

4-30-2019

Hidden narratives; Personal albums from the KITLV collection and their captions

Liesbeth Ouwehand

National Museum for World Cultures, liesbeth.ouwehand@wereldculturen.nl

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/wacana>



Part of the [Other Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ouwehand, Liesbeth (2019) "Hidden narratives; Personal albums from the KITLV collection and their captions," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*: Vol. 20: No. 1, Article 5.

DOI: 10.17510/wacana.v20i1.744

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/wacana/vol20/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty of Humanities at UI Scholars Hub. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia by an authorized editor of UI Scholars Hub.

Hidden narratives

Personal albums from the KITLV collection and their captions

LIESBETH OUWEHAND

ABSTRACT

This article examines captions found in the various personal albums in the KITLV photo collection (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde / Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies). The article shows that two types of captions can be distinguished: descriptive or identifying and commentary or reflective captions. These captions are an important part of the albums' materiality and composition. Hence, captions turn the albums into autobiographical objects for both compiler and intended audiences. It is argued that photo albums and their image content should not be read separately from the captions either physically or digitally in image databases.

KEYWORDS

Captions; photo albums; materiality; Netherlands Indies.

LIESBETH OUWEHAND was trained as an anthropologist at Leiden University. She worked on the KITLV photo collection (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies) between 2003 and 2018. At present she works as a photo curator of the collection of the National Museum for World Cultures. Her book *Herinneringen in beeld; Fotoalbums uit Nederlands-Indië* (Leiden: KITLV Press) was published in 2009. Her latest publications include the article "Chinese photographers and their clientele in the Netherlands Indies, 1890-1940" for this journal (*Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* Vol. 18 No. 2 (2017): 315-342). Liesbeth Ouwehand can be contacted at: liesbeth.ouwehand@wereldculturen.nl.

© 2019 Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia

LIESBETH OUWEHAND | DOI: 10.17510/wacana.v20i1.744.

INTRODUCTION

Male tiger [in] Doekoe shot under the right eye through the jaw, along the jawbone into the chest. Heart, lungs and liver affected. Fell to the ground and simply stretched out. Final shot in the right fore-leg turned out to be superfluous. The giant animal did not even stir again. (UBL¹ KITLV A569).

This detailed caption accompanies three photographs in one of the most tactile photo albums in the collection of the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies) or KITLV. The Institute acquired the album through a dealer in 1998. The photo album shows snapshots of tigers, wild boar, and bulls shot by the compiler, E.G.A. Lapré (see Image 1).²



Image 1. Elaborate caption for three photographs of a tiger shot in Doekoe on 29 October 1937 by Lapré. (UBL KITLV A569).

The cover is the *pièce de résistance* of the hunting theme; a fragment of the tiger skin was attached to the cover by Lapré. The cover, captions, and photographic technique used for the prints are one of the main characteristics of an album, making up its materiality. The material choices made by Lapré, like the piece of tiger skin and the elaborate captions, supplement the image content. As Edwards and Hart (2004: 1-2) have shown, the image content of a photograph are inseparable from its materiality. It is the materiality, composition and

¹ For Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden (Leiden University Libraries).

² Lapré was stationed in Sumatra and Lombok as a *controleur* in the service of the colonial administration in the 1930s.

photographs which transform photo albums into three-dimensional objects. This article focuses on the albums as objects, the use of captions as part of this object-hood in particular.

Lapré's tiger album is one of the many personal albums which form part of the KITLV photo collection. The Institute holds an extensive photographic collection consisting of loose and mounted photographs, photo albums, (lantern) slides and negatives. The photographic images were produced by professional photographers and by dedicated amateurs. It is not clear when the KITLV began collecting photographic material. Nineteenth-century annual reports and minutes do not give any information. Their information is restricted to book and map acquisitions for the Institute's library and to its publication activities. The oldest photographs in the collection were made by Linnaeus Tripe in 1855 and were acquired long before photo material entered the acquisition registers. There is a strong possibility that originally the photo material was discounted as a scholarly source. This changed when G.P. Rouffaer was appointed as deputy-secretary responsible for the KITLV book and map collection in 1898. The first time photographs are mentioned in connection with the KITLV collection was by Rouffaer. He asked for photographs of Javanese antiquities in a letter to J.L.A. Brandes (D H 754).³ Rouffaer added provenance details to the photographs he acquired, for example, when he bought a photo album at the Van Stockum auction in 1906 or when KITLV's general secretary, E.B. Kielstra, donated photographs in 1903. Rouffaer was one of the authors of the first published catalogue of the Institute's library in 1908. But, even though he was responsible for many photo acquisitions, the catalogue does not mention the photo collection (Rouffaer and Muller 1908). In the early days, acquisition strategies were not guided by any particular policy. Nevertheless Rouffaer unquestionably had a strong interest in acquiring material about antiquities and material culture.

During his tenure and thereafter, the KITLV collected photo material from the former Dutch colonies in the East and West. These cover a wide range of topics ranging from family portraits, travel albums, military photographs, photographic documentation of archaeological sites and expeditions, pictures of colonial exhibitions, landscape and town view photography, "native type" photography, to photographs advertising companies and plantations, and so on. This article will focus solely on photo albums, since the photos within one volume are closely connected and were selected and put in a particular order by the compiler.

Photo albums can consist of widely produced commercial photographs taken by professional photographers or snapshots or a mixture of both types of photographs. Albums compiled in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century generally consist of commercially produced landscapes, town views, "native type" photography and commissioned photographs, that is, studio portraits and images taken on location. At first glance, these commercial

³ Brandes was a fellow librarian at the Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences. He also worked as a linguistic civil servant and studied Hindu-Javanese monuments.

photographs do not seem to have any personal connotations, since the same images appear in different albums. It is however, the context in which these images function, for example, as part of a family or travel album in which the compiler has added personal captions, which changes the character of widely mass-produced commercial photographs.

When photo cameras became more affordable and easier to use after the 1910s, snapshot photography took off and many albums were filled with photos which were more personal in character. But, as Protschky (2014: 51) notes, it was still an elite hobby. The addition of captions intensifies the highly intimate quality of these albums. Over 50 percent of the KITLV photo album collection consists of personal photographs, like family albums or scrapbooks.⁴ Albums travelled from the Netherlands Indies to Europe and at some point in their biographies became part of the Library collection. The biographies of personal albums raise several questions: What was being photographed and shown to whom? What happens when photo albums move from the private into the public sphere? How are personal photographic memories transformed by their entry into a library? In other words, what happens in their new context of a photo archive?

Personal albums have recently begun to attract scholarly attention. Protschky (2012), for example, has drawn attention to tea-drinking scenes as representations of domesticity. These particular displays grace many family albums from the colonial era. One of the topics Rose (2010) examines is the circulation of family photographs in the public sphere through mass media. Pattynama (2012) has also paid attention to the shift from personal to public sphere in her discussion of social biographies and shifting Indies identities in the use of family albums which were collected by the IWI.⁵ The focal point of many scholars is the image content of the photographs. However, it is difficult to read photographs in isolation from their captions. As will be shown, original captions which are part of the photos in an album act like a voice-over. Pertinently, in some cases these captions tell a different story to that of their photographs. Nordström (2004) has reviewed the captions of a particular set of travel albums. This article will, like Nordström, discuss the captions but delve even deeper by considering the changes made materially when a photo album enters the photo archive. This discussion relates to a specific question: What happens to these captions when the albums enter the photo archive and are made digitally available in a database? However, before examining the captions and their photographs in personal albums, it is essential to take a look at the composition and provenance of examples in the KITLV collection.

⁴ It is not known when the first personal albums were added to the KITLV collection. It is very likely that the first examples were part of acquired archival material.

