

Exploration of the archived world: from *De Vlamingh's Plate* to digital realities

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Between 1616 and 1697 Dutch skippers surveyed the coast of Western Australia. The country's oldest-known written record of European exploration is a pewter plate left behind in 1697 and inscribed by Willem de Vlamingh (the plate is now in the Museum of Western Australia). Dutch maps, charts and journals transformed the unknown land into 'a flat surface of paper that can be archived', generating what Bruno Latour calls 'immutable and combinable mobiles'. In Latour's centres of calculation, events, places and people can be administered on a large scale and at a distance. Many things can be done with the archived world that cannot be done with the true world. This is as true today as it was in the seventeenth century. Reality is digitally virtualised and archived. Information about reality becomes information as reality (in Albert Borgmann's terms). What are the implications for record professionals?¹

As the title of this paper indicates, it invites the reader to move through time and space, back and forth from the past into the present and the future. There is a continuum between what we read from the records about the past and what we can learn from them about the present and the future.

Records about the past tell us about discovery and exploration by flying Dutchmen.² In 1616, ten years after Willem Jansz with his ship *Duyfken* had explored the Queensland coast on Cape York Peninsula, Dirck Hartog,³ *schipper* of the *Eendracht* (Harmony) in the service of the VOC (the Dutch East India Company), was the first European to set foot on the shore of Western Australia, from then on called Eendrachtsland, country of harmony. Hartog was in the service of the VOC and he landed – quite by accident – on what was later called Dirck Hartog Island, some 75 kilometres from the mainland, in what is now Shark Bay. Dirck Hartog left a pewter plate nailed to a pole with the date of his arrival and departure, and the names of the supercargo (the upper-merchant), the *schipper*, the under-merchant and the uppersteersman (first mate).⁴ I will return to this oldest-known written record of European exploration later on.⁵

Other Dutch ships followed, including those under command of Frederik de Houtman, with supercargo Jacob Dedel in 1619. They too left their traces: their names can still be found in geographical names in Western Australia: the Houtman rocks, (d')Edelland.⁶ They go to show that the sailors followed the VOC instructions, which read: 'To all the places which you will touch at, you will give names, befitting to the nature of the place, either using the names of the United Provinces and the cities situated therein, or any other worthy names.'⁷ Naming the world is claiming the world. Linguist Jan Tent has calculated that today there are some 300 Dutch and Dutch-linked toponyms in Australia.⁸ Only about 35 date from before 1756, a small remnant of the names (about 200) the VOC *schippers* gave when they explored and charted the coast.

In the years following Dirck Hartog's landing, several Dutch ships sighted Eendrachtsland. In 1622 the English *Tryal*, following the Dutch route, made shipwreck there. Seven years later the same happened to the *Batavia*, under commander Pelsaert. The story of this shipwreck and

the ensuing mutiny, terrorisation and mass murder among the wrecked, and the punishment of the murderers was in the seventeenth century what we would now call front-page news. In its time 'the tragedy of the *Batavia* had a greater impact on the public imagination than did the wreck of the *Titanic* in the 20th century.'⁹ Eight of the crew were hanged on *Batavia's* graveyard, others were keelhauled or brought to trial in Batavia (now Jakarta). Two men were punished by being left behind on the Eendrachtsland. They were instructed 'to make themselves known to the folk of this land by tokens of friendship ... if God guards you, you will not suffer any damage from them, but on the contrary, because they have never seen any white men, they will offer all friendship.'¹⁰ The two – the first European immigrants – were never heard of again, but maybe they survived. In Western Australia there are indigenous people affected by genetic factors introduced by Dutch mariners and passengers marooned in the seventeenth century. We must assume that there were close contacts at some point, since a particular genetic disease introduced in South Africa by Dutch people in the seventeenth century that has a high prevalence among Afrikaners of Dutch descent, also occurs among Aboriginal people along the Western Australian coast.¹¹ Also, sixteen per cent of the Nhandu language spoken on the coast seems to have been derived from the Dutch language. Other invisible and visible traces of the *Batavia* – one might say: records – are the ship and its contents, the 'fort' the survivors built, and human remains on West Wallabi, Long, East Wallabi and Beacon islands. In 2006 the *Batavia* shipwreck, survivors' camps area and the Dirck Hartog landing site were declared national heritage. The *Batavia* continues to excite public imagination, stimulated by the bestseller *Batavia's Graveyard* by Mike Dash (2002).

The *Batavia* was discovered in 1963, more than three centuries after the shipwreck. Forty-five years later, on Sunday 16 March 2008, four days after the *Kormoran* had been found, the discovery of HMAS *Sydney II* – west of Dirck Hartog Island – was even more spectacular than the find of the *Batavia*.¹² Do you remember where you were when you heard the press conference by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Ted Graham of the Finding Sydney Foundation and the chief of the Navy vice-admiral Russ Shalders over the news? Finding the *Sydney* and the *Kormoran* has not answered all questions, nor has it ended the controversies about

the loss of the *Sydney* and all of its 645 crew. As records professionals know, a record – be it a shipwreck, or any other document – does not speak for itself: the ‘tacit narratives’ of the record echo the user’s interests, hopes and fears.¹³ It is up to the user what meaning he or she derives from the archives.¹⁴ This empowers the user to explore and discover, to recontextualise in his or her own way what is found in the records that were initially created in the first dimension of the records continuum. That is why the archive is never closed and never complete: every individual, every generation is allowed his own exploration and interpretation of the archive, is allowed to re-invent and to reconstruct its view on the past and its narrative of it. That is to say, in Hannah Arendt’s words, every generation has ‘the right to write its own history. We admit no more than that it has the right to rearrange the facts in accordance with its own perspective; we don’t admit the right to touch the factual matter itself.’¹⁵

