



Henk J.  
van Rinsum

# Utrecht University and Colonial Knowledge



**EXPLORATION,**

**EXPLOITATION**

**AND THE CIVILISING MISSION**

**SINCE 1636**

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## Utrecht University and Colonial Knowledge



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*Exploration, Exploitation and the Civilising Mission since 1636*

Henk J. van Rinsum

Amsterdam University Press

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At the top of the cover: a group of scientists at the Fourth Congress of Science in Java in 1929, with Professor F.A.F.C. Went of Utrecht on the far right.

In the centre of the cover: a picture of a 'Wardian case', which was used to transport plants from the Dutch East Indies to Europe. The Botanical Gardens in Utrecht has a Wardian case on display.

At the bottom of the cover: a map of western Java drawn by the orientalist, philologist, and cartographer Adriaan Reland (1676-1718), who was a professor at Utrecht University from 1701 to 1718.

On the back cover: specimens from the collection of the Botanical Gardens of Utrecht University.

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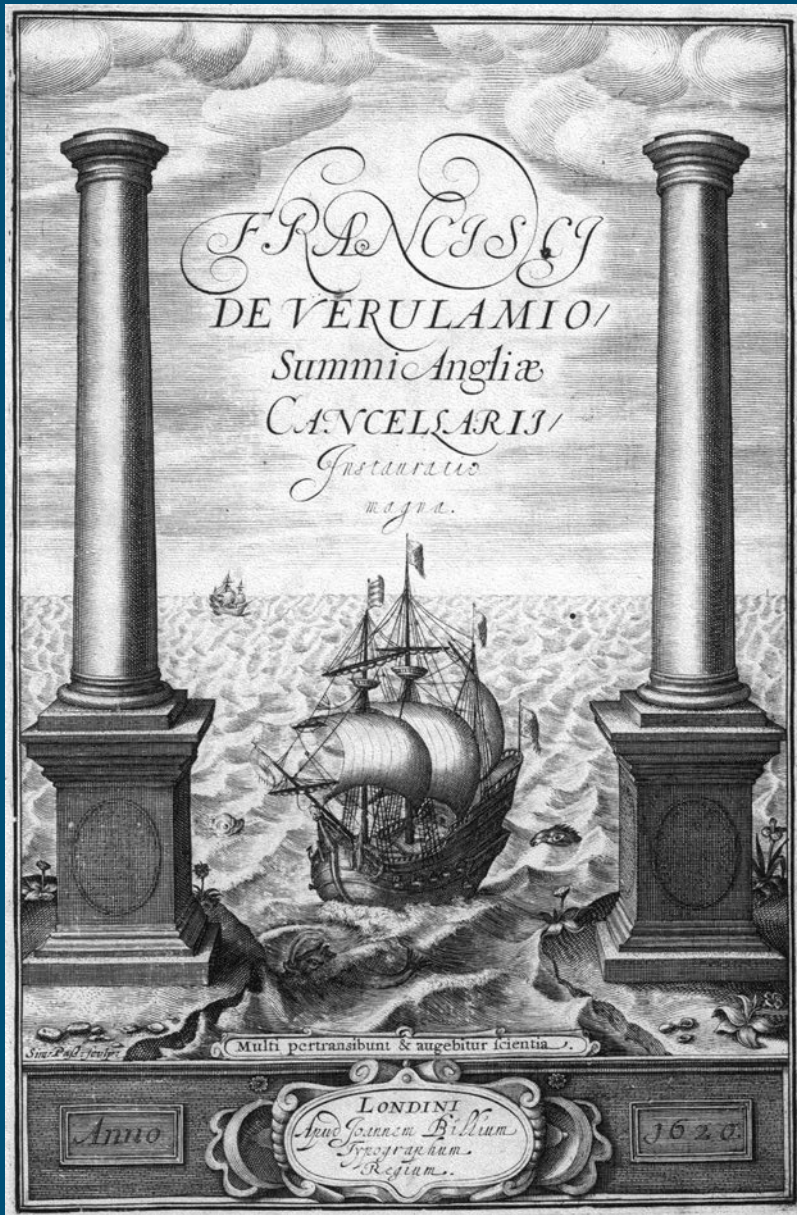
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‘met hope dat het ons vorder aen noodzakelijke middelen tot voortsettinge van Gods kerk en dienst te sijner tijd niet en sal mancqueren, waartoe scholen dienst niet weynig sal toebrenghen, *om niet alleen onse Christen jeugt maar ook die van uytlandsche en ingebore duysterlingen in 't ligt van de zonne der gerechtigheyd op te queecken, en daarin te leeren wandelen*, terwijl 't nog boven de kimmen van onsen horizon is.’

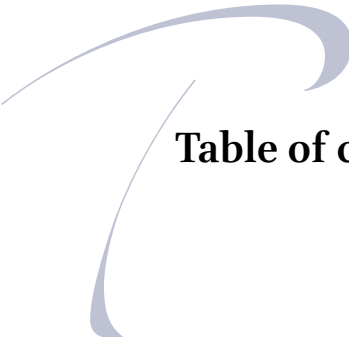
Brief van 20 augustus 1669 van Johan Basseliers aan de Staten van Zeeland. Geciteerd bij J.M. van der Linde, *Surinaamse Suikerheren en hun Kerk*, 194. (cursief HRi)

with the hope that in due course we shall not fail to find the necessary means for the continuation of God's church and service, to which schools will not contribute little, *to nurture not only our Christian youth but also those of foreign and inbred darklings in the light of the sun of justice*, and to learn to walk therein, while it lingers above the horizon.

Letter of 20 August 1669 from Johan Basseliers to the States of Zeeland. (Italics HRi).



Title page of Francis Bacon, *Instauratio Magna*, 1620  
The ship that sails between the Pillars of Hercules to distant shores.  
Multi pertransibunt & augebitur scientia (Daniel 12:4, King James Version)  
'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.'



# Table of contents

## FOREWORD 11

Henk Kummeling, Rector Magnificus Utrecht University 11

## 1 INTRODUCTION: UNIVERSITY, KNOWLEDGE & THE COLONIES 13

Personal story 13

University: Teaching & learning, research, and society 17

Colony, knowledge & university: Some theoretical perspectives 21

Structure: Periods, themes, and key figures 25

## 2 CONFESSION & CONVERSION (1636-...) 31

Voetians and the Mission: Confession and conversion 31

Johannes Leusden: Hebraist and the conversion of the Indians 35

Voetius and his students overseas 41

*Cornelis van der Sluijs* 41

*Hermanus Specht* (c. 1645-1699) 42

*Johan Basseliers: 'a lonely sparrow on the roof'* 43

*Johann Wilhelm Kals* (1700-1781) 44

Adrianus de Mey, Henr. F., Indus 46

*Disputatio Theologica De Conversione Indorum* (1675) 48

'Brown-skinned but white-souled': Students from the colonies in Utrecht 52

Michiel Christiaan Vos: A remarkable student from the Cape in Utrecht 55

Utrecht University and missionary societies 60



<b>3</b>	<b>EXPLORATION &amp; CLASSIFICATION (c. 1636-1850)</b>	<b>65</b>
	Collectors of flora	67
	<i>Hortus Indicus Malabaricus</i>	71
	<i>Icones Plantarum Rariorum</i>	77
	<i>Flora of the Dutch East Indies</i> by F.A.W. Miquel	79
	<i>Flora of the Guianas</i>	81
	<i>Linnaeus and the classification of people</i>	82
	The language of the ‘infidel Other’	84
	<i>Gilbertus Happart</i>	85
	<i>Frederic Gueynier</i>	85
	<i>Jan Frederik Gerrit Brumund</i>	86
	Adriaan Reland: philologist, Arabist and cartographer	87
<b>4</b>	<b>EXPERIMENTATION &amp; EXPLOITATION (1850-1950)</b>	<b>99</b>
	From VOC to colony: The East Indies as a ‘wingewest’ [economically exploited region]	99
	Dutch universities in the nineteenth century	105
	G.J. Mulder; his students and the colony	107
	G.J. Mulder and cinchona culture	112
	The colonies measured, observed, and explored	115
	<i>J.A.C. Oudemans and triangulation</i>	115
	<i>C.H. Buys Ballot, P.A. Bergsma and meteorology</i>	119
	<i>Felix Vening Meinesz and gravity measurements</i>	120
	<i>C.E.A. Wichmann and geological sciences</i>	123
	<i>Expeditions</i>	124
	<i>Geology and oil</i>	131
	<i>Geographical sciences</i>	133
	From taxonomy to morphology: F.A.F.C. Went	134
	<i>Went, Utrecht and the colonies</i>	140
	<i>Went’s colonial entourage</i>	147
	<i>Johanna Westerdijk</i>	154
	<i>Biologists in South Africa</i>	154
	<i>Agrochemical research</i>	156
	Animal health	157
	Human health: Medicine and tropical hygiene	163
	The human species measured: Development of physical anthropology	169
	J.H.F. Kohlbrugge: <i>Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan</i> [Glimpses into the Javanese man’s inner life]	175

G.A.G.Ph. van der Capellen: Governor of the colony and the university 182  
 Pure science in the colony or purely colonial science? 186  
 Western scientists with indigenous assistants 190

## 5 HONORARY DOCTORATES FOR (COLONIAL) THINKERS AND DOERS

(1815-1940) 193

1828 Dirk Lenting 193  
 1849 Pieter Bleeker 194  
 1857 Geerlof Wassink 195  
 1861 Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk 196  
 1886 Karel van Gorkom 197  
 1886 Jacobus P. Sprenger van Eyk 198  
 1894 Jacques Spanjaard 199  
 1900 Adolphe G. Vorderman 200  
 1909 Gijsbert A.J. van der Sande 200  
 1910 Anna Weber-van Bosse 201  
 1913 Albert C. Kruyt 203  
 1927 Cornelis Douwe de Langen 204  
 1936 Cornelis Andries Backer 205  
 1936 Paul Christiaan Flu 206  
 1936 Louis ('Lou') Otten 207  
 1936 Hendrik Kraemer 208

## 6 UTRECHT UNIVERSITY & SLAVERY 211

Utrecht University and the issue of slavery 211  
 Utrecht University and the 'friends of slaves' 214  
 Herman Jeremias Nieboer: *Slavery as an industrial system* 221  
 Anthropology and Suriname 226

## 7 TRAINING & CONTROL (1925-1950): THE 'OIL FACULTY' 229

The Indology faculty 1925-1950 229  
*F.C. Gerretson* 240  
*Students at the Indology faculty* 244  
*Dissertations at the Indology faculty* 245  
*Masdoelhak Nasoetion* 247  
 H.H.A. van Gybland Oosterhoff: The ideology of the 'Utrecht colonial school' 249  
 'Copyright': Dutch entitlement to the Indies 257

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>8</b>	<b>LEGACY OF THE 'OIL FACULTY'</b>	<b>255</b>
	Jan Gonda and the Oriental language and culture tradition in Utrecht	256
	Anthropology born of the colonial mind	259
<b>9</b>	<b>EDUCATION IN THE COLONY</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (1950-1990):</b>	
	<b>ETHICAL POLITICS REVISITED?</b>	<b>277</b>
	University Development Programme	277
	Utrecht University after 1990: The international university	284
<b>11</b>	<b>IN RETROSPECT: KNOWLEDGE, POWER &amp; SUPERIORITY</b>	<b>287</b>
	Utrecht University & 'Development'. The 'master narrative' as the	
	'narrative of the Masters'	287
<b>12</b>	<b>LOOKING AHEAD: TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL UNIVERSITY?</b>	<b>297</b>
	NOTES	297
	LITERATURE	311
	IMAGE CREDITS	337
	INDEX OF PERSONS	337
	INDEX OF PLACES AND THINGS	345
	CURRICULUM VITAE	352



## FOREWORD

In 2006, Henk van Rinsum published his book *Sol Iustitiae en de Kaap: Een geschiedenis van de banden van de Utrechtse Universiteit met Zuid-Afrika* [Sol Iustitiae and the Cape: A History of Utrecht University's Relations with South Africa]. One of my predecessors, Hans van Ginkel, concluded his foreword to this book with an expression of hope:

that the University of Utrecht may complement this book by Henk van Rinsum with a history of the links and substantial activities of our university in Indonesia, Suriname, and the Antilles.

Partly because of our mutual interest in South Africa, I have been able to follow Henk's work over the past few years, knowing that – with his background in university development cooperation – he has always been concerned with the colonial history of our university, long before we began to reflect on Utrecht University's connections to slavery.

Now we have before us his work on scientific knowledge about the colonies, in the colonies, from the colonies and for the colonies, developed by individuals connected to our university. The underlying theme of his work is the idea of Western, and thus Utrecht's, superiority in the field of knowledge, knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer. He focuses on the fundamental dichotomy between 'developed' (and therefore modern) and 'not (yet) developed' (and therefore primitive or traditional). And, as he has previously suggested, this is also the broader framework within which the university became involved in the system of slavery. Henk shows how the knowledge acquired in the colony also contributed to the development of science in our own university, particularly in the natural sciences at the end of the nineteenth century.

At present, research is being carried out in various faculties that focus on this colonial past within their disciplines. Henk's book on Utrecht

University and Colonial Knowledge is valuable because it provides a framework within which we can position these research activities, but also because it will undoubtedly prompt many to reflect on the university's colonial past. I expect this book to serve as an inspiration for many activities that cast light on this history and invite us to reflect on it.

Henk Kummeling  
Rector Magnificus Utrecht University  
September 2023



# INTRODUCTION

## University, knowledge & the colonies

### Personal story

This research embodies one of the dilemmas faced by a historian working in the field of contemporary history: the balance between engagement and detachment. The researcher and author of this book is a historian and anthropologist who studied at Utrecht University<sup>1</sup> and has worked in the International Office of that University for over 25 years in the field of ‘university development cooperation’.

Utrecht University was involved in academic partnerships with universities in what we used to term ‘developing countries’. As part of this work, I became interested in the role that knowledge institutions played in the relationship with (institutions in) the colonies. I worked in ‘university development cooperation’ until 2000. In 2001, I obtained my PhD from Utrecht with a dissertation entitled *Slaves of Definition. In Quest of the Unbeliever and the Ignoramus*. The idea for this dissertation was born during my work on a joint project of the Faculty of Theology at Utrecht University and the Department of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Classics at the University of Zimbabwe. As part of this project, the Faculty of Theology at Utrecht University supported Zimbabwean colleagues in conducting research and developing study materials for secondary education in the field of African traditional religion. My dissertation focused on an epistemological analysis of the concept of ‘development’, which functioned as a dominant and compelling discourse, a ‘master narrative’ that guided the way we – the ‘masters’ – thought about the world around us. We supported ‘them’/‘the others’ in teaching and researching their African religious systems. We worked with the assumption that ‘we are developed, they are not (yet)’. Scientists in universities in the Global North had been educated and trained in a Western concept of science and its presuppositions.

I consider modern (Western) universities as institutions founded on the ideas of the Enlightenment. I add the adjective ‘modern’ because the foundations of universities predate the Enlightenment. But our universities today are particularly linked to the ideas of the Enlightenment. The need to subject the world around us to critical enquiry, to analyse that world in ever smaller detail, to make that world measurable, to classify it, to bring ‘order’ to apparent chaos, to question established dogmas, is the ultimate aim of the modern university. Modern man has imagined himself the master of the world. Sometimes, after a struggle – such as at Utrecht University – the ideas of Descartes (and others) found their way into the universities. A Cartesian-inspired mathematical-mechanistic rationality and methodological doubt gradually developed into a dominant philosophy, especially within the (experimental) natural sciences.

But we are also deeply embarrassed by our connection to the Enlightenment. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno spoke of the dialectic of the Enlightenment, pointing to the terrible consequences of the disenchantment of the world. Others spoke of the paradox (*para-doxa* – against the odds) of the Enlightenment. The critical rationality of the Enlightenment turned out to be capable of developing into an instrumental rationality, in which human individuality was subordinated to numbers and measurement.

Following Aníbal Quijano, Walter Dignolo speaks of ‘coloniality’, ‘the darker side of modernity’<sup>2</sup>. From the philosophy of the Enlightenment, moderns began to study nature. They did so by classifying the biological world, plants, animals, and trees, and eventually also human beings. The Swede Carl Linnaeus, the godfather of classification, not only classified but also assigned characteristics to the different ‘human races’. Gradually, an order of development emerged, with the ‘developed’ and therefore ‘enlightened’ humans at the top. Not coincidentally, this turned out to be the ‘white man’ living in Europe, the cradle of the Enlightenment. At the bottom of the ladder were people from ‘darkest’ Africa. Although the philosophy of the Enlightenment was – and still is – presented as a universal philosophy of equality, it soon became clear that the enlightened man needed a non-enlightened man. In his *Seeing Like a State*, James Scott spoke of ‘high modernism [which] needed this “other”, this dark twin, to rhetorically present itself as the antidote to “backwardness”<sup>3</sup>.

The Enlightenment became a way of thinking about progress and development. However, the concept of the Enlightenment was not

unambiguous. Vartija, in his *The Colour of Equality. Race and Common Humanity in Enlightenment Thought*, speaks of a 'polyphonic Enlightenment'; it consists of different voices that are sometimes at odds with each other. Although all men were equal in 'Enlightenment' theory, it turned out that not everyone shared equally in the fruits of the Enlightenment. Educated modern man boldly and unashamedly placed himself at the top of the ladder of development and civilisation. The truth was that Modernity, the offspring of Enlightenment, had brought with it the darker side of superiority. Superiority came to the fore in the voyages of discovery to the distant shores of the world. However, they seemed to lead not only to discovery, but also to brutal conquest. Exploration had a 'dark twin': shameless and therefore uncivilised exploitation. The other man whom modern man met on these voyages was relegated to a place on the lowest rung of the ladder of development. And their knowledge of this 'other' also meant, in the eyes of the moderns, their power over 'the other'. This hegemonic ambition is based on a fundamental dichotomy between 'developed' (read: modern) and 'un-developed' (read: primitive or traditional).

But while it was clear to many that large groups in this world had not yet reached the same level of development as the 'moderns' in Europe, there was also a belief that people were equal. Siep Stuurman nicely sums up this paradox:

In this perspective, modern equality emerges as an equal right to participate in universal culture. Becoming equal means becoming like those who are already equal, namely Europeans. To achieve this goal, everyone must be 'enlightened'. Both the European masses and the non-European peoples thus appear as objects of a paternalistic civilising mission.<sup>4</sup>

They had lagged behind and therefore needed a helping hand to catch up on 'development'. 'We', located in the heart of Europe, were developed and therefore 'the Other', far away, had to be developed in our image. In this process, Western science – an intrinsic part of the processes of colonisation and globalisation – developed from a local, culturally, and historically determined model of science into a hegemonic model.

In this model, the emergence of science was closely linked to the religious system in the West as it developed from the late Middle Ages onwards. One of the basic assumptions of Western science is the existence



of a single, intelligible, universe. This premise denies the existence of different, equivalent, but mutually exclusive forms of knowledge. At the heart of Western science is the accumulation of knowledge about this single universe with its inherent complexity. Science developed in parallel with, and became intertwined with, Christianity, the Western religious system. Both have always focused on knowledge of the 'ultimate truth', and although paradoxically we are part of this universe, we position ourselves in opposition to it. This led to a fundamental separation of subject and object in Western science. We positioned ourselves opposite nature, the object of our quest for knowledge. God's creation was 'objectified'. The universe was seen as a text to be deciphered and read and thus known. God has revealed His will in nature, and this enables us to decipher His will through knowledge of nature, by reading the *Boeck der Natuere* [Book of Nature]. Western man became convinced that God's revelation could be 'read', yet at the same time, struggling with inner uncertainty about the truth of this text. This led to a dynamic in the knowledge system that was constantly, almost aggressively, searching for new theoretical knowledge. The conversion drive of Christian monotheism was secularised in the voyage of discovery of modern (Western) science. This modern Western science is based on a combination of supposedly universal technological knowledge and the specifically modern Western aspiration to read the *Boeck der Natuere*, to domesticate nature and reduce it to being read. And, as I wrote in my dissertation, people in the West not only wanted to 'read', but also 'read to', and 'pre-scribe' to 'the Other'. The paradox of the Enlightenment, namely the Enlightenment and its 'darker twin' – the perceived yet distinctly felt 'white' superiority – were an integral part of the DNA of the modern university, including Utrecht University.

In November 2018, I gave a lecture on the colonial past of 'my' university at the Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta to Indonesian students and staff members. Some of the latter had worked with Utrecht University in the past in the context of university development cooperation. In a sense I had come full circle, as I sought to demonstrate my affiliation with a new generation of scholars who analyse the intricate relationship between my alma mater, Utrecht, and Indonesia, transcending the basic moral categories of 'good' and 'evil'.

As an extension of my work at the International Office and my reflections on the concept of 'development', I continued to explore the

relationship between university, knowledge (development) and colony. In the meantime, the discussion about the history of slavery and the Dutch involvement in it has also erupted in the Netherlands. In a contribution to the DUB (Digital University Bulletin) of Utrecht University, in response to the report *'Rekenschap geven'* [Rendering Account] of the Advisory Committee Utrecht University and Slavery, I argued that such a question should be explicitly broadened to include the colonial past of the university, its teaching and research, and thus the academic development of our university. Its past includes deep-rooted and structural inequality and therefore also of slavery.<sup>5</sup> This book is the result of my journey of discovery.

I could not have written this book without the inspiration and comments of Anneke, Armand, Ernst, Gert, Henk, Jan, Joop, Loek, Marian, Twan, Gertjan, and others.

## University

### *Teaching & learning, research, and society*

Universities are institutions with a very long history. Much has changed over the centuries in the way universities operate in society. What has not changed, however is that teaching and learning are considered as their primary *raison d'être*. For centuries, universities have sought to impart knowledge to younger generations.