⁵ The IWI (Indisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut or Indies Scientific Institute) photo collection is kept at the Tropenmuseum.

CONTEXT AND PROVENANCE OF PERSONAL ALBUMS

Photo albums come in all shapes and sizes and therefore have different performative qualities, a topic suggested by Edwards and Hart (2004: 11). The size of an album, which is part of its materiality, determines how an album will be viewed. One of the smallest personal albums in the KITLV collection is a booklet which contains passport photos and other small size (studio) portraits (see Image 2). It is a so-called friends' book which contains photographs as well as poems and notes. The pocket-size booklet (10 x 8 cm) was hand-held when being viewed by its owner, S. Nasruddin, and is a typical example of an album to be viewed in private.

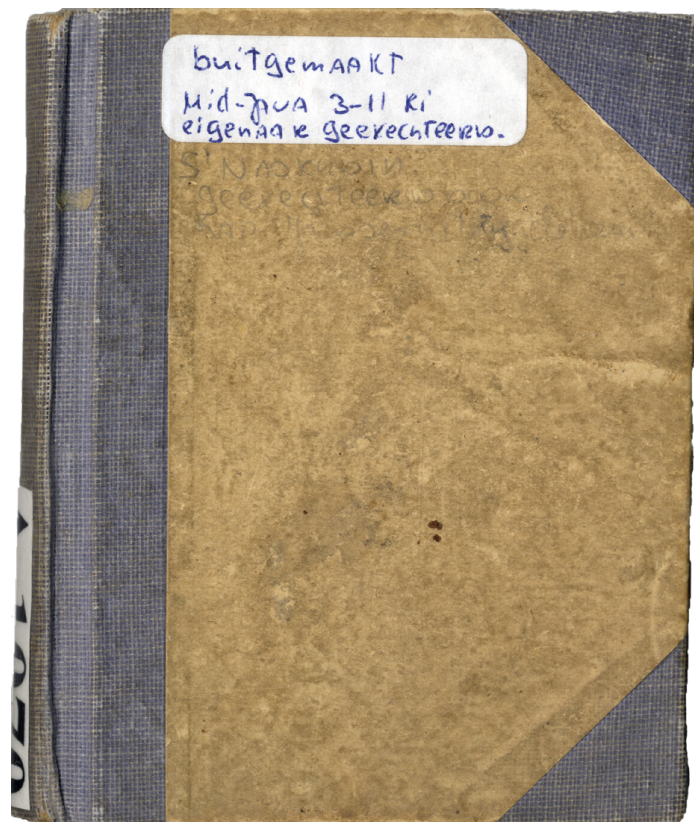


Image 2. Cover of a pocket-size friends booklet. The sticker states that the booklet was looted when the owner was executed in 1948. (UBL KITLV A1070).

Whereas another personal album in the collection was donated to the recipient, Catharina Elisabeth (Kitty) Stoerhaan, to celebrate her hundredth birthday, and must have been viewed by many who attended the party (see UBL KITLV A1186: Images 7-9). If nothing else, the pages of the autographs of guests at the party are proof of its many viewings. Kitty or Aunt Kit was a nanny to the Van der Plas family for whom she began working at Koeripan near Buitenzorg, present-day Bogor, in the 1890s. When she moved to the Netherlands with the Van der Plas parents, Kitty still remained closely connected to the family

and the following generations. She was considered part of the family.⁶ The album marks this close virtually familial relationship. As Rose (2010: 59-61) observes, family photos are mobile objects, maintaining familial relationships when they are exchanged. Furthermore, the photographs are to be understood as social biographical objects, that is, they belong to “a continuous process of production, exchange, usage and meaning” (Edwards and Hart 2004: 4). The personal album for Aunt Kit was compiled in 1971 and consists partly of photos which were produced long before the album took shape. The album includes family members distanced far apart from each other not only geographically but also in time. Duplicate records from the family archive were re-arranged together with contemporary images in an album for a special occasion. The vintage prints were given a second life when they moved from the family archive to the album.

<u>INHOUDSOPGAVE.</u>	
<i>Albumaanbieding door Nout met commentaar.</i>	
<i>Vervaarding ervan met commentaar.</i>	
<i>Chronologische volgorde. Toen zelfs nog wat.</i>	
HOOFDSTUK I:	Blz. 1
<u>Restjes na den Zondvloed.</u>	
Reis om de wereld in 20 maanden. 1920-21.	1
Bulce Romm periode. 1925-30.	3
Wart voor studie naar Holland. 1928.	3
Plattegrond van Bulce Romm + parijzen.	5
1929-30 zijn we weer in Holland. Niels nu ook student.	6
Janey periode. 1930-36.	8
Plattegrond van Janey.	7
Waspada. 1936-45.	15
Plattegrond van Waspada.	16
Toeristisch genot. Diverse jaren. (Indië).	30
Vervolg restjes toerisme (Holland).	37
1. Indische tijdschrift over de Nederlands en N. Hol- landische verhoudingen. 1929.	37
2. Vijftiende tijdschrift over Indië, Overijssel, Veluwe. 1929.	46
Van het slot van dit hoofdstuk. Terugblik naar twee plekjes grond in Indië.	53
HOOFDSTUK II:	55
<u>Kemoevinglaan 14. 1945-49.</u>	
Plattegrond Kemoevinglaan 14.	60
Verbeelding en afbeelding van Indië.	69

Image 3. Table of contents in the Douwes Dekker scrapbook. (UBL KITLV A169).

Another example of photographs being re-used in an album is a scrapbook which was compiled by G.M.G. Douwes Dekker. Interestingly, the book was put together in 1949-1950, long after most of the photos were taken. The album

⁶ Personal communication from the donor of the album on 3-10-2018.

was made in a scrapbook form, that is, maps, floor-plans of houses, notes, letters and an airline ticket illustrate the well-structured outline of the book. Douwes Dekker commemorates his memories in two chapters (see Image 3). The first chapter is entitled “Remnants of the deluge” (*Restjes na de zondvloed*) and is illustrated with photos from the 1920-1945 period which survived the violence of World War II and the colonial war. The second chapter, “Kemoening Road 14” (*Kemoeninglaan 14*) focuses on snapshots taken just before the scrapbook was made, 1945-1949. All the pages are numbered. The numbered pages left empty in the first chapter are particularly striking. The pages were deliberately left free for future additions, in case some photographs of that period which survived the traumatic World War II and colonial war period should happen to turn up. As will be shown later, the extensive captions and letters are a complete break with the images.

As with all photos in the albums discussed so far, the images depict happy moments, whether they celebrate the trophies of hunting parties or family gatherings. As Nordström (2004: 84) has noted, “We must recognize what they do and do not show”. In some cases, the captions reveal more about what the images do not show. The layout and captions of an album are an aid to reading the visual content.

The social biography of an album begins at the moment of its production. The majority of personal albums in the KITLV collection were produced in the Netherlands Indies. The Aunt Kit album is an exception. The albums began their trajectories in the Indies and continued their route when they travelled from the Indies to Europe and at some point were added to the KITLV collection. Whether the album entered the collection by donation or was sold to the Institute, all photo albums are part of a visual economy. This term was introduced by Deborah Poole (1997) to draw attention to the flow of photographs between Europe and the Andes. The visual economy has to do with “social relationships, inequality, and power” as well as with “shared meanings and community” (Poole 1997: 8). As we have seen, photo albums are in some instances ideal objects through which to maintain social relationships, as was the case with the Aunt Kit album. Aunt Kit lived with one of the Van der Plas sisters. When she passed away in the 1970s the album was returned to the family; one could say the album rotated within the familial circle.⁷ A family member donated it to the KITLV in 2008, together with other family photographs and archival material connected to the Van der Plas family. Hence we know that the Aunt Kit album and its photographic content had always circulated in an intimate circle between compilers and receiver before it became part of the KITLV collection.

