Challenges in the Archives of the Afrikaans Language Museum, Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa: a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

All archives, irrespective of size, have their challenges. The archival collection of the unique Afrikaans Language Museum, grew over 43 years and has its fair share of challenges. The archival project commenced in late 2017 and was completed by the middle of 2018. This article illustrates how it commenced, progressed, the decisions taken and evaluating the project after completion. To understand the nature and scope of the work it is necessary to understand the founding history of the museum as this constitutes a large part of the collection. Over a period of time, many curators worked on the collection with varying results. Challenges included the following: the nature of the records, non-current administrative records vs archival collections, original documents vs copies, physical condition, *respect des fonds,* the problematic retrieval system and evaluation of the current database, identification of unknown material, sorting and arrangement, compilation of finding aids, questions around the handling of photographs, drawings, publications and oversized material. Policies and procedures received attention. The ever present issues of time and budget constraints had to be dealt with.

Key words: language museum archives, Afrikaans, South Africa, challenges, preparation for digitisation, case study

Le sfide nell'Archivio del Museo della lingua Afrikaans di Parl, Western Cape, Sud Africa: un caso di studio

SINTESI

Tutti gli archivi, indipendentemente dalle dimensioni, offrono delle sfide. La raccolta archivistica dell'unico Museo della lingua Afrikaans, è cresciuta in oltre 43 anni e presenta la sua giusta quota di sfide. Il progetto Archivio storico è iniziato nel tardo 2017 ed è stato completato entro la metà del 2018. Questo articolo illustra come ha iniziato, come ha progredito, le decisioni prese e la valutazione del progetto dopo il completamento. Per comprendere la natura e la portata del lavoro è necessario comprendere la storia fondante del museo, dato che questo costituisce una grande parte della collezione. Per un periodo di tempo, molti curatori hanno lavorato sulla raccolta con risultati variabili. Le sfide hanno incluso quanto segue: la natura dei documenti, i fondi archivistici dei documenti amministrativi non correnti, le copie dei documenti originali, la condizione fisica, il rispetto del principio di provenienza, il problematico sistema di recupero e valutazione dei database correnti, l'identificazione di materiale sconosciuto, l'ordinamento e la sistemazione, la compilazione di strumenti di ricerca, le problematiche circa la gestione di fotografie, disegni, pubblicazioni e materiale di grandi dimensioni. Politiche e procedure hanno ricevuto attenzione, e hanno dovuto essere affrontati i sempre presenti problemi di vincoli di tempo e budget.

Parole chiave: archivi del Museo della lingua, afrikaans, Sud Africa, sfide, preparazione per la digitalizzazione, caso di studio

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Izzivi v arhivih muzeja Afrikaans Language Museum and Monument: študija primera

IZVLEČEK

Vsi arhivi, ne glede na velikost, imajo svoje izzive. Arhivska zbirka edinstvenega jezikovnega muzeja afriških jezikov je rasla več kot 43 let in ima svojevrstne izzive. Arhivski projekt se je pričel konec leta 2017 in je bil dokončan do sredine leta 2018. Prispevek prikazuje, kako se je projekt začel, razvijal, katere in kakšne odločitve so bile sprejete med potekom ter končno oceno po zaključku projekta. Da bi razumeli naravo in obseg dela, je treba razumeti zgodovino ustanovitve muzeja, ki je velik del zbirke. V določenem časovnem obdobju so številni kuratorji delali na zbirki z različnimi rezultati. Izzivi so vključevali naslednje: naravo zapisov, preteklo administrativno gradivo v primerjavi z arhivskimi zbirkami, izvirni dokumenti ali kopije, fizično stanje gradiva, *respect des fonds*, problematični sistem za iskanje in vrednotenje sedanje baze podatkov, identifikacija neznanega gradiva, sortiranje in ureditev, priprava iskal in iskalnih pripomočkov, vprašanje ravnanja s fotografijami, risbami, publikacijami in fizično (pre) velikim gradivom. Potrebno je bilo nameniti pozornost politiki in postopku delovanja. Prav tako je bilo potrebno obravnavati vedno večje časovne težave in proračunske omejitve.

Ključne besede: arhivi jezikovnega muzeja, Afričani, Južna Afrika, izzivi, priprava na digitalizacijo, študija primera

1 Introduction

The archival collection of this unique museum, grew over many years, especially after 1975 when the museum was officially opened. There are records dating back to the mid-19th century, as well as significant records associated with the First Afrikaans Language Movement (1875) and Second Afrikaans Language Movement (1906).

