



Introduction

Since 1851 the KITLV has had the triple task of caring for its collections, research and publishing scientific works, principally on Indonesia and the 'Dutch' Caribbean. In the past 160 or more years the way in which this task has been fulfilled has changed considerably – one can read about it just in the book by Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *Tussen oriëntalisme en wetenschap (Dutch scholarship in the age of Empire and beyond, see below)*, published on the occasion of 150 anniversary of its existence. However, in recent years, under pressure from the KNAW, the umbrella organisation to which the KITLV has belonged since 2001, this mission has been steadily reduced. In 2012 its own publishing house had to be closed: Brill Academic Publishers took over the publishing of the 'Verhandelingen', the Caribbean Series, and also the journals *Bijdragen [Contributions]* and *New West Indian Guide*. Thus in 2013 the English edition of Koutenbrouwer's book about the history of the KITLV, was published not by KITLV Press but by Brill.

In 2011 the KNAW let it be known that it aimed at the establishment of a Humanities Centre in Amsterdam, in which, as was the intention, all the Academy's institutes for the humanities would work closely together. In the past three years intensive negotiations for this have taken place between the KNAW and the institutes concerned. In these negotiations the KITLV had a special position. Initially, as far as the KNAW was concerned, the possibility of the closure of the institute was one of the possibilities: this threat could be averted. Both the KITLV and the Leiden University insisted that, given the field of work and the national and international profile of the University, the KITLV could find no better place than on the Leiden campus. The board of the KNAW showed themselves to be sensitive to this.

At the end of 2013 a variant emerged by which the KITLV as a KNAW research institute would remain on the Leiden campus and the collaboration between institutes and colleagues at the University would be strengthened. At the same time, the KITLV would be part of the Humanities Centre that was being established. The reverse side of this good result, however, was that the present collections, legally the property of the KITLV Learned Society, would be transferred as permanent loan to the University Library (UBL), which in future would take responsibility for the collections. Part of the budget involved would be transferred from the KNAW to Leiden University, while at the same time considerable economies would be made by the KNAW. The further elaboration of the principle agreement between the KNAW and the UL would be realised in the first half of 2014 – that was the intention at the end of 2013. With this agreement the KITLV lost its second, and historically speaking, its oldest and most important buttress of the institute, namely care and acquisition of its world-famous collections. For all connected with the institute in any way this was an extremely painful experience, particularly so as for the staff involved it meant either transferring to the UBL or the loss of their job. On the other hand, with this agreement Leiden University guaranteed the continued existence and care of the collections and the KNAW agreed to the strengthening the research institute KITLV. Under the circumstances this appeared to be the best feasible result, as the General Meeting of the Learned Society concluded.

Understandably this process, running from 2011, has demanded much management effort and has caused much unrest among members and users, but above all among members of the staff of KITLV. Nevertheless the normal work was carried out. This introduction will deal only with a number of exceptional developments and achievements.

The Learned Society organised various meetings in which discussions were held with the members about the management developments, but also offered a number well-attended meetings such as 'Ticket to Leiden; New Indonesian histories and postcolonial collections in the Netherlands' and a

lecture about slavery in connection with the big exhibition 'Black/white' in the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam.

Prompt action by the curators of our own collections and good discussions with those of the Royal Tropical Institute led to that several thousand works about Indonesia and the Dutch Caribbean written in the period 1950-1970 could be added to the KITLV collection. In addition various exceptional acquisitions were made, including the purchase of a unique and extensive photographic collection, offered by the antiquarian book shop Minerva in The Hague.

UNESCO accepted the request that two editions of the manuscript of the Javanese Prince Diponegoro, the *Babad Diponegoro* in the UNESCO register 'Memory of the world'. This request, under the auspices of the Indonesian UNESCO committee, was made jointly by National Library of Indonesia and the KITLV. This adjudication received a great deal of publicity, particularly in Indonesia, and whereby the KITLV was increasingly recognised as a partner and thanked for its role.

In January, with a great deal of public interest and in the presence of the former president B.J. Habibie and a many high officials, the exhibition 'Mapping the history KITLV; World-class collections and scholarship on Indonesia' was opened in the Erasmus House in Jakarta. A large number of exceptional historical photographs, prints, manuscripts and publication, sent from Leiden to Jakarta for the occasion, were exhibited

In the last two decades research has become an increasingly important function of the KITLV and various major themes have been placed convincingly on the international research agenda. Currently that concerns in particular the programmes 'From clients to citizens?' and 'Elite network shifts'. In both cases the themes have been gradually broadened; we can mention substantial external finance and close collaboration with foreign researchers, including those in Indonesia.

Senior researcher Gerry van Klinken was appointed endowed professor of social and economic history of South-East Asia by the University of Amsterdam. This chair is due to the KITLV and a continuation of the former KITLV chair at the University that was held by Peter Boomgaard. On 2nd October, greeted by great interest, Van Klinken gave his inaugural lecture with the title 'Murder in Maumere; Postcolonial citizenship'.