The last flying Dutchman to explore the Western Australian coast was VOC schipper Willem de Vlamingh.¹⁶ After a voyage of eight months (with a stopover at the Cape), he landed on Rottnest Island on 31 December 1696. Four days later his upper-steersman Michiel Bloem and bookkeeper Joannes Bremer went ashore on the mainland. De Vlamingh deemed ‘it proper to postpone going there until I could be informed of the success of the first landing’.¹⁷ A reconnaissance party of 86 men went ashore on 5 January 1697 and explored the country south of Lake Claremont, and along the river which they named Swaene River, today known as the Swan River. They went as far as the present Perth Esplanade, camping there overnight. The company was divided into three platoons ‘to see whether we could lay aboard any of the inhabitants but all in vain’.¹⁸ They followed the river to its mouth, and spent a second night on land, before returning to the main ships on 7 January.

De Vlamingh and his crew spent seven weeks in the region, exploring and charting the coast, describing flora and fauna, and trying to get in contact with the inhabitants. The crew had been warned that ‘the coast is inhabited by very savage, barbaric and cruel people’,¹⁹ but they still wanted to make contact, if only to catch a South Lander and bring him to Amsterdam, possibly as a source for anthropological and

linguistic studies which were the interests of Nicolaas Witsen, a VOC director and burgomaster of Amsterdam who had taken the initiative to send De Vlamingh to the South Land.²⁰ De Vlamingh even had two 'Indians' from the Cape among the crew, who were supposed to act as interpreters. Two or three times the Dutch saw indigenous people, 'sijnde swart en naeckt', being black and naked, with short curly hair. They made signals to the Dutch with their feet and hands, but when approached they fled 'at such an extraordinary speed that it was impossible for our people to follow them.'²¹ The journals of De Vlamingh are among the earliest recorded observations of Australian people.²² They also inform about fauna and flora, but, as the governor-general reported from Batavia to the VOC directors in Amsterdam, the crew had not 'discovered any singular animals or birds there, except mainly in the Swan River a species of black swan, of which they brought us three alive, and we should have liked to send them to you, but they died one after the other shortly after their arrival here.'²³ De Vlamingh collected other specimens too: scented wood, from which some oil was distilled in Batavia and sent to Amsterdam, 'together with a small chest containing shells collected on the beaches, fruits, plants, etc., but which are of little importance and may be found elsewhere in the Indies of a much better quality. So that in general in this region of the South Land which they have properly observed and along which they have sailed in conformity with their instruction, it has proved to be nothing but a barren, dry waste land.'²⁴ The VOC board was disappointed, and Nicolaas Witsen specially so. An enthusiastic collector of anything foreign, he had hoped that the expedition could bring back a South Lander and other curiosities.²⁵ Witsen had also ensured that there was a draughtsman on board, to paint whatever curiosity the Dutch would encounter. Seven profiles of the coast of Western Australia, watercolours painted by Victor Victorszoon, have survived: they were discovered in 1970 by the cartographic historian Günter Schilder among the papers of Claas Bichon, the commodore who had taken all De Vlamingh's material to Holland in 1697 and who had apparently kept the paintings himself – and fortunately the family preserved them for three centuries.²⁶ Who knows if some of the botanic specimens from the Australian coast that Witsen received 'lie undiscovered in obscure places in modern herbaria'?'²⁷ Witsen was pleased with two Australian

shells 'hitherto not sufficiently known' and he sent a drawing to the English conchologist Martin Lister who published the two shells in one of the issues of his *Synopsis Conchyliorum*.²⁸ Collections like Witsen's were set up and their descriptions made, not with the coloniser's gaze, nor with the interest in nature shown in the Age of Enlightenment by, for example, Joseph Banks. Witsen – like other merchants, diplomats, and sailors – acted out of a genuine curiosity in the natural world.

Curiosity is the root of discovery and exploration, and these in their turn lead to recording, collecting, ordering the world. Witsen had drawings made of the flora on Java, he sent someone to Sri Lanka to study the indigenous languages and he was keen to see what De Vlamingh brought back from the South Land.²⁹ What the seventeenth-century Dutch sailors and merchants did in the way of recording and collecting may be regarded as a start of what was to become modernity's quest for ordering and knowledge. The Dutch domination of the world economy, for a time, made it possible to collect facts and pursue knowledge on a global scale. As Harold Cook argues, in his recent book on commerce, medicine and science in the Dutch Golden Age, 'The northern Dutch world had become an intellectual entrepôt as much as an entrepôt for goods and finances. In the home metropolis collections were accumulated, housed, and preserved, inventories were taken and sometimes published, and redistribution of the value-added information and objects was initiated. Material progress and utility became the watchwords of contemporary naturalists even when they revelled in curiosities. From careful investigation and reporting they wished to create enduring knowledge that could be handed down to others.'³⁰

The VOC entrepôt in Amsterdam received, through De Vlamingh, the pewter plate Hartog had left in 1616. It had been discovered by De Vlamingh's steersman.³¹ This plate, together with other VOC artefacts, became state property in 1799 and is now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Willem de Vlamingh replaced it by a new flattened pewter plate, recording both Hartog's and his own landing. On his voyage to Eendrachtsland, De Vlamingh had left wooden tablets recording his arrival on Saint Paul and on Amsterdam islands.³² Peter Sigmond of the Rijksmuseum looks upon them as letters: as messages for the first reader

to come ashore and – once read – becoming more or less meaningless. But on Hartog Island, De Vlamingh did not use wood, but pewter, the same material as Hartog had earlier used. De Vlamingh's plate, with his inscription and the text of his predecessor, may also be interpreted as a letter, but it can also be seen as a memorial tablet meant to remain as a monument in honour of Hartog. The Hartog plate and the Vlamingh one are 'at first sight, identical objects but because of their contexts and contents they are very different in meaning and significance,' Sigmond concludes.³³ Doesn't that sound familiar to records professionals? As Joan Schwartz argues, the job of records professionals is to seek the intended function or role of a record 'as a means of communicating a message across time and/or space and then to consider how to preserve and describe them in a way that respects, reveals, and retains their impact on human relations, power, and knowledge.'³⁴