Although doing fundamental research is a relatively recent phenomenon at universities, knowledge of new developments has always been disseminated through teaching and learning. Initially, it was the (royal) academies and learned societies where researchers met. These societies developed relatively late in the Netherlands. In the 'Republic of Letters' these scholars also sought each other out or corresponded in an international context.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, we see a development in which students were given practical instruction in the newly established laboratories at the universities. This development was initiated at Utrecht University by the chemist G.J. Mulder. Especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, we observe rapid progress in the natural sciences within universities, including Utrecht University. Experimental research within the walls of academia became increasingly important. This also led to the 'Second Golden Age', especially in the natural sciences. The role of research and exploration in the colonial territories became increasingly important.

Teaching and research have always contained a social component. Cultural and intellectual training (*Bildung*), service to society, forms of social responsibility – in today’s university jargon reduced to the formal policy framework of knowledge valorisation – of universities and the intellectuals who work there have always in some way been part of these higher education institutions.

If we take a closer look at the history of Utrecht University and the Dutch colonies, we see that these three elements – teaching & learning, research, and *Bildung* – were emphasised to a greater or lesser extent at different times. In this book, I would like to focus on the interaction between developments in education and research at Utrecht University and its role in the development of science in the Dutch colonies, especially in the East Indies. It deals with the relationship that the university, its teachers, researchers, administrators, and students had with individuals and institutions in the colonies for centuries.

We can structure the history of the relationship between Utrecht University and the world beyond Europe in different ways. One can describe and analyse this relationship as a pattern of a specific form of internationalisation or – in the more common terminology – ‘globalisation’. The history of the relationship between Utrecht University and the colonies is thus part of the spreading of a Western knowledge system on the coat tails of Western colonisation, sometimes even before colonisation. Universities were an intrinsic part of the ‘civilising mission’ that was exported around the world along with Christianity and commerce. The world became the object of commercial, civilising, and proselytising zeal. Dutch history is often presented as a struggle between merchant and minister. My aim in this book is to show how the scientist – part of civilisation – also wanted to partake of the food on the colonial shelves.

Utrecht University was also part of the CCC constellation described by the missionary and explorer David Livingstone (1813-1873).<sup>6</sup> After formal decolonisation, this international dimension was translated – including in Utrecht – into the university’s development cooperation programme. To the colonial Cs of Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation, a fourth ‘decolonial C’ was added: that of Cooperation. In this respect, Utrecht University developed a tradition of decades-long cooperation with partner universities in the Third World, the group of developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>7</sup>

I see my book as a contribution to the integration of both intellectual history and colonial history of Utrecht University in the period 1850-1950. It deals with the production of (scientific) knowledge about the colonies, knowledge in the colonies, knowledge from the colonies, knowledge for the colonies and knowledge of the colonies. This knowledge was initially accumulated in the colonies and in the home country by people from the colonisers' country, often with the help of colonised assistants. Subsequently, this knowledge was also shared, appropriated, rejected and finally institutionalised in educational and knowledge institutions such as universities in the colonies. In the context of colonial relations, universities can be seen as originally European institutions that we subsequently encounter all over the world. Whatever one thinks of the process of colonisation of the 'non-Western' territories – an area in which the Netherlands undoubtedly left its mark – the export of a Western system of knowledge led to the establishment of higher education institutions in the 'overseas' territories.<sup>8</sup>

In 2014, Robert-Jan Wille wrote an article entitled 'Een Indische geschiedenis van parasitisme en symbiose. De Tropen als laboratorium voor de vervlechting van Politiek, Wetenschap, Maatschappij en Natuur'<sup>9</sup> [An (East) Indian history of parasitism and symbiosis. The tropics as a laboratory for the entanglement of politics, science, society and nature], in which he wrote:

It would be interesting at some point in the future to investigate the extent to which the internationalisation of Dutch biology proceeded via the East Indies. Although global history has made great strides in recent years in highlighting the cultural and economic contribution of non-Western actors and territories to global science, with hybrid communities of white settlers and local elites playing a key role, the political impact of settler science on the European continent has remained largely unexplored. To what extent did the organisation and expansion of the 'colonial scientific project' contribute to changes in the science policy landscape of Europe and the Americas in the twentieth century?

Essentially, in this book I have focused on Wille's question and its connection to Utrecht University. From the mid-nineteenth century, we see at Utrecht University an intertwining of intellectual developments at the university with the colonial relations with the Dutch colonies in the West

and the East. The knowledge accumulated in this way was not neutral but served the colonial enterprise. The development of science is part of – and closely linked to – the political, economic, social, and cultural context. As such, the development of science is part of a specific constellation of civilisations. Science emerged from Western civilisation, and Western civilisation was able to develop through science.

I examine the interplay between the evolution of science within a specific institution, i.e. Utrecht University, and the broader developments in the colonising nation and its colony, from the establishment of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) [Dutch East India Company] to the development of a capitalist-agrarian expansion, the political transitions, and ultimately, the end of Dutch rule in the East Indies. Specifically, I explore how Utrecht University evolved throughout this extensive period of colonial engagement, primarily, though not exclusively, in the East Indies. What were the driving forces behind this involvement, and what impact did it have on Utrecht's own scholarly development?

I am aware that by focusing on only one Dutch university, I am setting a limit. The choice of one university's 'colonial narrative' is based on pragmatic and personal reasons. This book is also my participation in the colonial and postcolonial history of Utrecht University. My more general theoretical framework and reflections on the concept of 'development' are certainly applicable to other Dutch universities. In this story we will also meet colleagues from other Dutch universities; sometimes there was cooperation, sometimes competition, and sometimes hatred and envy.<sup>10</sup>

I see my contribution as an exploration. I refer to the existing literature on the colonial past of Utrecht University, e.g. on theology & mission, biology, the role of the experimental stations, cinchona culture, the history of (physical) anthropology, etc. A great deal more has been published about different aspects of this colonial past than many people are aware of. Therefore, I have deliberately included an extensive bibliography. In my endnotes I refer to the original titles. In the bibliography, I provide an English translation of the title of Dutch-language literature. In my original Dutch version, I reproduced many Dutch and Latin quotes. I have translated these quotes into English. I use the term 'Buitengewesten' [outlying regions] as a *pars pro toto* for the colonial context. I have tried to avoid words like 'black', 'white', 'slave' and so on. In the Dutch text I use the word 'inheems'. In this English edition I use the word 'indigenous'.

With this exploration, I hope to contribute to the broader field of research on the role of knowledge in a colonial context.

## Colony, knowledge & university

### *Some theoretical perspectives*

This chapter discusses the theoretical aspects of the mutual influence of the development of science in universities and colonial relations in a historical perspective.<sup>11</sup> No one will deny that science and the development of science played a role in the way colonial relations developed, but the question is how we can interpret this relationship theoretically. In the words of Roy Macleod, ‘Imperial science [as] an expression of a will and a purpose, a mission, a vocation, often inarticulate, but enormously powerful.’<sup>12</sup> As Hodge put it, ‘Science supported, justified and at times, challenged, the British colonial enterprise.’<sup>13</sup> Obviously, science acted as a support, as a mission, a justification, and a challenge in colonial relations. And this role was also partly motivated by the way in which the development of science in their own ‘Western’ universities was stimulated by the presence of colonies.

In recent decades, several models have been developed in the academic literature, each of which puts a new emphasis (and negates older ones) on the way in which we can analyse the structure of colonial relations, including the role of knowledge and knowledge institutions.

As early as 1967, George Basalla described the different phases of the spread of (Western) science around the world.<sup>14</sup> In the first phase, there is a proto-scientific development in the wake of the mostly geographical exploration of the ‘New World’. This phase is followed by the ‘colonial science’ phase, in which science and scientific infrastructure were built up in colonial territories as ‘dependent science’. The third phase comprises the attempt to build an independent ‘own’ scientific development as part of the process of decolonisation. In all three phases, the relationship with the colonial power and its scientific infrastructure played an important role. Universities in the West often acted as the ‘alma mater’ of institutions in colonised and subsequently decolonised territories. However, this was mainly one-way traffic from the West to the (de)colonial territories.

Basalla proposed the paradigm of diffusion. From the motherland, scientific knowledge and technology were diffused to the outer regions in a linear process. It was essentially a model of modernisation, strongly

inspired by the classical model of economic growth as described by Walt Rostow in his *Stages of Economic Growth* that described the five stages of economic growth: Traditional Society, Preconditions for Take-off, Take-off, Drive to Maturity, and Age of High Mass Consumption. He spoke of a 'take-off' after which a country can stand on its own two feet, including its own scientific infrastructure.

This diffusion model was roundly criticised by scholars who developed the dependency model, and who increasingly highlighted structures of inequality that contradict the idea of linear growth. This model was developed in the early 1970s, particularly in Latin America by, among others, Andre Gunder Frank. In his 1967 classic, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, Frank used a Marxist conceptual framework to explain the growth of underdevelopment in colonised areas. The Norwegian Johan Galtung formulated the centre-periphery model. He argued that on the periphery, i.e. in the colony, a centre and a periphery can be distinguished.<sup>15</sup> The shortcomings of the linear diffusion model were pointed out because Basalla, et al., failed to take into account the structural inequality between metropolis and periphery, thus reinforcing and perpetuating the dependence on the periphery. Science was seen as an instrument of the metropolis to control and exploit the periphery, in this case the colonies.

In 1978, Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published, which has remained highly influential to this day. In his book, Said, a professor of literary studies at Columbia University and a Palestinian exile, pointed to the critical link between knowledge and power:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.<sup>16</sup>

Western science was analysed as an essential part of cultural imperialism. Science is subsumed by knowledge – and therefore control – of 'the other'. It is, according to Said, a 'discourse' that results from an exchange – defined in terms of inequality – with different kinds of power: political power (viz. the colonial establishment), intellectual power (i.e., dominant academic disciplines such as comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern political sciences), cultural power (such as orthodoxy and

canons of taste, texts, values), and moral power – ideas about what ‘we’ do and what ‘they’ cannot do or understand as ‘we’ understand. In this cultural imperialism, knowledge, ‘scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description’ play an indispensable role in understanding and thus controlling and manipulating ‘the other’ and ‘the world of the other’ within our Western conceptual framework. In this way, the dominant colonial power built up its own cultural archive of ‘the other’. Bernard Cohn spoke of an

investigative modality [that] includes the definition of a body of information that is needed, the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into usable forms such as published reports, statistical returns, histories, gazetteers, legal codes, and encyclopaedias.<sup>17</sup>

It was these ‘investigative modalities’ that underpinned the process of collecting, organising, classifying, etc. with the aim of control and domination, and that also guided the scholars, including those from Utrecht, in the colony.

The Said model has also received much criticism from the Western academic world. The criticism focused on an overly rigid model of cultural imperialism that could be applied to the colonial relations from the second half of the nineteenth century, but which wrongly neglected the nuances and complexities of earlier exchanges with other cultures. Said responded to these critics in 1993 with *Culture and Imperialism*. In particular, he wanted to address ‘a general worldwide pattern of imperial culture, and a historical experience of resistance against empire.’<sup>18</sup> He now defined imperialism as ‘the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory’, situating his ‘model’ particularly in the nineteenth century.

Another variant of the postcolonial model is represented by the work of several Latin American scholars, including Aníbal Quijano from Peru and Walter D. Mignolo from Argentina. They contrast colonialism as a process with ‘coloniality’ as the other, darker side of modernity. This modernity has the dominant Western model of knowledge, an ‘episteme’, that has swept away other modalities of knowledge.

Both the dependency model and the postcolonial model take the architecture of the centre-periphery model as their starting point. This



model is beginning to come under criticism, particularly from the movement that has come to be known as 'New Imperial Histories'.<sup>19</sup> Critics of the centre-periphery model point out that colonial relations were not a one-way street. They therefore argue for a network model in which there has been much more circulation. This model involves the movement of people, ideas, knowledge, and institutional practices. An interesting example is the route from the Netherlands to the East Indies via the Cape of Good Hope. There was a lot of two-way traffic between these parts of the Dutch colonial empire, including the transport of enslaved people. This model is a valuable complement to the diffusion model and the centre-periphery model, which were mainly characterised by one-way traffic. However, this network model has its drawbacks. People warned against neglecting the element of inequality in the network model. It was certainly not a network of equal partners; the network was characterised by relationships of jarring inequality.

The most recent offshoot from this line of thinking about colonial relations is the model of a global intellectual history. According to the authors of this latest model, we must move away from a view that locates the beginnings of science in the West and draws a line from there to a culmination of scientific development as it occurred in the Americas. The world of knowledge, in the words of Rens Bod 'the human search for patterns and principles in the world that surrounds us', consists of multiple scientific cultures with a long historical memory.<sup>20</sup> As Poskett writes: 'Indeed, modern science has always depended on bringing together people and ideas from different cultures from all over the world.'<sup>21</sup> We see a dialectical movement back and forth through space and time on a global scale. A major inspiration for this view was the work of the American philosopher and historian Arthur O. Lovejoy (1873-1962). He wrote in 1940:

And ideas are the most migratory things in the world. A preconception, category, postulate, dialectical motive, pregnant metaphor or analogy, 'sacred word', mood of thought, or explicit doctrine, which makes its first appearance upon the scene in one of the conventionally distinguished provinces of history (most often, perhaps, in philosophy) may, and frequently does, cross over into a dozen others.<sup>22</sup>

Only in this way can we understand the importance of the scientific past for the present, and the influence of the present on our perception of

the past. The network – with its inequalities – now becomes a ‘world of knowledge’. And this network of global intellectual history is characterised by connection, exchange, and integration, but also by the resistance and conflict of different ‘histories.’<sup>23</sup>

In summary, these different models help us to better understand the development of science in a colonial context. The diffusion model shows how people in the colony worked to establish a particular scientific structure. At the same time, the centre-periphery model shows the dependency in these relations, which is further sharpened when we look at the role of knowledge in cultural imperialism as formulated by Said and later by Quijano and Mignolo. The network concept does justice to the movement from the colonies to the motherland and other European countries and vice versa. It rightly goes beyond one-way traffic, but at the same time runs the risk of underestimating the inequality in this network. Global intellectual history is a spatial deepening in time of the network model and puts the dominant Eurocentric model into perspective.

## Structure

### *Periods, themes, and key figures*

In this book I try to cover the most important themes and key people, but I do not claim to be exhaustive. It is about Utrecht University from its foundation in 1636 as an academic institution, but more importantly about the people associated with this university. I want to try to analyse the development of science, but at the same time I want to tell the story of a single institution and its people who, driven by curiosity and perhaps other motives, embarked on an uncertain journey and stayed in the tropics. I have tried, no more and no less, to write a kaleidoscopic survey in time and across the breadth of scientific disciplines.

I bring the themes and people together in a few periods with their own character. These periods sometimes follow each other, but sometimes they overlap. I start with the period of *Confession and Conversion (1636 -...): Theology & Mission*, which begins with the opening of Utrecht University in 1636. An important part of the education was theological training with the Utrecht imprimatur. It was about confession, namely the confession of the reformed, pious and inspired faith. In the early period, Voetius was the dominant figure in this education. Utrecht thus produced

theologically trained people, some of whom were sent to work in the colonies, where they translated these theological ideas into a proselytising offensive, such as the Utrecht graduate Johan Basseliers, who wanted to convert the people in the colonies in the spirit of the *Sol Iustitiae* [Sun of Justice]. It is not clear when this period ended. The independent functioning of the indigenous churches at the end of the 19th century meant that the influence of Western theology and missionary discourse lost its importance. However, perhaps in a specific way, this period of confession and conversion is still present in the discourse of university development cooperation from the 1970s onwards. Did not the university then exchange the religious missionary for the secular missionary who came to spread the gospel of modern science? Incidentally, the merchant was by no means absent from this development cooperation. After all, this university development cooperation was also a source of funding for Dutch universities.

Also soon after 1636 the period began of what I call *Exploration & Classification (1636-1850): Collecting, arranging, and measuring flora and fauna, languages and religion*. These activities were focused on the range of collecting, arranging, classifying, counting, measuring, weighing, and drawing the Other and the Other's place. They were mainly activities of individual 'amateurs' interested in the exoticism of the Other and their world. Some of these amateurs also had connections with Utrecht University. At that time, the university did not yet have an explicit research culture. Utrecht's connection with the colonies was mostly indirect, focusing on discovering the Other in his or her physical and cultural-religious environment. In addition to the appreciation of the exotic, this 'discovery' increasingly developed the idea of superiority. Utrecht alumni, including theologians, also travelled to distant lands with the intellectual baggage they had acquired in Utrecht.

In this section I devote considerable space to the Utrecht student of Islam, Arabist, cartographer, and philologist Adriaan Reland (1676-1718), who was deeply interested in the languages and cultures of the Dutch colonies and corresponded extensively about them with the administrators and ministers sent to the East Indies.

Around 1850, an interesting and exciting period in terms of scientific development began, both in the colony and at Utrecht University. It is the period of *Experimentation and Exploitation of and in the colony (1850-1950): Colony, University and Scientific Development*. In this chapter I will focus on

the development of science in Utrecht in the colonial context. How did the 'possession' of the colony – especially the East Indies – influence the development of science at Utrecht University in the period 1850-1950? I argue that the development of the natural sciences in particular – from a general science developed behind the desk to an active experimental research practice in laboratories for researchers and students in Utrecht – was fostered particularly by the interaction between the university and the colony. The research ethos (ideal of civilisation – social interest – fundamental) and collective research work were spurred on by the work in the colony, especially in the natural sciences. A shining example of this development is the botanist Melchior Treub, who from 1880 tried to realise this experimental research in 's Lands Plantentuin Buitenzorg. It was also the time of exploration, especially of the areas outside Java through expeditions. We will follow some representatives of Utrecht University on these expeditions and discover that the distinction between a scientific and a military expedition was often small. Academics were present on military expeditions, and the academic expeditions were often supported by the military authorities.

I will then interrupt the chronological approach with a thematic chapter in which I will look at several 'Honorary Doctorates 1815-1940: Instruments to honour (colonial) thinkers and doers', followed by a chapter in which I will focus on some features of the relationship between Utrecht University & slavery.

A special period is that of *Training & Control (1925-1950): the Oil Faculty and the training of Dutch colonial officials* as a response to the colonial ambitions of Leiden University. Utrecht began to contribute to the training of Dutch colonial officials with its own educational programme. This programme soon became known as the 'Oil Faculty' as it was partly funded by the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij. This period overlaps with that of the period of *Experimentation and Exploitation (1850-1950)*, but what links the two periods is the connection between science and (a specific conception of) civilisation. In the period of *Experimentation and Exploitation*, scientific development in the natural sciences was equated with the development of civilisation and a civilisational push. This was a Western civilisational push in areas that had not yet been 'developed'. This episode was an attempt to preserve the (own) Dutch civilisation through (scientific) knowledge transfer.

The question is to what extent the Oil Faculty was an integral part of a distinctive Utrecht university 'profile'. Did it fit in with Utrecht or was

it an occasional construction that ended up in Utrecht by chance rather than design. To some extent the Oil Faculty was an unexpected construction, but at the same time there were definitely points of contact with the liberal-conservative trend at Utrecht University. Perhaps it was more a regression to a training university, but if so, training based on either liberal-conservative and Christian-historical (and sometimes fascist) ideology. The Oil Faculty was defined by its own people as the 'Utrecht School' of the idea of imperial unity, as an ultra-conservative version of the 'Groot Nederlandse Gedachte' [Greater Netherlands Idea], including the colonies as well as Afrikaner-dominated, white-ruled South Africa.

In the chapter *Legacy of the Oil Faculty*, I ask what the real legacy of the Indology faculty at Utrecht was, apart from the bad smell of a few fascist individuals. Wasn't it also the foundation of an Indology tradition in which the name of Jan Gonda is particularly central? Through his work and his students, Utrecht University has acquired an excellent international reputation in the field of Indian languages and cultures. Another part of the legacy is the way in which modern geography and later anthropology have their roots in this period.

The last episode is that of *University Development Cooperation (1950-1990): An ethical policy revisited?* During this period the Dutch universities sought to cooperate with young universities in the former colonies in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia. Under the auspices of Nuffic, the organisation for international higher education, and funded by the Dutch government, a programme of university development cooperation was set up. The aim of this programme was to strengthen the teaching and research capacity of partner institutions in developing countries. After World War II and Indonesian independence, the now independent Indonesian academic institutions gradually resumed their links with Dutch universities. Utrecht also began to cooperate with several Indonesian universities. An important element was the partnership with Universitas Gadjah Mada. These university relations came under pressure in the 1970s and 1980s due to the deteriorating human rights situation in Indonesia. In Utrecht, too, there were heated discussions, especially between the Board of Governors and the University Council, which wanted to break off relations with the Indonesian universities. Utrecht was also involved in several cooperation projects, particularly in Southern Africa and Central America.

In Utrecht, certainly in the early days of university development cooperation, the initiative for these collaborative projects lay with individual

academics who were involved for reasons of their own. Apart from the noble motives that certainly existed, the importance of the discipline in question could also play a role. 'Presence in the colonies' became 'presence in the tropics' or 'presence in developing countries', which was of major interest to several disciplines. I firmly associate this work in university development cooperation with the theoretical framework of 'development'. We wanted to help the other to develop, and we felt that we could and should do so because we had moved further along the path of human progress.

I conclude with the chapter *In Retrospective: Knowledge, Power & Superiority* followed by a *Looking Ahead: Towards a decolonial university*.



Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676)



## CONFESSION & CONVERSION (1636-...)

### Voetians and the mission

#### *Confession and conversion*

The earliest Protestant presence in the East Indies was marked by the arrival of merchants affiliated with the Dutch East India Company, that primarily ventured to the East Indies, Formosa, and Ceylon. Established in 1602, this trading company's main focus was on commerce rather than matters of faith and mission. Nevertheless, a significant majority of these merchants were Protestants, and maintaining their churches in distant trading outposts held importance. The presence of a minister or a caretaker of the sick on ships sailing to and from these remote regions provided crucial support during perilous voyages on which illnesses and fatalities among the crew were common.