In other instances, the passage to the KITLV collection was less smooth. Moreover, unequal relations played a role in their travels to Europe. For example, the friends booklet belonged to S. Nasruddin, who was executed by a Dutch infantry captain in 1948. According to information on the cover, the pocket-size album was looted by Nasruddin’s executioner (see Image 2). It is

⁷ Personal communication from the donor on 3-10-2018.

highly likely this captain brought the album back to the Netherlands with him. At some point in its biographical life, the booklet was commodified, that is, it assumed an economic value. The booklet ended up with a dealer, who sold it to the Institute in 2004.⁸ Its dramatic changes in ownership amplified the commodification of the booklet. Moreover, personal albums, like the booklet and the Aunt Kit album consist of photographs which were free gifts; gifts intended to maintain familial relationships. These free gifts, in some cases, do gain an economic value when they circulate through dealers or auctions. In the process, the personal albums become collectable items, moving outside the enclosed intimate sphere.

As we have seen, personal albums vary in size and content. Although the image content of the various albums might not differ widely, it can be seen as a variation on a theme. Images showing (group) portraits of smiling people, domestic interiors, or hobby activities. It is the context of the album, like the materiality of commemoration or birthday albums, which gives the image content context. The context of an album is one of the main considerations which plays an important role in acquiring the object. As will be shown next, when the album is received by a library and becomes part of its collection, the object is transformed.

BECOMING COLLECTIONS

In many cases, the biographies of personal albums accrued before they entered the KITLV collection are unknown. Information in the album, like the looting of the friends booklet by the executioner or the compilation of surviving photographs in the Douwes Dekker album, hint at its trajectory. Traces, like stains and creases, touch on its physical use and are therefore also part of this trajectory. Interestingly, personal albums were never produced to leave the intimate sphere of family or friends to become part of a library collection. They were part of an intimate sphere in which they were controlled by the owners or their descendants. This control changed dramatically when the albums changed ownership. Papavasileiou (2015: 91) has written about the move of a photo collection of a private collector to a museum environment. She notes that, with its entrance into the museum collection, the photo collection “achieves ... recognition and of course a degree of immortality”. This is exactly what happens to personal albums when they are introduced to a new context: that of the library collection. This immortality is often referred to by donors of family albums, who prefer to add it to a library, instead of giving it to descendants who are not interested and might throw away the precious photographs after the owners have passed away.

The entrance of (personal) albums into the KITLV collection has certain implications. They become part of a larger photo collection, which also conserves other albums, like military, farewell or travel albums.⁹ In this new

⁸ At the time of the acquisition, no questions were asked about the dubious background of the trajectory of the album.

⁹ When the KITLV collection moved to the Leiden University Libraries in 2014, the collection

collection context, the personal albums are used in conjunction with albums holding a different (photographic) content. Moreover, the photo albums are catalogued and made accessible to a wider audience. In their new environment, labels and shelf marks are added, and specially crafted boxes are made to protect the album, changing its materiality. Within the library, the focus turns more to the conservation aspects of various materials, like photographs and paper. Therefore, until recently, in the case of the Douwes Dekker and the Van der Plas collection, the photographs and albums were separated from the donated archival material. Even though cross references are made when both archives and photographs are catalogued, inevitably some of the context of the collection disappears.

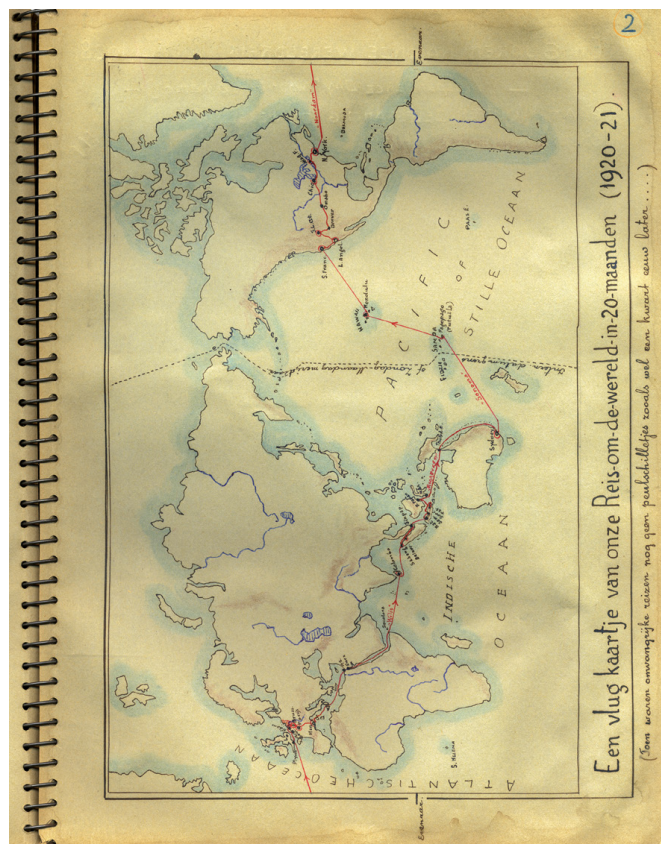
Once a photo album becomes part of the KITLV collection, its status within the collection might change as well. Scholarly interest, for example, can add to its status. The commemoration of historical events, for instance, is another elevating factor. One of the best-known albums in the KITLV collection is not a personal but a military album. The so-called *puputan* album consists of snapshots by H.W. van Weede taken during the campaign in which the Balinese were being subjugated by the Dutch in 1908. The Seventh Bali expedition ended in a *puputan* by the Raja of Klunkung and his followers.¹⁰ The album has attracted and still attracts scholarly attention. It has also drawn and still continues to draw great attention from Klunkung inhabitants around every umpteenth decade commemoration. The *puputan* album suffered severe water damage when the roof in the photo storage leaked. As a consequence, all the photographs were transferred to a new album. The size of the new album matches that of the damaged album and the order and position of the photographs were copied from the damaged album. The damaged album, with its captions, is stored with the new album. Even though the materiality of the *puputan* album has changed significantly, its status has only increased since the Institute acquired the album in 1945. This has to do with the fact that the album marks such an important historical change in Bali. The dramatic material change has certainly not detracted from the status of the album. This is partly attributable to the fact that the interested parties are more concerned with the image content of the album. However, the image content of the album should not be detached from its captions. It is the combination of both images and captions which comprises the individual experiences in personal albums and hence make it autobiographical objects.

IN FOCUS: CAPTIONS

As earlier stated, images in photo albums are usually accompanied by captions which act as a voice-over. The compilation moment of the album influences the way the photos are commented on in the captions. One striking example in the KITLV collection has already been mentioned, the Douwes Dekker scrapbook.

became part of a much larger collection. The University Libraries hold other photo collections, like the collection of the Print Cabinet and the Kern Institute, each with its own focal point.

¹⁰ The Balinese term *puputan* refers to fight to the death, rather than any surrender.



Images 4 and 5 (are on opposite pages in the album). Paragraph in the Douwes Dekker scrapbook of the “remnants” of their trip around the world in 1920-21. (UBL KITLV A169).

The scrapbook begins with a letter from the son of G.M.G. Douwes Dekker, Wouter. He refers to the family's house named Waspada near Bandung, the Japanese occupation and the years immediately after World War II, the colonial war. The motto written by the compiler, G.M.G. Douwes Dekker, refers to the same topics and mentions the loss of thirty photo albums from the family archive in Waspada during the colonial war. The first photo page in the album consists of images which were taken during the family's trip around the world. A total of five photographs and a map of the world on the opposite page comprise this section (see Images 4 and 5). All photos were given captions. A comment on the page states the following:

This extraordinary journey around the world alone included at least 16 of the destroyed 30 large photo albums [entitled] 'our travels'; not to mention the many accompanying bundles of booklets, brochures, leaflets, plates, guides, maps and other documentation and souvenirs. (UBL KITLV A169).