Towards the end of 2017 the services of a professional archivist was required for the management of the paper based collection of the Afrikaans Language Museum, Paarl, in preparation for a digitisation project of the paper based collection.

The scope of work as per the tender document included the following:

To:

- Determine the scope, variety and condition of the paper based collection in the archive;
- Identify the problem areas and challenges with regards to the storage and the overall condition of the collection and submit suggestions with regards to preventive conservation;
- Identify items that require conservation/restoration;
- Establish the correct order in the archival collection, establish the storage requirements of documents, ensure that all documents are numbered and that the numbers correspond to the existing numbers in the database, include exact locations of items located in archive in the database. All documents must be indexed, categorised as it must be easily accessible to researchers. The "respect des fonds" principles must be applied as well as the "sanctity of the original order";
- Every collection must have a separate inventory;
- A list of argivalia must be compiled and should include the following information:
  - the name of the group and code if applicable
  - location
  - extent of the collection or group (indicated in linear meters)
  - the specific search method and the reference for example inventory, database, etc.
  - the period covered by every group
- Prepare an archival policy for the collection as well as the accompanying procedure document;
- The service provider must have, apart from formal qualifications and experience, At least 5 years practical experience of work in an archive with knowledge of museums and libraries; a knowledge of the history of the Afrikaans language;

Pétria de Vaal-Senekal (assisted by Marietjie Putter) of *De Vaal & De Vaal Information Brokers cc* was appointed during November 2017 to implement an archival retrieval system and archival plan at the relatively small museum archives. During the first assessment, most processes and conditions appeared to be functional. It was, however deceptive, and it was decided to pay attention to a number of aspects in this archive in order to improve the functionality thereof.

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Together with the Museum Curator, Chantelle de Kock, the project commenced in earnest in early 2018. Challenges were experienced in a number of areas and as the project progressed, solutions were found and decisions were taken to improve the system in the archive.

2 Background of the Afrikaanse Taalmuseum (Afrikaans Language Museum)

The Afrikaans Language Museum and Monument (hereafter referred to as the ATM) in Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa, is one entity although geographically separate.

The museum, situated in the centre of town, was inaugurated on 14 August 1975, a 100 years after the founding of the Association of True Afrikaners or Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners (hereafter called GRA.) The museum is located in the beautifully restored house that belonged to Gideon Jozua Malherbe, well-known wine farmer and business man of the Paarl, who built the Late Georgian Style house in approximately 1860.

Photo 1: The Afrikaans Language Museum

The purpose of the GRA was to promote Afrikaans as a written language (sought recognition for the language as one of the official languages in the country) and particularly to translate the Bible into Afrikaans.

According to Nienaber *(1959),* a Professor in Afrikaans Literature, the person who can be considered as "the father of Afrikaans', Arnoldus Pannevis (1838 - 1884), was a Dutchman by birth. He was well versed in the classical and various modern European languages. As a teacher at the Paarl Gymnasium (a local school), he had considerable influence on one of his pupils, the later Reverend SJ du Toit who was a friend of Gideon Malherbe. Du Toit's eyes were opened to the existence and utility of the Afrikaans

Language. Pannevis indirectly set the First Afrikaans Movement in motion by means of his letters advocating a translation of the Bible into Afrikaans addressed to the *De Zuid-Afrikaan* (Dutch Newspaper at the Cape) (1874) and then to the British and Foreign Bible Society (1874).

Pannevis was supported by another man from The Netherlands, CP Hoogenhout, who wrote and published in the so-called Afrikaans language (Nienaber, 1959). Pannevis realised that the spoken language was much different than Dutch and that not all the Afrikaans speakers could understand the Dutch Bible any more.

Although Pannevis was not present at the founding of the GRA, one can say that he paved the way. Malherbe, who's house is now the museum, was one of the eight founding members of the GRA, which was established in the dining room of this house on 14 August 1875. The purpose of the Association was to establish Afrikaans as a formal language. Exactly 100 years later, on 14 August 1975, the museum opened its doors to the public. The building was declared a national monument in the same year.

The other founder members of the GRA was the well-known Paarl Reverend SJ du Toit, CP Hoogenhout, P Malherbe (Gideon's son), DF du Toit (known as Daantjie Dokter), DF du Toit (known as Oom Lokomotief), SG du Toit and A Ahrbeck.