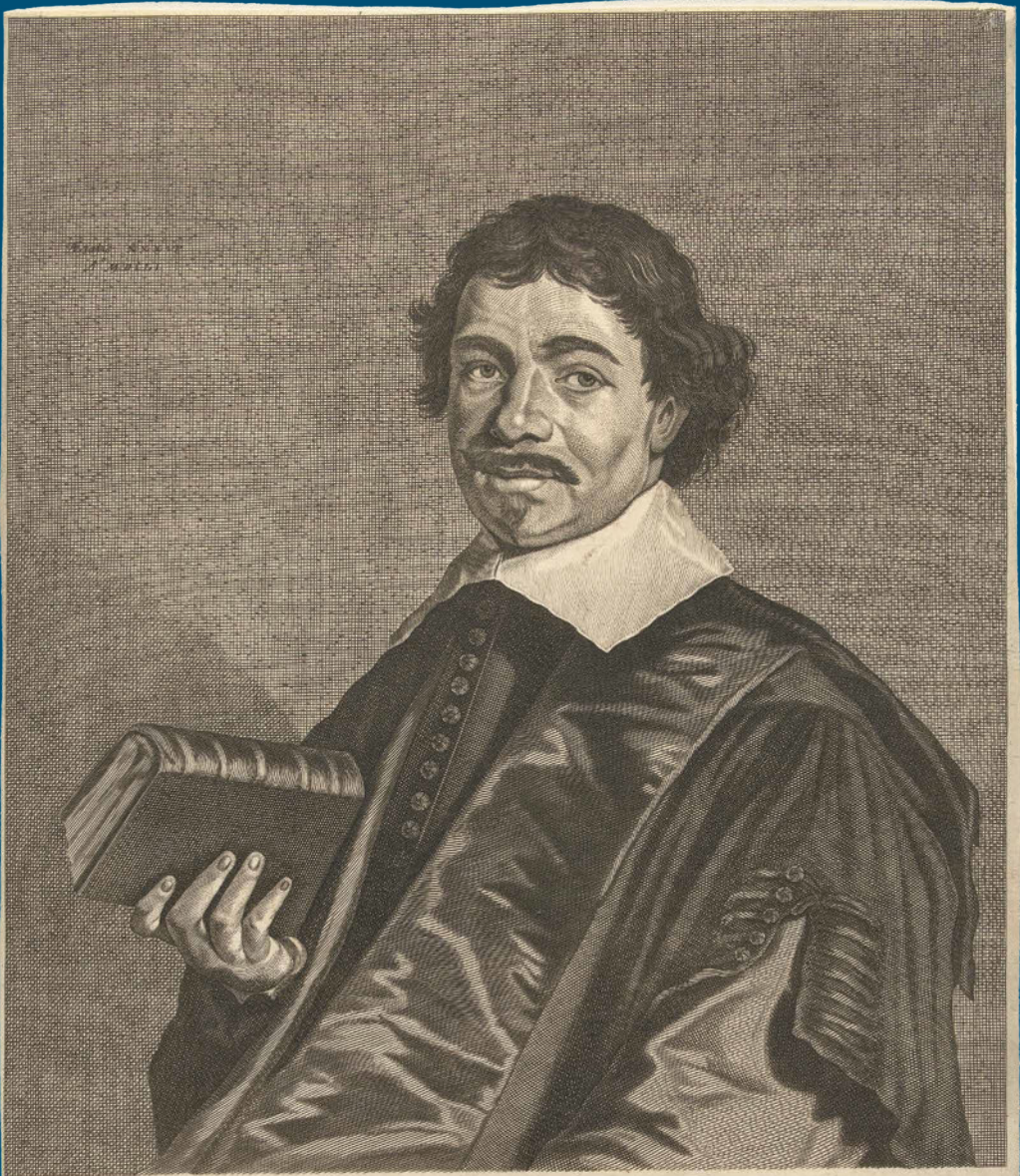
The VOC and its West Indian trading counterpart, the West-Indische Compagnie (WIC), established in 1602 and 1621 respectively to conduct trade led to the creation of trading churches in their trading posts. While ministers were tasked with upholding the Christian religion and their own church, they also faced the challenge of countering the active missionary efforts of the Roman Catholic Church. Additionally, these ministers encountered other 'non-Christian' religions, particularly Islam. In his article 'Onze betrekkingen tot Lombok' [Our Relations with Lombok] in *De Gids*, 58 (1894), W.G.C. Bijvanck referred to the tension between the government, represented by the VOC, and the church as the *Waren religie* [the true religion] versus the *Warenreligie* [the religion of goods]. These expressions effectively highlighted the delicate balance between the privileged church, which was financially dependent on VOC benefactors who paid for education, ministers' salaries, translation costs and more. As a result, ministers had to navigate the tension between worship duties, trade considerations and respect for other religions. These trading church



ministers were predominantly from the Reformed Church, the dominant public church in the early Dutch Republic. In that republic, the Reformed faith, characterised by a degree of tolerance towards other faiths, served as the dominant theology, which often led to tensions between church and government, including in the Dutch East India Company trading posts that represented the government there.

In 1636, Utrecht University, the 'Academia Ultrajectina', was founded, partly with the aim of producing ministers trained in the genuine Reformed faith. This young university thus took on the role of guardian of the prevailing Reformed religion. Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676), a professor of theology, Hebrew, and other Oriental languages from 1634 to 1676, acted as a stern guardian of this theology, and the theological faculty maintained its prominence within the university for a long time. Voetius articulated a Reformed theology in which mission was essentially regarded as theology, primarily concerned with the continuation and expansion of the Reformation and the Reformed Church (as a public church), known as *De Plantatione Ecclesiarum* [On the planting of churches].<sup>1</sup> According to Voetius, mission is theocentric and ecclesiocentric: God is the first cause and, therefore, the ultimate goal of mission. Mission is conceived as 'from God, through God, and to God'; it constitutes the true worship of God and the establishment of the divine kingdom of the universal Church, echoing the sentiment of the Lord's Prayer: 'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come'. Voetius emphasised the importance of education and proficiency in the indigenous language as crucial tools in this endeavour. Throughout his long career, Voetius left an indelible mark on the practice of theology and thus on imparting knowledge to students in Utrecht, including those who were eventually sent to distant shores.

On the Sunday before the official inauguration of the university on 13th March 1636, Voetius delivered a sermon in the Dom cathedral *Redenvoering van de nuttigheid der Academien en schoolen, mitsgaders der wetenschappen konten, die in deselve worden geleerd* [Discourse on the usefulness of Academies and Schools, as well as the sciences that are taught in them]. In this sermon, he expressed his views on the 'usefulness' of a university, drawing upon a biblical passage from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verse 46 (King James Version): 'And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions'.



IOHANNES HOORNBECK.  
S. THEOL. DOCTOR. IN ECCLESIA. & ACADEMIA ULTRAIECTINA  
PASTOR, ATQ. PROFESSOR.

*J. Brouwer sculpit.*

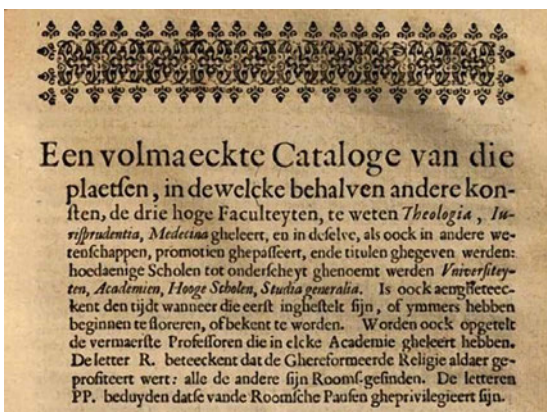
4  
*H. Hoornbeek sculpit.*

Johannes Hoornbeek (1617-1666)

Voetius built his argument around this biblical text, asserting that ‘academies’ and ‘colleges’ were indispensable for the dissemination and preservation of the Reformed faith. Alongside the publication of this sermon, Voetius included a *Volmaeckte Cataloge van Universiteiten, Academies, Hogescholen en Studia Generalia* [Complete Catalogue of Universities, Academies, Colleges, and General Studies], which apparently included only those located within the *Christenrijk* [Christendom]. In contemporary terms, this exhaustive list represents an early attempt at ranking universities, with Voetius explicitly supplying value judgments throughout.

Until around 1850, the connection between Utrecht University and the East and West Indies consisted mainly of ministers who were trained in Utrecht and then served in the colonies. From the very beginning of the university, graduates ventured to the furthest reaches of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces to work as ministers. They were stationed in various places, including South Asia, East Asia (Japan and Formosa), Brazil, Suriname, the Cape and others. In essence, this marked the beginning of a journey of an intellectual tradition combined with a (Reformed) civilising mission.<sup>2</sup>

On the fringes of the ‘Christenrijk’, encounters with individuals adhering to different belief systems were inevitable. These individuals were collectively categorised as Jews, Muslims, and heathens. In 1653, for instance, Voetius’ former student Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617-1666) published his *Summa controversiarum religionis cum infidelibus, haereticis, schismaticis*



Voetius, *Een Volmaeckte Cataloge [...]*, 1636

(1653). Voetius and Hoornbeeck played a key role in shaping the discourse on mission within the Reformed tradition, emphasising the dichotomy between believers and non-believers, who included Jews and Muslims. Voetius took a clear stance on Islam, seeing it as a 'complete apostasy in denying the true God and the covenant of the gospel'. Consequently, the mission was perceived as the salvation of Muslims 'ab inferno ad coelum' [from hell to heaven], as Hoornbeeck put it. The writings of Voetius and Hoornbeeck provided source material for Utrecht University graduates destined for colonial service. However, the primary mission of these ministers remained the affirmation of the Reformed faith in their congregations, with less emphasis on converting the 'heathen' in their vicinity.

## Johannes Leusden

### *Hebraist and the conversion of the Indians*

In addition to the notable contributions of Voetius and Hoornbeeck, Johannes Leusden played a significant role in the early history of the university. Leusden held the position of extraordinary professor of *Linguae sanctae* from 1650-1653 and ordinary professor of *Linguae sanctae* from 1653-1699. As noted in the eulogy of Leusden by his colleague Gerard de Vries, Leusden, renowned as a scholar of Hebrew, received a grant of one hundred guilders from the Vroedschap [City Council] of Utrecht in 1650. This enabled him to study for a period in Amsterdam with Jewish scholars – 'alterum Judaeum Arabem, Germanum alterum' [one an Arab Jew and the other a German Jew], as part of his continuing education. During this time, he not only broadened his knowledge of Hebrew, but also immersed himself in the ritual life of the Jewish community. Leusden devoted considerable effort to the pedagogical aspects of the Hebrew language, expressing his desire to assist 'soo Jonghmans, als Joffrouwen en Jongdochters, die te samen opweckt zijn deze tale te leeren' [Young men, as well as ladies and young girls, who are encouraged together to learn this language], as stated in the preface to his *Boeck der Psalmen: met de Nieuwe Nederlandsche Omsettinge* [Book of Psalms: with the New Dutch Translation]. Following the advice of Anna Maria van Schurman<sup>3</sup>, he published a Hebrew, Latin, and Dutch dictionary in 1668, having previously published a Hebrew grammar.

Leusden took a keen interest in the mission to the Indians in 'New England', on the east coast of North America. He maintained contact with



IOHANNES LEUSDEN.

LIB. ART. MAG. ET LINGVÆ SANCTÆ IN ACADEMIA  
VLTRAJECTINA PROFESSOR.

*Cor: Lanfon van Ceulen pinxit.*

*Th: Matham sculpsit.*

Johannes Leusden (1624-1699)

ministers working in the Boston area, who had expressed a significant need for Hebrew teaching materials. Leusden might have been particularly intrigued by the 'legend' suggesting that the Indians were descended from the 'ten lost tribes of Israel'. This belief was supported by the perceived similarity between Hebrew and the languages of the Indians. The origin of this narrative can be traced back to the accounts of the Jewish-Portuguese traveller Antonio de Montezinos (Aaron Levi). Montezinos travelled through Latin America in 1641-1642 and claimed to have encountered Indians in Ecuador who were familiar with Jewish rituals and spoke a language related to Hebrew. In Amsterdam in 1644, he swore to the Jewish rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel that he had discovered this connection.

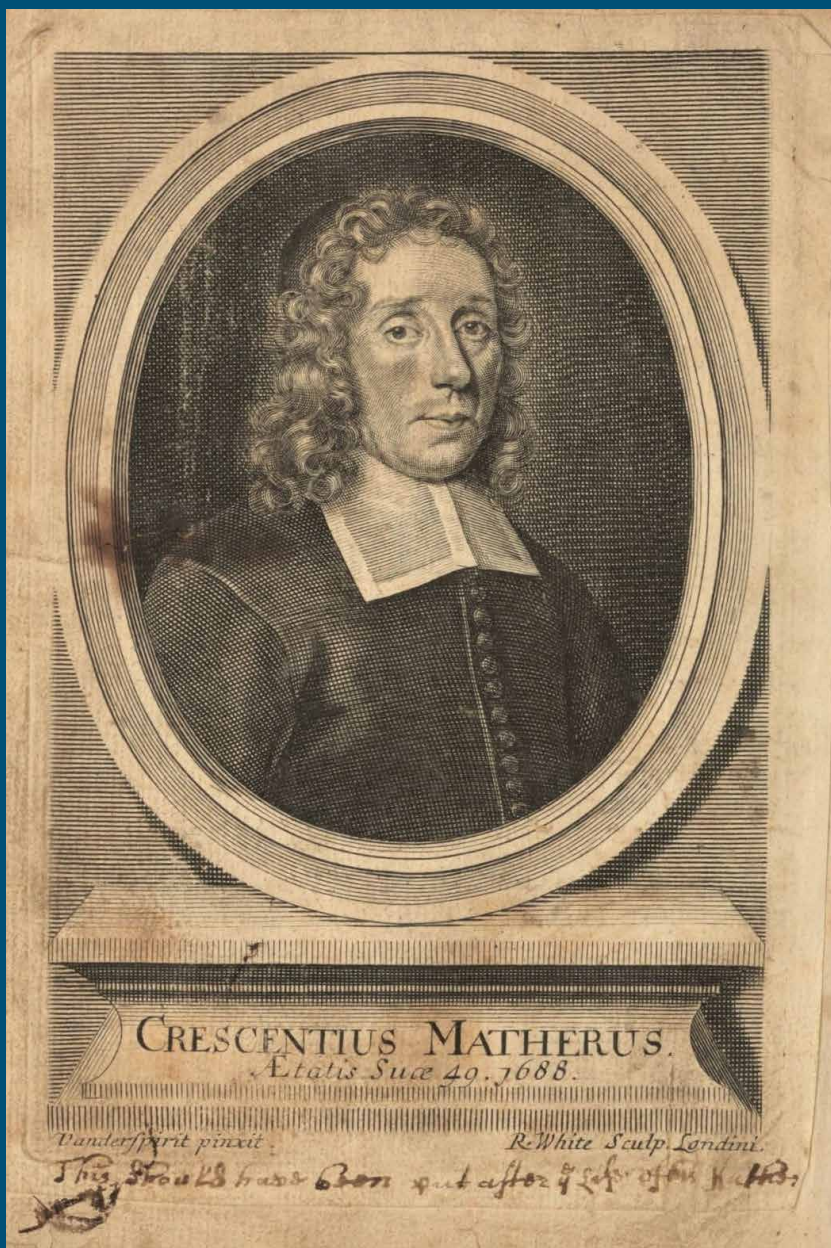
For Menasseh Ben Israel, this story supported the messianic hope of the recovery of the 'ten lost tribes', as detailed in his book *De Hoop van Israël*, which was also translated into Dutch. The original edition, *Esperança de Israel*, was published in Amsterdam in 1650. Leusden may have been acquainted with the story of the 'ten lost tribes' during his stay in Amsterdam.

On 12th January 1687, Leusden informed the Senate that he had received a Bible translated into the Indian language [*biblia in Americanam linguam translata*] as a gift for the university library from Crescentius Matherus [Increase Mather] (1639-1723), minister and president of Harvard College since 1685.

Six months later, on 12th July 1687, Increase Mather wrote a detailed letter to Leusden, giving an update on the missionary work of John Eliot (c. 1604-1690, 'Elliotus ille Indorum Americanorum Apostolus') among the Indians. Eliot was deeply committed to his missionary work due to his belief that the Indians were descended from the Jewish people. Mather detailed the success of the mission, which had resulted in the ordination of twenty-four native ministers. Eliot firmly believed



Title page *De Hoop van Israël* by Menasseh Ben Israël



Increase Mather (Crescentius Matherus) (1639-1723)

in the necessity of native ministers who could preach the gospel in their own language. Mather, in his letter, reiterated the significance of native ministers.

Mather wrote this letter in response to inquiries from Leusden about the progress of the mission among the Indians. It seems that Leusden might have mentioned the successes of Utrecht-trained missionaries in Ceylon and other places in his earlier letters. Mather's letter also acknowledged the receipt of several writings sent by Leusden himself. Leusden received this letter in Utrecht on 3rd February 1688. He discussed its contents at length during the Senate meeting on 7 February.

Leusden had sent several of his publications to America, including a Lexicon, a Compendium of the New Testament, and a Book of Psalms accompanied by an English translation dedicated to John Eliot and the twenty-four indigenous American ministers ('Twenty-four American ministers; lately Gentiles but now converted to the Christian Religion'). He also sent another Liber Psalmorum [Book of Psalms] with a Latin translation, dedicated to Increase Mather himself. In this communication, Leusden mentioned again the twenty-four native ministers. He confirmed receipt of Mather's letter, and agreed to send fifty copies of the Book of Psalms for the students at Harvard College, pending Mather's indication



John Eliot preaching to the Indians



of the preferred translation. Leusden confirmed the receipt of two Bibles translated into the Indian language, an Indian grammar, and an Indian ABC.

Increase Mather's letter to Leusden, *De Successu Evangelij Apud Indos occidentales in Novâ-Angliâ Epistola Ad Cl. Virum D. Johannem Leusdenum*, was published in 1688. It was also translated into French and German and was widely circulated in Europe. The letter was included in a document *De Successu Evangelii apud Indos orientales*. Mather's letter mentioned a subsequent communication from Leusden, in which Leusden expressed his admiration for the conversions among the Indians, citing it as an impetus for conversions among the 'Indos Orientales'. In this letter Leusden spoke of as many as three hundred thousand conversions in and around Ceylon. He understood that such figures might seem highly improbable. To substantiate these claims, he appended to *De Successu* short accounts of numerous conversions of 'Indos Orientales' by former Utrecht students, including Herman Specht, Cornelis van der Sluijs, Adriaan de Mey and his colleague Francois Valentijn, from Ceylon and Ambon. These reports were intended to demonstrate the credibility of the remarkable figures, as the East Indian ministers sought to match their American counterparts.

In Leusden we see a fascinating connection between (Reformation) theology, mission and language, especially Hebrew. Initially, Leusden was keen to help ministers in New England learn and teach Hebrew by providing teaching materials. This was a matter of great importance to him as a Hebraist, and it effectively addressed the specific needs of local ministers. At the same time, he was struck by the close connection between preaching the gospel and the native language, with frequent reference to the twenty-four native ministers. This insight led him to recognise the need to make the Reformation faith and its scriptures, especially the Bible, available in the languages of the (as yet) 'unbelievers'. The correspondence vividly illustrates how the worlds of West and East Indians were integrated into a 'global' conversion campaign in which Utrecht theologians and ministers played a notable role.

Interest in indigenous languages evolved from a necessary tool for Christianisation to a genuine, and at times scholarly, fascination with them. In the following chapter I will explore the aspect of studying the culture, including religion and language, of the people with whom the ministers interacted at the trading posts.

## Voetius and his students overseas

Utrecht University operated not as a church but as an educational institution for those who wished to serve as ministers in the Reformed Church, including service in the trading posts in the Far East. In his *Biografisch Woordenboek van Oost-Indische Predikanten* (1893) [Biographical Dictionary of East Indian Ministers], Van Troostenburg de Bruijn lists about seventy Utrecht-trained ministers who had gone to the East Indies for varying lengths of time since the establishment of Utrecht University. Van Troostenburg de Bruijn, himself a Utrecht graduate, served as a missionary minister in various East Indian locations from 1857 to 1885. An examination of the brief biographies of these Utrecht graduates provides an insight into the aspirations of these young men, driven by a deep commitment to become worthy ministers in the East Indies. Two of them, Gilbertus Happart and Frederic Gueynier, are briefly discussed in the following chapter for their remarkable contributions to the study and documentation of indigenous languages. First, we will focus on two ministers who are also mentioned in Johannes Leusden's document: Cornelis van der Sluijs and Herman Specht.

### Cornelis van der Sluijs

A seventeenth century Malay hymnbook bears this inscription:

Cornelius van der Sluijs. Ultrajectinus. In 't Jaar 1672 for krankbezoeker met 't Wapen van Alkmaar naar Oost-Indien gevaren. In 't Jaar 1678 tot peremptoir onderzocht, en als absoluut predikant na Ternate beroepen. In perpetuam mem. tesseram. Posui C. v/d Sluijs.<sup>4</sup>

[Cornelius van der Sluijs. From Utrecht. In the year 1672, sailed on the ship 't Wapen van Alkmaar (*Alkmaar Arms*) to the East Indies, as a church comforter of the sick. In the year 1678, subjected to peremptory examination, and then called as a full preacher to Ternate. In perpetual memory. Inscribed by C. van der Sluijs.]

Cornelis van der Sluijs followed a somewhat unconventional career trajectory. Born in Utrecht, he is recorded as a student in the *Album Studiosorum*, a register of the enrolment of Utrecht students (albeit incomplete). In 1673, he arrived in Batavia as a *krankenbezoeker* [comforter

of the sick] and was subsequently sent to Ambon. Apparently, he had not completed his studies including the proponent's examination in Utrecht because on 10th July 1674 he had a local examination as a proponent [a proponent is qualified to be called as a minister). By 1678, he had attained the status of a fully qualified minister in Ambon. He was later posted to Ternate in the Moluccas, returning to Ambon in 1684. By May 1690, he had returned to Batavia. Accused of allowing Ambonese Christians to practice idolatry, he left for the Netherlands in 1697. After living in Zuilen near Utrecht for some time, he was sent out again by the Chamber of Zeeland in 1702. Until 1709, he served as a minister on the island of Onrust off the coast of Batavia. He was a member of the committee for the translation of the Bible under the leadership of Melchior Leydecker. He died in 1715.