On other pages, apart from the captions, references are made to the acquisition of particular photographs, like the hand-coloured image of the titan arum (see Image 6).

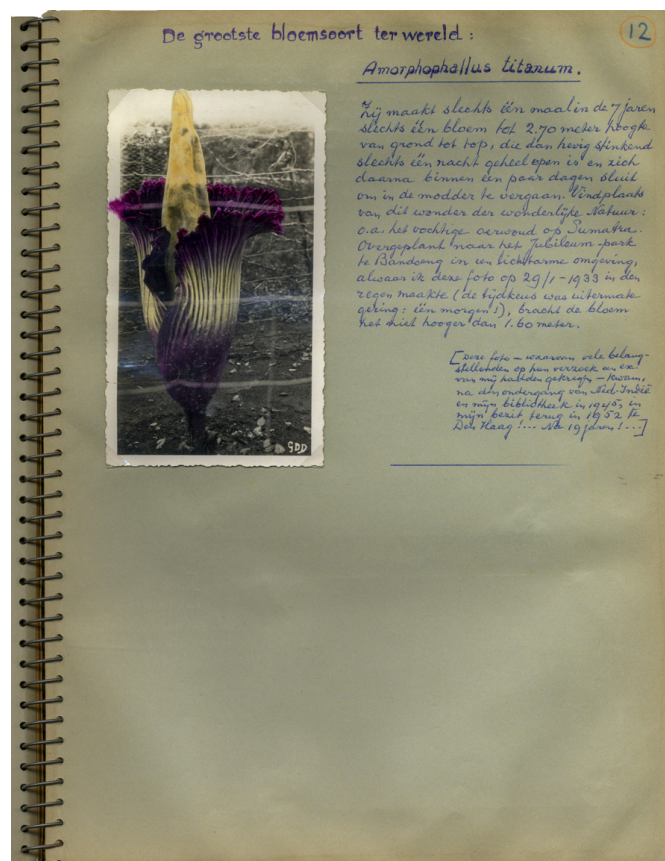


Image 6. Hand-coloured photo of a titan arum flower by G.M.G. Douwes Dekker, which was added to the scrapbook in 1952, according to the caption. (UBL KITLV A169).

The extended caption reveals information about the taking of the actual snapshot by Douwes Dekker on 29 January 1933. It also states that many friends ordered a copy of the flower photo from Douwes Dekker. He himself received a copy in 1952, after he had returned to The Hague to replace that which he had lost in the “downfall of the Netherlands Indies and the destruction of [his] library in 1945” (UBL KITLV A169). Many pages testify to Douwes Dekkers’ opinions about World War II, the colonial war and his personal sufferings:

Again and again, it cannot be repeated often enough, I remember that every phase of our busy life, countless photographs from this posthumous scrapbook of ‘remanents of the deluge’ are missing. As a result of the senseless murder and vandalism of the foot-loose, disorganized ‘Indonesian’ savages, who burned their way to my library in Waspada containing more than 30 photo albums after the Japanese capitulation in 1945. (UBL KITLV A169).

Douwes Dekker glued the photos in chronologically. The second chapter contains photographs which were taken when he lived in a protected camp (1945-1949) in Kemoening Road in Bandoeng. This chapter has retained hardly any photographs of his life in Bandoeng. It consists mainly of photos which were sent to him by relatives in other parts of the archipelago and in the Netherlands.

The Douwes Dekker scrapbook is a highly autographical object. The remainder of the photographs were taken before the outbreak of World War II; pictures of interesting trips, family gatherings and comfortable houses, a glimpse of happy moments. The captions and annotations, however, were written after the end of the colonial war, after Douwes Dekker had moved to the Netherlands. As we have seen, the captions reflecting on these happy moments are strongly coloured by his experiences during both wars. Nordström (2004: 88-93) uses the term re-authoring to describe the captions given to mass-produced commercial photographs. With the re-authoring of an album, compilers turn these photos into specific personal experiences. Even though Nordström is writing about the captions given to commercial photographs, the term re-author also applies to the Douwes Dekker captions and annotations. In them, Douwes Dekker reflects on his pre-war life in the Indies through a heavily tinted post-war lens.

The scrapbook is structured chronologically. In the two chapters Douwes Dekker made two clear divisions: before and after World War II (see Image 3, UBL KITLV A169). A clear division in chronological chapters is also made in the Aunt Kit album (UBL KITLV A1186). The chapters cover the different Van der Plas generations, beginning with the first generation of whom Kitty took care at Koeripan. Koeripan is clearly stated as the place at which the strong connection between Aunt Kit and the Van der Plas family originated (see Images 7 and 8). Interestingly, the photographs covering the first generation were given captions; explaining who is who (see Image 9). In contrast the portraits of the second, third, and fourth generations have not been annotated,

probably since most of these images were (re)used within a short time frame. Moreover, the people from the second, third, and fourth generations portrayed were still in contact with Aunt Kit at the time of the compilation of the album in 1971 and were also probably present at her birthday party. As is the Douwes Dekker scrapbook, the Aunt Kit album is an highly autobiographical object in which her relationship with the different generations is celebrated.



Images 7 and 8. Photos of the house, the Van der Plas family and nanny aunt Kit in the 1890s. The photos are part of the album celebrating aunt Kit's birthday in 1971. (UBL KITLV A1186).



Image 9. Carte-de-visite portraits showing the first generation of children who were taken care of by aunt Kit, between 1893-1900. The descriptive captions give names of the portrayed. (UBL KITLV A1186).

Relationships or networks also played an important role in the friends booklet (UBL KITLV A1070). The portraits are all or partly connected to Nasruddin's colleagues of the First Division of the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia or Indonesian National Military) in 1948. Most captions consist of the names of those portrayed (see Image 10). Even though the time frame of the production of the portraits and the compilation of the booklet was short, some portraits were given a question mark as a caption (see Image 11). Those portrayed were probably further removed from Nasruddin. Like the captions in the Aunt Kit album, the captions in the friends booklet are quite succinct; the names of those portrayed are the core of the caption. These captions can be characterized as identifying. Moreover, it is the networks of the recipient (Aunt Kit) and the compiler (Nasruddin) which adds to the autobiographical character of the albums.

The autobiographical character of the earlier mentioned tiger album refers to only one aspect of compiler Lapré (UBL KITLV A569); his passion for hunting wherever he was stationed as a colonial administrator. He compiled the album between 1935 and 1950. Most photos were added to the album before the outbreak of World War II. Only three images were added in 1950. The vast majority of the photos portray hunting game and parties. Only a few images show his family life and habitat. Even in this instance, these photos are

connected to hunting; presenting tiger skins decorating his house or Lapré's son and wife posing with game trophies (see Image 12).