An interesting aspect of the Afrikaans language, is that one of its earliest versions is to be found in the so-called "koples-boeke" (exercise books) dating back to the second half of the 19th century. Muslim children, who only understood Afrikaans, re-wrote parts of the Koran in the Arabic alphabet. New symbols were even designed to write the Afrikaans sound phonetically. One of the well-known teachers that came to the Cape in the 1860's, was Abu Bakr Effendi. His book, "Bayaan-ud-diyn" was printed in 1877 - the very first Afrikaans publication in the Arabic alphabet.

Dr Dirk Kotzé from the University of Stellenbosch and the first curator and head of the museum, was actively involved in the "Taalmonumentkomitee" since 1964 and started collecting an extensive collection of Africana texts on the First Afrikaans Language Movement of 1875 amongst others. This is housed in the archive in the museum. Researchers can consult the early documents in a reading room in the museum on request. These documents are in a vault with, amongst other specifications, temperature and humidity control *(Van Zyl & Rossouw, 2016)*.

The ATM is a public entity governed by a council which is appointed by the national Department of Arts and Culture. This Department provides an annual subsidy and the ATM generates additional revenue through sponsorships, donations, entrance fees, facility hire, product sales, and events.

The ATM strives for all South Africans to appreciate Afrikaans. In this spirit, the ATM works hard to encourage and support Afrikaans among the youth and non-mother-tongue speakers.

"The institution's main functions are to gather relevant material and information; conduct research on Afrikaans; portray the origin, development, use and growth of Afrikaans through exhibitions, lectures and articles; offer educational programmes, guided tours and cultural activities; and to preserve the ATM's cultural history heritage sites, as well as the legacy of Afrikaans itself" *(Die Afrikaanse Taalmuseum en -monument, 2018, The Official Website of Department of Arts and Culture)*.

The Afrikaanse Taalmonument (Afrikaans Language Monument), situated on the foothills of Paarl Mountain, is a well-known landmark and tourist attraction.

It took more than thirty years before the vision to erect a language monument finally materialised. A competition was launched in 1964 and the winning design by the architect Jan van Wijk, was chosen. His design was a symbolic structure (a structure in concrete in the Brutalism style) with meaningful architecture based on the environment and the work of two well known Afrikaans writers. The monument was inaugurated on 10 October 1975. The monument portrays the growth of Afrikaans (one of the youngest languages in the world) and gives recognition to the roots of the language from the different continents: Africa, Europe and East Asia. The first initiative for the erection of a language monument in Paarl dates back to 14 August 1942. This was at a commemoration of the founding of the "Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners" or "GRA" (Association of True Afrikaners).

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Photo 2: The Afrikaans Language Monument

3 Challenges and problems

All archives, irrespective of size, have their challenges and problems. Although not purely private, the questions and solutions around this archive can serve as an example for similar archives - especially museum archives.

3.1 Where to start

It was decided to start working through all the records (approximately 15 linear metres in total). These are archival material found in boxes only. Soon it was realised that certain records appeared to be in a good order, due to the fact that they were numbered and packed in boxes. However, while browsing through some of these, it was apparent that the numbering system used was problematic and made the retrieval of documents very difficult.

There were certain collections clearly recognizable, others not.

A number of stand-alone boxes (in all shapes and formats) were found. These boxes were in most cases marked: "to sort" or "unknown" or "miscellaneous".

Soon it was realised that an intensive sorting process needed to be done. All the records were browsed through and evaluated on a high level only - not too much depth. This process created context within which the other tasks could be done.

3.2 Predecessors' work

It was noticed that previous staff members and/or contractors spent a lot of time on the documents. Collections were created, either by means of the body that created the records, by theme or by the name of a person or family.

At a certain point in time, all documents that were considered as "archival" received an X-number. This is opposed to the museum artefacts that received an A-number. (More about the numbers below.)

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The Museum implemented an MS Access database a number of years ago, developed for the acquisition purposes of the museum. On this database, records, photographs, publications, artefacts and audio-visual material were captured.

A lot of time must have gone into this, as some records, e.g. old letters, must have been read in order to give a description and allocate keywords on the database. One huge problem was discovered when investigating the database: it only mentioned "archives" where it states a location. No shelf number, no volume or box number, no file numbers were captured. In all instances it only mentions an item number that could be located anywhere in the archives.