The hymnbook that refers to Van der Sluijs' voyage also mentions Isaac van Thije, a VOC governor. Van Thije refers to a form 'to administer Holy Baptism to elderly persons' that had been translated into Malay. However, it is unlikely that either Van der Sluijs or Van Thije was responsible for the translation of this hymnal.

### Hermanus Specht (c. 1645-1699)

Hermanus Specht, born around 1645, came from the distinguished Specht family of Utrecht. He attended the Hieronymus School in Utrecht and studied theology at Utrecht University. In 1672, he volunteered for service in the East Indies. Later that year, he sailed to the East Indies aboard the VOC ship *Pijnacker*, assuming the role of minister. Initially stationed at Tutucorijn (now Thoothukudi), a port city in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, he later served as minister in Colombo from 1674 to 1691. Renowned for his knowledge of Sinhalese and Tamil, he improved his linguistic skills with the help of interpreters and a Brahmin scholar. He returned to the Netherlands in 1691, but reappeared at the Cape in 1693, waiting for a ship to take him back to Colombo, where he died in 1697 (or 1699). His brother, Philippus Specht, also pursued a career as a minister, serving in Curaçao.

To conclude this survey of Dutch ministers educated at Utrecht University, we will briefly look at the West Indies, where several Utrecht-trained ministers served. We will focus on two, both noteworthy in the context of the book's theme.



showed a commitment to the church's missionary work. However, he faced challenges in reaching the local Indians and learning their languages. His focus shifted to educating their children, which he saw as his mission:

met hope dat het ons vorder aen noodzakelijke middelen tot voortsetting van Gods kerk en dienst te sijner tijd niet en sal mancqueren, waertoe scholen dienst niet weynig sal toebrengeen, om niet alleen onse Christen jeugt maar ook *die van uytlandsche en ingebore duysterlingen in 't ligt van de zonne der gerechtigheyd op te queecken*, en daarin te leeren wandelen, terwijl 't nog boven de kimmen van onsen horizont is.

with the hope that in due course we shall not fail to find the necessary means for the continuation of God's churches and service, to which schools will not contribute little, *to nurture not only our Christian youth but also those of foreign and inbred darklings in the light of the sun of justice*, and to learn to walk therein, while it lingers above the horizon] (emphasis mine).

Basseliers appears to deliberately reference the emblem of his alma mater, *Sol Iustitiae illustra nos*. The quotation uses the term 'uytlandsche en ingebore duysterlingen' to refer to the indigenous Indians and black enslaved people from Africa, categorising them as 'darklings' in contrast to the sun of justice. Balancing his roles as minister and planter proved a challenge for Basseliers, as is evident from his correspondence with the States of Zeeland, where he described himself as 'a lonely sparrow on the roof'. He tendered his resignation as minister in 1684 and died suddenly at the end of 1689, leaving his wife in charge of the plantation.

### **Johann Wilhelm Kals (1700-1781)**

The second Utrecht alumnus was Johann Wilhelm Kals (1700-1781). Born in Düren, Germany, Kals studied theology in Utrecht. In 1730 he was sent to Suriname as a missionary. Described as a hot-tempered man with strong opinions, Kals openly criticised the treatment of Indians and black slaves by the Dutch planters in Suriname. He also condemned the 'whoring and adultery' prevalent among the planters themselves. This outspokenness led to his expulsion from the country by both colonial and church authorities. On his return to the Netherlands, he wrote

Title page *Neerlands hooft- en wortelsonde*,  
by Jan Willem Kals

*Klagte over de bedorvene zeden die voorgangeren zo in 't Kerk- als Burgerbestuur in ene zeer vruchtgbare en eerst opluikende colonie* [Complaint about the corrupt morals among the leaders of both the church and the civil administration in a very fertile and prosperous colony], in which he denounced the extravagant behaviour of the colonial rulers.

After his return to the Netherlands, Kals travelled from the Netherlands to England and America and back again. His life was marked by numerous conflicts. In 1756, he published *Neerlands hooft- en wortel-sonde, het verzuim van de bekeringe der heidenen en Nuttige en noodige bekeeringe der heidenen in Suriname en Berbices* [Netherlands' main and root sin, the neglect of the conversion of the heathens and Useful and necessary conversion of the heathens in Suriname and Berbices], also known as '*Neerlands hooft- en wortelsonde* Dl II'). In these writings, he expressed unequivocal views on the position of Indians and black slaves:

Now look first at the people in whose land you live, the Indians, and try, may I pray you, to see what right you have to seize their lands and possessions. It is needless to explore here how these peoples came to these lands. You find them there, see that they are men like you, that they are equal to you in everything, except that they are not clever enough to unite and make themselves strong, and drive you out of their land, because you bring them neither benefit nor advantage, but on the contrary continual unrest. [...] Is it any wonder that this people, once they get their eyes, come out of the woods at night and find you all in your beds or hammocks? Come to kill, to get rid of these strange guests at once? [...]



Secondly, look at the negroes, whom you have to fetch from Guinea at great expense, who – by what right let me answer those who do this business – are taken from there, brought to you, and sold and bought openly in the people's market (for shame, Christians!). These people you use in your service, and most of you deal with them more roughly and harshly than they deal with their stupid cattle – dogs, cats, horses, cows or pigs. Is it any wonder that these people run away? And then gather in the woods, hold all kinds of meetings to come and pay you back in due course for what you have done to them or their ancestors? Especially when they see, and often experience, that you do not leave them alone now, but seek them everywhere, track them down, and take them into your power, then kill them in the most grim and inhuman way, which you still dare to call justice or doing justice.<sup>7</sup>

Understandably, some writers see Kals as a precursor of Multatuli [the pen name of Dutch writer Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820-1887). Multatuli (from the Latin 'multa tuli', I have suffered much) is best known for his novel *Max Havelaar* (1860), which criticised colonial exploitation in the Dutch East Indies]. Kals was a Utrecht-educated theologian who, as one of Utrecht's first graduates, vehemently opposed colonial exploitation. However, Kals' confrontational behaviour and sharp tongue did little to improve the living conditions of the Indians and black slaves in the West Indian colonies.<sup>8</sup>

### Adrianus de Mey, *Henr. F., Indus*

Years earlier, Adrianus de Mey studied at Utrecht University. In 1676, he was listed as 'ADRIANUS DE MEY Indus Paliacathensis, S.S. Theol.Cand.' in the *Album Studiosorum*. Adriaan was born at Paleacatte on the Choromandel coast (present-day Pulicat in the state of Tamil Nadu) to a Dutch father and an indigenous mother from whom he learned the Tamil language. He was a 'Mardijker' (a designation for a heterogeneous group of free citizens and freed slaves who were often of mixed descent). Adrianus was a full cousin of Louis (Ludovicus) de Mey. Louis was called 'a black inlander' and was the son of Louis de Mey, lieutenant of a company of Mardijkers in Batavia. Possibly through this family connection, Adriaan learned Latin in Batavia. We do not know to what extent he also received instruction in

theology, but he was enrolled as a student in Utrecht in 1676 with the specific title Theol.cand. De Mey publicly defended his *Disputatio Theologica De Conversione Indorum* on 18 December 1675. This disputation was also published.

After his studies in Utrecht, he was confirmed by the Amsterdam Classis [the church council responsible for sending ministers to the colonies] and returned to Ceylon where he served as minister in Jaffna from 1678 to 1688. He then served briefly as minister in his native Paleacatte, but returned to Jaffna in 1690, probably against his will. He was appointed rector of the seminary at nearby Nallur, for which position De Mey was an obvious choice. He had had a solid theological education in Utrecht, a good knowledge of the local languages (especially Tamil) as well as Portuguese, and could use the seminary to counter the Portuguese missionaries in Ceylon.

The concept of such a local seminary originated with Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein, Commissioner-General in Ceylon, whom we will meet in the next chapter as a collector of flora. Van Reede tot Drakenstein was convinced that local educational institutes should be set up where Dutch could be taught alongside indigenous languages and Portuguese. The take-over of Ceylon from the Portuguese freed up a network of schools that people wanted to use for their own colonisation of Ceylon. At the Malabar seminary, young people of Malabar descent were trained as teachers or proponents who would then study theology in the Netherlands. Education included the Dutch language, Malabar/Tamil, and theology. The seminary soon flourished under his rectorship. De Mey also planned to establish a similar institution for the Sinhalese.

This Utrecht alumnus was highly ambitious, to put it mildly. He was conceited and had an exaggerated sense of decorum. Perhaps inspired by his experiences in Utrecht, he started using the title of *rector magnificus*. To the annoyance of his colleagues, De Mey was always accompanied by up to two enslaved men holding two parasols. De Mey owned 32 slaves, far more than the other people. But he was also described by those around him as 'an alert and particularly industrious man'.<sup>9</sup> He published 'The Acts of the Apostles, translated into the Malabar language in 1692, which was edited by the Honourable Adrianus de Mey, in his life minister and Rector of the Malabar Seminary at Jaffanapatnam [...]'. De Mey died on 28 February 1699.



## Disputatio Theologica De Conversione Indorum (1675)



Title page *Disputatio Theologica De Conversione Indorum* (1675)

Voetius had died in 1676, so it is unlikely that De Mey attended lectures by him. But the disputatio certainly shows considerable influence of Voetius. In his disputatio, Adriaan de Mey discusses how to successfully convert the Indians to Christianity. He begins his argument on a personal note. He recalls how he was determined to preach the gospel to the heathens [Gentiles] and ‘populares meos Indos’ [my fellow Indians]. De Mey clearly indicates here that he considered himself an Indian. That is why he left his home and family, his ‘charissima matre viduâ’ [beloved widowed mother], friends and acquaintances to study in Utrecht:

totum Oceanum navigando superavi; & in remotas hasce orbis parte, ac potissimum hoc bonarum artium, omnisque eruditionis, imprimis etiam sacrae, emporium, me contuli, ea mente, ut (optimo Deo favente) adminiculis necessariis instructus ad meos deine reverterer, & consilio Dei possent servire, ad ipsius gloriam, multorumque conversionem salutarem, in magno illo opere de quo nunc nobis erit dissertatio

[By sailing, I have traversed the entire Ocean; and I have taken myself to these remote parts of the world, and especially to this trading place (i.e. Utrecht) of good arts, and of all erudition, especially sacred, with the intention that, God willing, having been equipped with necessary resources, I might return to my people, and might

be able to offer the counsel of God, to His glory, and to the healthful conversion of many, in that great work which will now follow.]

After these personal outbursts, his theological treatise begins with a series of short chapters followed by a number of propositions. The strategy for converting the 'Indos' is clear: start with their 'natural' religion! With reference to Romans 1:19 (in the King James Version): 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them', De Mey believes

*nam nulla est gens tam fera, tam barbara; ut non agnoscat aliquod numen.*

[for there are no people so wild and so barbarous that they do not know anything of a deity].

This truth is confirmed by reason, 'si spectemus universam rerum naturam' [when we consider the universal nature of reality]. This reason makes it possible to learn to see God in everything that grows in nature: 'præsentemque Deum quæ libet herba docet' around us. And this 'Cognitio Dei' [knowledge of God] is basically present in every human being. Further on in the treatise, he states that we can think of God as the first cause, 'prima causa'. God has inscribed His holiness and justice in our minds and consciousness too: 'Sanctitatem ac justitiam suam Deus menti & conscientiæ nostræ etiã insculpsit'.

Of course, also Indians seek redemption:

*Multa sanè variaque sunt media, quibus Indi conantur remissionem peccatorum obtinere; utpote: sacrificiis, lotionibus, tum aquâ fluvii Gangis, tum marinâ; item visitationibus locorum, (in primis aut Sjangernat; quod templum situm est in littore regionis Orixæ, summæ apud illos celebritatis ac sanctimonix, quo singulis annis plus viginti hominum millia concurrunt;) ad hec eleëmossynis ac beneficentiâ, præcipuè erga Bramines seu Brachmanos; ædificationes sacrarum ædium, aliisque expensis, laboribus, ac molestiis, in gratiam Idoli alicujus; in primis etiã mortificationibus, seu poenitentiis arduis, &c. qua omnia nequaquam istum valorem habent,*

ut justitiæ Divinæ pro peccatis satisfacere possint: nec ullo argumento constat, ea Deo placere.

[There are, of course, many and various ways in which the Indians try to obtain forgiveness of their sins; for example, sacrifices, ablations and the waters of the river Ganges and the sea. Similarly, by visits to the places (especially Shangernatn [Jagannath]; which temple is situated on the coast of the region of Orixia [Odisha], of the greatest fame and holiness among them, where more than twenty thousand people a year congregate) to these with alms and benefices, especially to the Bramines or Brahmins; to the construction of the sacred building, and other expenditures, labour and troubles, in favour of an idol; yea, even for mortifications, or difficult penances, &c. all of which have by no means the value of divine justice that they can make up for sins, nor can they be shown by any argument to please God].

In short, his countrymen may have a sense of 'God', but they miss the essence of faith:

Monstrandum itaque venit verum illud remedium, quod à Deo ipso in tam arduo & difficili negotio propositum est per Euangelium; Mediator, Sponsor, Redemptor, & Servator ille θεάνθρωπος, Jesus Christ: & explicandum, quomodò ipse salutem nobis impetraverit sua satisfaction & oblatione verè expiatoriâ, justitiâ item ac merito suo.

[Therefore, the true remedy comes to be shown, which God Himself has proposed in such a difficult and arduous matter through the Gospel; the Mediator, Sponsor, Redeemer, and Saviour, that divine-human being, Jesus Christ: and it must be explained how He obtained salvation for us by His satisfaction and truly expiatory offering, as well as by His justice and merit.]

And here lies the task of the ministers to preach the Gospel. Therefore, according to De Mey, they must be careful not to fall 'in acutis disputationibus & subtilitatibus' [into sharp discussions and subtleties], which would only dull the Indians' ears too much ('nimiùm teneras aures obtundant'). As for the practice of preaching, De Mey also gives some wise lessons.

First, it is important to know the language of the people to be converted.

Qui autem cum fructu dictam conversionem curabit, peritus sit oportet linguæ istorum Gentilium, ut ipse cum illis loqui & agere possit.

[But whoever will manage this conversion with success must be skilled in the language of those Gentiles, so that he may be able to speak and interact with them.].

The second important lesson is the exemplary role of the minister:

Qui denique conversioni Gentilium feliciter dabit operam, in eo prorsus requiritur integritas vitæ, ac sanctimonia: quia Gentiles dem nofram de moribus judicant. Proclivius quippe est, quod videas credere, quam quod audias. Et raró persuadet sermo factis contrarius.

[Indeed, whoever will diligently devote themselves to the conversion of the Gentiles, integrity of life and sanctity are absolutely required, because the Gentiles judge us more by our conduct than by our words. It is easier for them to believe what they see than what they hear. Rarely does speech persuade when actions contradict.]

In Proposition II of his *Disputatio*, he writes succinctly:

Theologia naturalis non contrariatur supernaturali. Est-que utilis-sima ad convertendos Gentiles: nec tamen sufficit ad consequendam salutem aeternam.

[Natural religion is not opposed to supernatural religion. It is quite useful to convert the pagans. Yet it is not sufficient to attain eternal salvation].

After all, as he says in Proposition III:

No datur gratia universalis ad salutem sufficiens.

[There is no universal grace given that is sufficient for salvation].

But fortunately, the sense of a deity is universal: (Proposition X)

Nec in America, nec alibi, dantur homines, quibus conscientia non dictet aliquod esse Numen.

[Neither in America nor elsewhere are there people to whom conscience does not dictate the existence of some divine power.]

The theological views expressed by De Mey in his treatise are fully in line with those of Voetius in particular. Voetius also believed in a 'religio naturalis' present in every person ('innata'). But this is opposed to the 'religio relevata', the revealed faith in the message of salvation, which 'rational' religion can never achieve. Voetius also pointed out that mission required knowledge of the indigenous languages. Adriaan de Mey is an excellent example of how Voetian theology began to travel to distant lands, so to speak. And he certainly knew his languages. As for his exemplary role, Adriaan obviously had his own thoughts, which were not shared by everyone!

### **'Brown-skinned but white-souled'**

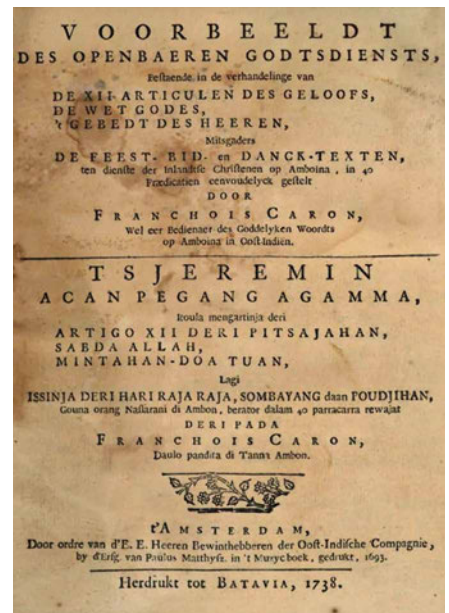
#### *Students from the colonies in Utrecht*

The primary role in spreading the Reformed message was, of course, played by theological students of Dutch origin, as well as those from various European countries. However, there were also students of mixed origin who came to Utrecht from the East Indies, India, Ceylon and other distant places to study theology. The *Album studiosorum* 1636-1886 lists over a hundred students whose origins were described as 'Indus', 'Indo' or 'India'. Most were probably Dutch students, the sons of VOC officials. Notably, these individuals were not exclusively theology students.

In the nineteenth century there was a misconception that a training school for East Indian ministers was established in Leiden and then in Utrecht after 1622. However, as early as 1655 'FRANCISCUS CARON Japona-Indus' was matriculated. This Francois (1634-1706) was the son of a Dutchman who worked at a trading post in Hirado, Japan, and a Japanese mother. His mother died in Batavia in 1643, after which the family moved to the Netherlands. Like his brother Daniel, François studied first at Leiden and then at Utrecht. He returned to the East Indies in 1660, serving as a minister in Ambon until 1674, and later as a minister in Lexmond. Francois was very fluent in Malay and published a collection of sermons in that language *Voorbeeldt des openbaeren Godtsdiensts* [Example of public worship], containing the *XII Articulen des Geloofs, de Wet Godes, 't Gebedt des Heeren, mitsgaders de Feest-, Bid- en Danck-texten, ten dieneder Inlandtse Christenen op Amboina, in 40 Praedicationen eenvoudigeÿck gestelt door Franchois Caron*. In 1683, he also published a catechism booklet with 46 questions, *De weg na den Hemel* [The Way to Heaven], inspired by Willem Teelinck's catechism booklet *Den weg der zaligheyd* [The Way of Salvation].

*Voorbeeldt des openbaeren Godtsdiensts by*  
Francois Caron

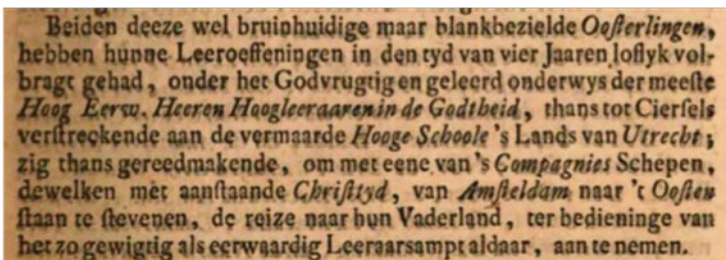
The efforts made in local education in Ceylon to prepare young men for further study in the Netherlands were significant, particularly in the mid-eighteenth century. During this period, a number of students from India and Ceylon sought theological training at Utrecht University in order to qualify for the ministry. Van Troostenburg de Bruijn documented several of them, some of whom lived on Korte Jansstraat in Utrecht. Johannes van den Broek, a student at the seminary in Ceylon, arrived in the Netherlands in 1747 and went to Utrecht to study theology. Unfortunately, his studies were hindered by behavioural problems and no further details are available. Franciscus Janzen (Franciscus Jansz., Janse of Jansze), a native Tamil ('Ceilonensis'), brought an attestation from Colombo to Utrecht in 1748. He was confirmed as a minister for the church in Ceylon in 1751 and served in Colombo and Jaffanapatnam, preaching in Dutch and Tamil, until his death sometime before 1777. Petrus de Sylva, a Malabar student who had also studied at Utrecht in 1748, was confirmed by the Amsterdam classis for service in Asia in 1751. On his return he served in various places in Ceylon. Benjamin Cabralsch, a Sinhalese student educated at the seminary in Ceylon, unfortunately died while studying in Utrecht. Willem Jurriaan Ondaatje, from Malabar, received his initial education at the seminary in Ceylon. He came to the Republic in 1752, studied theology in Utrecht and became a proponent in 1756. Returning to Ceylon, he became a minister in Colombo and in 1757 rector of the seminary. Willem Jurriaan preached in Dutch, Malabar and Sinhalese and is said to have baptised sixteen hundred natives on one of his journeys. He was married to Hermina Quint from Amsterdam. In June 1758 his son Peter Philip Jurriaan Ondaatje was born, who later studied law in Utrecht and became a prominent figure in the patriotic movement. Hendrik Philipsz, a Sinhalese, joined Willem Jurriaan Ondaatje in Utrecht to study theology.