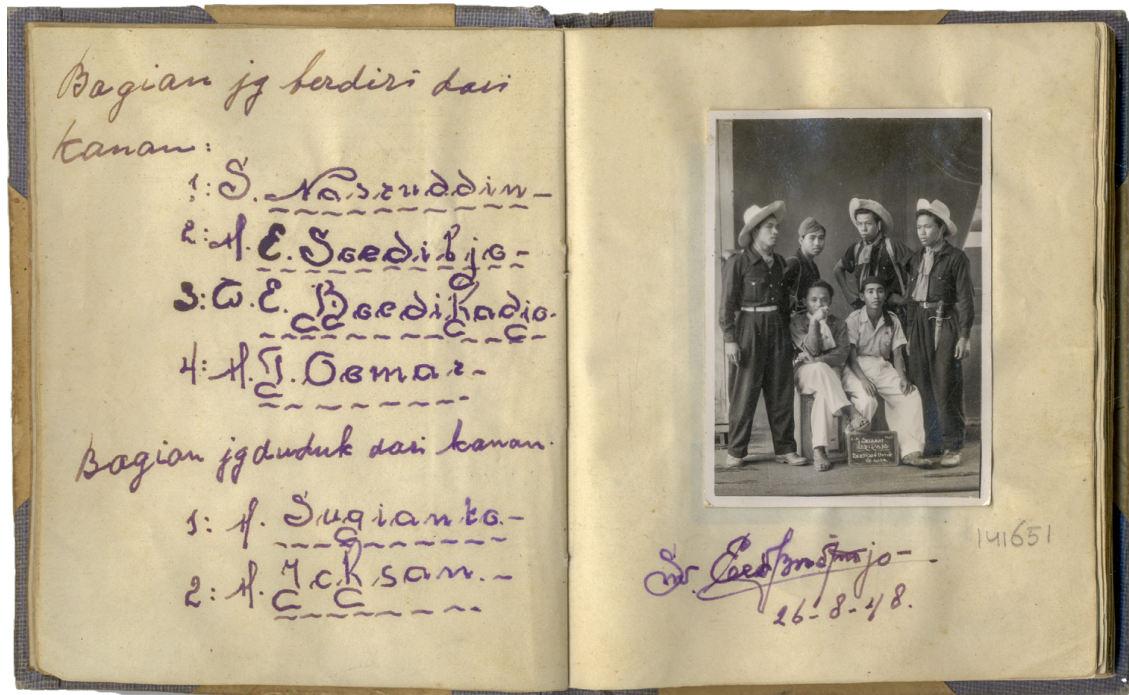


Image 10. Group portrait of S. Nasruddin and four of his friends on 26 August 1948. The identifying caption explains who is who. (ULB KITLV A1070).



Image 11. Three anonymous portraits in Nasruddin's friends booklet. (UBL KITLV A1070).

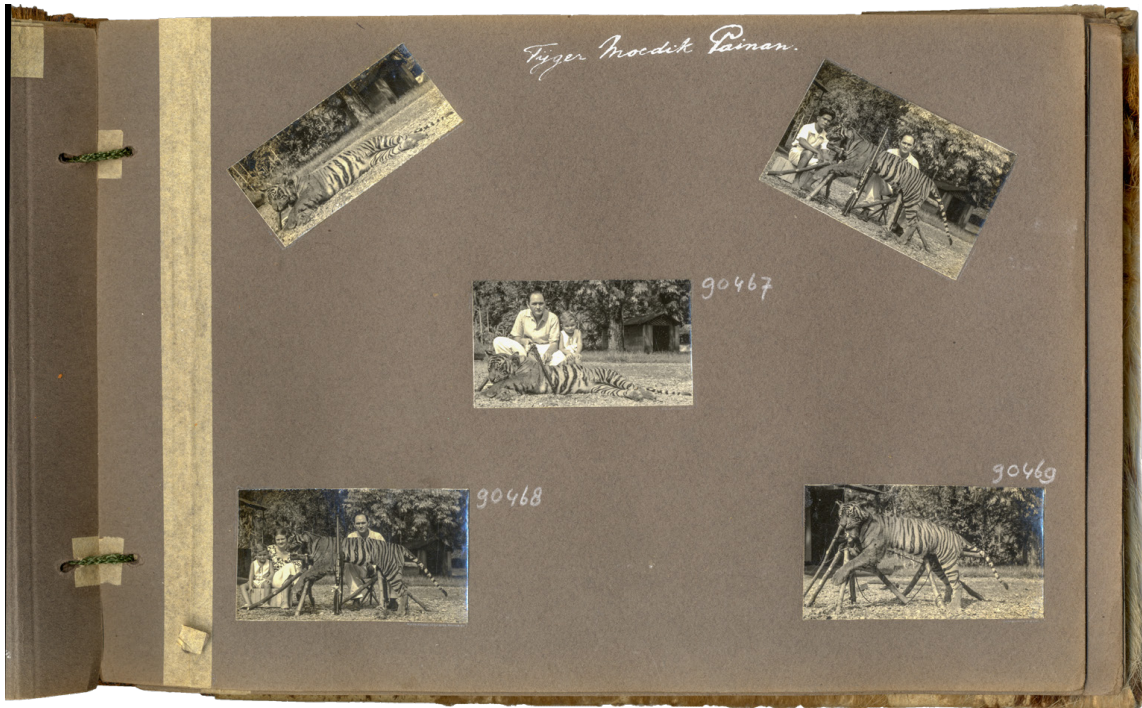


Image 12. Portraits in which Lapré poses with a shot tiger. Lapré is portrayed with among other his wife and son. (UBL KITLV A569).

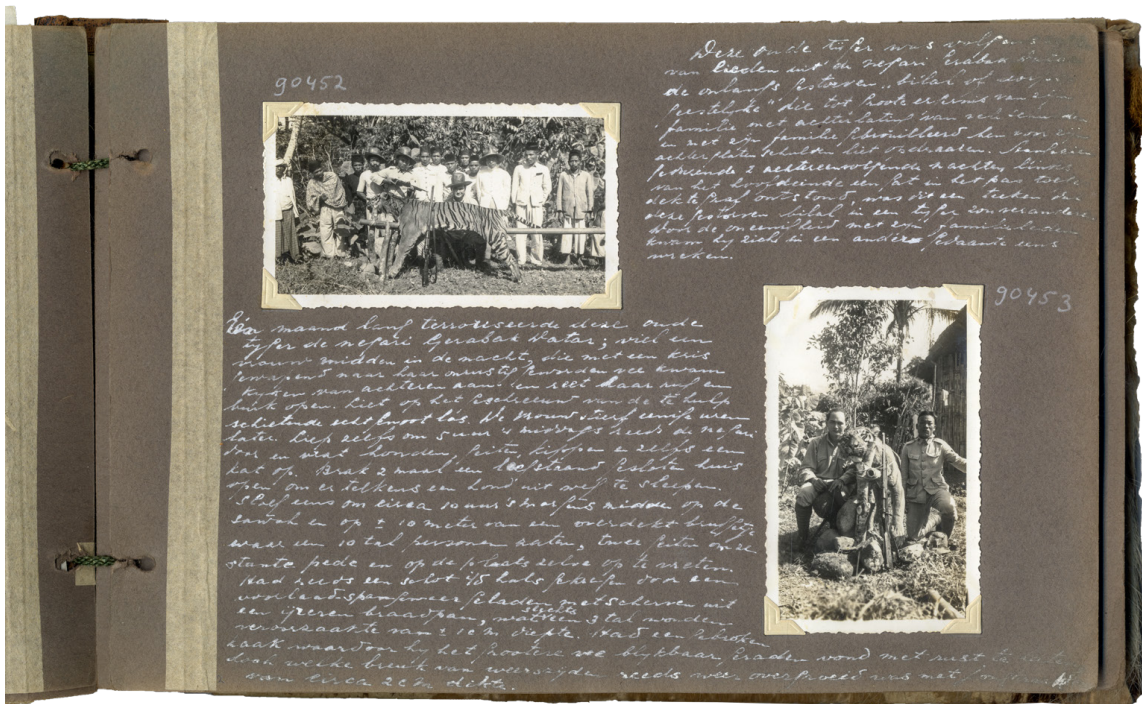
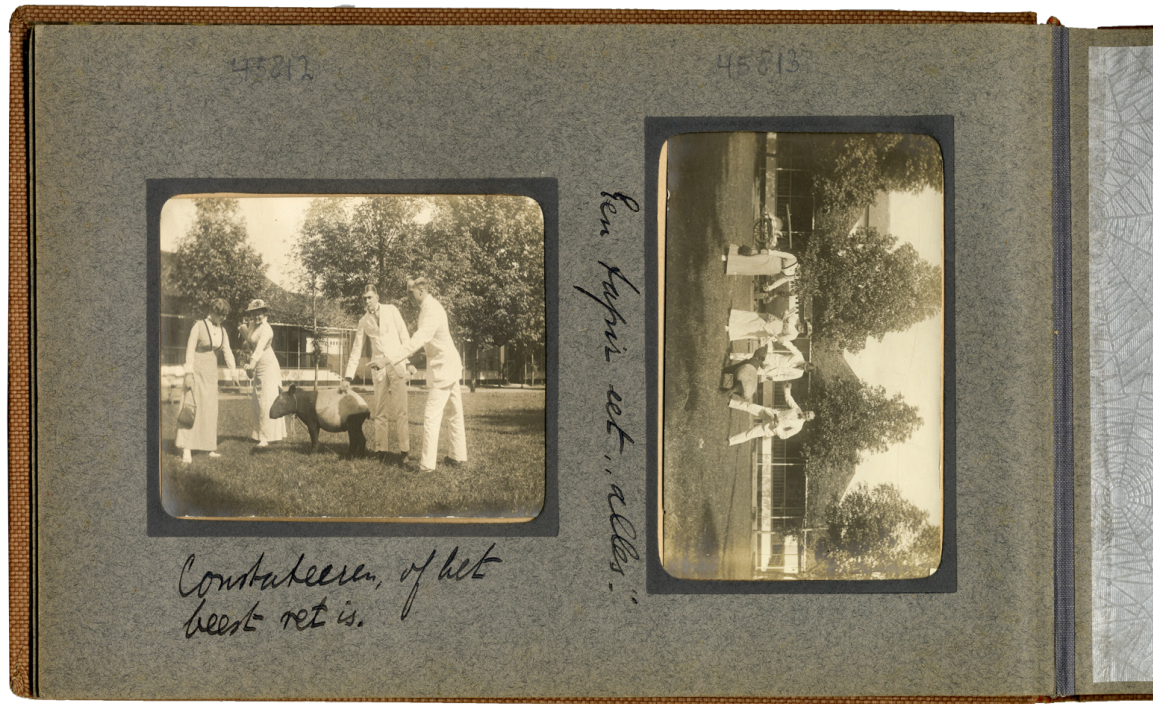


