

# A Case Study of the Digital Translation of the Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek |Xam and !Kun Notebooks into *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*

F. Saptouw

**Abstract**—This paper will examine the digitization process of the |Xam and !Kun notebooks, authored by Lucy Lloyd, Dorothea Bleek and Wilhelm Bleek, and their collaborators |a!kunta, ||kabbo, ≠kasin, Dia!kwain, !kweiten ta ||ken, |han≠kass'o, !nanni, Tamme, |uma, and Da during the 19th century. Detail will be provided about the status of the archive, the creation of the digital archive and selected research projects linked to the archive. The Digital Bleek and Lloyd project is an example of institutional collaboration by the University of Cape Town, University of South Africa, Iziko South African Museum, the National Library of South Africa and the Western Cape Provincial Archives and Records Service. The contemporary value of the archive will be discussed in relation to its current manifestation as a collection of archival and digital objects, each with its own set of properties and archival risk factors. This tension between the two ways to access the archive will be interrogated to shed light on the slippages between the digital object and the archival object. The primary argument is that the process of digitization generates an ontological shift in the status of the archival object. The secondary argument is an engagement with practices to curate the encounters with these ontologically shifted objects and how to relate to each as a contemporary viewer. In conclusion this paper will argue for regarding these archival objects according to the interpretive framework utilized to engage secular relics.

**Keywords**—Archive, curatorship, digitization, *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THIS paper will examine the digitization process of the |Xam and !Kun notebooks, authored by Lucy Lloyd, Dorothea Bleek and Wilhelm Bleek, and their collaborators |a!kunta, ||kabbo, ≠kasin, Dia!kwain, !kweiten ta ||ken, |han≠kass'o, !nanni, Tamme, |uma, and Da during the 19th century. Detail will be provided about the current status of the archive, the impetus for the creation of the digital archive and selected research projects linked to the archive. The process of digitization initiates a sequence of events that make the digital

object the primary access point for engaging the intellectual content that was previously associated with the archival object. The primary argument of this paper is that this act of digital surrogacy generates an ontological shift in the reader's relationship to the archival object; this shift requires that the function of the archival object is examined in more detail to acknowledge this displacement. This paper will argue that there is a tension between the two ways to access the archive, as an archival object and a digital object, and will interrogate the slippages between these two related but separate ontological states.

For the sake of clarity; it is useful to present a brief explanation of choices that have been made in relation to the terminology utilized in this paper. Given the text-based nature of the archival object that is the subject of this study, the term 'reader' has been employed throughout this text to indicate the individual accessing the information in the various ontological states discussed. Terms like copy, original, real, virtual, material and immaterial will not be employed as it reinforces problematic oppositions between the ontological states investigated in this paper. Instead, the item that has moved through time parallel to the history of the world will be termed the 'archival object' and the digitized item linked to the aforementioned object will be termed the 'digital object'. Within this framework the term object is not tied to a specific set of properties – but rather linked to the domain within which it is encountered. Situating the two objects in this manner indicates a relationship to one another but also accounts for the specificity of each materialized object. This avoids creating a reductive binary and allows the exploration of the complexities of the tension between what will be proposed to be two distinct ontological states.

In the first instance an object acknowledged for its historical or cultural value is encountered that is separated from its predetermined function and preserved within the context of an archive. In the second instance an object that was generated using imaging software and hardware is encountered as a digital output with an electronic likeness of the aforementioned archival object. Institutions have often taken another step and inserted a collection of digital objects in an electronic database that is accessible by internal and external parties through a networked platform. This tension between the two ways to access the archive will be interrogated to shed light on the slippages between the archival object and the digital object. This slippage is best framed within the field of Ontology, which can be broadly

F. Saptouw is with the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. Address: Michaelis School of Fine Art, 31 - 37 Orange Street, Gardens, 8001 (phone: +27 (0)21 650 7160; e-mail: fabian.saptouw@uct.ac.za).

The financial assistance of the University Research Committee (URC) Travel Grant and the Research Development Grant (RDG) administered through the Research Office of the University of Cape Town (UCT) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the URC, the RDG and UCT.