Confirmed as a minister by the Amsterdam Classis in 1756, he returned to Ceylon and preached in Dutch and Sinhalese until his death on 19 May 1790. Bastiaan Janszen, a Malabar student of the Ceylonese seminary ('Ceilonensis'), studied at Utrecht and was confirmed for the East Indies in 1761. After three years in Cochin, where he learnt Portuguese, Bastiaan became minister of the Portuguese congregation in Batavia, where he died in 1776. Finally, Andreas Spoor, a Misties (of mixed blood) and student of the Ceylonese seminary, came to the Netherlands to study in 1755. After studies in Leiden and Utrecht, he was confirmed as a minister in 1761 and worked for a long time in Galle, preaching in Sinhalese.

Willem Jurriaan Ondaatje and Hendrik Philipsz, having successfully passed their exams, were reported in *De Maandelykse Nederlandsche Mercurius* [The Monthly Dutch Mercurius], first volume, Amsterdam, 1756:

beiden van d'Oosterse Zwarte Natie en geboortig zynde van Colombo [...] Beiden deeze wel bruinhuidige maar blankbezielde Oosterlingen, hebben hunne Leeroeffeningen in den tyd van vier Jaaren loflyk volbragt gehad, onder het Godvrugtig en geleerd onderwys der meeste Hoog Eerw. Heeren Hoogleeraaren in de Godtheid, thans tot Ciersels verstrekkende aan de vermaarde Hooge Schoole's Lands van Utrecht; zig thans gereedmakende, om met eene van's Compagnies Schepen, dewelken met aanstaande Christtyd van Amsteldam naar 't Oosten staan te stevenen, de reize naar hun Vaderland, ter bedieninge van het zo gewigtig als eerwaardig Leeraarsampt aldaar, aan te nemen [...] ter vermeerderinge van GODS Gereformeerde Kerke in het nog grootgedeelde-lyk in 't akelige duister gezetene Azië.



Newspaper article in *De Maandelykse Nederlandsche Mercurius*, 1756

[Both of the Eastern Black Nation and natives of Colombo [...] Both these indeed brown-skinned but white-souled Orientals have commendably completed their studies in four years' time, under the God-fearing and learned instruction of most of the most Honourable Professors in Theology, now bringing honour to the renowned High School of Utrecht; now preparing to embark on one of the Company's Ships, which are due to sail from Amsterdam to the East in the forthcoming Christmas season, to take up the voyage to their Fatherland, to serve the important and honourable post of a teacher there. [...] for the propagation of GOD's Reformed Church in Asia, which is still largely in miserable darkness].<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, reports from Ceylon indicated that these mixed-race students were not always accepted as full-fledged ministers.

In addition, dozens of white students from the Cape (now South Africa) came to Utrecht to study theology in the mid-nineteenth century. Utrecht had a significant tradition of conservative Reformed theology, known as the 'Voetian tradition'. I have discussed this extensively in my book *Sol Iustitiae en de Kaap* (2006) and will briefly mention M.C. Vos here, highlighting the travels of individuals between the Netherlands, the Cape and, in his case, Ceylon.

## Michiel Christiaan Vos

### *A remarkable student from the Cape in Utrecht"*

In 1781, an extraordinary person appeared in Utrecht, Michiel Christiaan Vos, to study at the theological faculty. Through the publication of his autobiographical work, *Merkwaardig verhaal aangaande het leven en de lotgevallen van Michiel Christiaan Vos* [Remarkable story concerning the life and adventures of Michiel Christiaan Vos] we gain insight into the distinctive life of this somewhat peculiar character. He was born in Cape Town on 31 December 1759, to 'Christian parents, who came from European and Asian ancestors'.

Based on genealogical research Huigen identified Michiel Vos as the first 'black' (in the sense of non-European) writer to publish his *Merkwaardig Verhaal* in 1824.<sup>12</sup> In his narrative, Vos presents himself as a pietistic, deeply sentimental man who considered preaching the Gospel





MICHIEL CHRISTIAAN VOS.

GEBOREN OP CABO DE GOEDE HOOP DEN 31 DEC. 1759, BEDIENAAR'S HEILIGEN EVANGELIUMS TE  
WOUJENBERG 1785, TE RYNACKER 1789, TE WOERDEN 1790, GEDISTICIEERD  
NAAR CABO DE GOEDE HOOP 1793.

Aanfhouwer van dit beeld! wilt g'ij gelukkig weezen!  
Peog' dan, door't waar geloof, in Jesus, God te vreezen  
Bewandeld g'ij dien weg, dan, doch dan ook maar alleen,  
Smaakt g'ij het hoogste goed, in eend'looze reuzig'heen.

*Van Nijmegen 20 maart 1822*

*B. H. Koster, Schiedam*

TE UTRECHT BIJ H. VAN OTTERLOO.

*Prolog*

Michiel Christiaan Vos (1759-1825)

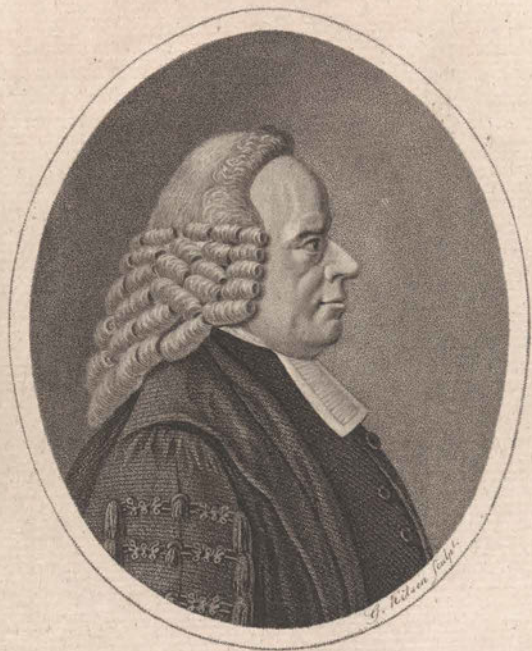
among the slaves as a significant calling in his life. Perhaps this vocation could be traced back to his genealogy, being a descendant of a slave. The young, somewhat sickly Michiel Vos was determined to become a minister. In 1780, he travelled to the Netherlands, initially unsure about in which university he would enrol.

Having reservations about my path, I recalled a conversation I had overheard three years earlier at the Cape, from a caretaker of the sick aboard a ship, discussing Professor G. Bonnet at Utrecht. Intrigued, I acquired his recently published books and read them with such enthusiasm that, while fervently praying to God, I resolved to attend Utrecht University and become a disciple of his High Honour.

Professor Gijsbertus Bonnet, a venerable figure, lectured ecclesiastical dogmatics at Utrecht University from 1761 to 1804. Michiel Vos arrived in Utrecht without credentials or connections:

I entered Utrecht in August 1781, and, being unfamiliar with anyone there and lacking a letter of recommendation, sought accommodation in an ordinary lodging house. On the following day, a day of rest, I attended divine service thrice. I was so profoundly nourished in spirit that I thought to myself: 'This is where I must be! This, I hope, is the place which the Lord has designated for me as a training ground, where He intends to prepare me for the ministry of the Gospel!'

He then introduced himself to Bonnet, who pledged to mentor him in his theological training. Subsequently, Bonnet introduced him to a 'Kaapsche juffrouw' [young lady from the Cape] whom Vos' mother had known. Motivated by a desire to return to the Cape at the earliest opportunity, Vos engaged in diligent study. After three years, a vacancy came up at the Cape. Seeking to obtain the necessary references, Vos approached five professors at Utrecht. He then travelled to Amsterdam for examination by the classis of Amsterdam. As early as 1642, the national Synod of the Reformed Church had decreed that the Amsterdam classis would oversee the overseas daughter churches, including those at the Cape, which was considered part of the East Indies. Consequently, the Amsterdam classis was responsible for appointing ministers to these daughter churches. Upon his arrival in Amsterdam, Vos faced a significant setback as the vacancy had already been filled. Nonetheless, Vos did learn:



Rechtzinnig, schraoer, Rein in Woorden, Leer en Handel.  
De Roem van 'slichts Alleen, door Godvrucht, kunde en Wandel.  
Vol Yver, Liefde en Trouw, voor Jesuss Eer en Wet.  
Zien, Christen! in dees schets, den Groten Man, B. C. A. N. E. T.  
J. M. Buislingh.  
Eed. Reform. Past.

N. Cornel Excudrt.

Gijsbertus Bonnet (1723-1805)

[...] that the principal deputy responsible for the foreign churches was no longer very favourable to me. This was not only because I had become primarily a pupil of Professor Bonnet, thus aligning with the Voetians, against whom he held a strong bias, but also because he considered me a zealot – a term he applied to those who took their beliefs seriously.

Vos felt deeply indignant about the deputy's behaviour but eventually found himself compelled to seek employment in the Netherlands. In doing so, he likely became the first African to serve as a minister in the Netherlands, which attracted people to his church services. In this context, Vos recounts:

[...] a certain maidservant, who had only come to church to see an *African*, scrutinised me closely as I ascended the pulpit. She said to the lady seated beside her who was her mother: 'Is that all? He looks just like any other person!'

This woman was eventually converted under Vos' influence and remained as a housemaid with the Vos family – his wife had meanwhile joined him – and when they returned to the Cape. In 1793, Vos was finally called to Rodezand, and he departed for the Cape at the end of that year. Upon his arrival, Vos, described by Elizabeth Conradie as a person 'branded by his fondness for everything that had a coloured skin',<sup>13</sup> displayed fervent missionary zeal. He preached on the words in the Mark 16:15: 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world; preach the Gospel to every creature.'

In addition to his zeal for preaching the Gospel among slaves (without explicitly rejecting slavery as such), Vos found himself in conflict with the owners of enslaved individuals. Christianised slaves were not permitted to be sold, thus diminishing their economic value. In 1799, Vos became the main founder of the first South African missionary society: the *South African Society to Promote the Expansion of Christ's Kingdom*. In doing so, Vos firmly stood in the tradition of pietistic missionaries who increasingly focused on the predicament of enslaved people in South Africa and other parts of the British colonial empire.

Vos did not represent a strict Reformation theology but rather an 'orthodoxy of the heart', making him a precursor of the *Reveil* (a pietistic revival movement) and later the ethical theology that dominated the Utrecht theological faculty, especially in the second half of the nineteenth

century. Due to conflicts arising from his missionary zeal (some writers also mention an affair with a housekeeper), Vos departed for Europe again, where he was a guest of the London Missionary Society. This society sent him to Ceylon to oversee the work of missionaries. He remained there for several years before finally returning to the Cape in 1809. By this time, Vos had remarried after the death of his first wife in 1805. Vos himself passed away in 1825. A remarkable figure, Vos was able to indulge his missionary zeal on three continents — Europe, South Africa, and Asia. His autobiography was keenly read in South Africa and the Netherlands for many years.

## Utrecht University and missionary societies

The concept of mission as envisaged in modern times only came into its own with the establishment of missionary societies towards the end of the eighteenth century. In the new regime from 1815 onwards, the formal link between church and state that existed during the days of the VOC was loosened. Increased attention was given to religious freedom, and mission increasingly became the realm of new societies such as the ‘Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap ter voortplanting en bevordering van het Christendom, bijzonder onder de heidenen’ (NZG) [Netherlands Missionary Society for the propagation and promotion of Christianity, especially among the heathens], founded in 1797. This society sent its first missionaries to the East Indies from 1815 onwards and operated independently of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands. Its focus was on planting ‘true Christianity’. Essentially, the mission was privatised, with an emphasis on private missionary zeal concentrated on the spiritual welfare of the individual.

In this new ‘regime’, a distinction between minister and missionary became increasingly apparent. The council of churches in Batavia had already noted in 1777:

Surely there is a great difference between gathering a new congregation out of blinded pagans and exalted Muslims and pasturing a Christian flock that has already been brought together; between constantly arguing against pagan superstitions or Muslims’ prejudices and providing comprehensive and penetrating church reasons.

It was clear to them:

that we needed entirely different individuals as missionaries to the pagans and Muslims than as ordinary ministers in the already established congregations. People who had been living for several years with the Javanese or Malay, and had to adapt to their own misconceptions, were not suitable at all to satisfy the discerning taste of our congregation by delivering elegant lectures.<sup>14</sup>

Individual professors and alumni of Utrecht University, such as theology professors Bonnet, Heringa, Vinke, and Doedes, played a significant role in these missionary efforts. Some of them departed from the NZG due to the increasing influence of modern theology. Alongside the NZG, the 'Nederlands Bijbel Genootschap' (NBG) [Dutch Bible Society] was established in 1814. This society focused on the presence of the Bible in indigenous languages, continuing the work of ministers from an earlier period who, as mentioned before, had translated portions of the Bible and other theological writings into indigenous languages. For example, H.C. Millies, the professor of Oriental Language and Literature appointed in Utrecht in 1856, played a central role in the NBG, partly due to his interest in Malay and Javanese.

We will encounter Millies later in his opposition to slavery. Following Millies, there was an evident development of 'ethical theology' in Utrecht. Ethical theologians were particularly concerned with the experience of the divine and the workings of the Spirit in the individual believer. Although they did not reject the historical-critical method, they sought knowledge of God in what God revealed in humanity. The metaphor of 'development' was frequently used, signifying that all nations with their religious systems experience an evolution from low to high.

From 1883 to 1903, Gijsbert Hendrik Lamers (1834-1903) served as a professor of The History of Religions in General, Philosophy of Religion, and History of the Doctrine of God. He published *De Wetenschap van den Religie* [The Science of Religion] in two volumes, with Part I focusing on the historical perspective and categorising 'uncivilised' and 'semi-civilised' peoples under 'De Godsdiensten zonder Geschiedenis' [The Religions without History]. Lamers included the religions of the Indies among those of 'uncivilised peoples', along with populations in Africa and indigenous peoples of the Americas. He was actively engaged in the work of the NZG. The concept of 'development' also led to an increasing emphasis on ethnographic material. Lamers' second wife was Adriana Kruyt, making him

the uncle of the later missionary Albert C. Kruyt, who received an honorary doctorate at Utrecht University in 1913. In the chapter on honorary doctorates, we will explore how collecting ethnographic material significantly influenced A.C. Kruyt's work.

J.J.P. Valeton (1848-1912) is regarded as Utrecht's 'godfather' of ethical theology. From 1877, he served as a professor of The History of the Israelite Religion, Israelite Literature, and the Interpretation of the Old Testament. Valeton actively participated in international discussions on mission and acted as a board member and president of the *Utrechtse ZendingsVereniging* (UZV) [Utrecht Missionary Society]. Founded in Utrecht in 1859, the UZV was established partly in response to the influence of modern theology in the NZG. As Valeton wrote in a commemorative book:



Ons Hoofdbestuur bestaat thans uit de volgende leden:

Prof. Dr. J. J. P. Valeton Jr., *Voorzitter, Utrecht*; Ds. H. H. Barger, *Vice-Voorzitter, Utrecht*; Ds. J. W. Gunning, *Zendings-Director, Rotterdam*; Ds. J. Rauws, *Director-Secretaris, Rotterdam*; Ds. M. A. Adriani, *Binnenlandsch Secretaris, Utrecht*; G. L. Baron van Boetzelaer, *Penningmeester, de Bilt*; Ds. M. G. Blauw, *Blokzijk*; Ds. H. C. Briët, *Utrecht*; Dr. J. A. Cramer, *'s-Gravenhage*; Ds. A. Drost Azn., *Loenen a. d. Vecht*; R. Freudenberg, *Hilversum*; Dr. L. Heldring, *Amsterdam*; Mr. M. P. Th. à Th. van der Hoop van Slochteren, *Utrecht*; W. E. van Lennep, *Utrecht*; Ds. Th. H. Nahuijs, *Zeist*; Prof. Dr. H. M. van Nes, *Leiden*; Ds. C. J. van Paassen, *Haarlem*; Dr. A. van Veldhuizen, *Rotterdam*; Ds. C. H. J. Verweijs, *te Breukelen*.

The Board of the Utrecht Missionary Society with Professor J.J.P. Valeton in the centre

Less than many others, it originated from what we commonly refer to as ‘the congregation’; more than many others, on the other hand, it is a foundation of a few individuals who felt compelled to engage in missionary work due to an inner urge to believe. [...] These individuals, all residing in Utrecht, included both ministers and men of high rank.<sup>15</sup>

The later Prime Minister of the first South African apartheid government, Daniel Francois Malan (1874-1959), stayed in Valeton’s house on Plompentorengracht while working on his dissertation in Utrecht. In a letter dated 15 March 1901 to his sister, Malan recounted a fascinating encounter in Utrecht with a man called Van Aken, who had served at a mission post in Mashonaland (southern Zimbabwe), where Malan’s sister had also worked. Van Aken, accompanied by a black evangelist named Josias, was in Utrecht to talk about their mission work. They visited Malan and shared dinner with the Valeton family: ‘It is the first time I have come to sit at the table alongside a pitch-black ‘Outa’<sup>16</sup>. However, he already seems to know white manners very well’. Malan expressed sympathy for Josias:

When he walks down the street, there is always a long procession of schoolchildren following him, and everyone he meets stops to look at him properly. He seems to take it rather calmly, however. He speaks in Kaffir at the meetings, and Van Aken translates. The poor boy gets terribly cold here, doesn’t like the country at all, and longs to return to his own country.

Several professors from Utrecht University held positions in the administrative bodies of the UZV, imprinting the organisation with the signature of the mission as part of the worldwide civilising mission. This increasingly matched the Dutch government’s policy of honouring civilising initiatives in the context of its colonial policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

After Valeton, ecclesiastical professor Francois E. Daubanton (1853-1920) should be mentioned. He earned a doctorate in Lausanne and received an honorary doctorate in Utrecht in 1886. In 1903, he was appointed ecclesiastical professor responsible for ‘biblical theology, practical theology, and the history of Christian missions’. This appointment marked him as the first professor of missionary science at the university.



The phase characterised by *confession and conversion* extended roughly until the beginning of the twentieth century. The transition from the mission field to independent churches commenced with the discussions at the *World Missionary Conference* in 1910 in Edinburgh.<sup>17</sup> The mission focus shifted towards assisting indigenous churches. In the section on university development cooperation after World War II I will provide a detailed survey of the continued legacy of missionary science in Utrecht.



## EXPLORATION & CLASSIFICATION (c. 1636-1850)

The era of *exploration and classification* is marked by a profound fascination with another world. Following ‘Columbus’, new lands, countries, and peoples, with unknown natures, cultures, languages, and religions emerged. These discoveries occasionally invoked aversion or fear, but more frequently, they stirred fascination.

Subsequently, individuals from the Western world ventured into this previously uncharted territory. Their interest in the natural environment prompted investigations, descriptions, and classifications of trees and plants. Efforts were made to comprehend the languages spoken in these newfound lands and to grasp the religious systems embraced by their inhabitants. At this stage, there was no systematic, scholarly examination conducted by university scholars; such activities were yet to materialise. Research, or perhaps more aptly described as proto-research, was often undertaken by enthusiastic laypersons. The VOC’s stance on research proved inconsistent. Endorsement of research fluctuated between turning a blind eye and occasionally being spurred by the individual commitment of a VOC official. VOC officials tended to try to keep knowledge pertaining to the specific nature of the trading enterprise, including trade and cartography, confidential, preventing competitors from gaining strategic insights.

Even in the absence of a formal scientific programme, the exploration of distant lands significantly propelled the development of scientific disciplines at universities. Astronomy and cartography in particular became intricately intertwined with the maritime voyages to far-flung destinations. We will explore the involvement of Adriaan Reland, a Utrecht Arabist and philologist, in the production of maps, including those of Java. These disciplines played a pivotal role in opening up connections to the new world.

Early in the nineteenth century, in 1825, Gerrit Moll (1785-1838), a Utrecht professor of mathematics, physics, and astronomy, who also served as the



Gerrit Moll (1785-1838)

director of the Observatory, published a treatise entitled *Verhandeling over eenige Vroegere Zeetogten der Nederlanders* [Treatise on Some Early Sea Voyages of the Dutch]. In this treatise, Moll offered a comprehensive overview of the geographical exploration of the world, relying on his collection of maps. He observed that a significant number of people:

are ignorant of the events that have resulted in the establishment, expansion and flourishing of Dutch rule in the East and West Indian colonies. [...]

This unfamiliarity naturally causes one to doubt whether anything important was done by the Dutch on their various voyages, whether anything noteworthy was done for the sciences and arts during their travels, and one easily suspects that the only result of the Dutch travels was the expansion of their trade. [...] Rather, I believe that no people on earth, except for the Spanish and Portuguese, have contributed more through their journeys to increasing the knowledge of our globe and its products, the greatest goal imaginable in scientific journeys.<sup>1</sup>

People brought back exotic artifacts from the newfound world, including unknown plants. Notably, at universities such as Utrecht, botanical gardens were established, showcasing a variety of exotic botanical specimens. The phenomenon of ‘cabinets of curiosities’ emerged, housing collections that celebrated the marvels of the natural world. Simultaneously, an inherent desire for knowledge about the cultures of distant peoples took root. The colonies became a subject of curiosity, drawing the interest of professors, also in Utrecht.

## Collectors of flora

One of the early ‘amateur’ collector-botanists in the East Indies was Georg Eberhard Rumpf (1627-1702), better known as Rumphius. Originally a German VOC official, Rumphius displayed a keen interest in the natural environment during his extended stays in Ambon. Despite losing his sight while there, he persevered and eventually compiled a twelve-volume work ‘Het Amboinsche Kruid-Boek’ [Ambon Book of Herbs] with an appendix, which was not published in the Republic until 1741. In 1705, his ‘D’Amboinsche Rariteitenkamer’ [Cabinet of curiosities of Ambon] was published.



EFFIGIES  
GEORGII EVERHARDI RUMPHII, HANOVIENSIS ÆTAT' LXVIII.