Image 13. Extensive caption reporting on the shot tiger portrayed in two photographs. The caption explains the background of the shooting. (UBL KITLV A569).

The captions accompanying the photos of big game, like tigers and banteng, are given the most extensive captions. Lapré records the date, time, place, and position of the lethal entrance wound. Should the tigers have attacked inhabitants or livestock, Lapré reports extensively on these events (see Image 13). The game images, extensive captions and tiger skin cover were probably

a medium through which Lapré relived his hunting experiences whenever he viewed the album. Like the Aunt Kit album and the friends booklet, the tiger album contains captions which are closely connected to the image content of the photographs. Whereas in other cases, like the the Douwes Dekker scrapbook, the annotations are only partly related to the image content.



Images 14 and 15. Series of four photographs in which Kuylaars reports on the encounter with a tapir in Immink's garden. (UBL KITLV A907).

Another personal album in which the captions do not yield much information about who and where is a personal travel album compiled by J.H.C. Kuylaars when he visited the archipelago in 1916. In the album we are introduced to Kuylaars' sense of humour, for example, what happened when he met a tapir in the Immink's garden. In the first photograph of the tapir encounter Kuylaars comments: "Establish that the animal is fat". The following captions make a small story out of the encounter. "A tapir eats anything, even gentlemen's trousers" [Image 14: A907_1]. And so, "Father Immink reprimands it" (see Images 14 and 15).

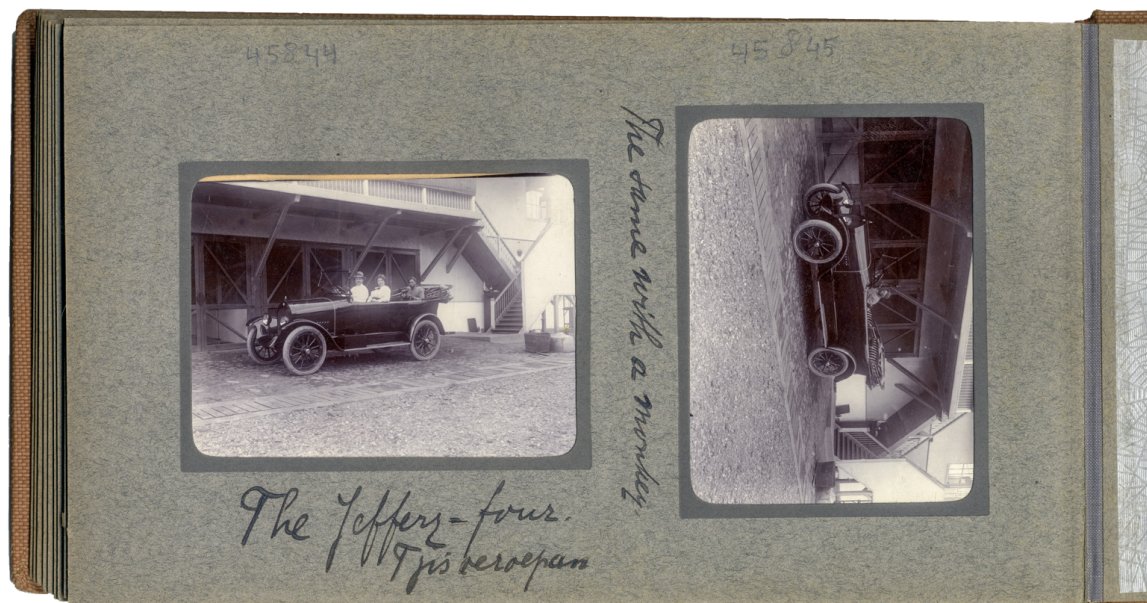


Image 16. Two photos made when Kuylaars and his wife travelled to Tjisoeroepan by car provided with cheesy captions (UBL KITLV A907).

Kuylaars often sequences the captions in photographs portraying a single event. One of the most striking captions in the light of present-day ideas are those accompanying two pictures, taken when Kuylaars and his wife made a car trip to Tjisoeroepan in West Java. The first caption "The Jeffers[on]-four, Tjisoeroepan" describes a photograph of the Kuylaars couple and their Indonesian driver in a car. The next photograph shows only the chauffeur in the driver's seat: "The same with a monkey" (see Image 16). Even though this caption should be seen in the context of the rest of captions, it echoes not only Kuylaars' cheesy sense of humour, it is also a reflection of the social and racial differences between European and Indonesian inhabitants of the archipelago.

As we have seen, all personal albums are autobiographical in nature for the compilers or receivers. That is, they reveal information about networks, for example, in the friends booklet and Aunt Kit album, or they report on personal experiences, for instance, in the Douwes Dekker scrapbook or the tiger album. In some examples, like the Douwes Dekker scrapbook and the Kuylaars travel album, a storyline which in both cases along a chronological line is maintained. It is the combination of photos and their captions which

gives insights into the autobiographical character of the personal albums. In these personal albums we can distinguish two types of captions. The first are those which reflect or comment on particular events, as is the case in the Douwes Dekker scrapbook and the Kuylaars travel album. In the second place, captions that are more descriptive or identifying in nature. Describing who, what and when, for example, in the Aunt Kit album, the tiger album and the friends booklet. Be that as it may, both commentary and identifying captions explain the context of the photographs and the album.