A proposal for this paper was presented at the Archive and Public Culture Initiative Workshop 2019 and the Making of Humanities Conference 2019. The argument presented in this paper is the foundation of a doctoral research proposal.

defined as the study of the relations of objects and their manifestation within various material, conceptual and scientific networks of meaning and hierarchies of value [6]. Ontological study thus seeks to establish an object within a specific framework of physical and symbolic significance which generates the operational logic of the system according to which that object is analyzed. This is crucial to acknowledge in the museum space as Taylor notes that the hierarchical value of the accessioned item can only be understood if the context of its collection or curation is made transparent to the reader [15].

The secondary argument is in support of the creation of curated encounters with these ontologically shifted objects and how to relate to each as a contemporary reader. These examples will contextualize a discussion of the contemporary value of the archive, and how to regard the manner these curatorial projects extend the life and impact of the archive. In conclusion this paper will present an alternative framework for regarding these archival iterations, which acknowledges the ontological shift argued for throughout the course of the paper.

## II. THE DIGITAL BLEEK AND LLOYD

*The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* was published in 2005 and is available at <http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/> [10]. The online archive contains 14,000 high resolution images of the notebooks as well as contextual information about the archive and its creators. The digital archive was developed as part of a research initiative led by Pippa Skotnes at the Centre for Curating the Archive, a research unit of the University of Cape Town. Hussein Suleman developed the website that makes the archive publicly accessible and the following individuals assisted with numerous tasks essential to completing the project: Eustacia Riley, Thomas Cartwright, Cara van der Westhuizen, Fazlin van der Schyff and Nicholas Nomumu Simane. *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* is an example of institutional collaboration by the University of Cape Town, University of South Africa, Iziko South African Museum, the National Library of South Africa and the Western Cape Provincial Archives and Records Service.

The digital archive includes digitized versions of a range of historically valuable material:

- “Lucy Lloyd’s |xam and !kun notebooks
- Wilhelm Bleek’s |xam notebooks
- Dorothea Bleek’s various notebooks
- Jemima Bleek’s !kun and Korana notebooks
- Drawings and watercolours made by |han#kass’o, Dia!kwain, Tamme, |uma, !nanni and Da
- Bleek’s !nusa dictionary
- The |xam dictionary of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd
- Photographs in the Bleek and Lloyd collection
- Correspondence and other documents relating to the Bleek and Lloyd families” [10: Online]

This is a useful case study to examine the development of an institutional archive with limited resources linked to the public presentation of a crucial moment in South African history, when the numbers of |xam speakers were dwindling. The notebooks provide a wealth of information relating to the

myths, fables and beliefs of a culture that received limited attention at the time of its creation. Some of the contents of the notebooks were presented in texts like *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (1911) which was published by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd, but the actual notebooks that informed that research project did not receive the same amount of attention. The public presentation of the data allows a much wider audience to interact with this specific collection; in addition, the digital archive is searchable thus readers are able to make connections across a range of the notebooks or track down information on a specific item, term or myth. The website also extends the exploration of the past by including interactive elements like a |xam – English dictionary that can be navigated with ease, as well as watercolours by |han#kass’o, Dia!kwain, Tamme, |uma, !nanni and Da (often with annotations) and correspondence between important historical figures. This digital archive successfully presents the scholarly project of Bleek and Lloyd within a mode that is easily accessible - depending on the reader’s level of internet connectivity.

The status of *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* is best described as secure and stable - unlike other online archives without a data protection policy and proper maintenance procedures, the servers have remained online since its inception, there is no corruption within its programming and the text and images published in 2005 remain readable in 2020. This is largely due to the excellent work done by Suleman as articulated in a paper on the structure of the website titled ‘In search of Simplicity: Redesigning the Digital Bleek and Lloyd’ [9]. Design elements like the choice to have a simplistic directory structure and including the metadata as text files in that directory structure partially protects the archive against obsolescence. This format and structure allow the entire archive to be migrated easily to another platform if the need arises, as well as add new collections and services to the existing data [9].

