



## **Introduction to the KITLV Annual Report for 2017**

In many respects, the year 2017 was a good and dynamic one for the KITLV. In mid 2014, when it was due to undergo reorganization, there were serious concerns emanating from both within and outside of the institute. Would the KITLV, which from that point on would exclusively focus on research, manage to develop in a satisfactory way? Would the transfer of management of the unique KITLV collections to Leiden University Libraries work out well? We now know that the answer to both these questions is 'yes'.

In a symbolic celebration of the new arrangements, a visit was paid to the KITLV and Leiden University Libraries by the institute's patroness, Her Majesty Queen Máxima, on the occasion of the opening of the LUB's Asian Library, of which the KITLV collections constitute a prominent part. During the visit, the institute's board and researchers and also the chairman of the KITLV Association were afforded ample opportunity to bring our patroness up to date on developments since 2014. The tenor of these conversations was distinctly positive, with the way in which the research institute had developed over recent years being discussed in detail.

The institute now has two long-term research themes, namely 'State, violence and citizenship' and 'Mobility and belonging'. A large number of projects fall under these themes, most of which are being worked on by very diverse teams, with members ranging from researchers with a great deal of experience to those who are just starting out. Over recent years, the KITLV has been particularly successful in attracting externally funded research projects. Three such projects were launched in 2017, the first of which was a very large, government-funded research project into 'Decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia, 1945-1950'. The KITLV, along with the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (which, like the KITLV, is an institute affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy for Arts and Sciences, or KNAW) and the Netherlands Institute of Military History (NIMH) had been pressing for a study of this kind since 2012. The KITLV-NIMH-NIOD consortium will now be able to carry out this research, partly in cooperation with the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, between 2017 and 2021. The KITLV also obtained two NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) grants to fund research into 'Indonesia in transition: From Revolution to nation-building, 1943-1955' and 'Traveling Caribbean heritage'.

The institute's acquisition of these projects has meant that it has been able to attract a considerable number of researchers. In 2013, the KITLV was made up of just 13 FTE researchers and that number has now been doubled. In 2014, our ambition was to obtain 25% of our budget from external grants, and now, in 2017, that proportion has risen to 39%. An abundance of different research projects and researchers working in various disciplines and of varying seniority and origin have made the research group exceptionally diverse and dynamic. This dynamism is being further enhanced by the international fellows programme and the internship programme, which started up in 2014. A study initiated by the KNAW in the year under review revealed that, comparatively, staff at the KITLV are remarkably positive about their work at the institute.

The number of professors associated with the KITLV grew. Adriaan Bedner, who works for the Van Vollenhoven Institute at Leiden University but is also employed by the KITLV one day a week, took up a chair in Law and Society in Indonesia. Rosemarijn Hoefte was appointed a professor occupying an endowed chair in 'The history of Suriname in comparative perspective' at the University of Amsterdam. Fridus Steijlen was appointed a professor occupying an endowed chair in 'Moluccan migration and culture' at the VU Amsterdam. Hoefte was also selected to become the chair of the Association of Caribbean Historians.

Two of our young researchers also received distinctions. Tom Hoogervorst received the 'Young Scholar Prize 2017' from the *Indonesia and the Malay World* magazine, while Malcom Ferdinand was awarded the 'Robert Mankin PhD prize for interdisciplinary research', put up by the Paris Institute of Science and Humanities (IHSP).

The KITLV now boasts no fewer than nine doctoral candidates, funded by the KNAW, NWO or the Indonesian government. In addition, Indonesian researcher Ridho Reinando, who started work at the institute in 2012, obtained his doctorate in 2017. Doctoral candidates are always supervised by a KITLV professor and another external professor.

In terms of the number of books and articles published, productivity in 2017 was a little lower than in previous years. It is too early to say whether this marks a trend. Among the books that were published, special mention must go to the monograph entitled *Becoming Better Muslims* (Princeton University Press), in which David Kloos looks into how average Muslims in Aceh practise and experience their faith and how they cope with the increasing pressure exerted on them by the authorities and religious literalists.

Social knowledge transfer is, quite correctly, increasingly being viewed as a criterion for the assessment of scientific institutions. In this respect, the KITLV has an excellent reputation. The media, along with the government and private bodies, know where to find researchers who can answer their questions about Indonesia, the Caribbean and, increasingly, issues relating to the legacies of colonialism in the post-colonial Netherlands. This has resulted in a large number of appearances in the media, with those appearances attracting plenty of attention, both through our own website and other 'new media'.

This introduction started out on a positive note, but unfortunately must end with the sad news of the death of Peter Boomgaard on 10 January 2017. Peter was the Director of the KITLV from 1991 to 2000 and continued to work for the institute in the capacity of Senior Researcher until his retirement in 2011. It goes without saying that the institute took a moment to mark the passing of this eminent scholar. The KITLV also supported a symposium entitled 'Manusia, lingkungan, dan harimau' (Man, environment and tiger) organized in his honour in Yogyakarta. The symposium's subject matter was a fitting reference to his pioneering work on the ecological, demographic and economic history of Indonesia.