



## **Introduction**

At first glance this annual report is no different from those of preceding years. However, appearances are deceptive. In the middle of the year, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, there came an end to the KITLV in the form in which it had existed since 1851, an institute with a triple function – the care for its collections, research and the publication of scientific works on Indonesia and the ‘Dutch’ Caribbean. Its own publishing house had already been transferred to Brill in 2012: by the middle of 2014 the responsibility for the collections, including KITLV-Jakarta, was entrusted to the University of Leiden. The KITLV was reorganised and would continue as a purely research orientated institute of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). This introduction describes the painful processes that have led to this, but also offers the opportunity to report the energetic start made by the ‘new’ KITLV. While previously we have given a detailed report of the results obtained by the Collection and KITLV-Jakarta departments, this is no longer applicable. From now on the Annual Report focusses on Research: in addition, there is ample attention given to the manner in which the institute, in collaboration with the Learned Society of KITLV, disseminates and shares its knowledge.

## **Division and a new beginning**

The recent developments have their origins in the gradual change (1990-2001) from the KITLV to the KNAW. From 1851 to 2000 the KITLV was managed by the Learned Society. Before World War II the institute functioned using its own modest means. After the war the government was the principal source of finance of the rapidly growing institute. In 1990, at the instigation of government, the board had to choose between working with the KNAW or with one of the Dutch universities, in this case the Leiden University. For good reasons the choice for the KNAW was made. In 2001 the Learned Society was more or less forced to become an institute ‘of’ the Academy. The Covenant between the two parties that emerged from long negotiation placed the finances and primary management responsibilities for the institute in the hands of the KNAW, but offered firm guarantees of the continued existence of the institute, the continued involvement of the board of the Learned Society in policy and a permanent location in Leiden.

For ten years this went well, very well in fact, as can be stated now in retrospect. The institute flourished; the means and structure increased, the research profile was strengthened, and consecutive international evaluation committees gave the KITLV excellent, and moreover, increasingly good, assessments. However, from 2010 the situation worsened. Financial cuts by a retiring government played a role in this, but above all this was due to the changing policy of the KNAW. By the end of 2010 it was clear that in the Trippenhuis, the administrative centre of the KNAW, there were thoughts of ‘phasing out’ the KITLV, due to economic considerations and because the institute would really not fit in the picture that Academy envisaged for its institutes for the humanities. In the spring of 2011 the director was informed that the KNAW was examining the possibility of putting institute, without a budget, out of the Academy. Due to a powerful lobby, in which the Covenant between the KNAW and the Learned Society already mentioned, played an important part, this danger could be averted. However for several years the existence of the KITLV hung by a thread.

For over two years there were difficult negotiations between KNAW, the Learned Society and KITLV-KNAW. The KNAW wanted the institute to be incorporated in an umbrella KNAW Humanities Centre, with a strong emphasis on the e-humanities and a greatly reduced focus on the collections. Both the KITLV and Leiden University continually pointed out that the KITLV could find no better place than on the Leiden campus. The board of the KNAW showed itself to be sensitive to this. The chair of the Learned Society and the director of the KITLV maintained that the care of the collections and research must remain linked; that changing the location, bearing in mind the field of work and the national and international profile of Leiden University, were by no means self-evident and in

contravention of the Covenant, and there was no scientific or administrative reason to deal so drastically with the KITLV.

Meanwhile the Learned Society and KITLV-KNAW had been forced to agree to abandoning KITLV Press, due to great pressure from the KNAW, which felt that such a concern was not consistent for what they wished to see as a primarily research institute. As a result, in 2012 KITLV Press was transferred to Brill Academic Publishers, which meant that a number of staff lost their jobs. Of the three functions of the KITLV (the collections, research, publication) only two remained. There was an impasse when the KITLV, along with the NIOD, withdrew from the negotiations with the affiliated instances that should lead to a grouping of the Humanities institutes of the Academy. In the opinion of the KITLV this development would lead to the abolition of the institute without any guarantee that their mission (the collections and research) would be continued in the new Humanities Centre of the KNAW. Then a breakthrough was achieved without the direct involvement of the Learned Society or KITLV-KNAW. In the summer of 2013 the board of the KNAW and the Board of Directors of Leiden University agreed that the KITLV would be split up, whereby the KITLV, as a research institute of the KNAW would be housed on the Leiden campus, and the responsibility for the collections of the Learned Society, including KITLV-Jakarta, would be entrusted to the Leiden University Library (UBL). This principal agreement was to have far-reaching consequences for both finance and personnel of the department of Collections; roughly speaking, a third of the KNAW budget would be transferred from the KNAW to Leiden University, whereby the UBL would take on about half of the personnel of Collections and a number of supporting staff. The other half would lose their jobs. KITLV-Jakarta would no longer be part of the KITLV, so the staff on Indonesia would also have a new employer. The research institute KITLV would continue with about one third of its original budget, to be augmented by new research resources, focussing on rejuvenation and renewal. At the same time the KNAW aimed to achieve considerable economies.