It is important to take note of the range of outputs by Pippa Skotnes linked to this specific archive, particularly to understand how each creative gesture increased the visibility of the archive in a significant manner. Early publications that preceded the creation of *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* are *Sound from the Thinking Strings* (1991) which was awarded the UCT book award, *In the Wake of the White Wagons* (1993) which was the Standard Bank Young Artist winning exhibition and *Miscast: negotiating the presence of Bushmen* (1996) which was published concurrently with a major exhibition at the Iziko South African National gallery. A crucially important publication to note is *Claim to the Country: The Archive of Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek* (2007). This publication featured a DVD which contained the entire Bleek and Lloyd archive and lavish reproductions of the notebooks which received public praise [11]. This is a fascinating example of the mutability of the archive and how the vision of the curator can guide the transitions between object, image, text and electronic format [11]. The publication of the archive had an immense impact on the way that particular historical period, the rock art and the culture of the

artists were studied. Another important event was *The Courage of //Kabbo: Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (2011) that occurred 100 years after *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (1911) was published by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd. In addition to the conference an exhibition *From Landscape to Literature* (2011) was presented which travelled from the Michaelis Galleries in Cape Town (August - September 2011) to the Wits Origins Centre in Johannesburg (February - April 2012) and was also curated as an installation in Kimberley in South Africa. A publication, *The Courage of //Kabbo: Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Publication of Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (2014), edited by Janette Deacon and Pippa Skotnes featured papers related to the conference [4]. These multiple creative gestures make it clear that unlike a traditional museum collection which is preserved for posterity as part of a permanent exhibition in a vitrine or as a rare object secluded in a UV resistant case with limited public presentations, the primary strategy in these gestures is to anchor a range of creative explorations to the archival object which functions as a conduit to the past. It is crucial to emphasize that this is not merely part of a process of exhibiting items linked to an archive, but instead it is related to curating significant encounters with archival objects that extends far beyond the singular object and starts to evoke the palimpsest of the historical period of that object. Within this context what is being presented is a complex set of interrelated practices that ground the archival object within a network of relevant signifiers.

The manifestation of the notebooks as both an archival object and a digital object presents an interesting challenge to the way a reader usually regards the museum object. In the contemporary moment, the dual accessibility is of great importance, but it should be noted that each manifestation has its own distinct properties and archival risk factors. Manuscripts are endangered by two major factors – the conditions of their creation and the conditions of their preservation. An archivist has to consider the pH-levels of the materials used to create and store the manuscripts, the material integrity of the substrates, the chemical composition of the inks employed and how the passage of time has influenced the combination of these factors. Contemporary archivists pay close attention to the combination of heating, ventilation and air conditioning when evaluating an existing archive and any renovations required making a location suitable for the long-term storage of an archive [5]. While implied above, it should also be stated explicitly that if the archive in question has been physically damaged or deteriorated over time – those specific collections usually require urgent intervention to enable restoration and preservation.

When discussing the dangers to the digital archive, Phiri & Suleman point out that the proliferation of digital data requires that institutions protect themselves against data loss due to the obsolescence of software and hardware, storage media failure and the threat of physical damage [9]. According to the Bodleian Libraries custodians of digital archives should also guard against transfer failure & corruption, make appropriate

storage plans for new file formats, control access internally to limit human error & inappropriate access and ensure there is sufficient funding and institutional support for the long-term preservation of data [3]. These issues should be guarded against when compiling a digital archive by the development of a robust data protection policy that clearly outlines procedures to avoid data loss. This is a major issue because cultural heritage institutions often place an emphasis on the process of digitizing, but not enough attention is paid to the data protection policies for the data that was secured at such a high cost [9]. If these processes are handled externally, research must be done to ensure that service providers are competent and have procedures in place for the long-term storage of the archived data. If it is handled internally then institutions need to consider which skills will be required by their staff to maintain the archive, a problem solved either through training or the appointment of new staff. Institutions also need to consider the long-term vision of the archive, and if the current design can be transferred to another operating system or software application with relative ease.