In 1818 the De Vlamingh plate of 1697 was taken to Paris by a French expedition and finally, in 1947, presented to the government of Australia, and transferred to the Western Australian Museum. It is the country's oldest written record of European discovery and exploration. Older yet is the 1616 Hartog plate, of which the museum displays a replica of the original, which is in Amsterdam.³⁵ The replica is a gift from the Dutch government (1966). However, supposing the internationally agreed rules for solving archival claims to be applied, one may wonder if the original Hartog plate shouldn't be returned to its provenance, the territory where the record was created.³⁶ In any case, the Hartog plate is a common heritage shared by the Dutch and the Australians.

Discovery and exploration lead to recording. The VOC instructed the captains to keep a careful record or daily journal so 'that we may get full information of all your doings and experiences, and the Company obtain due and perfect knowledge of the situation and natural features of these regions, in return for the heavy expenses to which she is put by this expedition.'³⁷ The VOC clearly regarded recorded information as a substantial trade-off.³⁸ Not only did the schipper have to keep a complete and elaborate journal of his voyage, he was also instructed 'to make due observation of the direction of the winds, the trend of the coasts, the situation of bays, inlets and capes, and properly to note and make drawings of the same, that on your return you may be able

to hand us a full and perfect report of the whole undertaking, thus furnishing fresh material for the correction of the charts now in use, and perhaps also of the courses to be kept.³⁹

Manning Clark sardonically writes that the Dutch were motivated by 'their insatiable covetousness'.⁴⁰ Making a profit was the rationale of the VOC: by trading gold, silver, tin, iron, lead and copper, nutmeg, cloves and pepper. Exploring foreign lands was primarily done to discover faster and safer sailing routes and to find new possibilities for trading, for making money. The Dutch were traders, not colonisers, at least not in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.⁴¹ *Mapping for money* is the appropriate title of the authoritative book on VOC map-making, written in 1998 by Kees Zandvliet, formerly head of the map department of the Netherlands National Archives and until recently head of the department of Dutch history of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

We no longer regard maps as a mirror of nature, but as cultural texts shaped by their political and social context. It was Brian Harley who in the 1980s led the way in deconstructing the map, influenced by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, thus uncovering the social practices that the map reflects and employs.⁴² Maps are indeed 'sophisticated artefacts, to be read as much for what they reveal of the cultures that produce them as of the geographical information they represent.'⁴³ The very practice of mapping is culturally determined. Aboriginal belief-systems posit a 'mapping' of the land by ancestral beings: the primal making of space into place.⁴⁴ An Aboriginal map therefore has a totally different purpose, just as it has a different meaning from a map drawn by a white explorer. Archivists and other records professionals know that the record is 'far from being an innocent by-product of activity, a reflection of reality, it is a construction of realities expressing dominant relations of power.'⁴⁵

Records are not factual, neutral, technical documents alone, although while serving legitimate ends they must appear this way, and while serving illegitimate ones even more so. They are designed – implicitly or explicitly – to produce an effect in some kind of audience, which itself actively uses records to interpret events. This is not to

suggest conscious deceit or cynicism on the part of either record keepers or users (although ... this is certainly possible). Rather it is simply to acknowledge and open up for analysis the conditions under which organizational records are produced and used.⁴⁶

As Simon Ryan has written with regard to the nineteenth-century explorers of Australia, the explorer does not just describe new land that he sees, and his journal is not a fresh and innocent transcription of the natural world: 'the discursive **construction** in the journals of what is seen by the explorers is generated by already existing cultural formation.'⁴⁷ A journal, or any other document is not a thing in itself, they are active constituents of social relations,⁴⁸ an insight gained by ethnomethodology (the study of the methods people use for producing recognisable social orders) as early as in the 1960s. Only recently those insights have informed archivists' discourse.⁴⁹ The active power of the record is realised or activated by the reader, the record being 'no more than an interpretive moment in a never-ending conversation with the texts'.⁵⁰ The record speaks in a dialogue with the reader/viewer, who may be outside the visible text, but never outside its invisible narrative.⁵¹ Record users are explorers, they are also activators, and even creators, just as recordkeepers are record creators, because they too contribute to the creation and recreation of the record. As Brien Brothman writes, records do not

simply reach a final state or condition. Rather, objects and processes are enmeshed in a dynamic of departure and return, emerging sameness and difference, repetition and recursion along with distancing and differentiation.⁵²

In the digital world, texts become 'hypertexts' which are reconstructed in the act of reading, rendering the reader an author.⁵³ The text becomes an interactive dialogue between 'the writer and her readers, and the reader could be asked to share the responsibility for the outcome'.⁵⁴ Likewise, the record becomes an interactive dialogue between the discoverer who may record his discovery but only in interaction with the subject of the discovery, interaction between the mapmaker and what is mapped, between the organisation and the client, customer or citizen. The subject of the record is becoming a party to the business function

which created the record, a co-creator. An example is data protection legislation allowing people to request annotation or amendment of records containing personal information. This is what I have called an activation of the record, the data subject being the activator, even a co-creator. Co-creatorship is, I believe, what Archives 2.0 should really be about, both in record creation and in archival representation and outreach.⁵⁵

