

Introduction to the KITLV Annual Report for 2018

Since the 1990s, the KITLV has been regularly evaluated by undergoing international peer review. These assessments have always turned out well for the KITLV: the three successive evaluations held in 1999, 2004 and 2012 all resulted in the institute being clearly rated as ‘good’, with the results even improving a little each time. The evaluation to which the institute was subjected in 2018 differed from the preceding ones in that the KITLV was being assessed purely as a research institute for the very first time (before the reorganization of 2014, evaluations had also included collection management and the KITLV Press). So, the rating the committee gave in 2018 was actually a rating for the ‘relaunch’ of 2014.

It is to our great satisfaction that we are able to report that the KITLV has never been reviewed as positively as it was in 2018. The institute was rated as ‘excellent’ (the highest possible rating) for both its academic results and its social impact.

The committee evaluated the institute’s viability as ‘very good’, justifiably noting that the upcoming generational changeover and the limited scale of activities are points to consider. The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) accepted this decidedly positive evaluation. The Academy and the KITLV were then able to agree on a good financial plan for guaranteeing staff continuity at the institute.

In mid 2018, Gerry van Klinken, a professor occupying an endowed chair at the University of Amsterdam and a senior researcher at the KITLV, was awarded emeritus status. His farewell symposium was dedicated to ‘Citizenship in precolonial Asia’ and as such entirely reflected the spirit of his inspiring contributions to the institute’s research profile. Rosemarijn Hoefte and Fridus Steijlen held their inaugural lectures at the University of Amsterdam (‘The Last Convulsions of Colonialism: The Suriname Experiment in the 1930s’) and at the VU Amsterdam (‘Tjakelele at full moon’) respectively. Marieke Bloembergen was appointed Professor of ‘Archival and Postcolonial Studies’ at Leiden University. Nico Kaptein, a senior researcher at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies, was appointed Professor of ‘Islam in Indonesia’ by Leiden University and seconded to the KITLV for one day a week.

As also established by the evaluation committee, the quality and quantity of the institute’s scientific output is at a high level. KITLV researchers published 42 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, some of which are immediately available through open access. They also had 10 books published by prestigious publishers such as Oxford University Press, Cornell University Press, Routledge, Fischer Verlag and Brill Academic Publishers. A significant proportion of the KITLV’s research is financed externally: the target level of 50% set during the 2014 reorganization has now been exceeded by some margin (reaching 88% in 2018). In addition to the ongoing projects financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and central government, two new projects have been acquired: ‘Palm oil conflicts and access to justice in Indonesia’ (NWO, Ward Berenschot) and ‘The colonial and slavery past of Rotterdam’ (City of Rotterdam, Gert Oostindie).

Increasingly, social and academic debates on the legacies of colonialism are being conducted in the Netherlands, as they are in other former colonial metropolises. The KITLV sees it as its task to contribute to these debates. The ongoing research being carried out into the last colonial

war in Indonesia and the new research into Rotterdam's colonial past are in line with this. Within this context, it is of vital importance that KITLV staff also reflect on their own role and on that of the institute in our colonial/post-colonial past and in modern-day debates. KITLV researchers attempt to do so when giving lectures, writing in publications and appearing in the media. The workshop entitled 'Academic research in a decolonizing world; towards new critical thinking and acting?', organized by Marieke Bloembergen, Sanne Rotmeijer and Priya Swami (National Museum of World Cultures) deserves special mention. KITLV staff are actively involved in many international academic associations, such as the European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS), for which the KITLV serves as the administrative office, and the Association of Caribbean Historians (ACH), of which Rosemarijn Hoefte is president. In the Netherlands, of course, the institute primarily works with the KITLV Association, under the chairmanship of Susan Legêne, and also with other institutes outside of the university, such as the Chinese Indonesian Heritage Center (CIHC).

Finally, we can report that an old plan that had once been put forward by the KITLV Association was finally implemented in 2018. This involved attaching a plaque to the house at number 12, Hugo de Grootstraat in Leiden, where the Indonesia Clubhouse was based between 1937 and 1941. This was an important site in the history of Indonesian nationalism in the Netherlands. The plaque was unveiled by the Ambassador for Indonesia, I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, on 5 March. Among those also present were the *Rector Magnificus* of Leiden University, Carel Stolker, alderman Paul Dirkse of the City of Leiden, and representatives of the Indonesian student association, Perhimpunan Pelajar Indonesia (PPI).