*Cæcus habens oculos tam gnaræ mentis acutos,  
Ut nemo melius detegat aut videat:  
Rumphius hic vultu est Germanus origine, totus  
Belga fide et calamo: ceteri dicet opus.*

*ex tempore potuit*

*W. A. Schlegel*

By this time, Rumphius had gained considerable recognition in Europe as a scientist-collector. The VOC directors often found themselves torn between prioritising profit and knowledge, which impacted their support for Rumphius' work. Nevertheless, Rumphius dedicated his *Amboinsche Kruid-Boek* to the VOC directors, expressing his gratitude to them in the 'Opdragt' [Dedication]:

I believe that it will be of no small glory to Your Excellencies if such writings were to appear under the wings and protection of Your Excellencies, as if they were to make it known to the world that Your Excellencies' concern is not only to enrich the Fatherland with profitable commerce, but also to promote all kinds of honourable studies, in particular those that can be of general service, as



Title page *Het Amboinsch Kruid-Boek*



Title page *D'Amboinsche Rariteitenkamer*

has already been demonstrated by Your Excellencies, in financing that glorious Work by the Noble Lord Hendrik van Rhede.

Rumphius' contributions did not fail to be noticed in Utrecht. Professor Miquel's *Flora van Nederlandsch-Indië* [Flora of the Dutch East Indies] starts with an image of Rumphius, signifying the acknowledgment of the debt Miquel felt towards him. Professor Pieter Harting, who held the Utrecht chair of biology and zoology from 1843 to 1883, wrote a highly commendatory short biography of Rumphius.<sup>2</sup> Van der Capellen, later governor-general and president of the Board of Utrecht University, erected a memorial stone in Ambon to honour Rumphius.

In 1902, a Rumphius Memorial Book 1702-1902 was published, coinciding with an exhibition at the Colonial Museum. In this publication, Utrecht professor of geology, Arthur Wichmann, contributed an article on 'Rumphius' role in the mineralogical and geological research of the [East] Indian archipelago'. Wichmann concluded his contribution with the following remarks:

Even the naturalist of our time thus honours RUMPHIUS as his outstanding guide and predecessor, whose labour is rightly called a monumentum aere perennius.<sup>3</sup>



Memorial Stone for Rumphius in Ambon

## Hortus Indicus Malabaricus

In the last sentence of his 'Opdragt' [dedication] Rumphius hinted at an initial connection between Utrecht and the botanical inventory of plants and trees in the colonies, a project initiated by the VOC official Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein (1636-1691). Being part of the Utrecht nobility and holding the title Lord of Mijdrecht, Van Reede served the VOC from 1656 and eventually became the governor of Malabar, the VOC settlement on the west coast of India. After returning to the Republic in



Hendrik Adriaan  
van Reede tot  
Drakenstein (1636-  
1691)



1678, he settled in Utrecht. In 1684, he was tasked with tackling corruption in various locations, including Choromandel, Malabar, the Cape, and Ceylon. Departing for the Cape in 1685, he continued his journey to India and Ceylon, where he passed away in December 1691 during the trip from Cochin to Surat.<sup>4</sup>

While in Malabar, Van Reede initiated the collection of information on plants and trees, collaborating with Carmelite Father Matthew de Santo Josepho. Johannes Casarius, a minister educated in Leiden in Spinoza's circles who later enrolled as a student in Utrecht in 1665, also assisted in this endeavour. Furthermore, Van Reede employed the services of a translator, Emanuel Carneiro. Emphasising the importance of indigenous knowledge, Van Reede sought the cooperation of the indigenous Brahmins Vinayaka Pandit, Ranga Bhatt, and Appu Bhatt. He also enlisted the expertise of an indigenous Malabar doctor, Itty Achuden of the Ezhava caste. Speaking about the Brahmins, Van Reede remarked:

Some have no other practice than temple service, free from all worldly worries, being constantly engaged in heavenly wisdom, starwatching, and natural sciences. These are very good and honest people who live a pious and safe life, never eat anything that has life or gives it, and no other drink than water, honey, milk and butter.<sup>5</sup>

The preface to Volume 1 of the *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* lists these contributors by name. The reference to the three Brahmins in the preface to the Dutch translation, *Malabaarse Kruidhof* [Malabaric Herb Garden], holds particular interest:

All three Brahmins of lineage and religion, and old school teachers in the spell of Cochin, by order of the Noble Lord HENRICUS van RHEEDE, Supreme Commander of the Malabar countries and city of Cochin, by our slaves who had knowledge of trees, plants, and herbs, all these from the Malabar country with their flowers, fruits and seeds, and brought to the city of Cochin, to be signed off and described, whose names are written in our book entitled *Manhaningattnam*, in which the virtues and medicinal powers of the same are also found, and in addition to these we have added everything that we have learned and observed through our many years' experience and with great labour and effort, and in order to complete this book, we have taken almost two whole years, so

that each and everyone who reads and sees this book will believe as surely as if they had experienced what is described in it themselves; we swear then according to our custom, that all that is contained therein, is true [...].

So the three priests or sages reported that they used enslaved individuals possessing expertise in trees, plants, and herbs, but they also asserted that their knowledge extended to medicinal practices, which were documented in an elusive ancient text entitled *Manhaningattnam*, which remains undiscovered. These medicinal plants likely formed a part of traditional Ayurvedic healing practices.

In the preface to Volume 3, Van Reede expresses profound respect for the wisdom and knowledge of the Brahmins, referring to them as ‘Gentiles Philosophos’. He characterises their knowledge system and education as a profound understanding rooted in enduring wisdom, describing it as a ‘knowledge of deep, insistent remembrance of time-honoured wisdom’, ‘docendi modus, qui memoriam tenacem requirit’. The *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* includes several images depicting interactions between VOC officials and indigenous people.

The three Brahmins, referred to as ‘The architects of Hortus Indicus Malabaricus,’ were commemorated with a memorial in Cochin in 2015.



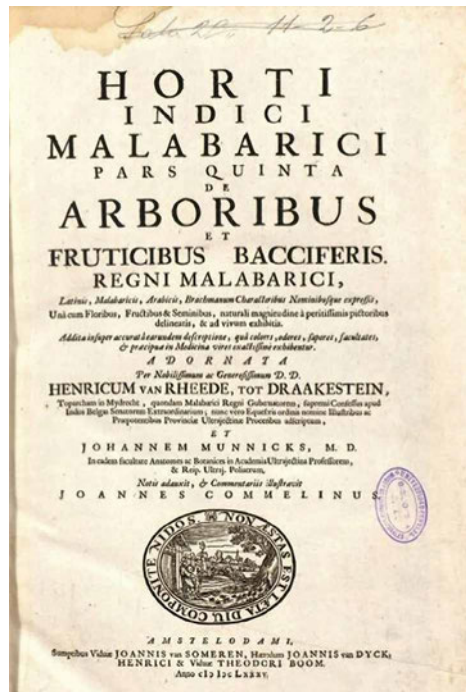
The Three Brahmins, co-workers of Van Reede

After returning to the Dutch Republic and settling in Utrecht, Van Reede tot Drakenstein sought the assistance of Johannes Munnicks (1652-1711), who held the position of professor of *Anatomes ac Botanices* at Utrecht University. Munnicks collaborated on volumes 3 to 5 for the final publication of the *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus*, a comprehensive work spanning 12 volumes. The *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* was published between 1678 and 1703. Originally presented in Latin, the designations of the trees, plants, and herbs were also provided in Malabar, Arabic, and Brahmin, and later translated into Dutch.

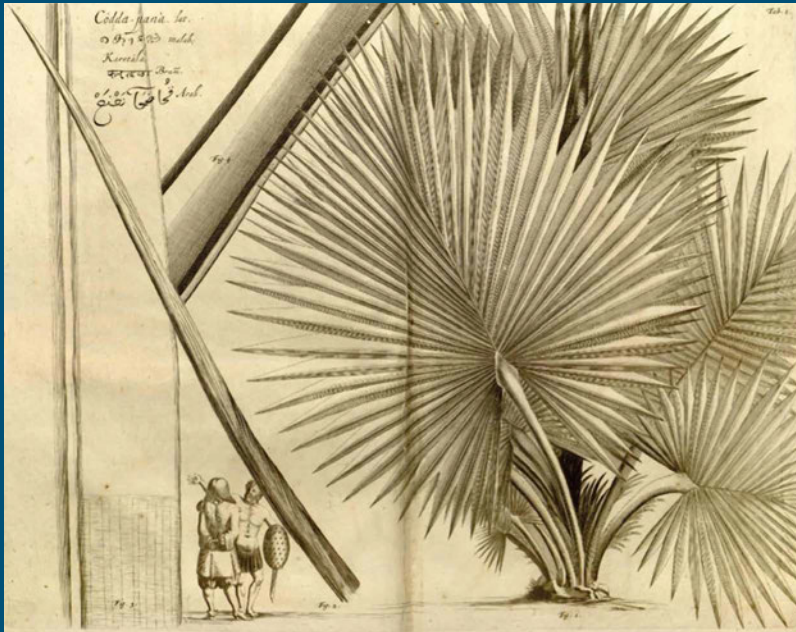
Despite Van Reede's profound respect for the Brahmins' knowledge system, the *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* can also be viewed as contributing to the formation of a colonial botanical library. In this process, original indigenous medicinal knowledge was extracted from its cultural context, potentially marginalising it. The utilitarian nature of colonial knowledge often failed to benefit the indigenous population.<sup>6</sup>



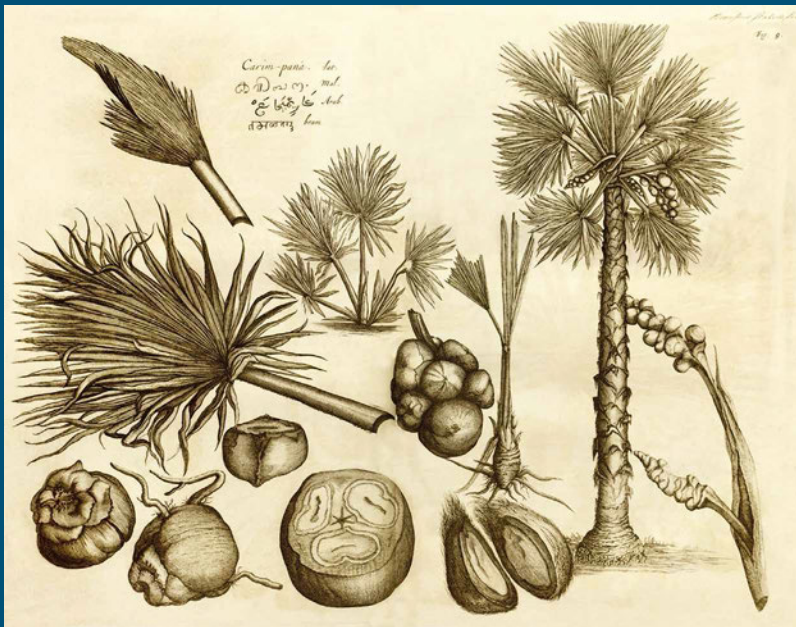
Johannes Munnicks (1652-1711)



Title page *Horti Indici Malabarici Pars quinta*, mentioning Johannes Munnicks



Hortus Malabaricus, Vol. 3. contact VOC – Indigenous people]



Hortus Malabaricus, Carim-pana (Palm)

In 1685, we find Van Reede at the Cape, where, in transit to the East Indies, he was tasked with restoring order among VOC officials amidst rumours of corruption. During his time at the Cape, Van Reede also displayed renewed interest in the local fauna and flora. There were suggestions that he envisaged a *Hortus Africanus*, but this project never materialised.

Simultaneously, at Utrecht University, significant efforts were invested in establishing a botanical garden, which was considered an essential component in the teaching of botany, which was then an integral part of the study of medicine. Everard Jacob van Wachendorff (1702-1758), *professor ordinarius medicinae, chemiae et botanices*, contributed to the expansion of the botanical garden. His inaugural medical dissertation, *Dissertatio medica inauguralis, exhibens quaedam de natura solidorum & fluidorum, eorumque mutua actione in variis aetatibus*, examined the impact of solid and liquid substances in nature on human health.

Wachendorff, well-versed in Linnaeus' classification system, corresponded with Linnaeus and, in 1747, sent him the *Horti Ultrajectini index* for feedback. Linnaeus expressed his intention to name a plant

after Wachendorff in a subsequent letter. Responding to this, Wachendorff suggested a plant from the East Indies, stating, 'Incola est Indiae Orientalis hicc frutex' [This shrub is a native of the East Indies]. Eventually, a genus within the Haemodoraceae family, representing an herbaceous plant, was named Wachendorfia. This genus was exclusive to the Western Cape and Eastern Cape of South Africa. Wachendorff also formulated his own classification system for plant species. His eulogy explicitly noted the colony as a discovery site: 'Uit de Oosterschatkist of het Westen her gebragt' [From the Eastern Treasury or brought back to the West].<sup>7</sup>



Evert Jacob van Wachendorff (1702-1758)

## Icones Plantarum Rariorum

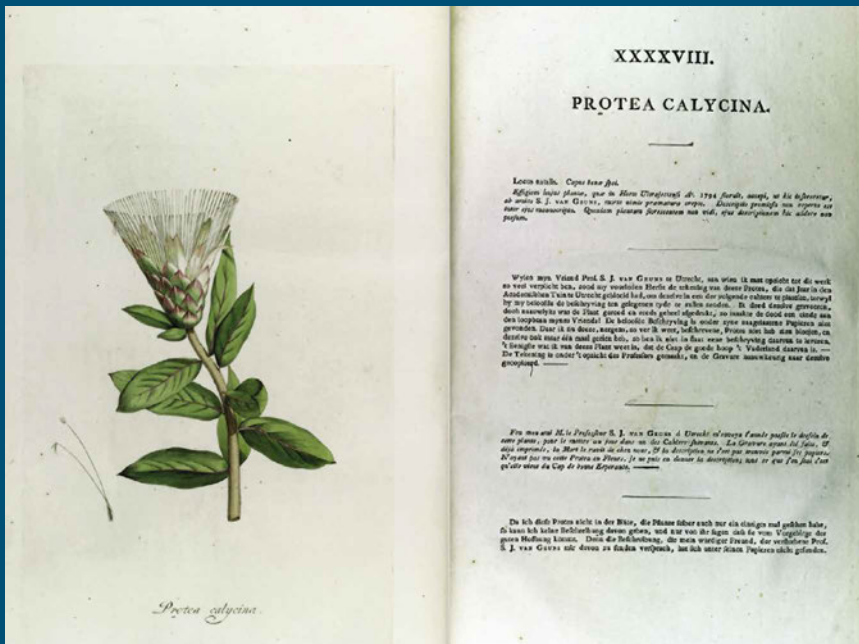
In 1793, the flora *Icones Plantarum Rariorum* was published. It featured pictorial representations of rare and delicate flowers and plants, illustrated by Hendrik Schwegman. The descriptions in Latin, Dutch, French, and German were provided by G. Voorhelm Schneevoegt. This flora showcased images and descriptions of exceptional plants gathered from various parts of the world. The Utrecht professor Steven Jan van Geuns, son of the renowned Utrecht professor of medicine Matthias van Geuns, supervised the descriptions and illustrations.

Steven Jan van Geuns (1767-1795) was a professor of medicine, botany, physiology, and chemistry. His inaugural address, *Oratio de instaurando inter Batavos studio botanico*, reflects a profound interest in botany, particularly in its connection to medicine. During a visit to Göttingen, he met Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), with whom he co-founded the *Physikalische Gesellschaft*. This encounter blossomed into a warm friendship, leading to joint scientific expeditions across parts of Germany, sometimes by carriage and sometimes on foot. Van Geuns documented this journey with Von Humboldt in his diary *Tagebuch einer Reise mit Alexander von Humboldt durch Hessen, die Pfalz, längs des Rheins und durch Westfalen im Herbst 1789*. Unfortunately, Van Geuns passed away at a young age.

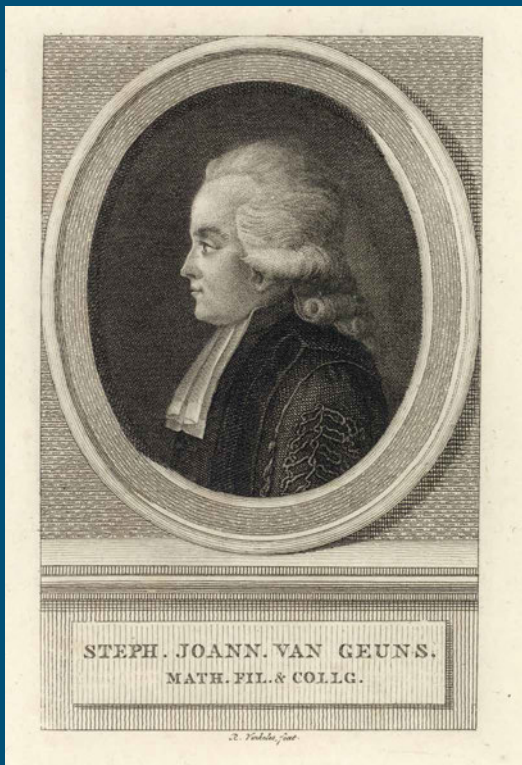
Of note is the mention in the *Flora* of the Protea. The Protea had been brought from the Cape to the Netherlands and apparently flourished in the Botanical Garden in Utrecht. The Protea, also known as 'suikerbossie' [sugar bush] in Afrikaans, has long served as the symbol of South Africa. A genus within the Protea family, the *Serruria florida*, affectionately nicknamed the 'blushing bride', was named after Joseph Serrurier, professor of philosophy, mathematics, and botany from 1705, who succeeded Munnicks.



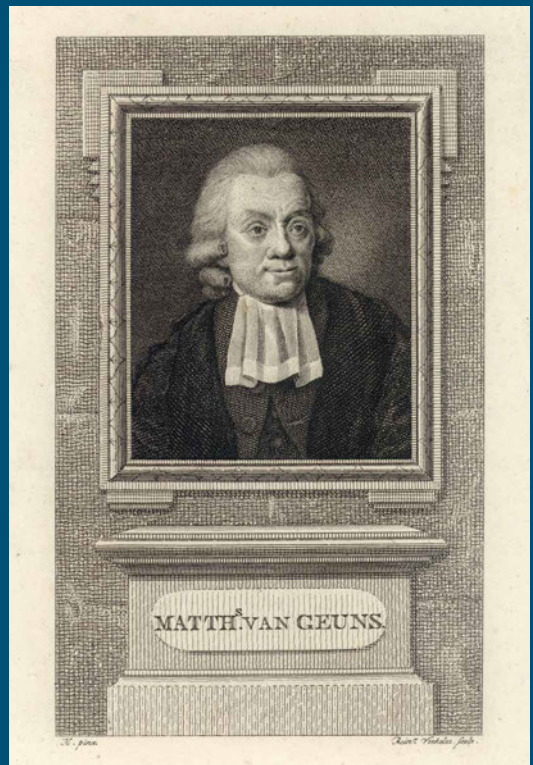
Title page *Icones Plantarum Rariorum*



Protea Calycina  
from the *Icones  
Plantarum  
Rariorum*



(son) Steven Jan van Geuns (1767-1795)



(father) Matthias van Geuns (1735-1817)

Voorhelm Schneevoogt reports:

My late friend Prof S. J. van Geuns in Utrecht, to whom I am so much obliged with regard to this work, sent me last autumn a drawing of this Protea, which had bloomed that year in the Academic Garden in Utrecht, to be placed in one of the following textbooks, while he promised to send me the description in due course. I had it engraved but no sooner was the plate ready and already printed in full than death ended the career of my friend! The promised description has not been found among the papers he left behind. As I have not seen this Protea – as far as I know, it has not been described anywhere else – flowering, and have only seen it once, I am not able to give a description of it. The only thing I know of this plant is that the Cape of Good Hope is its homeland. The drawing was made under the supervision of the professor, and the engraving was copied diligently from it.

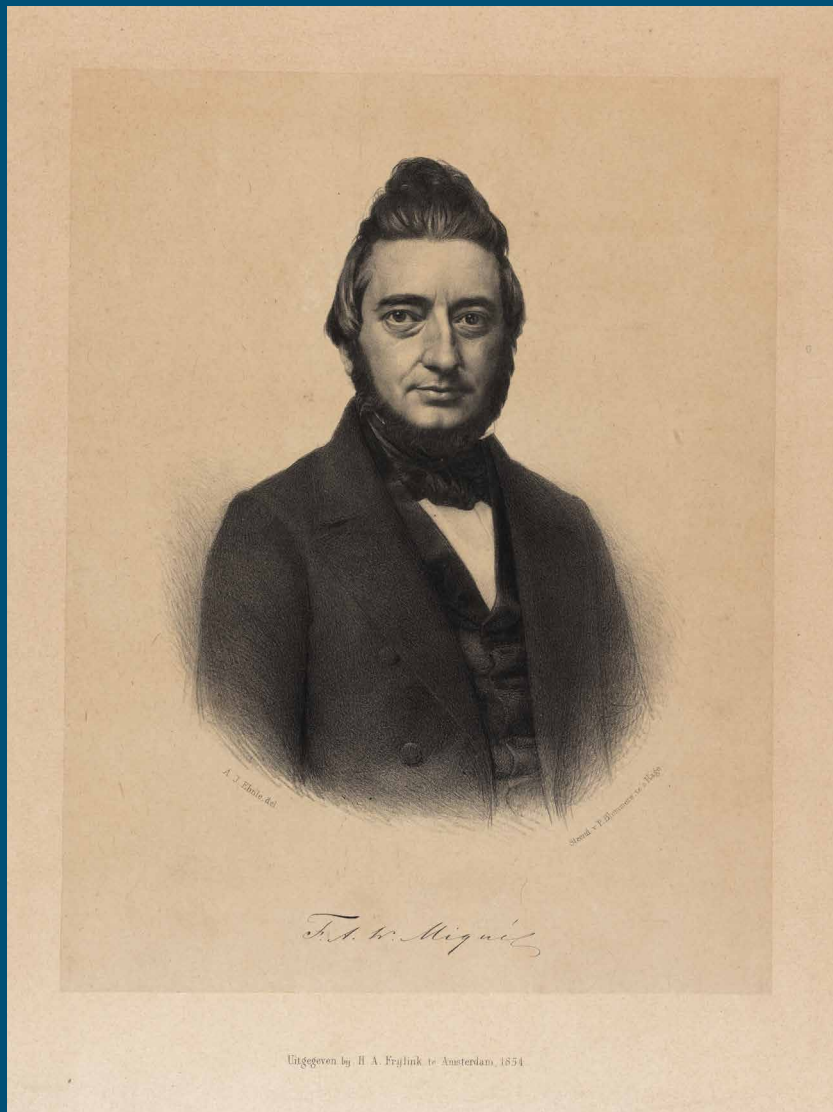
### **Flora of the Dutch East Indies by F.A.W. Miquel<sup>8</sup>**

Miquel studied medicine at the University of Groningen, where he also earned his doctorate. In 1835, he began working at the Clinical School in Rotterdam, establishing a lasting friendship with G.J. Mulder, who later became a professor and founder of the chemistry department at Utrecht. In 1848, Miquel joined the Amsterdam Atheneum. In his inaugural address in Amsterdam, he expressed, 'Mulderus certus et immutabilis mihi semper fuit amicus' [Mulder has always been a loyal and unwavering friend to me].