Drawings, journals, maps and charts were essential tools for the VOC, both for the schippers and the directors. Together with detailed instructions, Willem de Vlamingh received extensive information about earlier expeditions to the South Land, in the form of copies of reports and maps.⁵⁶ Each ship was supplied with several sets – one for each schipper, upper- and under-steersman and third mate – some 30 to 50 parchment maps, with globes and navigation instructions, costing around some 200 to 300 guilders per ship. After each journey, logs and maps had to be delivered at the East India House in Amsterdam: today the seat of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Amsterdam. You can still visit the VOC boardroom, where the walls are adorned with replicas of the maps and paintings which formerly surrounded the VOC directors. Elsewhere in the Amsterdam headquarters was the navigation room where all the maps to be taken aboard were inventoried and kept ready. The ships' logs and the maps that formed part of the reports from Asia were kept in the records room.

What is left of the immense VOC archives, created between 1602 and 1795? Many of the records were destroyed in the nineteenth century. What we have in the Netherlands, in the National Archives, is only a small part (even then some 1,300 metres of shelving) of the total amount. But VOC records can also be found in Jakarta, Cape Town, Chennai (Madras), Colombo, Kuala Lumpur, London and Paris, totalling 4 kilometres. These records often fill the hiatus in the Dutch archives. The instructions for Willem de Vlamingh cannot be found in the Netherlands, for instance, but fortunately a copy has been preserved in the VOC archives in Capetown.⁵⁷ The records kept in the Netherlands, on the other hand, form a unique source for the study of the history of countries in the large area navigated and controlled by the VOC: they often contain information that cannot be found in

the countries concerned. This is truly a common archival heritage. UNESCO has registered this common heritage as Memory of the World, the only item registered on a joint nomination by five countries. A large project is underway to preserve all the VOC archives in the world, to connect and to describe all components of the VOC archives in a detailed 'super inventory', accessible on the Internet. Linked with the project is the ENCOMPASS (ENcountering a COMMon Past in ASia) program launched by Leiden University in cooperation with several universities in South East Asia. The program involves education of Asian students and research. My colleague, Charles Jeurgens, Professor of Archivistics at Leiden University, presented the program at the ICA congress in Kuala Lumpur. He aims to study the dialectics of 400 years of Asian-European interaction. He will explore knowledge production, archives creation and the use of information, knowledge systems and archives.⁵⁸

The knowledge system of the VOC concerned seafaring routes, countries, people and goods. In an accumulation cycle stretching from South East Asia to Amsterdam, everything was transformed into what Bruno Latour calls 'a flat surface of paper that can be archived, pinned on a wall and combined with others'.⁵⁹ This echoes the inscription on the second important general map of the Dutch discoveries in Australia, the Eugene map (dating from around 1666) which reads: 'Here are projected on a flat surface ... all the sailing routes, and newly found lands, observed and sailed ... under the direction and command of Commander Abel Janssen Tasman', the map referring to Tasman's journal for more information.⁶⁰ The VOC is a perfect example of what Latour has described as 'centres of calculation'. Such a centre conditions and controls events, places and people from a distance. These long-distance operations are made possible by somehow 'bringing home' events, places and people, by making them *mobile*, while keeping them *stable* (allowing to move them to and fro without deforming them) and making them *combinable*.⁶¹ Latour uses the term 'immutable and combinable mobiles', which can 'be cumulated, aggregated, or shuffled like a pack of cards'.⁶² The centres of calculation condense the incoming primary information into secondary, which is then aggregated to new information of the third order and so forth: a never ending 'cascade of the fourth, fifth and n^{th} order inscription'.⁶³ Each aggregation adds

value and provides new insight. Latour uses this model to explain how science in action works: when someone says that he or she performs better, or discovers something new, first look for any changes in the mobility, stability or versatility of the traces, 'the many ways through which inscriptions are gathered, combined, tied together and sent back', says one of Latour's seven rules of method.⁶⁴

Latour's point is again proven by the VOC. The information the VOC map-maker – between 1633 and 1705 always a member of the Blaeu family – distilled from the ships' logs and charts, enabled the company to do more than was possible on board the ships. In their turn the draughtsmen on board could observe more – and from a different perspective – than the indigenous people on the coast. Aggregation of information is characteristic for the VOC: the trading posts in different places all over Asia sent their reports and copies of correspondence to Batavia, where they were copied into a register of incoming letters, but also recapitulated and summarised in one single *Generale Missive*, the general letter, an aggregation of the second order, reporting on everything the VOC was interested in, using a fixed classification.⁶⁵ In Amsterdam these reports were integrated into the *Overgekomen brieven en papieren* (Letters and papers received): many volumes for one year, totalling 2,942 volumes between 1614 and 1794.

Through combining those letters and papers, both copies and originals, and by using an established classification and several indexes, the information was reformatted, recontextualised, and aggregated. This enormous archive constituted the basis for knowledge, control, and power: 'Files of files can be generated and this process can be continued until a few men consider millions as if they were in the palms of their hands', as Latour writes.⁶⁶

This is done by what Latour reverentially calls *gratte papiers* (paper shufflers), who create and manage records in a way that allows mobility, stability and versatility of events, places and people, linking various centres of calculation. Many people despise 'this curious breed of lunatics that prefers to believe a piece of paper to any other source of information.'⁶⁷ Latour, however, thinks this unjustified. Engineers, scientists and all who work in a centre of calculation with phenomena that, by definition, are not present (such as the stars for the astronomer,

and faraway countries and people for the VOC) trust the n^{th} order paper form, the archiving of the 'immutable and combinable mobiles'. Even stronger: the results of scientific enquiry become 'immutable and combinable mobiles' themselves, because, once recorded into files they are integrated into the results in other fields, those of economy, strategy, law and geology. 'All these unrelated domains are woven together once they become sheets of this most despised of all objects, the record, the dusty record.'⁶⁸ Without it, though, the inscriptions would stay where they were, on board the ship, in the laboratory, in the explorer's tent, without any relevance to other issues.