There has been a concerted effort across the globe to pursue digitization by a range of institutions within the limits of what their funding, staffing and operational costs allow. The objects selected for digitization are objects with significant historical and cultural value that requires digital intervention as a strategy for preservation and to enable a broader audience to access that resource. The contact with the archival item remains primarily within that electronic space which does not pose a significant risk to the material and structural integrity of the archival item. In rare cases one can arrange a private viewing of the archival object, but it requires advanced notice and often an extensive amount of travel. In narrating the value of accessing manuscripts online Szpiech and Nollan, both authors with a deep respect for the materiality of the manuscript, explain that access to an entire world of knowledge dating back numerous centuries is but a few clicks away regardless of where in the world you are [14], [8]. This is a unique feature of the digital archive, and one that many institutions and scholars have embraced.

### III. THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF THE DIGITAL OBJECT

The primary argument is that the process of digitization generates an ontological shift in the relationship between the reader and the archival object. This is related to the tension between those two points of cultural contact; within the ontological framework, it is important to note that these objects are considered artefacts of culture, which are objects of a special class. Jacqueline explains that any object within this framework needs to be considered in relation to its physical and abstract properties, but the cultural object has an additional layer of complexity which differentiates it from other objects [6]. The cultural object is invested with qualia-expressive intentional properties which situate its creation within a field of specific referential thoughts and actions that tie it directly to the creator's agency and context of production. This specific element is what separates the notebooks that are the focus of this study from notebooks on

other topics by the same author(s), as well as other notebooks which bear a visual resemblance to these notebooks. The creation of these specific notebooks, in a specific time as a cross-cultural contact point directs the audience to regard it as a specific object with an intent to document a language in danger of disappearing. The digital object through its production process, its context of creation as well as the intention linked to its creation is fulfilling a different function. It is connected to that cross-cultural contact point in history through the archival object as a proxy for a past it cannot directly access. Instead the visual likeness of the archival object is accessed through the digital object – but given these vastly different set of properties – according to Jacquette’s formulation – the objects should be regarded as objects occupying two distinct ontological positions. There are additional properties specifically linked to the status of the digital object which will be explored in more detail below.

The practice of digitization follows a specific process; a key element is the creation of a high-resolution scan or a photograph that is termed the ‘digital master file’. This file is often of an extremely high resolution that is considered ‘purpose blind’ and intended to meet current and future user’s needs [12]. This ideal resource is created to ensure a sufficient standard of visual quality regardless of developments of both hardware and software access platforms improving rapidly in the future. This digital master file, sometimes called the ‘preservation master file’ is processed in order to create derivative files. The file format, color mode, bit depth, image resolution and file size required for the preservation master file are not always compatible with current image viewing, editing and production software and hardware thus a ‘production master file’ is required to render the data accessible. In brief the ‘preservation master file’ anticipates the needs of future users, while the ‘production master file’ accommodates the technological limitations of current users. That allows the presentation of the visual information in a wide range of access points – often these images are of a lower resolution and feature a smaller file size either due to compression or reformatting. Within this creation cycle, the core ideal is to follow the ‘only scan once’ principle which limits the damage caused by the exposure of the archival object to the range of invasive processes required to produce high resolution imagery that meets the standards of a digital master file [16]. It should be acknowledged that this is the ideal process of digitization, and that there may be variations to these principles depending on the context within which the digitization is taking place. Various external factors and dangers may impede the archivist’s attempts to create a digital master file, but these difficulties can only be accounted for on a case by case basis if sufficient contextual detail is provided. Thus, within this cycle of creation, the digital master file with its complex set of metadata becomes the primary access point of information. The images the reader actually accesses online are usually only the compressed derivatives of the digital master file that allows a quick navigation of the web-based platform. If a higher resolution image is required, the administrator of the database must be contacted for access to