This resulted in non-retrievability, unless one pages through the contents of a certain box where it is presumed a specific item could possibly be kept. This was one of the frustrations of the new curator.

3.3 Nature of the records

3.3.1 Institutional non-current administrative records versus archival collection

It was soon established that there was not always a differentiation made between institutional-generated records and those records donated or acquired in another way.

It is a well-known fact that, especially in an organisation like a museum, all records, irrespective of where they originated, are mixed. Museum staff are not always qualified in the archival profession, therefore records are sometimes treated in the same way as artefacts.

It is a known fact that Archives, Museums and Libraries overlap in terms of certain functions. However, the lack of knowledge in terms of the application of archival principles in a museum archive, can cause a lot of damage.

The first thing that is usually done incorrectly in a museum archive, is that institutionally created records are sometimes mixed with those received from donors or acquired in another way. The museum staff are not to be blamed - it is a matter of a different approach in the archival world.

Some larger institutionally created records in this museum archive, included the records pertaining to the planning and inauguration of the Afrikaans Taalmonument and the planning and inauguration of the Museum. These records were stored separately, which was a great advantage to the project.

Other records were, for instance stored by theme. In this case, the *respect des fonds* was not honored, which resulted in a mixture of institutional records and those received from other sources.

3.3.2 Original documents versus copies / physical condition

During the evaluation process a mixture of original, sometimes very brittle documents were found between photocopies, published material, photographs, etc. Folders and containers were not of good quality and did not protect the records.

There was an attempt previously to wrap individual items in acid free tissue paper, but in certain instances it caused more harm than protecting the items. Items were individually inspected and the tissue paper removed where necessary.

With the arrival of new folders and boxes, material was removed from the old folders (if any) and boxes and placed in new folders and containers. A roll of polypropylene was purchased for the purpose of creating pockets for brittle and other valuable items that needed additional protection.

3.4 Order of the records - respect des fonds or themes?

With their *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* in 1898, the Dutch Archivists, Muller, Feith and Fruin provided a detailed set of guidelines for the arrangement of records emphasising the principle of *respect des fonds* (principle of provenance).

In the physical world of items, folders, boxes, and shelves, the archive must be sorted, ordered, and stored sequentially in space *(Bailey, 2013)*.

The principle of provenance and accompanying sanctity of the original order was kept in mind when approaching the methodology in the museum archives. The well-known archivist, Schellenberg *(in: Stapleton, 1985:31)* stated that "the principle serves to protect the value of evidence in archives. The content of individual documents that are the product of activity can be fully understood only in the context with other documents that relate to the same activity. Therefore the way they were brought together is significant".

This principle was fairly easy to apply in the institutionally created records mentioned above. The order was previously somehow disrupted to a certain extent, due to sorting and arrangement attempts by staff members. Research on the functions of the institution, as well as the records themselves, guided us to follow the *respect des fonds* principles. These collections are the biggest in the archives.

Smaller "collections" were merely named after a theme, a person or a family. In a box or boxes with, for instance a person's name, there could be a variety of items. An example is the Arnoldus Pannevis collection. In this collection are to be found: work written / created by himself (either original and/or copies); work written about him (published and unpublished) as well as a variety of other documents e.g. sketches, receipts and even blotting paper that belonged to Pannevis.

The origin of many items in this collection is unknown. The decision was taken that the documents will just be sorted in a logic way and listed on the inventory. This would ensure easy retrieval.

In all instances, whether the principle of provenance was followed or not, the proposed digitisation of the collections was kept in mind.

3.5 Evaluating the existing finding mechanism/s (database)

The existing database was investigated. A number of questions were compiled and discussed with the developer. Concerns included the following:

The database is the only finding mechanism and has a lot of loopholes - on both the technical and intellectual side (data capturing / indexing).

Inconsistency in the numbering of items: this includes a difference in the number on the database and the number that appears on an item.

When a series of numbers appear in the "Item ID" field, an item number within that series cannot be searched, e.g. DOKA 13/7-13/31. When the number 13/8 is entered in a search, it will not be found.

Different sets of reference numbers are used.

Data capturing/ indexing is not standardised. There are no rules in this regard.

Location of the actual items are problematic, as the only "address" indicated on the database is: "archives". No shelf number, no volume number, no file or folder number.