Seen in this way, records professionals – Latour's paper shufflers – have great power because the records enable the representation of reality.⁶⁹ Thus they control reality. This is true especially for the paper shufflers who have entered the digital world. In the words of the philosopher Albert Borgmann, paper archives contain information *about reality* and information *for shaping reality*.⁷⁰ The first is information *about* something, for example a report, the second is information with which one can make something, for example a recipe, or a plan. These two are not yet information *as reality*, that is, information that coincides with or performs in reality. I will give you one of Borgmann's examples.⁷¹ The four words 'Bach's cantata nr. 10' (answering the question: what did they play?) are information *about* the cantata, but far removed from the musical performance itself. The score of that cantata (information *for reality*) contains about 164,000 bits, making the resolution approximately 900 times higher than the 176 bits that make up the phrase 'Bach's cantata nr. 10' when written down. The information density of the musical score, however, is nothing when compared to that of the performance as recorded on CD: 1.2 million bits (150 megabytes)! What the CD with the cantata produces is not something about or for Bach's music, it is the music itself.

What we see happening in the digital era is to some extent a sequel to the production and use of 'immutable and combinable mobiles' bringing faraway reality nearby and enabling control at a distance. Reality can be captured as digital information, and information *as reality* is combinable and mobile to a degree unimaginable by the traditional paper shufflers. But is the information stable? Borgmann does not deal with stability or archiving.

A digital document is variable and changeable, fluid and unstable.⁷² An original no longer exists because, intrinsically, each instantiation (on a medium, a screen or as a printout) is a representation performed by the operating system and the application software. We may try to reconstruct that information *as reality* **through** information *about* or *for* reality. The pudding can be reconstructed with the help of a gourmet's review *about* the pudding or the recipe *for* the pudding. But if no one **keeps** the information *about* and *for*, then we will never be able to cook the pudding again. Paper shufflers are becoming (re)constructors of digital records, enabling (re)discovery and (re)exploration of realities.

A starting point for rediscovery and re-exploration of the archived and the archiving world are the archival principles. These derive from the concept of the organic nature of records, presented in section 2 of the Dutch *Manual* of 1898. This concept is linked to the principle of provenance. 'The core idea is that an archive is not so much an arbitrary collection, but a whole that has arisen organically, originally even a 'living organism', which grows and changes with the organization that creates it.'⁷³ Nowadays, ICT enables new modes of collaborative work, greater flexibility, interactivity, and control in organisations. This blurs the relationship between record creator and record, because both their boundaries have become blurred. In e-business and e-government records are more and more created in a network with different partners contributing to the record, to the extent that it is difficult, even impossible, to attribute the record to any of the partnering creators.⁷⁴ To cope with this, Australians developed the concept of 'multiple provenance'. Chris Hurley is now proposing a theory of parallel provenance, allowing to identify two or more entities, residing in a different context, that establish the provenance of a record, even involved in different actions, for example creation and control.⁷⁵ The concept of parallel provenance also makes it possible to account for the creative contributions to record formation in the interactive dialogue between organisation and client, customer or citizen, to which I referred earlier when discussing the constructed nature of explorers' maps and journals. Records, as I said, are cultural texts shaped by their political and social context. To quote Stephen Lubar from the Smithsonian: 'Archives reflect and reinforce the power relationships of the institution that organises them; they represent not just a technological solution, but also an organizational solution. They document and carry out not only

knowledge and technique, but also culture and power.⁷⁶ This insight might be implied in a new reading of the Dutch *Manual's* concept of the organic nature of records. And if Muller, Feith and Fruin were alive, they might even subsume under the organic nature Jacques Derrida's famous statement 'the mutation in technology changes not simply the archiving process, but what is archivable – that is, the content of what has to be archived is changed by the technology.'⁷⁷ More difficult for the Dutch trio would be to acknowledge – as I did earlier in this paper – that archivists and recordkeepers are record creators, because they too contribute to the creation and recreation of the record. Record professionals shape and reshape the context, the structure, the form and thereby the meaning of records and archives throughout the records continuum. They *have* to, because in the digital age records cannot be left alone, they require, as Margaret Hedstrom once said, life-support systems that are evolving constantly and that force interventions by the recordkeeper. Still, I do not believe that this entails a paradigmatic change of the archival principles of provenance and original order, or the concept of the organic nature of records. What it does entail is redesigning our methodologies in order to adapt our practices to the digital realities. As I said before, the Hartog plate and the De Vlamingh plate are 'at first sight, identical objects but because of their contexts and contents they are very different in meaning and significance'. In the digital age we will be constantly required to assess the meaning and significance of seemingly identical digital objects carrying information. We will continue to be – more than any other profession – specialists of and contributors to the contexts of record creation, their use and abuse, constructing, reconstructing and even deconstructing the archive. The archive is never closed and never complete – the archive is a Flying Dutchman sailing outside time and space, never resting, never arriving at its final shore.

Endnotes

¹ An abridged version of this paper was presented as a keynote address at the Annual Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists *Archives: Discovery and Exploration*, Perth, 8 August 2008. Most of the research for this paper was done while staying at Monash University (Faculty of Information Technology).