the resource. Given the interest in the ontological status of the object, it should be acknowledged that the reader rarely sees the digital master file that was created from direct contact with the archival object, instead the reader usually remains in contact with a derivative image, the production master file or its derivatives, that is technically neither the digital preservation master file nor the archival object. Given the status of the digital master file as the highest resolution version of the archival object, its accessibility through its proxies online from anywhere in the world through its derivatives, the ease and immediacy of that access – depending on your network connectivity – it becomes the primary source of the information previously linked to the archival object. Due to this process of displacement of the archival object by the digital object, Kenney defines the digital object a ‘digital surrogate’ for the archival object [7]. Predictably, with the easy access to the digital surrogate readily available many readers often feel satisfied that they have ‘seen’ the item and do not consult the archival object and instead remain contentedly trapped within a set of referential reproductions linked to the digital master file. These derivatives of the digital master file are inserted into a database and paired with specific metadata that will provide access to a range of contextual information linked to the status and history of the archival object. Kenney points out that this annotation is essential as digital images “convey little beyond an electronic likeness of the original document or object. Additional work, which requires time-consuming descriptive cataloguing or manual indexing, is needed to bring intelligence to these [images]” [7:4]. This metadata could describe elements like the intellectual content, ownership and rights management, size, pixels, resolution, links to external databases and any other technical data that a potential researcher might be interested in. Within the framing of the notebooks in *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* there is a structure to allow the reader to navigate through the content in various modes “Cover to cover”, “Stories”, “Contributors”, “Categories” and “Keywords” [10]. The latter is particularly pertinent as the keywords associated with the digital object allow the reader to navigate to resources sharing the same keyword with ease. The metadata thus encourages the reader to view the digital objects as an interconnected series of parts with overlapping themes and subjects instead of an isolated resource. This has the benefit of allowing connections between a range of notebooks to allow an over-arching view of the academic project of Bleek and Lloyd, but what is visible from that vantage point is dependent on the way the metadata was coded into the database. This idea of the coding of the database of information is crucial to understand what the reader encounters when accessing the digital object. When discussing the structure of *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*, Phiri & Suleman explain it with a simple three-layer description [9]. The *client* accesses the *services* which allows the client to view the relevant *data* – each of those steps can be expanded on slightly:

- *The client* is accessing the data in HTML format online,
- *The services* designed for this express purpose has various functions to allow the client to navigate the data – for

example a search function, a browse function or an index listing all the contents,

- *The data* required to allow both the aforementioned items to function is in a repository – which is a file system or a directory tree that has all the digital content/objects and the related metadata in the appropriate format [9].

At this stage it is crucial to return to the question regarding the place of the digital artefact, and the necessity of re-evaluating that meaning within the contemporary moment to address the problems that have been raised in the preceding section. Within this context what needs to be stated clearly is that the digital object is presenting some, but not all of the information contained within the archival object. This partial access to the information of the archival object is considered sufficient access to the 'entire' object by many readers. This is a point which van Lit disputes and a critique is directed at scholars who access the digital object yet do not indicate that they have only consulted the digital object and not encountered the archival object [16]. This act of digital surrogacy leads to a lack of engagement with the archival object after the digitization process, which is technically part of the digital object's intended function. The digital object was generated to provide access to the information previously only accessible through the archival object, thus the visual properties, the textual content, as well as fragments of the visible history of the object are all paired with the digital object through the process of digital surrogacy. In addition, the mode in which the reader experiences the object is image based – the information is presented in color on a screen and the reader accepts its veracity because it presents supposedly sufficient visual evidence of the archival object.

Another key element to be discussed within this argument is the similarity between the process of digitization and traditional processes that curators use to selectively represent the past. 'Appraisal' or 'scheduling' is the process that curators employ within the museum context to evaluate an archival collection and make decisions about what is considered historically and socially valuable and thus what is included or excluded from the archive [1]. This process was often implemented when large volumes of data needed to be reviewed and shifted from one material modality to another and preserved within the context of the archival space. This process exemplifies the incompleteness of the archive when compared to the entirety of history and its narration as human experience [1]. A tension exists between the object as a silent witness to historical events and the archivist's curation of that experience as part of a selection process. This problem is exacerbated within the digital realm because institutions are necessitated by the high cost - time, material, funding and labor - to select what is important to digitize and which parts of the past to abandon. The digital database thus presents a vastly reduced object, a fragment of the past that is presented to us as the primary holder of meaning. Once this digital marker of the past has been acquired, the surrounding material residue of the past (like wrappers, ribbons, errant strands of hair and acidic cardboard containers) are often relegated to the status of waste, mere packaging with little import. In

discussing this phenomenon van Lit argues that the digital object is primarily a placeholder for the archival object, because there are certain properties that it cannot convey due to this loss of information contained in the archival object [16].

