



The Titus Brandsma family archive

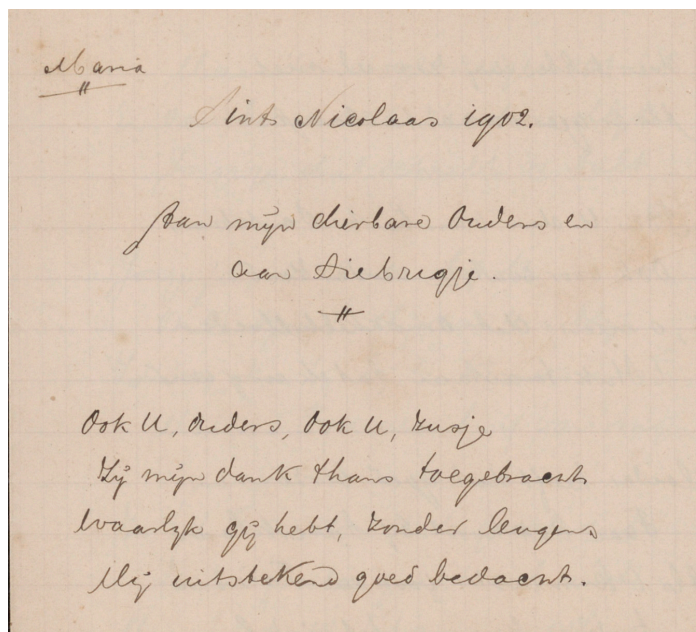
by the Archive - and Documentation - Centre for Roman Catholic Friesland Foundation (ADRKF)

Stumbling upon grant opportunities

Stichting Archief- en Documentatiecentrum voor R.K. Friesland (Archive- and Documentation-Centre for Roman Catholic Friesland Foundation, ADRKF) has been a Content Provider for Archives Portal Europe (APE) since 2020. We at Archiefbureau Ruerd de Vries (Archival Bureau Ruerd de Vries) act as Institution Manager for the ADRKF. On behalf of the ADRKF, the bureau has ingested 70 archives into APE, and we are constantly working on ingesting further archives. Recently, Tresoar, the Frysk Histoarysk en Letterkundich Sintrum (Frisian Historic and Literary Centre), notified the bureau about APE's 'Digitise & Upload Grant' and 'Metadata Ingestion Grant'. The ADRKF's most important archive is the family archive of Titus Brandsma O.Carm. (23 February 1881–26 July 1942), and we had not ingested it into APE. The grants presented a great opportunity to make the family archive of an influential Frisian available for an international audience. Hence, the bureau applied for funding to ingest and digitize the family archive.

About Brandsma

Brandsma was a Friesland-born Carmelite friar, priest, publicist, and professor who is an important figure in Dutch history. Brandsma was born in the buurtschap (a type of hamlet) Ugoklooster on the 23rd of February 1881. From 1923 until his death in 1942, Brandsma was a professor of philosophy and history of piety at what is currently the Radboud University of Nijmegen. He was also rector of this university in 1932-1933. Moreover, as advisor





to the Nederlandsche Rooms-Katholieke Journalistenvereniging (Dutch Roman-Catholic Journalists Association), Brandsma played a role in the modernisation of the catholic newspaper press and the improvement of the working conditions of catholic journalists. In addition, Brandsma championed Frisian causes, such as the emancipation of Frisian Catholics and conserving Frisian heritage. Furthermore, Brandsma was an important thinker in Carmelite mysticism, and his collection of copies of medieval mystical manuscripts led to the foundation of the Titus Brandsma Institute. In 1939, Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962) knighted Brandsma in the Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw

(Order of the Dutch Lion) for his altruistic achievements. Before and during World War II, Brandsma was an influential critic of National Socialism and racism. He also resisted the expulsion of Jewish students from Catholic schools. In 1942, the Nazi-regime arrested him for his criticisms and transported him to the Dachau concentration camp, where he died of a lethal injection following a period of abuse and sickness on the 26th of July 1942. Pope John Paul II beatified Brandsma in 1985.



About the archive

The archive contains 2,5 m of letters and postcards from Brandsma to his family, as well as photos, poetry, publications, and other valuable documents related to Brandsma. In 1992, the archive was gifted to the ADRKF by the Hettinga family from Bolsward, the descendants of Brandsma's sister Gatske de Boer-Brandsma. The archive grew via a series of expansions. Initially, with archival objects from the archives of the historians Henk Andela and Henk Aukes, a section of the newspaper clippings collection of the ADRKF, and archival objects from the Herdenkingscommissie Titus Brandsma 1942-1992 (Memorial Committee Titus Brandsma 1942-1992). Furthermore, in the spring of 2017, the archive of the Bestuurscommissie Zaligverklaring Titus



Brandsma (Management Committee for the beatification of Titus Brandsma) was ingested into the archive. Most recently, in 2019, Theo Schouw from Helvoirt gifted 162 letters and postcards sent between Brandsma and publisher Paul Brand from Bussum between 1917 and 1940 to the ADRKF.

Various versions of inventories of the family archive were published by the ADRKF between 2006 and 2019. The most recent version is the fourth revised edition. The inventories were compiled by Henk Nota, the current secretary of the ADRKF. Nota's inventory is subdivided into twelve sections. Nine describe materials related to

Brandsma and his family. These sections are 'Anno Sjoerd Brandsma (pater Titus O.Carm.)', 'De ouders van Titus: Titus Hendriks Brandsma en Tjitske Annes Postma', 'Boukje Brandsma (zuster Maria)', 'Apollonia Brandsma (zuster Barbara)', 'Michel de Boer en Gatske Brandsma', 'Siebrigje Brandsma (zuster Willibrorda)', 'Hendrik Brandsma (pater Henricus)', 'Overige familieleden' en 'Diversen'. Anno Sjoerd

Mag ik langs dezen weg mijn oprechten dank betuigen voor uw zoo hartelijk medeleven met mijn veertig-jarig Professiefeest, 3 October 1939. Uw naam is in het Album Amicorum ingeschreven en zal mij nog dikwijls uw vriendschapsbetuiging op dien dag in aangename herinnering brengen.