The institute faced a *fait accompli*. Moreover the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science appeared to support the principal agreement. Considering that the situation in other areas was only worse, witness the failure of the Royal Tropical Institute, it was decided to get the best possible outcome in the negotiations with the KNAW and now too, Leiden University.

Obviously this long drawn-out process gave rise to concerns among the members of the Learned Society, the international community of scholars of Indonesia and the Caribbean and naturally among the institute's staff. With regards to the last, from the first ominous intimations at the end of 2010 employees were continually kept up to date with developments, by which the local Employees Council (OC) – part of the works council of the KNAW - under the chairmanship of Fridus Steijlen played an extremely constructive role. In determining policy and strategy the chair of the Learned Society (first Peter Nas, professor at Leiden University, later Susan Lêgene, professor at the Free University Amsterdam, VU) and the director of the KITLV worked closely together. Close cooperation also found place with the Scientific Committee of the institute, first chaired by Mario Rutten (professor at the University of Amsterdam) and then by Ernst Hirsch Ballin (professor at the University of Tilburg and the University of Amsterdam). The members of the Association were kept informed regularly and when possible involved in the process: at two successive general meetings they supported, although sometimes with great hesitation, the chosen strategy and ultimately the results of the negotiations.

The development of the principal agreement was a relief in one sense because all the parties involved worked with mutual respect for a good result, on the other hand, for the KITLV it was an extremely painful process, considering the drastic consequences at both the institutional and personal level – in accordance with agreements made between the KNAW and Leiden University and the new budget of the KITLV, unilaterally decided by the KNAW, eventually eleven members of staff

would be transferred to the UBL and twelve would lose their jobs. It has to be said that unfortunately by the end of 2014 most of this last group had not been able to find other positions. In a physical sense too, the transition was far-reaching: the institute's own reading room – to many visitors the heart of the institute – was closed, a great number of rooms stood empty because staff moved to the UBL or would eventually lose their job.

Finally, on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, during a meeting in the boardroom of the Leiden University Executive Board, three agreements were signed that put the seal on the division of the 'old' KITLV and marked the beginning of the 'new' research institute KITLV. The president of KNAW Hans Clevers and the rector magnificus and chair of the Executive Board of Leiden University Carel Stolker signed the agreement that made provision for the transference of responsibility for the collections to the UBL, the maintenance of the research institute KITLV-KNAW on the Leiden campus and the joint investment in PhD programme, by which both the KNAW and Leiden University would finance three PhD students each for the KITLV. The whole agreement would be in effect for ten years: the PhD programme was started with the intention that this should be a long-term provision, but despite pressure from the KITL and Leiden University, the KNAW was not prepared to make this definite. Following this, the chair of the Learned Society and the director of the UBL, Kurt Belder, signed the agreement that provided for the transference of the responsibility for the collections to the UBL; those collections acquired before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 remained the possession of the Learned Society, anything acquired after that date would be the property of the UBL, with the exception of sporadic acquisitions made by the Association itself. At the same time it was determined that the KNAW, Leiden University, the Learned Society and the board of the KITLV would meet at least once a year in a 'Steering Committee KITLV' to discuss everything concerning the KITLV.

In the opinion of the management of the Learned Society and the institute KITLV was that, under the circumstances, these were the best and most permanent solutions to be found. The notices that the KITLV put on its own website, and from the press release given by the Learned Society, show this conviction – as well as a critical judgement of the role of the KNAW in the whole process. In an 'album' given to all members of staff, under the heading 'Sorrow and Pride' the many emotions that the process and result had evoked were baldly stated: *This solution is as permanent as the trustworthiness that will be shown by the parties involved: solemn words have been spoken and attested to that promise much good. So much depends on the élan that the researchers at the 'new' KITLV can radiate and realise, and the manner in which the former KITLV staff can use their skill and dedication with a new employer, the UBL, for this was also part of the deals that were made recently. Earlier the staff of KITLV Press was dismissed, in the middle of 2014 half the Collections staff were transferred to the UBL, but the other half lost their jobs. The researchers remained behind in what was once the home of all of us. That is painful; in the last few years it has often made many of us rebellious and indignant. That is why this book of photographs now evokes our sorrow.*