There are two different databases. The one was meant for artefacts, the other for archival material. Somehow, data capturing was not always done in the relevant database and a certain item is only to be found in the database where it is not expected to be found. This results in time-consuming searches for something simple.

It was decided to keep the database as is. Items that were properly described, can be searched and a reference number be found. These references correspond with the "old" reference numbers indicated on all inventories, that enables easier retrieval.

3.6 Identification of unknown material

In this museum archive, a lot of unidentified items were found. Some had notes, that assisted in identification. Some did not have any notes. The following example was a break-through in the identification of items:

A container was found with the name: "small books - to be identified and sorted". It was soon clear that these so-called "books" were not published in any way. On most of them were notes to say that they came from a specific family and short notes on what they are. They were notebooks and diaries amongst others.

There were two tiny notebooks that haven't been identified at all. With the knowledge in hand of the sorting and arrangement of the Pannevis Collection, the archivist immediately saw a similarity in the handwriting. Upon further investigation it was noticed that the handwriting was indeed the same when compared with notebooks in his arranged collection. The challenge was that the letters / words in these two little notebooks, were minute.

The one book contained quotes from *inter alia* Bilderdijk and Shirach, the other one Bible verses. When working through the Pannevis Collection, it was clear that he was a keen reader of the dutch poet Willem Bilderdijk's work - therefore the quotes from Bilderdijk.

The covers of these little books are also similar to the covers of other A5 notebooks in the bigger collection.

There was no indication whatsoever where these books came from. It was easy to add them to the bigger collection. The "Father" of Afrikaans' collection in the museum was enriched with the adding of these two little books. Pannevis paved the way for the translation of the Bible in Afrikaans (1933) and also the acknowledgement of Afrikaans as an official language in 1925 due to the hard word of the GRA men.

3.7 Sorting and arrangement and the compiling finding aids

"Finding aids are the signposts which lead the archivist and the researcher to the information they are seeking about or from archives. They come in many different formats, have diverse purposes and a variety of names. They reflect the variety and complexity of the holdings they control. Finding aids may range from a general overview of the archives' entire holdings to descriptions of individual collections and to specific material of interest within items" *(Pederson, 1987: 160)*.

It was decided that inventories have to be compiled for every collection in the archive. The sorting process included an overview of the whole archives, a rough sort and a detailed sort. It also included the removal of harmful items like paper clips, staples, pins, string and rubber bands. Where applicable, pages were unfolded and uncurled. It was ensured that items were as flat as possible without changing the order. Items that need special care were identified and mentioned in the comments section on the inventory, in order to be removed for conservation at a later stage.

After this the inventory for every collection was compiled. The following was kept in mind:

The arrangement of the main and sub-series in the inventory was arranged in conformity with the original organisation of the archives. The inventory reflects the arrangement of the archives. The headings according to which the series and sub-series are described are extremely important. Care was taken to keep the headings as short as possible *(De Vaal & De Vaal, 2017:20)*.

The inventory made provision for the following:

Name of collection / archives group
Source code
Volume number
File / Folder number
Item number
Old reference number
Description
Amount of pages
Comments
Period (date/s)

These were completed as far as possible for the sake of clarity and completeness. The old reference number is extremely important, as many (not all) of the items have received numbers before. Some have two to three different item numbers written on it in pencil.

The inventories now give control over all the paper-based archival collections and serve as a proper finding aid.

While compiling the inventory, an important decision needed to be taken: on what level does description take place?

The nature of the collection, its origin and the type of record, guided us here. For example: When there was a folder with minutes of meetings, the folder was described on that level. Individual items within this folder will be described by means of metadata during the digitisation process.

When a unique handwritten notebook or poem (for example) was found, descriptions on item level took place.

The decision on level of description was an ongoing process throughout this phase and constant evaluation of the items and/or folders needed to be done. Folders were created where necessary.

All folders were numbered with the source code, the volume number in which it belongs, the file or folder number and, where applicable, a short description of the content on the folder.

Folders were carefully monitored - not to exceed a thickness of maximum 2.5 cm. The condition and type of records inside were considered at all times in order to provide maximum protection.

Special horizontally placed boxes, opening at the front, were used. Folders can easily be taken out of the boxes and inserted again. Inscriptions on folders are at the open side of the boxes. Boxes are marked with: source code, the volume number and the file / folder numbers only.

The List of Archivalia (general finding aid) provides a summary of all the archival collections in the Museum archives. This was compiled at the end of the project.