A NEW CONTEXT OF DISPLAY

The introduction of an album into the KITLV collection is a new stage in its existence or biography. Therefore albums are not static objects. As said earlier, the captions are part of the materiality of the photo album. This materiality changes when they are catalogued and made accessible in an online database. The cataloguing of the objects carries big implications for both the photographs and their captions. The institutional practices of the KITLV, which are continued by Leiden University Libraries since the move of the collection in 2014, consist of the digitizing, cataloguing, and the conservation of the photo album. Cataloguing and digitizing the photo material makes it accessible worldwide. An added advantage is that the pressure on consulting the original photo albums is reduced and this helps the conservation of the original material.

Cataloguing is considered the first and foremost job of the Institute. Until recently, a selection of photographs in an album was described individually. Digitization costs were one of the reasons to choose not to catalogue all photographs in an album. This practice is, for example, seen in the Kuylaars travel album in Images 14 and 15; the tapir photograph on the left is not given a catalogue number. The repetitive character of the tapir photographs was one of the reasons for making a selection. However, it is precisely the repetition in the tapir images which does make sense in Kuylaar's storyline told through his captions. The Douwes Dekker album, for example, the photographs taken during the trip around the world were all left out when the album was catalogued (see Images 4 and 5). As the former Dutch colonies in the east and the west are one of the main geographical focal points in the KITLV collection, the pictures taken in Europe were deselected. Hence, the fact that many inhabitants of the Netherlands Indies travelled Europe when on furlough and this travelling was part of Indies culture, is ignored. Pertinently, Douwes Dekker's memories of this trip, recalled through the photographs, commemorated not only happy times in Europe, they also helped him tell his story about loss; a narrative which runs through the entire photo album. Writing of digitization, digressing on the selection of "suitable" images for digitization, Sassoon (2004: 205) observes that: "The image is moved by its custodian into a new discursive space", in which aesthetic qualities prevail over research potential. Even though aesthetic qualities do not play an important part in the selection process made by the KITLV, the fact that only

a selection of images from an album is catalogued and digitized means that narratives found in the albums are lost. That is, the careful composition of the album which had been properly thought through by its compiler, like Douwes Dekker, is undone. Therefore, interested parties, like researchers, are shown a distorted picture of the album content online.

When we zoom in on the handling of original captions during cataloguing, it becomes clear that even more relevant data is lost. The final photograph, a portrait, in the Douwes Dekker scrapbook, for example, is catalogued as “24-year old European man, possibly G.M.G. Douwes Dekker, in Surabaya”. The original caption says:

What should be done with this chap? He is a remanent of the deluge who no longer has a place anywhere in this album. Therefore I do not know what to do with this lonely museum piece from 1910. Perhaps it is best to annihilate this photo, as indeed will be the fate of the original itself within a very short time. But there are people, conservatives they are called, who are opposed to clearing up. Well, as far away as possible ... (see Image 17).

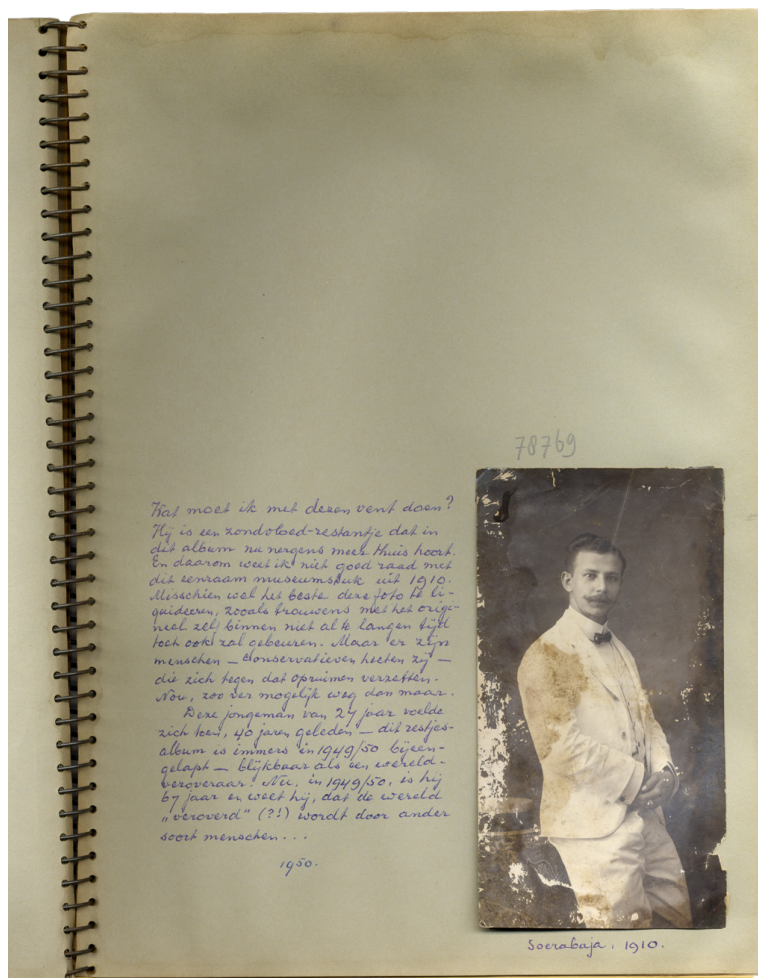


Image 17. Final photograph in the scrapbook portraying G.M.G. Douwes Dekker. In the caption Douwes Dekker considers himself as a “deluge remnants”. (UBL KITLV A169).

Douwes Dekker's reflection on himself is completely ignored, as are other contemplative notes he made throughout the scrapbook. The note field in the catalogue, however, does mention that, apart from the photographs, the scrapbook contains stories, drawings, floor-plans and maps, albeit the carefully designed structure of the album and annotations holding Douwes Dekker storyline were ignored during cataloguing. As a consequence, the autobiographical character of the Douwes Dekker scrapbook has been completely lost.

Some photo collections hold multiple originals, that is, duplicate photos. The photographs in Image 8, the cabinet portrait of the Van der Plas family, and the portrait of Aunt Kit. The descriptions and keywords of the duplicate photographs were copied, and cross references were made in the catalogue. In the case of the photographs of Image 8, both the original captions and title page of the album were copied in the catalogue. This information gives these particular copies context, that of Aunt Kit's hundredth birthday and her relationship with the family. The duplicate images lack original captions, album information and hence context. The latter way of cataloguing was standard practice in the KITLV and therefore the overall image database rarely gives original captions in which the opinions and feelings of the compilers are presented. However, it is precisely these captions which are part of the materiality of the album which gives the images context.

Within the library database, the focus is on image content. The photographs which are part of an album are singularized both in cataloguing and digitizing. They are given new "neutral" descriptions noting who and where and ignoring the personal narratives of the compiler. The illustrated "subject" is the key in cataloguing the image. Consequently, the (personal) albums are being reinterpreted in both the cataloguing and digitization process. When the photographs are digitized, the images are cropped from the album pages. Importantly, the photographs shown online are all more or less the same size. Digital versions can be blown up, making them larger than the original version. When viewing the scanned versions, the sense of size is completely lost. The small-size portraits in the friends booklet, for instance, are just as large online as the portraits in the Aunt Kit album. As Sassoon (2004: 210) has noted, the original photographs are being transformed; the digital version is not the same as the original, it is a digital shadow. Although some material aspects like the tiger skin rug or the title page in the Aunt Kit album are mentioned in the catalogue, the users of the image database still view digital shadows deprived of any material content and are therefore devoid of context. Interestingly it is materiality which plays an important role, at least in part, in acquisition decisions, for example, when the tiger album was collected. However, the materiality of the tiger album which is now completely invisible in the newly created digital context. Hence, photo albums are part of a continuous process of production (as Edwards and Hart observe 2004: 4); the new context of the library changes the way the photographs are dealt with; the album is reduced to a series of one-dimensional singularized photographic images.