I. TITUS BRANDSMA
O. CARM.

was Brandsma's birth-name. Titus Hendriks and Tjitske Annes were Brandsma's parents. Boukje, Apollonia, Gatske, Siebrigje and Hendrik were Brandsma's siblings. Michiel was Brandsma's brother-in-law. 'Overige familieleden' contains archival objects related to other family members. 'Diversen' contains various archival objects not subdivided in the other sections. Amongst others, this section contains damaged materials and documents whose relationship to the rest of the archive cannot be determined. The last three sections contain materials from the Herdenkingscommissie, Bestuurscommissie and the letters and postcards sent between Brandsma and Paul Brand respectively.

Assessing the calls for application's requirements

Before applying to the grants, we did an assessment of the outputs required by applicants. Regarding representing a linked open data URI, we researched multiple



options and selected the Library of Congress Name Authority File (LCNAF). The LCNAF was the best solution for us because Brandsma already has an established LCNAF (<http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/n80119298>) and including a LCNAF is an integrated option in ArchivesSpace (AS), the archive software we utilize. Furthermore, we appointed software developer LICO Innovations to augment our version of AS' Public Interface (PI) so we could include a 'direct link to the media file for the digital object' in the metadata. Previously these links would result in a direct download on our PI. However, we can now show images in-browser, fulfilling this requirement. Moreover, we inquired with GMS Noord, a business specialized in digitizing archives, if the digitized documents would meet Europeana's standards. Fortunately, GMS' output would easily match Europeana's standards. Last, we did research into any copyrights which might reside on the materials. As a result of this research, we found that the core of the archive, materials written by Brandsma, are in the public domain. Additionally, the materials written by Brandsma's sister Siebrigje are also in the public domain. The conclusion of our assessment was that we could only ingest and digitize the family archive if we received both grants. We would commission GMS to digitize the archive and ingest Nota's archival descriptions into AS ourselves. We would then link the scans to the archival descriptions via a custom web solution developed by LICO Innovations.

The grants are awarded to the ADRKF

Once the grants were awarded to the ADRKF, we set in motion the digitization of the archive by GMS. With advice from our contacts at APE and GMS we chose to receive all scans in JP2000 for conservation purposes, JPEG for single page images and PDF for all multi-page documents. Whilst GMS was working on digitizing the archive, we ingested the metadata into AS. Since Nota's inventory does not fully map to AS, we altered the inventory and enriched the metadata. With the archive completely described in AS, the archive consists of approximately 2400 archival descriptions. When it comes to archival descriptions, this is one of the largest archives we have worked with to date.

After roughly two weeks, GMS provided us with the scans: a whopping 2376 PDF-files, 12928 JP2000-files and 12928 JPEG-files. Making for a total of 28232 files, weighing in at 65,8 GB. We then started manually linking the scans to the archival objects via LICO's previously mentioned web solution. Along the way we encountered some hiccups. First, the HTML value APE uses to discern a digital object type does not appear in the expected location in EAD-files produced by AS. This was solved by a custom augmentation for AS developed by LICO. Second, the large size of the archive made providing a link to our digital object viewer per archival object overly time consuming. Hence, LICO developed a tool which facilitates exporting and importing via spreadsheets. Via this manner, AS inventories can be exported, edited in bulk, and then uploaded. With the deadline coming up, we decided on only linking scans of



materials in the public domain. All records written by Brandsma and his sister Siebrigje are now linked to their respective digital objects.

Results to be proud of

Our outcome is that roughly 240 letters and postcards by Brandsma and a few by his sister Siebrigje are now freely available for the public. Moreover, the metadata pertaining to the entire archive, an archive of approximately 2400 records, can be accessed for free as well. As outlined above, Brandsma was an important individual in Dutch history. Yet, the public is mostly familiar with him as a public figure; a publicist, a professor, a champion of Frisian causes and eventually a martyr for free press. Now, the family archive can show a unique private side of Brandsma to a global audience. In his letters and postcards, we see a committed family member, previously only visible to researchers visiting the ADRKF in Bolsward. Besides the digitally available materials, the metadata presents the comprehensive collection of the ADRKF to a wide audience. This information is especially valuable as it sheds a light on Brandsma's substantial *Nachleben*; from his death in 1942 to the present day. The process of digitizing and ingesting the family archive was an educational experience for our archival bureau. When we started, we had only just begun initializing OAI-PMH harvests, had little experience in digitizing an archive and never even heard of subject headings. Nor did we have much experience with copyright in the context of publishing archives. We have also become much more versed in





standards for encoding archival finding aids. Along the way we learned a lot and expanded our toolkit immensely. This project has been incredibly valuable. Not only because an important archive is made public, but also for us personally.

Future work

We are still hard at work with linking the remaining scans to archival objects not in the public domain. Over 25% of digital objects are now linked to an archival object. With all public domain materials written by Brandsma and his sister Siebrigje available digitally, it is time to set our sights on the future. We have many more scans and want to make them publicly available once the linking is complete. The bureau is working on a roadmap concerning the unrestricted publication of the remaining scans. However, this requires much additional research, and we are already over budget. We are very much still figuring out a way in which the publication of additional material can be brought to a fruitful conclusion.