² Jan Ernst Heeres, *The Part Borne By the Dutch in the Discovery of Australia, 1606-1765*, Luzac, London, 1899, available at <<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks05/0501231h.html>>, accessed 20 November 2009; Andrew Sharp, *The Discovery of Australia*, Clarendon

Press, Oxford, 1963; Willem CH Robert, *The Explorations, 1696–1697, of Australia By Willem De Vlamingh; Extracts From the Two Log-Books Concerning the Voyage to and Explorations on the Coast of Western Australia and From Other Documents Relating to This Voyage*, Philo Press, Amsterdam, 1972; Willem CH Robert, *The Dutch Explorations, 1605–1756, of the North and Northwest Coast of Australia: Extracts From Journals, Log-Books and Other Documents Relating to These Voyages*, Philo Press, Amsterdam, 1973; Günter Schilder, *Australia Unveiled: The Share of the Dutch Navigators In the Discovery of Australia*, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Amsterdam, 1976; Günter Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land: Willem de Vlamingh 1696–1697*, Royal Australian Historical Society, Sydney, 1985, translated by C de Heer from the Dutch, first published 1976; Peter Sigmond and Lous H Zuiderbaan, *Dutch Discoveries of Australia: Shipwrecks, Treasures and Early Voyages Off the West Coast*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1979; Günter Schilder, 'New Holland: The Dutch Discoveries', in Glyndwr Williams and Alan Frost (eds), *Terra Australis to Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 83–115; Henrietta Drake-Brockman, *Voyage to Disaster*, revised edition with an introduction by Frank Broeze, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1995; Philipp Playford, *Voyage of Discovery to Terra Australis by Willem de Vlamingh in 1696–97*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, 1998; James Henderson, *Sent Forth a Dove. Discovery of the Duyfken*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1999; Mike Dash, *Batavia's Graveyard*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 2002; Evan McHugh, *1606: An Epic Adventure*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2006; Bruce Donaldson, 'The Dutch Contribution to the European Discovery of Australia', in Nonja Peters (ed.), *The Dutch Down Under, 1606–2006*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, WA, 2006, pp. 4–25.

³ One finds his name spelled as Hartogs or Hartogsz (both meaning son of Hartog). I follow the current Australian spelling of Hartog, see the Western Australian Museum webpage on Hartog at <<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/DHI-site/hdv-01.html>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁴ My translation: 1616, on the 25th of October is here arrived the ship de Eendracht of Amsterdam; the upper-merchant Gillis Miebais, from Luick; schipper Dirck Hatichs, from Amsterdam; on the 27th do. set sail again for Bantam; the under-merchant Jan [Stins]; the uppersteersman Pieter [Doekes from Bil]. Anno 1616.

The words between brackets are no longer readable, but I have interpolated them, using the De Vlamingh journal in Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 134 (which, however, has Dirck Hartoog instead of the clearly readable Dirck Hatichs). Sigmond and Zuiderbaan (p. 36) and Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land* (p. 223) read Mibais; Stins; Doekes van Bil. Playford (p. 57 and endnote 69) reads Dookes van Bill.

Playford has not found a place name Bil, but I believe Bil is Bille (Luxemburg), not too far from Luick (Liège) where the upper-merchant came from.

'D'Eendracht van Amsterdam' can mean 'from Amsterdam', but also 'of Amsterdam', since the ship had been built by the Amsterdam chamber of the VOC, see Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 5.

See also <http://www.nederland-australie2006.nl/geschiedenis/au/html/ontdekkingsreizigers_scheepsreizen2.html>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁵ We do not have the original records of the Duyfken voyage, but only references to their contents in later reports and sailing instructions. See my 'Mapping for Societal Memory: From Duyfken to Digital', lecture given at a public function celebrating

the arrival of the Duyfken, Customs House, Brisbane, 27 July 2006, available at <<http://www.australiaonthemap.org.au/content/view/44/59/>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁶ On the map by Keppeler and Eeckebrecht (1630) we find Dirck Hartogs ree, F Houtmans aebroleous and Dedells lant, available at <<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks05/0501231h.html#maps-06>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁷ Heeres, p. 20 (my translation from the Dutch edition, available at <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17450/17450-h/dutch/contents.html>>, accessed 20 November 2009). See McHugh 2006, p. 50. Between 1606 and 1756, there were some 30 recorded Dutch contacts with or explorations of the Australian coastline; fewer than half of these are known to have conferred placenames: J Tent, 'Geographic and linguistic reflections on Moent and Dubbelde Ree: Two of Australia's first recorded placenames', *Geographical Research*, vol. 44, 2006, pp. 372–85, available at <<http://www.anps.org.au/documents/GeogRes.pdf>>, accessed 20 November 2009. See also Michael McCarthy, 'Dutch Place Names in Australia', in Peters (ed.), *The Dutch Down Under, 1606–2006*, pp. 26–33.

⁸ An example of a Dutch-linked placename is Camperdown (New South Wales), after the naval battle off the Dutch coast near Camperduin (1797), while Camperdown (Victoria) was named after the naval commander at the Battle of Camperdown, Adam Duncan, who was made Viscount Duncan of Camperdown and of Lundie. His son was created Earl of Camperdown.

⁹ Simon Leys, *The Wreck of the Batavia and Prosper*, Black, Melbourne, 2005, p. 7.

¹⁰ Dash, p. 259; Rupert Gerritsen, *And Their Ghosts May Be Heard*, Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth, 1994; Rupert Gerritsen, 'The Evidence for Cohabitation Between Indigenous Australians, Marooned Dutch Mariners and VOC Passengers', in Peters (ed.), *The Dutch Down Under, 1606–2006*, pp. 38–55, here p. 40.

¹¹ Gerritsen; Nonja Peters, 'Too Late to Set the "Wreckord" Straight?', in Peters (ed.), *The Dutch Down Under, 1606–2006*, pp. 34–7, here p. 35.