The actual digital object is hidden in a storage device, concealed inaccessibly inside a computer, dependent on a fully functional operating system and the related peripherals to allow a user to navigate the platform. The additional complication with the object accessed online is that the file needs not only to be digital, but also connected to a server that remains online to enable a reader to access it. After presenting these points, the argument for the classification of the digital object as related to but separate from the archival object is complete. Sufficient evidence has been provided for the tension between these two vastly different ontological states that the reader can access to gather information about the past.

While a case can be made for more advanced technological processes and more expensive equipment providing higher resolution scans – thus allowing the reader to see 'more' in the digital version - this does not address the primary concern of this paper. The main argument is that the archival object is part of the history the reader seeks to access in a unique manner that the digital evocation of the past does not technically allow. There is something palpable attributed to the way the object has moved through time that requires that it is thought about in a different manner than the digital object. Through careful consideration of the facts presented already, there is enough evidence for an argument that a significant amount of material is lost to the reader through appraisal, format changes and image compression. The information not communicated by the digital object is actually crucial in presenting a wider view of history that is not possible to access through the visual-electronic likeness and metadata that only provide a partial representation of the archival object. To address this point, a secondary argument will be briefly presented – which is an engagement with practices to curate encounters with ontologically shifted objects and how to relate to each as a contemporary reader. The basis for this has already been presented in the narration of the range of curatorial gestures that extend *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* archive through significant research outputs. This argument explores the idea that the digital object is requesting that the reader look elsewhere, whereas the curatorial strategies highlighted in this section are encouraging a return to the object.

#### IV. SECULAR RELICS

In 'The Emotional Museum: Thoughts on the "Secular Relics" of Nineteenth-Century History Museums in Paris and their Posterity' Bodenstein identifies a shift in the way museums have engaged the objects in their collections [2]. The museums discussed are primarily Parisian museums of the nineteenth century, which are utilized to validate the strategies employed by the *Cité de l'immigration* in Paris and *Musée de l'Europe* in Brussels. These museums utilize the classical object-orientated approach of museum culture, but pair it with

the emotional impact of the archival object. Bodenstein argues that the merging of the object, its historical importance and its nature as a possession of a famous historical, artistic or literary personality allows an otherwise banal object to become an embodied representation of the past [2]. To understand these evocative objects, it is useful to recall Bodenstein's description of these objects "[a]s distinct from texts or two-dimensional images which represent the past in an already abstracted form, objects that were once used, held, caressed, contemplated, smelt or even eaten are immediate, concrete and moreover of a fundamentally sensual nature" [2:Online]. This collection of verbs indicates the intimacy of the encounter with the object, and how it was enmeshed in the time being evoked.

The objects are used within the museum context to bear witness to history as synecdochical figures of the human experience of history. Bodenstein makes a convincing argument for the intrinsic power of these objects even when separated from their reproductions and textual accompaniments – and argues for the importance of the object as the primary way to commune with history. The specificity of engaging the object as related to but separate from its textual and historical content aligns with the gap that this paper proposes that it exists between the archival object and the digital object. This framework elevates the object to a new status and also imbues the object with an evocative power that the digital object does not have the capacity to convey. Bodenstein argues that this approach to the power of the object as a way to commune with a specifically relevant moment in the past is linked to the way relics are viewed within the Catholic tradition [2]. This argument of the museum as a place to engage secular relics is a useful framework for conceptualizing the post-digital archival object. These are the objects deemed sacred and valuable and presented as such within spaces of curation. Katarina Schramm argues that "[d]eclaring something sacred means to remove it from the everyday realm, giving it special attention and symbolic value and, at least ideally, deeming it undisputable" [13:7]. This particular formulation matches the way the archival object presents a level of value when separated from its utilitarian value and is presented in a curated encounter independent of the intellectual content previously associated with it. This content is now evidenced by the digital object, and the slippage of information from one object to the other creates an ontological shift significant enough for the archival object to be regarded as a secular relic.