During his time in Amsterdam, Miquel developed an interest in Surinamese flora. He assumed the position of professor in Utrecht in 1859 and held it until his death in 1871. Upon his move from Amsterdam to Utrecht, he brought along his private botanical collection. Additionally, from 1862, he concurrently served as the director of the Rijksherbarium [National Herbarium] in Leiden. Miquel declined a professorship in Leiden.

Miquel's arrival in Utrecht with his private collection significantly advanced the development of a herbarium, initiated by Matthias van Geuns' collection in the early nineteenth century. With Miquel, the focus on the





F.A.W. Miquel (1811-1871)

flora of Suriname, and even more of the East Indies, became prominent at Utrecht University. Miquel published his *Flora van Nederlandsch-Indië* between 1855 and 1859, dedicating it to the Minister of Colonies (and later governor-general), Ch.F. Pahud. One of Miquel's Utrecht students, Rudolph Scheffer, secured the position of director of 's *Lands Plantentuin Bogor* (1869-1880) [the Bogor Botanical Gardens] through Miquel's intervention. Unfortunately, Miquel's ill health restricted his travels.

### Flora of the Guianas

The tradition of maintaining a herbarium focused on a specific geographical region persisted into the twentieth century at Utrecht University, led by the Department of Systematic Botany. This department dedicated years to developing a *Flora of the Guianas* (encompassing British Guiana, Suriname, and French Guiana). The construction of this Flora primarily relied on the contributions by Miquel, with special emphasis on the later work of the plant biologist A.A. Pulle, a colleague of F.A.F.C. Went, who will be extensively discussed later. Plants from that region were systematically collected and transported to Utrecht.

In the 1960s and 1970s, on the upper floor of the Trans II building on the Uithof campus (now known as the Van Unnik building at the Utrecht Science Park), these plants were gathered, dried, described, and preserved. However, due to a shift in the scientific focus of the Biology subfaculty at that time, leading to the phasing out of the Department of Systematic Botany, the Flora found a new home at *Naturalis* in Leiden.

A rich body of literature examines how collections, initially curated by amateurs and later by professional scientists, played a pivotal role in the establishment of a colonial empire. Zaheer Baber succinctly concludes his article, 'The Plants of Empire: Botanic Gardens, Colonial Power, and Botanical Knowledge', with the assertion: 'Botanic gardens constituted one of the key sites – physical, intellectual, social, and cultural – in which colonial power was literally rooted.'<sup>9</sup> The act of collecting and classifying flora and fauna globally was a fundamental aspect of interpreting God's '*Boeck der Natuere*'. However, classification was far from a 'neutral' activity. The act of observing, collecting, and classifying was integral to constructing a 'library of colonial knowledge'. It involved developing understanding about various plants and trees that eventually played a crucial role in advancing the colonial enterprise.

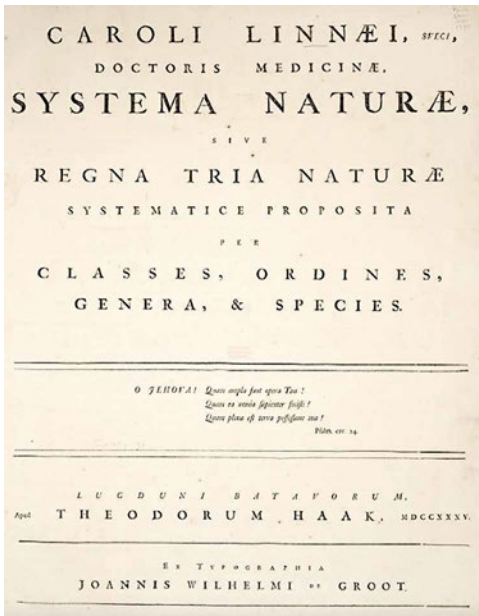
## Linnaeus and the classification of people

The transition from classifying and taxonomy of plants, trees, and animals to a classification of humans proved to be only a small step. In his *Systema Naturae*, initially published in Leiden in 1735, Linnaeus categorised ‘Homo sapiens’ at the top of the Mammalia class. In doing so, he further divided humans into *Americanus*, *Europaeus*, *Asiaticus*, and *Afer*. However, even this classification was far from neutral. Linnaeus attributed specific mentalities to each category: *Americanus* was *cholericus*, *Europaeus* was *sanguineus*, *Asiaticus* was *melancholicus*, and *Afer* was *phlegmaticus*. These attributions were based on the four ‘humores’, bodily fluids, specifically the blood of sanguineus, the yellow bile of cholericus, the black bile of melancholicus, and the phlegm of phlegmaticus.

Following Linnaeus, the ancient Greek view by Hippocrates, associating the four temperaments with bodily fluids, was applied to racially defined groups of people. However, these classifications eventually led to a ‘rank-

ing’ between (groups of) people, where ‘albus’, representing Western man, assumed a superior position (associated with ‘blood’), while ‘niger’, representing black man (associated with phlegma, mucus), invariably found him/herself at the bottom of the developmental hierarchy.

Amidst the discourse of ‘modern equality’ and the Enlightenment’s aspiration to ‘know’, a ‘dark side of modernity’ of the era emerges. The discovery and exploration of the new world, and the ensuing classification also propagated a hierarchy of human development, where external physical characteristics determined psychological traits in the eyes of many.



Title page *Systema Naturae* by Carl Linnaeus, 1735



Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778)

MAMMALIA. PRIMATES. Homo		29
<i>Americanus.</i>	<p><b>α.</b> rufus, cholericus, rectus.  <i>Pilis</i> nigris, rectis, crassis; <i>Naribus</i> patulis; <i>Facies</i> ephelctica; <i>Mento</i> subimberbi.  <i>Pertinax</i>, contentus, liber.  <i>Pingit</i> se lineis dædaleis rubris.  <i>Regitur</i> Conſuetudine.</p>	
<i>Europæus.</i>	<p><b>β.</b> albus, fanguineus, toroſus.  <i>Pilis</i> flaveſcentibus prolixis. <i>Oculis</i> cæcæis.  <i>Levis</i>, argutus, inventor.  <i>Tegitur</i> Veſtimentis arctis.  <i>Regitur</i> Ritibus.</p>	
<i>Aſiaticus.</i>	<p><b>γ.</b> luridus, melancholicoſus, rigidus.  <i>Pilis</i> nigricantibus. <i>Oculis</i> fuſeis.  <i>Severus</i>, faſtuotus, avarus.  <i>Tegitur</i> Indumentis laxis.  <i>Regitur</i> Opinione.</p>	
<i>Afer.</i>	<p><b>δ.</b> niger, phlegmaticus, laxus.  <i>Pilis</i> atris, contortuplicatis. <i>Cuta</i> holoferica, <i>Naſo</i> ſimo. <i>Labiis</i> tumidis. <i>Femine</i> ſiquis pudoris; <i>Mammae</i> lactantes prolixæ.  <i>Vaſer</i>, ſegnīs, negligens.  <i>Ungit</i> ſe pingui.  <i>Regitur</i> Arbitrio.</p>	
<i>Monſtroſus.</i>	<p><b>ε.</b> ſolo (a) &amp; arte (b, c,) variat:  <b>a.</b> <i>Alpini</i> parvi, agiles, timidi.  <i>Patagonici</i> magni, ſegnes.  <b>b.</b> <i>Monorchides</i> ut minus fertiles: <i>Hottentotti</i>.  <i>Juncæ</i> puellæ abdomine attenuato: <i>Europææ</i>.  <b>c.</b> <i>Macrocephali</i> capite conico: <i>Chinenſes</i>.  <i>Plagiocephali</i> capite antice compreſſo: <i>Canadenſes</i>.  <i>Habitat</i> intra Tropicos <i>Palmis</i> <i>Lotophagus</i>.  <i>Hospitatur</i> extra Tropicos ſub novercante <i>Cerero</i>, <i>carnivorus</i>.</p>	
DE-		
<p><i>que cogitat eſſe; cito natura revocavit &amp; comedit; Mori omnes æquos vocat; irati Dni propitiusque moriendum, Senec. l. 19.</i></p>		
<p><i>Memoria mori</i></p>		
<p><i>Naturaliter</i>: Te audacis naturæ miraculum, Animalium principem, cujus cauſa cuncta genuit natura, eſſe Simium animal ſens, rideas, melodium, loquens, docile, judicans, admirans, ſapientiſſimum; ſed fragile, nudum, ſuapte natura interea, ad omnem fortunæ conſumeliam projectum, alienæ o-</p>		

Carl Linnaeus, MAMMALIA PRIMATES. Homo

## The language of the 'infidel Other'

Influenced by journeys to the East Indies and the Far East during the time of the Dutch Republic, a growing prerequisite in Utrecht for professors specialising in oriental languages to acquaint themselves with the indigenous languages in the colonies developed. This interest stemmed not only from an inherent fascination with these languages but also often coincided with the need to communicate with the Other and, through this interaction, bring that individual into the realm of one's own religion

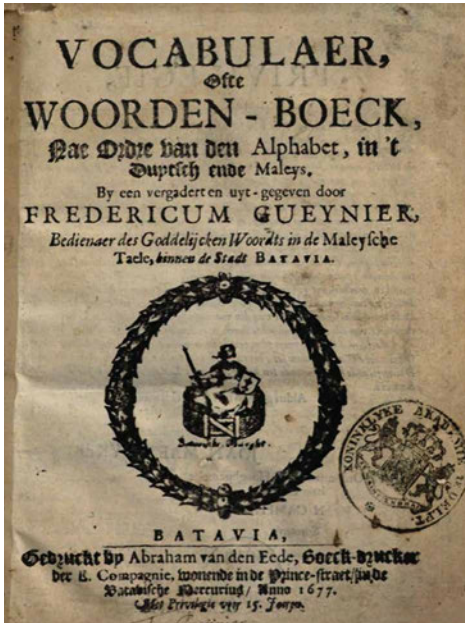
and literature. Conversion, it was believed, necessitated proficiency in the languages spoken by the indigenous people. The ability to ‘read’ and articulate the language of the Other not only empowered colonial rulers to ‘prescribe’ to them, but also facilitated the translation of Christian texts, particularly the Bible, into indigenous languages to promote Christianisation. Simultaneously, this process of ‘trans-lation’ also signified, to some extent, a trans-ition into the world of the Other. The study of indigenous languages was notably integrated into the missionary work of ministers, including some alumni of Utrecht University.

### Gilbertus Happart

Happart was born in Goes. The *Album Studiosorum* records his matriculation in Utrecht in 1643. The Rotterdam classis accepted him as a proponent for the churches in the East and Far Indies. In 1648, he arrived in Batavia, then left for Formosa in 1649. During his tenure in Formosa, he faced significant challenges in his relationship with the governor, Nicolaas Verburg. In 1652, he returned to Batavia to file a complaint against the governor. By 1653, he was back working in Favorlang, where he passed away not long after. Happart’s manuscript, *Woordboek der Favorlangsche taal* [Dictionary of the Favorlang language] was discovered in Batavia in 1839 by W.R. van Hoëvell. Minister Van Hoëvell published this manuscript in 1842 in the *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*. Also included was a Formosanian Glossary based on a Utrecht manuscript, preceded by brief comments by C. J. van der Vlis, Doctor of Theology. This Utrecht manuscript had previously been in the possession of Adriaan Reland. In 1840, the British minister W.H. Medhurst had already published in Batavia *The Dictionary of the Favorlang dialect of the Formosan language by Gilbertus Happart: written in 1650*.

### Frederic Gueynier

Frederic Gueynier arrived in the East Indies in June 1668 to assume a pastoral role. Having studied theology in the Netherlands, his name does not appear in the *Album Studiosorum* of Utrecht University. However, he carried letters of recommendation from Voetius to the East Indies, suggesting a likely period of study in Utrecht. Confirmed as a minister in Batavia in November 1669, he served the Malay congregation there from 1671 to 1682.



Title page *Vocabulaer, ofte Woordenboek* by Frederic Gueynier (1668-1682)

In 1678 and again in 1682, Gueynier declined to perform the mandatory prayer for a Muslim condemned to death who rejected his assistance. This act, perhaps stemming from respect for the Muslim, was not well-received by the commanders in Batavia, resulting in Gueynier's suspension. He contested his suspension, taking the matter to the Netherlands.

In 1677, he published his work *Vocabulaer, ofte Woorden-boeck, nae ordre van den Alphabet, in 't Duytsch ende Maleys* [Vocabulary, or Dictionary, in alphabetical order, in Dutch and Malay]. In the letter to Joan Maetsuyker, governor-general from 1653 to 1678, Gueynier emphasises the 'necessity of the Malay Language, both in the Police and Trade of the East India Company, as well as in the Church Service, for the conversion of so many Muslims

and blind Heathens, who could only be brought to the Light of the Holy Evangelium and the Saving Knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ through that means' [...]. Here, language proficiency and 'translation' are integral components of a colonial regime encompassing supervision ('Police'), commerce ('Trade'), and the Christian religion ('Church Service')! In 1708, a reissue appeared 'By a linguistic enthusiast [Petrus van der Vorm], noticeably revised and expanded [by Melchior Leydekker]'. This reissue was also included in the *Malaica Collectanea Vocabularia* [Malay dictionary], volume 2, published in Batavia in 1708.

### Jan Frederik Gerrit Brumund

After the earlier alumni Happart and Gueynier, we now turn to a person from a later period, Jan Frederik Gerrit Brumund. Born in 1814, he initially studied at the Atheneum Illustre in Amsterdam and later came to Utrecht. In 1839, he entered the church service. Early on, he had the intention to

travel to the East Indies and, in preparation, took Malay language lessons with minister Lenting in Zeist. Brumund served as a minister in various locations and extensively travelled as a result. He had a keen interest in his surroundings and the history of the areas where he worked, producing several pieces on the subject. In 1853, these works were compiled and published under the title *Indiana. Verzameling van Stukken van onderscheiden aard, over landen, volken, oudheden en geschiedenis van den Indischen Archipel* [Indiana. Collection of Documents of Various Kinds, about Lands, Peoples, Antiquities, and History of the East Indies Archipelago].

Brumund played a transitional role, evolving from a minister/amateur-collector to adopting a more scientific approach in his work. It is noteworthy that he was a member of the *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* [Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences]. Founded in 1778, this society can be considered a precursor to the scientific study of languages and cultures in the Dutch East Indies. The society published the *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* [Journal of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology of the Indies] which delved into various aspects of languages and cultures in the East Indies.

## Adriaan Reland

*Philologist, Arabist and cartographer*<sup>10</sup>

In 1705, a pivotal book was published in Utrecht, marking a shift in the hitherto negative European perception of Muslims. The author, twenty-nine-year-old Adriaan Reland, had been a professor of oriental languages at Utrecht University since 1700, succeeding Johannes Leusden.

Following the establishment of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, the religion rapidly spread along the shores of the Mediterranean and into the Near and Far East, including the Indonesian



Title page *Indiana* by J.F.G. Brumund



XXIV. D<sup>i</sup> pl. III.



*A. Goussier delin.*

*J. B. de Meulen, sculp.*

Adriaan Reland (1676-1718)

Archipelago. Among Christians, the perception of this rival religion had been consistently negative since the Middle Ages. Islam was viewed as a heresy that rejected Christianity's trinity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The prophet Mohammed was often portrayed as a pseudo-prophet and impostor in this context. Additionally, concerns mounted over the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which had its capital in Constantinople since 1453. In the seventeenth century, many Reformed theologians in the Netherlands, including Utrecht theologian Gisbertus Voetius and his pupil Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617-1666), perceived Islam as the antichrist. Voetius criticised Islam in his disputation *De Muhammedismo*, while Hoornbeeck addressed it in his *Summa Controversiarum Religionis*. Adriaan Reland (1676-1718) departed from this polemical-negative tradition, seeking a more historically accurate portrayal of Islam in his pursuit of 'truth'. His book *De Religione Mohammedica* (1705) marked a turning point in the prevailing view of Islam.



Title page *De Religione Mohammedica* by Adriaan Reland, 1705

Born in De Rijp to a Reformed minister father, Reland began his education at the Atheneum Illustre in Amsterdam at a young age, where he developed a love for classical authors. After this initial education, he commenced his studies in Utrecht at the age of 13, living with the Reformed theologian Melchior Leydecker. His father placed him there to ensure he stayed on course 'in deeze glibberjeugt' (in this slippery youth). During his studies, Adriaan befriended the German student Heinrich Sike, from whom he acquired knowledge of Arabic. In 1694, at the age of 18, he authored his dissertation *De Libertate Philosophandi*, earning a philosophy doctorate a few years later in 1699. In this publication, influenced by new philosophers like Spinoza and Descartes, he emphasised the freedom to philosophise. He consistently asserted that a philosopher should never accept the authority of others without conducting their own research.

According to Reland, theology (*vox dei*) and philosophy (*recta ratio*) were fundamentally different. This stance contradicted the prevailing view in Reformed theology, where philosophy was considered the 'servant' of theology. He continued his university education for some time in Leiden where, in addition to teaching theology, he took classes in 'ondervinderlyke Natuurkunde' [experimental natural sciences] with Wolferdus Senguerdus.

In 1699, he assumed the position of professor of physics and metaphysics at the University of Harderwijk. In his inaugural address *De incremento, quod Philosophia coepit hoc seculo* [About the growth that Philosophy began in this century] (1700), he demonstrated a thorough understanding of new natural philosophers like Bacon, Kepler, Galileo, and Descartes. He particularly appreciated Francis Bacon's empirical-experimental method.

Through the intervention of Willem III, he was soon invited to join the University of Utrecht as a professor, focusing on oriental languages. Reland welcomed the opportunity to teach languages in Utrecht, as he was not fond of the intense polemics surrounding Descartes' new philosophy at the universities, especially in Utrecht, involving both supporters and opponents. He accepted the appointment in Utrecht with the inaugural address *Pro lingua Persica et cognatis litteris Orientalibus* [For the Persian language and related Oriental literature], emphasising the significance of Persian and related oriental languages for a better understanding of Hebrew, the Old Testament, and also the 'religio Mohammedica'. In this inaugural lecture, he observed that 'Mohammedans' were often ascribed various absurdities.

During Reland's early academic pursuits, Europe was witnessing a growing interest in the Ottoman Empire. Dutch travellers such as Levinus Warner, a Leiden University alumnus working as a diplomat in Istanbul, explored the Turkish Empire, bringing back Arabic and Turkish books and manuscripts. This surge in interest prompted the teaching of Arabic, notably in Leiden, where Erpenius and Golius gained renown as Arabists. Many considered the study of Arabic crucial as a tool to enhance knowledge of Hebrew, regarded as the primordial language.

Reland actively collected Arabic and Turkish manuscripts, although he never personally travelled to the regions he wrote about. In his *Treatise on the Religion of the Mahometans* (1718), he expressed a desire to see 'Konstantinopoles'. Edward Gibbon, renowned for his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, frequently cited and praised Reland's work on Islam,

describing him as ‘a judicious student [who] had travelled over the east in his closet at Utrecht’. Due to his ailing father, who eventually passed away in his Utrecht home, Reland never journeyed to the East.

Reland’s work on Islam initially appeared in Latin in 1705. He later published an expanded version of *De Religione Mohammedica* in 1717. A Dutch translation titled, *Verhandeling van de Godsdienst der Mahometaanen*, followed in 1718, the year of his death. The book was subsequently translated into French, German, and English. To understand Reland and his purpose in writing *De Religione Mohammedica*, his preface gives us clear clues. He writes: ‘Most religions that formerly existed in this world or are professed today, have suffered from being misunderstood by their opponents or subjected to unseemly slander and unfair denunciation’. For Reland, one thing was paramount: ‘The truth must be tracked down everywhere and always’. Therefore, he believed it was crucial to describe another religion like Islam in the manner ‘as it is taught in the houses of worship and schools of the Muslims themselves’. He lamented that students interested in studying the Muslim religion were often directed to polemical-negative publications, such as those by Voetius and Hoornbeeck. According to Reland, these students should instead learn the Arabic language to understand Islam from within. In modern anthropological-religious studies, this method has become known as the ‘emic approach’ to the study of religion.

*De Religione Mohammedica* consists of two parts. The first part comprises a compendium of ‘Muslim’ theology based on an Arabic text in Reland’s possession. The second part contains a survey of forty ‘concepts’ of Islam that Reland believes were falsely attributed to the ‘Muslims’ (nonnulla, falso Mohammedanis tribuuntur). These false notions are ‘debunked’ by Reland using Arabic texts, passages from the Qur’an, and travelogues, among other sources. In chapter xxxii, he discusses the view that ‘Mahometans’ are allowed ‘to marry as many women as they can give a living. [...] But that this is false, we learn from the words of the Alkoran himself [...]’. In chapter xxxix, he explores the fable of the dove, which whispered in the ear of Mahomet, symbolising the spirit of God. ‘This is a well-known Fable’, says Reland. His book thus presents a vision of Islam that could almost be seen as modern. *De Religione Mohammedica* is still considered by Arabists and scholars of religion in Europe as an indispensable contribution to altering the perception of Islam on the continent.