All records are now ready for digitisation.

3.8 Handling photographs, drawings, publications and other material [includes over-sized material]

It was decided to keep theme-related photographs within collections, e.g. photographs of the museum building were kept in this collection. The only photographs that were removed and placed into the separated photograph collection, are those about the GRA founders and their families.

Drawings, publications and other material were kept intact in the collections, as it enhances retrievability in this particular museum archives.

The photograph collection is relatively small and was sorted together with the museum curator, as some framed photographs are considered as artefacts. They, however, form all part of the photograph collection.

The photographs are in folders marked with the names of the person or families.

Any other over-sized material (e.g. scrap books) were lifted from a collection and put in a larger container. The address from where it was lifted is indicated on the large container (source code, volume number and folder number). It is also indicated on the outside flap of the box from where it was lifted as well as in the inventory.

3.9 Time and budget constraints

Time and budget constraints are always a challenge in any project like this. The amount of work exceeded our expectations, but, we managed to establish a proper archive with required finding aids using a bit more time.

Any archives have ongoing processes. In this instance, a museum staff member is numbering and counting pages for digitization purposes.

Polypropylene pockets still need to be made for certain items. The budget had to be kept in mind when purchasing containers and folders. This resulted in the purchasing of archival material that was not in all instances purely acid-free. However, we believe that we could compromise with the introduction of workable containers and folders that are still acceptable in the archival environment.

The archives also have an audio-visual collection and an Africana book collection. Museum staff is also busy with processes here.

3.10 Policies and Procedures

There were no policies and procedures for the museum archive. The only policies and procedures for the museum pertains to the museum collections (artefacts etc.).

A policy and accompanying procedure document has been written and handed to the curator for implementation.

Conclusion

The majority of the museum archives' work has been completed. As we know, the work of an archivist is never complete. Despite the problems and challenges experienced, the whole process went smooth and can we say that all archival material is not only retrievable, but also protected physically.

In the words of former South African Statesman, General Jan Smuts (1870 - 1950), lie a wealth of wisdom regarding the work of an archivist, as opposed to the historian and his usage of archival collections.

Smuts said the following in Hancock *(1956:17)*: "I have been thinking, too, about the terms of partnership between the historian and the archivist. On the face of it, this partnership seems so one-sided; the historian is such a selfish person, the archivist such a selfless one; the historian takes all the glory although he would have been altogether helpless without the work that the archivist has already done for him... I have shared the joy of recovering what might have been lost and making provision for its safe keeping. I have learnt something about the archivist's calling and the deep satisfaction it brings. Fame is not *his* spur, but something deeper, a loyal respect for the continuity and integrity of the human record. In his eyes, we historians must appear an ephemeral tribe. Historians come and go but an Archive goes on for ever."

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Pétria de VAAL-SENEKAL - Chantelle de KOCK - Marietjie PUTTER: Challenges in the Archives of the Afrikaans Language Museum, Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa: a Case Study, 195-205

SUMMARY

The authors of this article were constantly challenged with decision-making. Whether it be about the further use of the existing database, the keeping of old reference numbers, whether to apply the principle of provenance or not, the level of description in the inventories - all aspects of the archival work were dealt with. One thinks that a small archive like this, will be fairly easy and quick to do. The uniqueness and value of these records, however, required far more in-depth attention than was envisaged. Although time-consuming, we are happy to say that an archive has been establish for many purposes. The direct purpose was to prepare for digitization, other purposes include retrievability, having control over the archival collection and make it a user-friendly archive for future research. The authors realised that this project *per se* did not only serve a direct purpose for the Afrikaans Language Museum and its researchers, it also established a model for museum archives in South Africa - whether private or public. Unique principles and methods that were developed in the course of this project, can be implemented at other similar museum archives. What stood out during this process, is that a museum archives is much different from any other archives, in the sense that the archival collection supports the main functions and collections of the museum. All museums, whether big or small, have institutionally created records as well as those records that forms part of or support other museum collections or artefacts. The nature, aim and focus of a museum instructs the processes to be followed in the museum archives. These, together with archival principles such as the principle of provenance and the sanctity of the original order, have an influence on the somewhat different approach in a museum archives. The result of our work has already been tested in searches - all searches positive, documents can be retrieved and far less time is spent. We are thrilled to introduce this model to other museum archives in both the private and public sector - irrespective of the size of the museum and / or archives.