The process of exchange (Edwards and Hart 2004: 4), which is also part of an album's life, is continued on a different level in the library context. As said earlier, before they moved to public sphere of the KITLV collection, the personal albums were part of an intimate sphere in which they were controlled by the owners or their descendants. Moreover, the moment the albums became part of the KITLV collection, they moved from the private to the public sphere, never to return to the former again. The upshot is that, when personal albums are made accessible online, the intended viewing in the intimate familial sphere changes drastically. The photos are now being viewed by strangers. As a consequence, this increased access changes the visual economy connected to the personal albums. That is, the unequal colonial relationships which, for example, played a big role in the biographical life of the looted friends booklet, have changed since the photos have been widely accessible online. Moreover, the accessibility of personal albums in the KITLV collection is no longer geographically limited. The image content of the albums is now, for instance, available to both former colonizer and colonized.

The drawback is that the accessibility of the photo collection online has limited the access to the original photo albums. Hence, the original material is hardly ever opened and touched, a drastic change to the album's previous life. The biographical life of the physical albums has ground to a halt as it were.

The act of viewing has changed significantly in twofold ways. First of all, the digitization policy, including cropping and selecting, determines what is being viewed online. Secondly, after cataloguing and digitization, the image content of the album is widely available to any interested party. As stated previously, what is viewed online is not the same as the original personal album. As Sassoon (2004: 200-204) has noted, the authenticity of photographic material online is highly questionable. With the focus on image content, material aspects of an album like captions which structure the narratives are lost online. In other words, the narratives which contextualize the personal albums are amputated from them; personal albums are being decontextualized online. In the decontextualized digital version of the album, the autobiographical character of the album is completely lost. Whether a caption is closely or only partially related to image content, it is both descriptive and reflective and it helps reading the images and forming the core of the composed storyline. Moreover, captions allow insight into the compiler's views and experiences and those of the intended (private) audiences. As shown earlier, the captions give a glimpse into the autobiographical character of the object.

In order to allow more insight into the autobiographical character and context of a personal album or any album in the KITLV collection, the relationship between the digital and physical versions should be drastically changed. Cataloguing and digitizing practices should shift from cropping photographs to digitizing an album cover to cover. When the KITLV began the online photo database in the 1990s, the Institute was limited in its digital possibilities. Recently, online databases have been offering page-turning functions. The Library has therefore now changed its digitization policy

to scanning whole objects. Even though this new policy still turns a three-dimensional object into a one-dimensional one, by implementing this new policy, the link between the physical album and its digital shadow will be more connected. Consequently, with the help of its original captions and comments the context of an album will become more apparent.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Captions are an important feature of a personal album's materiality. I would argue that it is the captions above everything else which turn the albums into autobiographical objects. Photo albums are often structured documents in which the photographs have been placed in a particular order and meticulously provided with captions. As I have shown, this structure is striking in the outline of the Douwes Dekker scrapbook and the sequencing of photographs and accompanying captions in the Kuylaars travel album. Unquestionably their compilers made a document that were properly thought through.

The time span between the taking of snapshots and the actual compilation of the album influences the way the photographs are commented on in the captions. In the Douwes Dekker scrapbook, for example, the captions reveal personal experiences which are not represented in the photographs. It is these reflective captions which unveil personal views and experiences. In other instances, captions are more descriptive or identifying, for example, giving the names of those portrayed, as is the case in the Aunt Kit album or the friends booklet. These captions are related to the familial networks of friends and family of the compiler or receiver of the personal albums.

The moment personal albums become part of the KITLV collection, their photographic content, captions and their intended audiences, which are key to the autobiographical character of the object, change remarkably. When the albums were still part of the intimate private sphere, compilers and their close familial connections controlled who viewed the albums. Upon entering the KITLV collections, personal albums become accessible to any interested party, the great majority of them strangers.

What is being viewed has also completely changed. When the object is catalogued and digitized, the personal albums are transformed from a three-dimensional object into a cropped one-dimensional image. As a consequence, the personal albums are drastically transformed in the material sense; the album content online is represented by a digital shadow which is dematerialized and decontextualized. Moreover, the autobiographical character which is echoed in the captions is lost when photographs or a selection of images in the database are given new "neutral" captions. In short, the (personal) albums are being reinterpreted online. They are reduced to a series of images with "neutral" descriptions telling the who and the where and ignoring the personal narratives of the compiler.

It could be said that, once catalogued and digitized, the personal albums and their photographs are transformed into illustrations. This ignores the fact

that it is the views revealed in cheesy comments or reflections, handmade album covers and motto pages which are what make the albums utterly personal and give it context. It is therefore important to change the way the albums are catalogued and digitized. The focus should shift from image content to object content in which the complex nature of the album will be disclosed.

REFERENCES

- Edwards, Elizabeth and Janet Hart. 2004. "Introduction; Photographs as objects", in: Elizabeth Edwards and Janet Hart (eds), *Photographs, objects, histories; On the materiality of images*, pp. 1-15. London/New York: Routledge.
- Nordström, Alison. 2004. "Making a journey; The tupper scrapbooks and the travel they describe", in: Elizabeth Edwards and Janet Hart (eds), *Photographs objects histories; On the materiality of images*, pp. 81-95. London/New York: Routledge.
- Papavasileiou, Eleni. 2015. "5 from private to public; The David Macgregor maritime photographic collection", in: Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton, *Photographs, museums, collection; Between art and information*, pp. 83-98. London/New Delhi /New York /Sydney: Bloomsbury.
- Pattynama, Pamela. 2012. "Tempo doeloe nostalgia and brani memory community; The IWI collection as a postcolonial archive", *Photography & Culture* 5(3): 265-280.
- Poole, Deborah. 1997. *Vision, race, and modernity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Protschky, Susie. 2012. "Tea cups, cameras and family life; Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies, ca. 1900-42", *History of Photography* 36 (1): 44-65.
- Protschky, Susie. 2014. "Personal albums from early twentieth-century Indonesia", in: Geal Newton (ed.), *Garden of the East; Photography in Indonesia 1850s-1940s*, pp. 48-55. Canberra: National Gallery of Australia.
- Rose, Gillian. 2010. *Doing family photography; The domestic, the public, and the politics of sentiment*. Farnham: Routledge.
- Rouffaer, G.P and W.C. Muller. 1908. *Catalogus der Koloniale Bibliotheek van het Kon. Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Ned. Indië en het Indisch Genootschap*. 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Sassoon, Joanna. 2004. "Photographic materiality in the age of digital reproduction", in: Elizabeth Edwards and Janet Hart (eds), *Photographs objects histories; On the materiality of images*, pp. 196-213. London/New York: Routledge.

CONSULTED ALBUMS AND PROVENANCE AND ARCHIVE

UBL KITLV A169. *Restjes na de zondvloed*. Scrapbook made by G.M.G. Douwes Dekker. Donated to the KITLV in 1979.

- UBL KITLV A569. Tiger album compiled by E.G.A. Lapré. Sold through a dealer to the KITLV in 1998.
- UBL KITLV A907. Travel album compiled by J.H.C. Kuylaars. Donated to the KITLV by a dealer in 2004.
- UBL KITLV A1070. Friends booklet compiled by S. Nasruddin. Sold through a dealer to the KITLV in 2004.
- UBL KITLV A1186. *Tante Kit's 100ste verjaardag*, compiled by the Van der Plas family. Donated to the KITLV in 2008.
- D H 754. Brieven van Gerret Pieter Rouffaer (1860-1928), Hendrik Herman Juynboll (1867-1945), Jan Laurens Andries Brandes (1857-1905), Willem Bastiaan Tholen (1860-1931) en E.C. Ekker.