¹² See the *Finding Sydney* website at <<http://www.findingsydney.com>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

¹³ Eric Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives', *Archival Science*, vol. 1, 2001, pp. 143–55.

¹⁴ Angelika Menne-Haritz, 'Access: The Reformulation Of An Archival Paradigm', *Archival Science*, vol. 1, 2001, pp. 57–82; Paul Macpherson, 'Theory, Standards and Implicit Assumptions: Public Access to Post-Current Government Records', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2002, pp. 6–17.

¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, 'Truth and Politics', in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977, pp. 227–64, here pp. 238–39.

¹⁶ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*; Playford, *Voyage of Discovery*.

¹⁷ Playford, p. 85.

¹⁸ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 125; Playford, pp. 86–8.

¹⁹ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, pp. 58, 166.

²⁰ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 4; PJAN Rietbergen, 'Witsen's World. Nicolaas Witsen between the Dutch East India Company and the Republic of Letters', in J van Goor (ed.), *All Of One Company: The VOC In Biographical Perspective: Essays In Honour of Prof. M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, under the auspices of the Centre for the History of European Expansion, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Hes, Utrecht, 1986*, pp. 121–34, here p. 127. The VOC

was eager to catch natives – preferably boys and girls – who (as one instruction reads) might be raised in Batavia and be used later in the newly-charted lands, as interpreters and guides. In 1636, however, the VOC instructed the schipper ‘You will not carry off with you any natives against their will, but if a small number of them should be found willing to come hither of their own accord, you will grant them passage’, see Heeres, p. 66.

²¹ Playford, p. 94.

²² The earliest observations were made by the Duyfken crew in 1606, see note 4. See also Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Book and University of Otago Press, London, New York and Dunedin, 1999, p. 80 about Abel Tasman’s observations of the Maori.

²³ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 211.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 84–9, 210; Playford, pp. 20–5.

²⁷ Stephen D. Hopper, ‘South-Western Australia, Cinderella of the World’s Temperate Floristic Regions’, *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine*, vol. 20, no. 2, May 2003, pp. 101–26, here p. 105. The drawings (possibly by Victor Victorsz) of fish which were in Witsen’s collection have not been located, see Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 218.

²⁸ *Philosophical Transaction*, vol. 20, 1698, pp. 361–2; Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, pp. 221–2.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 159; Rietbergen, ‘Witsen’s World’; Klaas van Berkel, *Citaten uit het boek der natuur*, Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 1998, pp. 142–6, available at <http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/berk003cita01_01/berk003cita01_01_0007.htm>, accessed 20 November 2009.

³⁰ Harold J Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007, p. 225.

³¹ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, pp. 223–7; Playford, *Voyage of discovery*, pp. 55–8; JP Sigmond, ‘Two Pewter Plates’, in Leo Akveld, Frank Broeze, Femme Gaastra et al (eds), *In het Kielzog. Maritiem-historische studies aangeboden aan Jaap R. Bruijn bij zijn vertrek als hoogleraar zeegechiedenis aan de Universiteit Leiden*, De Bataafse Leeuw, Amsterdam, 2003, pp. 245–56; Peter Sigmond, ‘Cultural Heritage On a Piece Of Pewter’, in *Dutch Connections 2006: 400 Years of Australian–Dutch Maritime Links 1606–2006*, Australian National Maritime Museum, Perth, 2006, pp. 72–85.

³² Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, p. 68 mentions tablets left by De Vlamingh on the Tristan da Cunha Islands, Saint Paul and Amsterdam Island, but regarding the first I have not found a reference in the journals, see *ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

³³ Sigmond, ‘Two Pewter Plates’, p. 255.

³⁴ Schwartz, p. 110.

³⁵ See the Western Australia Museum’s webpage on Dirk Hartog’s Plate at <<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/DHI-site/hdv-01.html>>, accessed 20 November 2009, and at the Rijksmuseum website at <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/aria/aria_assets/NG-NM-825?lang=en>, accessed 20 November 2009.

A copper replica (circa 1950) of the De Vlamingh plate is in the National Library of Australia.

- ³⁶ Sigmond, 'Two Pewter Plates' considers the Hartog plate as a 'pewter letter' of which De Vlamingh was the recipient, and the Hartog plate was, as an incoming letter, part of De Vlamingh's archive. Playford, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 58, writes that the Dutch government 'has declined to follow the French example by returning the even more historic Dirck Hartog plate to Australia. However, the Dutch point of view can be readily understood, as the plate is such an important record of their role in the European discovery of the fifth continent, Australia.'
- ³⁷ Heeres, p. 20.
- ³⁸ See Ryan, p. 38.
- ³⁹ Heeres, p. 74.
- ⁴⁰ CMH Clark, *A History of Australia*, vol. 1, Melbourne University Press, 1963, p. 23.
- ⁴¹ 'The Dutch had, of course, only been interested in Australia in so far as it might have something of mercantile value to offer them. Taking possession of newfound territories for the fatherland was never of concern to them ...', Donaldson, p. 23.
- ⁴² JB Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge, and Power', in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays On The Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use Of Past Environments*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1988; JB Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1989, pp. 1-20. Both articles have been reprinted in JB Harley, *The New Nature of Maps*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2001, pp. 51-82 and 149-68. On the importance of Harley for archives see Joan M Schwartz, 'Negotiating The Visual Turn: New Perspectives On Images and Archives', *American Archivist*, vol. 67, 2004, pp. 107-22, here pp. 115-19.
- ⁴³ Dennis Cosgrove, 'Mapping/Cartography', in David Atkinson et al (eds), *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts*, Tauris, London and New York, 2005, pp. 27-40, here p. 30.
- ⁴⁴ Simon Featherstone, *Postcolonial Cultures*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2005, p. 205.
- ⁴⁵ Verne Harris, "'A World Whose Horizon Can Only Be Justice': Toward a Politics of Recordmaking', in Verne Harris, *Archives and Justice. A South African Perspective*, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2007, pp. 253-68.
- ⁴⁶ John Van Maanen and Brian T Pentland, 'Cops And Auditors: The Rhetoric of Records', in Sim B Sitkin and Robert J Bies (eds), *The Legalistic Organization*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1994, p. 53. Van Maanen and Pentland's findings and comparable research by others have been superbly woven in a general recordkeeping context by Ciaran B Trace, 'What Is Recorded Is Never Simply "What Happened": Record Keeping In Modern Organizational Culture', *Archival Science*, vol. 2, 2002, pp. 137-59.
- ⁴⁷ Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 54.
- ⁴⁸ Eric Ketelaar, 'Archives as Spaces of Memory', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 29, 2008, pp. 9-27.
- ⁴⁹ Gavan McCarthy and Tim Sherratt, 'Understanding the Role of Record-Keeping in Scientific Practice', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 24, 1996, refer to ethnomethodology. I believe that Elizabeth Yakel was the first in archival science to use results of ethnomethodological research, in her thesis *Recordkeeping in Radiology: The Relationships Between Activities and Records in Radiological Processes*, 1997; see also Elizabeth Yakel, 'The Way Things Work: Procedures, Processes, and Organizational Records', *American*

