heritage is formed by the Dutch in the Dutch language and so the Dutch language is essentially part of the heritage itself. But the recent generations are in Brazilian schools, learning Portuguese and slowly the knowledge of Dutch will fade away in the coming decades. The heritage is under threat in the sense that a decreasing number of people will be able to read and understand it in its original form. So what can we do? Scanning a photograph is the easy part, recording the photo requires effort to describe it in both Dutch and Portuguese. This is labor intensive work, done probably once, and so it makes sense to immediately do this in two languages. It would also be logical that a person with Dutch language skills creates the descriptions and that these descriptions are translated into Portuguese. But in practice it turned out that the part-time archivist of the museum, who is Portuguese, creates the descriptions in Portuguese first and translation in Dutch is done later on.

We could not really find the one and only standard for photo descriptions and decided to create our own template and instructions, but based on best practices and more general international standards. We published it on the Tulipana website. Descriptions in both languages can be recorded together in an easy-to-use Excel sheet. This practical instruction proved to be very useful to the Museu Holambra. So in the Tulipana project we have thought about what language to use in the digitization process and separately in the publication process. We have agreed to use both Dutch and Portuguese in digitization and to use at least Dutch for publication. The reason for this is the choice to publish the digital heritage at first online in a Dutch system in the Netherlands.

In order to have the best chance for online survival for the next decades, it is advisable to choose wisely an institution that is expected to stay around for a long time. An institution that is supported and financed with sufficient resources and kept up to date. The Holambra museum cannot be asked to fulfill the obligation for long-term preservation because of the limited resources in personnel, skills and technology. Volunteers can be asked to contribute to heritage management tasks but cannot be held responsible for running a web based publication system. So we took a long time to consider the options, varying from Brazilian Archival institutions to Universities and Museums. Outsourcing the online publication to a Brazilian IT company would be possible but it would be too expensive for the museum and the nature of software engineering in the private sector differs too much from the non-profit nature of cultural institutions. Our hope focused on a cultural institution that was willing to embrace the full collection of the Museum Holambra and regard this as a digital heritage unit to publish in full. To split up the collection digitally and publish the photo collection separately from the archives and the museum objects would result in losing the identity of

Museu Holambra in the digital heritage space and would also lead to a multitude of institutions managing only a part of the digital heritage.

The Europeana spinoff called loCloud seemed a promising online solution that focusses on small collections of private individuals and local museums. An ideal candidate to work with because it promised an easy-to-use system without the need for technical skills and notion of IT service and maintenance. But looking more closely at the solution we were hesitant to join and act as an early adopter of this platform. The loCloud team is divided over different European countries, is small in size, and this European project still does not ensure long-term preservation of digital heritage. It made us aware of the possible risks we would introduce with loCloud. The loCloud option did lead us to Hans Schraven of the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency. The agency maintains and invests into a digital heritage publication system that acts as a national aggregator for Dutch digital heritage online. This means that for example museums can provide their digital heritage to the agency to be recorded in this system that can automatically forward it to Europeana as the European digital heritage platform. This option has been tested and it is formally agreed with Museu Holambra that we will follow this path to publish their heritage on this platform in Dutch. While discussing the platform it became important to reconsider the rights of ownership and authorship of the Museu Holambra digital heritage.

Working with heritage is also about understanding authorship, ownership and publication rights. We decided to approach this topic from the Dutch legal point of view because we will publish on a Dutch website. We have tried to understand what rules apply according to Brazilian law, but so far even the National Archives of Brazil have no real advice on how to deal with this. Many photographs were donated to the museum in the past and so ownership is clear, but without a formal agreement the photographer's children still inherit the authorship of these photos. Publishing the photo images online would require permission from the author. But sometimes it is simply not known who made the picture and the museum can claim the authorship but still has to try and find the original photographer. Photos online can be easily downloaded and so it is advisable to mention a license to those who want to reuse the photo images. The Museu Holambra will publish their photo images with one of the Creative Commons licenses that is an internationally accepted open license. A license indicating under what conditions the material can be used in other publications, without requesting formal permission of the authors. To be on the safe side with this, a license will be chosen that indicates that if someone wants to reuse and publish images then they have to mention a reference to its origin at the museum, it cannot be used in a commercial way, and it needs to be shared with the same license. Apart from the photo image itself, the description of the photo is not subjected to authorship according to Dutch law as it does not add any creativity nor originality to the photo itself. It is simply describes undisputed facts about the photo and its contents and thus no rights can be reserved.

The archives of the Museum Holambra vary from minutes of meetings of the Cooperatie, to invitations to community events, to periodicals and correspondence. The same can be expected for other Dutch communities. Knowing where Dutch archives are in Brazil would be very helpful to researchers in the first place. The research guide by Lodewijk Hulsman provides an overview of archival sources in the Netherlands on Dutch migration to Brazil. During our visit to Brazil in 2014 we came up with the idea to make a similar research guide

on archival sources in Brazil. At the moment Renate Stapelbroek is traveling around Brazil, visiting Dutch communities, to find out what archives there really are. This initiative is supported by the Dutch Embassy in Brazil and the Center for Global Heritage and Development and the communities themselves. It will result in a similar research guide to provide a more complete overview of archival sources on Dutch Migration. This guide will be published online on the Tulipana website and will be freely available for download.

Creating archive inventories in more detail can be challenging for volunteers and archivists. Museum Holambra has a part-time archivist who creates archival descriptions in Portuguese and this is already a great achievement. Creating archival descriptions in a multilevel way, meaning defining a hierarchical structure with sub-archives, series, subseries and files complies to international standards but it can be difficult if the Museum does not have a professional archive management system or methodology.

In the Tulipana project we suggested to use a tool called AtoM, Access to Memory, that is developed and supported by the ICA, the International Council of Archivists. A tool freely available for download and installation on a webserver. It can generate data files in EAD format to exchange data to other archive management systems or publication platforms. The ideal solution on paper, but in practice it needs a great deal of training and experience as it is not very end user friendly tool. At the Holambra Museum the Tulipana team organized a two day workshop in conservation and archive management together with the State Archives of Sao Paolo. It turned out that AtoM was also fairly new to the archivists of the State Archives and the workshop was simply not enough hands-on and practical to be effective. This was a real learning point, as the expectations of the volunteers was not sufficiently met. Volunteers understandably ask for very practical training and clear instructions and quick results at the end of the day. The community aspect of working together with heritage must be taken seriously and require easy-and-quickly-to-use tools. AtoM is not a tool like that and we are still looking for a better alternative. Meanwhile we simply continue with familiar tools like spreadsheet templates and documented instructions.

The focus should be kept on the heritage itself always and not on the tools. After all we want it to be useful and rewarding for the Museu Holambra and the volunteers to contribute to the long term preservation and publication of their cultural heritage.

With a low cost and low maintenance solution in place now, basic standards and agreements set on rights and online publication, the Tulipana team will continue to preserve and publish digital heritage online. The photo collection of Holambra will be the first online milestone this year and we would like to continue with the museum archives and collections. We hope that other communities are interested to join as well. Dutch migrant heritage deserves to be known and shared in Brazil and in the Netherlands and we hope that you all can support this mission.

Thank you.