## V.CONCLUSION

Through this paper the complexity of the link between the archival object and the digital object has been explored with specific reference to *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*. An extensive account was presented to indicate the different ontological states of the archival object and the digital object; with an emphasis on the materiality of the digital object as a complex item linking a 'digital master file' and a range of derivative images.

The presentation of the archival object within a curated

encounter as an evocation of a past that is embedded in it on a material and symbolic level as a 'sacred relic' is important. Through the application of this framework, the archival object is no longer required to represent the visual information linked to the past; instead the reader is encouraged to reconsider the function of the archival object and acknowledge its ability to hold the reader in communion with the past. This function of 'bearing witness to' rather than 'providing evidence of' is an inversion of what the archival object was previously required to do within the space. That inversion is only possible because the primary task of providing evidence has been located elsewhere – the digital object. This level of operational understanding of the semiotic value of the archival object and the digital object is only possible if it is considered as two distinct ontological states. This framework is advocating a return to the objecthood of the archive and carefully considering the reader's relationship to the archival object, its history as well as the shared moment in the present and the simultaneous evocation of the past.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bearman, D. 2002. Electronic Record-Keeping, Social Memory and Democracy. In *Refiguring the Archive*. C. Hamilton, V. Harris, J. Taylor, M. Pickover, G. Reici & R. Saleh (eds.). Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip; Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- [2] Bodenstein, F. 2011. The Emotional Museum. Thoughts on the "Secular Relics" of Nineteenth-Century History Museums in Paris and their Posterity. *Conserveries mémorielles* (En ligne), #9 | (Online). Available: <http://journals.openedition.org/cm/834>. (2020-02-14).
- [3] Bodleian Libraries. 2018. Introduction to Digital Preservation: Risks to digital assets. (Online). Available: <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/digitalpreservation>. (2020-03-03).
- [4] Deacon, J. & P. Skotnes (eds). 2014. *The courage of //kabbo: celebrating the 100th anniversary of the publication of Specimens of Bushman folklore*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- [5] Garaba, F. 2015. The Timbuktu manuscripts: a model for preservation in Africa. Paper presented at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress 81st IFLA General Conference and Assembly, 15-21 August 2015, Cape Town, South Africa.
- [6] Jacquette, D. 2002. *Ontology*. Acumen Publishing, United Kingdom
- [7] Kenney, A.R. 2000. Technology: Mainstreaming Digitization into the Mission of Cultural Repositories. (Online). Available: <https://clir.wordpress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/pub88.pdf> (2020-02-03).
- [8] Nollan, M. 2013. "Medieval Habit, Modern Sensation: Reading Manuscripts in the Digital Age. in *The Chaucer Review*. 47(4): 465–476
- [9] Phiri, L. and H. Suleman, (2012) In Search of Simplicity: Redesigning the Digital Bleek and Lloyd. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology* 32(4):306-312. (Online). Available: <http://pubs.cs.uct.ac.za/archive/00000780/> (2020-02-03).
- [10] Skotnes, P. 2005. *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd*. Llares, University of Cape Town. (Online). Available <http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/>. 14000 image and text pages. (2020-03-05).
- [11] Skotnes, P., Bleek, W. H. I. & L. Lloyd, 2007. *Claim to the country: the archive of Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek*. Johannesburg: Jacana; Athens: Ohio University Press.
- [12] Puglia, S. & J. Reed, E. Rhodes. 2004. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) - Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access: Creation of Production Master Files – Raster Images. (Online). Available: <https://www.archives.gov/files/preservation/technical/guidelines.pdf>. (2020-03-05).
- [13] Schramm, K. 2011. Landscapes of Violence: Memory and Sacred Space. *History & Memory*. 23(1): 5-22.
- [14] Szpiech, R. 2014 "Cracking the Code: Reflections on Manuscripts in the Age of Digital Books." in *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures*. 3(1):75–100.

- [15] Taylor, J. 2002. Holding: Refiguring the Archive. In *Refiguring the Archive*. C. Hamilton, V. Harris, J. Taylor, M. Pickover, G. Reici & R. Saleh (eds.). Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip; Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 243-282.
- [16] Van Lit, L.W.C. 2020. Among Digitized Manuscripts: Philology, Codicology, Paleography in a Digital World. Brill: Boston.