Archivist, vol. 59, 1996, pp. 454–64, here p. 458; Trace, 'What is Recorded'; Geoffrey Yeo, 'Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects', *American Archivist*, vol. 71, 2008, pp. 118–43, here pp. 128–29.

⁵⁰ Bernadine Dodge, 'Across the Great Divide: Archival Discourse and the (Re)Presentation of the Past In Late-Modern Society', *Archivaria* 53, 2002, pp. 16–30, here p. 19; Dorothy E Smith, 'Textually mediated social organization', in Dorothy E Smith, *Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling*, Routledge, London and New York, 1990, pp. 209–24; Annelise Riles (ed.), *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2006.

⁵¹ Verne Harris, 'A Shaft of Darkness: Derrida in the Archive', in Carolyn Hamilton (ed.), *Refiguring the Archive*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2002, pp. 61–81, here p. 65.

⁵² Brien Brothman, 'Archives, Life Cycles, and Death Wishes: A Helical Model of Record Formation', *Archivaria* 61, 2006, pp. 235–69.

⁵³ Mark Poster, *What's the Matter With the Internet?*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2001, p. 188.

⁵⁴ Jay D Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, second edition, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2001, p. 112.

⁵⁵ Ketelaar, 'Archives as Spaces of Memory'.

⁵⁶ Schilder, *Voyage to the Great South Land*, pp. 14–15, 58.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 73, endnote 1.

⁵⁸ See ICA webpage at <<http://www.kualalumpur2008.ica.org/en/sessions/archives-transition>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁵⁹ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1987, p. 227.

⁶⁰ 'Alhier is in 't plat met groote neersticheijt en vlijt ontworpen ende op wassende graden gearteert alle de seijlagien ende nieuwe gevonden landen', FC Wieder, *Monumenta Cartographica*, vol. 4, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1932, p. 138 and plate 95.

⁶¹ John Law, 'On the Methods of Long-Distance Control: Vessels, Navigation and the Portuguese Route to India', in John Law (ed.), *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley, 1986, pp. 234–63.

⁶² Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 223.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 234.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 258.

⁶⁵ See the Institute of Netherlands History website at <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DeVoc.GeneraleMissiven1610-1795/index_html_en>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁶⁶ Bruno Latour, 'Visualization and Cognition: Thinking with Eyes and Hands', *Knowledge and Society*, vol. 6, 1986, p. 28.

⁶⁷ Latour, *Science in Action*, p. 255.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Geoffrey Yeo, 'Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations', *American Archivist*, vol. 70, 2007, pp. 315–43.

⁷⁰ Albert Borgmann, *Holding on to Reality: The Nature of Information at the Turn of the Millennium*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1999.

⁷¹ Borgmann, pp. 180–82.

⁷² Eric Ketelaar, 'Writing on Archiving Machines', in Sonja Neef, José van Dijck, and Eric Ketelaar (eds), *Sign here! Handwriting in the Age of New Media*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2006, pp. 183–95.

⁷³ Peter Horsman, Eric Ketelaar, and Theo Thomassen, 'New Respect for the Old Order: The Context of the Dutch Manual', *American Archivist*, vol. 66, 2003, pp. 249–70.

⁷⁴ Helen Tibbo, 'Creating, Managing, and Archiving Records: Changing Roles and Realities in the Digital Era', in Niklaus Bütikofer, Hans Hofman, and Seamus Ross (eds), *Managing and Archiving Records in the Digital Era: Changing Professional Orientations*, hier + jetzt, Verlag für Kultur und Geschichte, Baden, 2006, pp. 15–30, here pp. 21–3.

⁷⁵ Chris Hurley, 'Parallel Provenance: (1) What if Anything is Archival Description?', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 33, no. 1, May 2005, pp. 110–45.

⁷⁶ S Lubar, 'Information Culture and the Archival Record', *American Archivist*, vol. 62, 1999, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, translated by Eric Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1996, p. 17 and Jacques Derrida, 'Archive Fever. A Seminar ...', in Carolyn Hamilton (ed.), *Refiguring the Archive*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2002, p. 46. S Lubar, 'Information Culture and the Archival Record', *American Archivist*, vol. 62, 1999, p. 16.