Reland's work has been particularly influential in European scholarly circles. In the Netherlands, for instance, the renowned Leiden Arabist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) spoke highly of Reland's work. Additionally, *De Religione Mohammedica* was popularised in encyclopaedic surveys such as *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* by the Huguenots Bernard Picart and Jean-Frédéric Bernard, published in Amsterdam between 1723 and 1743. This does not negate the fact that Reland, as a product of his time, believed that Islam should be combated. However, in *De Religione Mohammedica* and his other works, he demonstrated himself primarily as an enlightened (religious) scholar who resisted negative representations and slander, constantly seeking the truth. At the end of his preface to *De Religione Mohammedica*, he writes:

Per me licet, qui quotidie magis magisque experior mundum decipi velle, & praeconceptis opinionibus regi.

[Indeed, I experience daily more and more that the world wants to be deceived, and that it wants to be governed by biased opinions].

As a professor of oriental languages, he explored the 'geographia sacra', the study of the geography and material culture of the Holy Land of Palestine. In this field too, he considered it his duty to eliminate unproven assumptions about the geography of the Holy Land, actively contributing to the creation of authentic maps of Palestine.

However, Reland's interests extended beyond Arabic and Hebrew to various languages and cultures from other parts of the world, including India, the East Indies, the Far East, and even the Indians of America. In his extensive preface to *De Religione Mohammedica*, he wrote:

Let me first address those who deem it unnecessary to investigate subjects related to the Muslim religion because we do not have extensive dealings with Muslims. [...] Do we not often engage with Muslims in places like Constantinople, the border regions of Hungary and the Turkish lands, along the coasts of Africa, in Syria, Persia, and the East Indies, where many Muslims reside in our colonies and locations frequently visited for economic purposes? Is it not then, I ask, essential to explore that which so often impacts us? [...] Anyone embarking on the investigation of matters beyond the comprehension of ordinary people, such as the study of the

customs and languages of ancient peoples or those presently inhabiting our Earth but distant from us, will inevitably encounter critics who, simply because they can offer no response beyond asserting the unnecessary nature of such work, condemn every form of inquiry.<sup>11</sup>

Like many European scholars, Reland relied on contacts with merchants and individuals knowledgeable in exotic languages to provide him with the necessary manuscripts, including original texts, copies, or self-made dictionaries, lexicons, vocabularies, or grammars. During his studies in Utrecht, he maintained an extensive correspondence with scholars and collectors, especially those dedicated to gathering linguistic knowledge and other materials and artifacts from distant lands. For example, he corresponded intensively with Gisbertus Cuper, mayor in Deventer, Nicolas Witsen, mayor of Amsterdam, and the Dutch painter and traveller Cornelis de Bruijn.

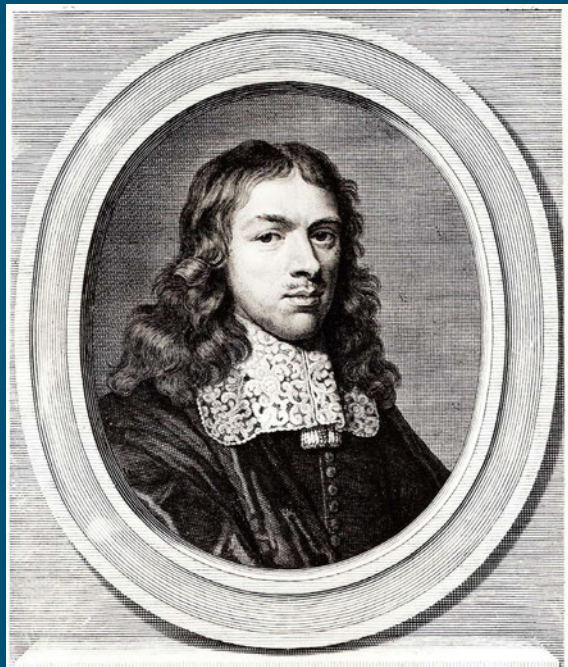
Reland received manuscripts from the Orient, primarily from Petrus van der Vorm and Cornelis Mutter. Petrus van der Vorm (1664-1731) became a minister in the Moluccas in 1689 and worked in Batavia from 1698 until his death. Van der Vorm was renowned for his extensive knowledge of languages. Reland wrote of him: 'cujus liberalitate plurima possideo MSSta orientalia' [through whose generosity I possess many oriental manuscripts]. Born in 1659 in Overschie near Rotterdam, Mutter made a career in the Dutch East India Company. In 1674-1680, he served as a clerk and interpreter at a VOC trading post in Golconda, near present-day Hyderabad, and later in Batavia. Mutter returned to his homeland in, or shortly after, 1698 and died around 1704. He left a considerable number of manuscripts in Persian and Malay or Javanese. Reland acquired at least nine manuscripts from Mutter. Thus, Van der Vorm and Mutter, and to a lesser extent Francois Valentijn, provided the material that enabled Reland to publish on the languages of the (Far) East in his *Dissertationum miscellanearum pars tertia*, pp. 57-139 (*Dissertatio De linguis insularum quarundam Orientalum*). The importance attached to Reland's work was evident from a message from the Council of Churches from the East Indies. On 14 November 1701, this Council of Churches of Batavia sent a letter to the classis of Amsterdam. It had been informed that 'the famous expert of oriental languages Hadrianus Reeland had been appointed professor at Utrecht' and expressed the hope 'that the theologians would



Gisbertus Cuper (1644-1716)



Cornelis de Bruijn (1652-1727)



Nicolaes Witsen (1641-1717)

learn Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac and other oriental languages well because the knowledge of these would greatly facilitate and promote the study of the East Indies'. Academic teachers like Reland in Utrecht and their published studies helped ministers and merchants acquire knowledge of the languages and culture of the areas where they would be stationed. At the same time, Reland indicated that much knowledge still needed to be unlocked. To Witsen, Reland wrote in 1714:

I regret that, having sailed almost the entire Arctic fleet and having the opportunity to check all the scripts, one still has to say that there is something that one cannot say with any certainty where that script is used... There is nothing about Borneo, except that on the seacoasts they speak Malay or Portuguese, but what script is used domestically, who knows this?

In addition to his need for knowledge of the languages of the East Indies and the Far East, Reland also produced maps of Persia and Japan, as well as West and East Java.

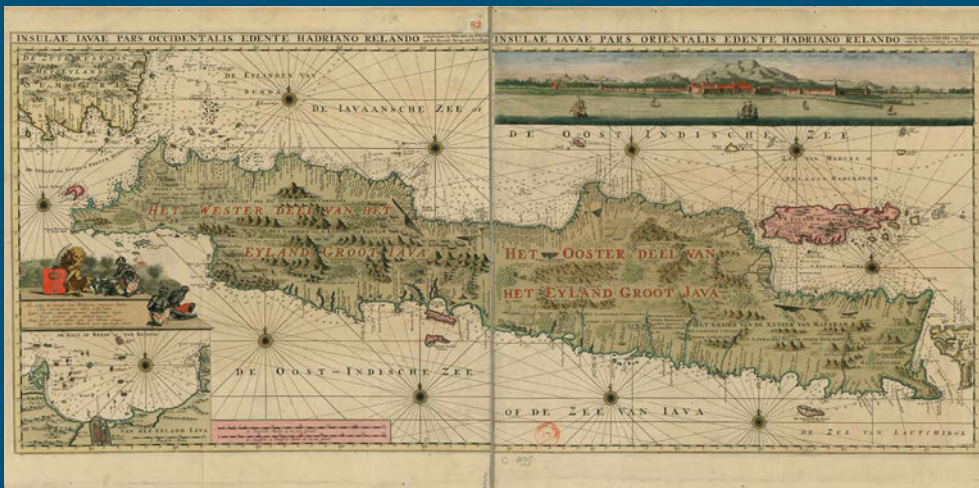
The map of West and East Java has an inscription in Latin on the bottom left:

*Hic sedet & domitis Leo Belgicus imperat Indis  
Hic moret excussis aurea colla jubis  
Quum fremit attoniti ponunt diademata reges  
Seque Oriens gazis abdicat ipse suis  
Meta fuit priscis rerum aut spes ultima Ganges  
Quam longe hunc Batavi post sua terga rident.*

[Here sits the Dutch lion, ruling over the conquered Indians,  
Here, he shakes the golden manes on his neck.  
When the stunned kings lay down their crowns in fear,  
And even the East itself renounces its treasures.  
The Ganges was the ultimate limit, or hope for the ancients,  
that the Batavians see far behind their backs].<sup>12</sup>

This map by Reland depicts the colony and colonial relations, thus being part of the 'cultural technologies of [colonial] rule'. In Cohn's words, 'command of language' thus also becomes the 'language of command'.<sup>13</sup> In this





Insulae Javae pars occidentalis – pars orientalis edente Hadriano Relando



Detail Insulae Javae pars occidentalis – pars orientalis edente Hadriano Relando

way, Reland's work also became part of the construction of the colonial archive that would enable the Republic to 'know' the colony and thereby control it.

On 5 February 1718, this prolific and promising young professor died rather suddenly of smallpox. Reland was a scholar explicitly interested in the Other, its language, religion, and customs. His views on how we should treat (the study of) other religions in a scientifically responsible and respectful manner are still relevant today. At the same time, he was part of the 'opening up' of the colony.



Building Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM) in Batavia



## EXPERIMENTATION & EXPLOITATION (c. 1850-1950)

### From VOC to colony:

#### *The East Indies as a 'wingewest' [economically exploited region]*<sup>1</sup>

After slowly withering as of the mid-eighteenth century, the VOC ceased to exist in 1796. The West India Company had already been dissolved a few years earlier, in 1792. The VOC was essentially a trading company with trading posts, but with de facto governmental powers. It was now up to the sovereign state to relate to its colony. During the period of the Batavian Republic (1795-1806), the 'Staatsbewind' [a small council of ministers] decided on 11 November 1802 to establish a commission:

to answer the question: 'On what basis and in what manner should the trade in the country's possessions in the East Indies be conducted in the future, and those possessions be governed, in such a way as to bring the highest possible level of prosperity; the most benefit to the Republic's trade and commerce and the greatest advantage to the country's finances.'<sup>2</sup>

'The highest possible level of prosperity', 'most benefit', 'the greatest [financial] advantage'; these are the three themes that will dominate Dutch colonial politics in the nineteenth century. A period of Enlightenment ideas was dawning, but at the same time the treasury was running a huge deficit.

The ability of the colony to 'bring the most benefit and the greatest advantage to the finances of the country' was required. Until 1848, the king played a major role in colonial affairs in the national state. The task of building a colonial empire became increasingly important. After a brief British interlude, the East Indies were administered by a governor-general with his own civil service on behalf of the Dutch government. The nineteenth century presents a picture of a growing colonial empire with major

economic interests in the East Indies. Central to these colonial affairs was the growth of profits flowing back to the Netherlands. Gradually, exploration by the 'collector' gave way to exploitation by the colonial power.

In October 1815, three commissioners-general – Cornelis Theodorus Elout, Arnold Adriaan Buyskes, and Goderd Alexander Gerard Philip, Baron van der Capellen – were sent by King Willem I to administer the East Indies following the English interlude led by Thomas Stamford Raffles. Van der Capellen assumed the role of governor-general in 1819. As the colonial state expanded, it gradually became evident that Dutch administrators were seeking opportunities to exploit the Indies more extensively as a 'wingewest' [an economically profitable region]. Initially, the commissioners-general took over the system of land rent to be paid by indigenous people from Raffles, who had introduced it to replace the system of compulsory supplies of products and services. Only in the Preanger area (located in West Java on the southern coast) did the compulsory delivery of coffee persist, as this system proved highly profitable. The assumption was that the colonial government owned the land and could, therefore, rent it out, assuming that the farmers could then function as productive, self-employed entrepreneurs. However, this notion of economic freedom and non-interference in crop production proved to be a misconception, especially as the old feudal-agrarian structure persisted. This also put pressure on the production of export crops and, consequently, profits for the Dutch treasury. What was perceived as most advantageous to the country's finances now turned out to be financially detrimental for the motherland, especially given the considerable cost of the Java War of 1825-1830 to the Dutch state.

This paved the way for the implementation of the *Cultuurstelsel* [cultivation system] in 1830 under the leadership of governor-general Johannes van den Bosch. In the eyes of the king and his advisers, Van der Capellen had opposed these developments and was forced to step down in 1825. Essentially, the cultivation system reinstated the old system of compulsory production within a feudal-agrarian framework. The cultivation system required that twenty percent of village land be designated for government crops intended for export. The exports were controlled by a monopolist, the *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (NHM), which consequently earned the nickname 'Kompenie Ketjil' or the 'Kleine Kompanie'; the *VOC revisited*.

The cultivation system essentially modernised a long-standing feudal-agrarian structure, guiding the Javanese peasant along the path to

civilisation through coercion and discipline. In this process, the colonial government assumed the role previously held by the private company, the VOC. This coercive regime, described by Breman<sup>3</sup> as 'naked exploitation', persisted until the 1860s, generating substantial profits for the Dutch treasury but also leading to dire conditions for the unfree small farmers. According to some estimates, revenues from the cultivation system made up nearly a third of the Dutch budget in certain years. These funds were used to finance the development of modern infrastructure in the Netherlands. Because of this system, there was increased pressure on the balance between domestically produced food (such as rice) and export-oriented production. As a result, parts of Java experienced famine.

As part of the modernisation of the feudal-agrarian structure, a structure of local administration and management was developing, particularly in Java. Two administrations operated alongside each other: the European administration and an indigenous administration. This arrangement mirrored the new colonial ideology emphasising the sovereignty of Western authority in the colony, rooted in a perceived Western superiority.

In 1870, two laws were enacted, signifying the end of the cultivation system: the *Agrarian Act* and the *Sugar Act*. The Agrarian Act regulated land ownership belonging to indigenous people, allowing them to lease the land to private individuals, including private companies. The Sugar Act stipulated that the colonial government would no longer be involved in the mandated supply of sugar under the cultivation system. While the cultivation system had assigned a pivotal role to the colonial government in the exploitation of export products, a liberal-capitalist system was now emerging. This system provided larger private enterprises with the opportunity to rent land and cultivate crops, such as coffee and tea, on a larger scale and through long-term investments. Consequently, the plantation economy experienced rapid growth.

The nineteenth century witnessed the expansion of the Netherlands both as a national state and as a colonial world power. In this colonial role, the Netherlands aligned itself with the major imperial powers, led by Britain and France, while Germany also sought to attain a similar status. The Netherlands' position as an imperial power has been a topic of considerable debate among Dutch historians. Some have characterised Dutch imperialism as an exceptional case, portraying it as a 'reluctant imperialism', suggesting that the imperial identity of the Netherlands was somewhat more 'enlightened' in nature. This perspective is often linked to

the ethical ideology of Dutch colonialism together with the international standing of the Netherlands as a minor power. Jan Breman's publications, part of the 'Amsterdam school', highlighted the imperial exploitation of 'coolies' (low-wage labourers, mostly of Indian or Chinese descent), the prevalence of racism, and the close relationship between government and business. Locher-Scholten referred to an 'ethical imperialism', emphasising that the focus was not so much on the external borders of the imperial empire as such, but rather on the further interpretation and enforcement of 'rigid' imperial authority in areas outside Java. She stressed the continuity of the strong Calvinist tradition of morality in a relatively small country.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, this sense of Calvinist morality contributed to a critical-negative attitude towards the indigenous aristocracy. Throughout, a strong belief in a civilising mission rooted in Dutch nationalism and a deeply felt sense of superiority persisted.

The social and economic changes of the nineteenth century significantly influenced the advancement of scientific knowledge within the colony and its interaction with the scientific developments at the universities in the motherland. English Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Raffles displayed a distinct scientific interest in the culture and nature of the country he governed for a relatively brief period, publishing his *History of Java* in 1817. In 1815, when the triumvirate of commissioners-general was dispatched to the East Indies, an official was added to offer advice on various aspects of the Indies. Amsterdam professor C.G.C. Reinwardt was approached for this role, and he was appointed director of Agriculture, Arts, and Sciences in Java and the neighbouring islands. The second article of the Royal Decree outlining his appointment detailed his tasks as follows:

to serve our commissioners-general, as well as governor-general in Council, with considerations and advice on all issues on which they will find it wise to consult him, especially as far as they relate to the cultivation of the land, including the forests, to the measures for the benefit of public health, to the education of youth, etc.

Article 4 of the same royal decree stated:

Mainly, however, and to improve his skills in fulfilling the duties described in Article 2, he shall carefully observe the nature of the soil and its products, search for minerals and make useful observations on the animal kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

Attached to this instruction by Reinwardt was an extensive list of questions covering various issues, with a central focus on the term 'koopwaar' [merchandise]. A significant aspect of Reinwardt's work in the East Indies involved the establishment of 's *Lands Plantentuin* in Buitenzorg (Bogor) [The Bogor Botanical Gardens]. According to Melchior Treub, one of the subsequent directors of this botanical garden, this marked a pivotal moment in the history of colonial scientific research. In 1820, the so-called Natural Science Commission was established, initiating organised expeditions to systematically document the flora, fauna, and indigenous groups of people along with their languages and customs. Article 1 of the Royal Decree outlined the purpose of the commission:

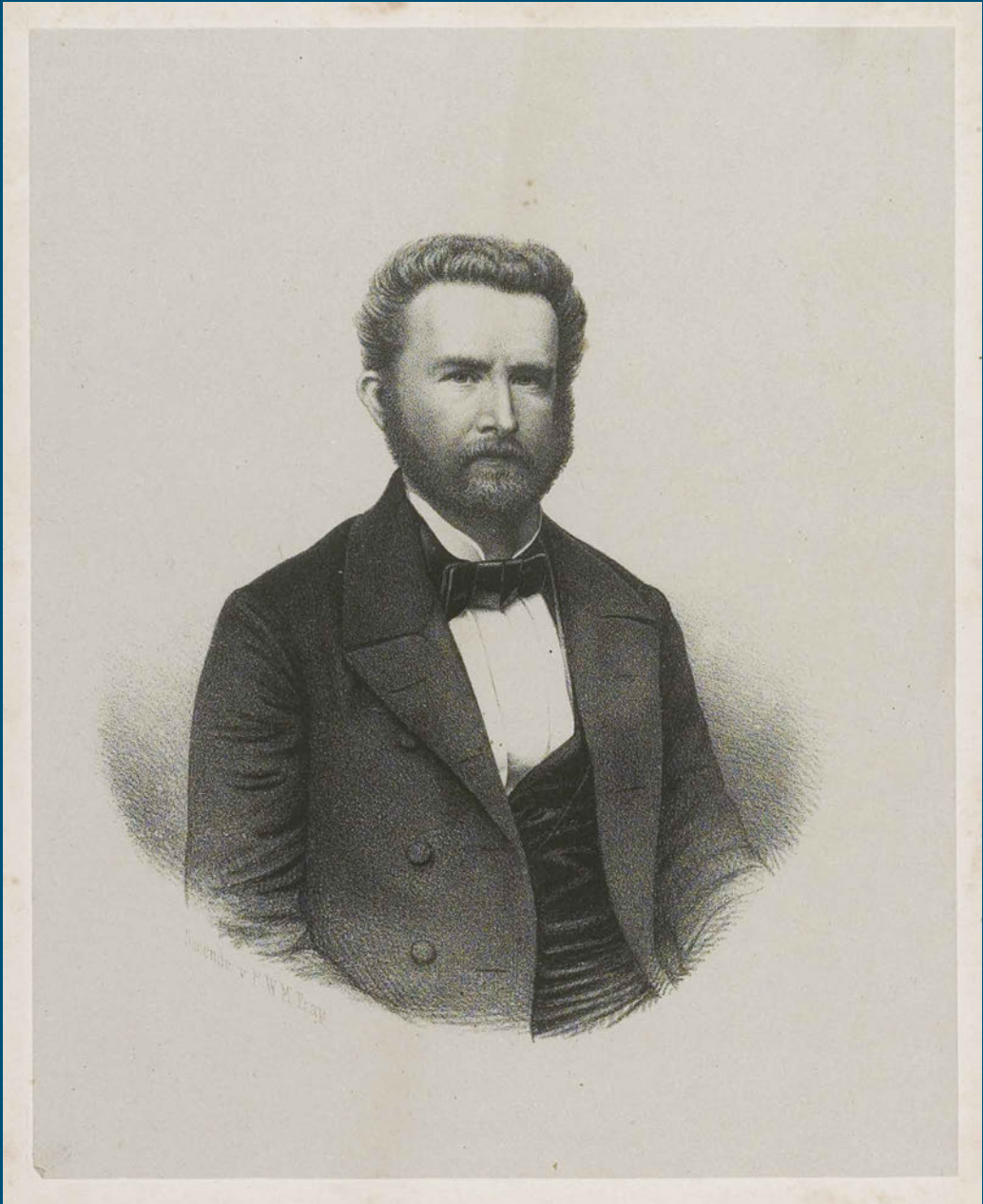
to travel, under the orders of our governor-general, to the Dutch possessions in the East Indies, for the specific purpose of expanding the scientific knowledge of what nature yields in those countries.<sup>6</sup>

The term 'yield' also referred to the production of economically useful things, setting the stage for a scientific approach. Foreign scientists, predominantly Germans, actively participated in this commission. However, the commission's output was relatively limited, and it was disbanded in 1850. Interest in natural science did indeed grow during the nineteenth century. In 1850, a Natural Science Society in the Netherlands East Indies was established. One of the most renowned naturalists of this era was the German Franz W. Junghuhn (1809-1864). From 1835, he spent extended periods in the Dutch East Indies and published his findings in botany, zoology, geology, and ethnography. After a short stay at the Herbarium in Leiden, he was entrusted with establishing cinchona culture upon his return, as we will discuss later.

In 1852, the *Dienst van het Mijnwezen* [Mining Bureau] was established to promote geological exploration.<sup>7</sup> This work, facilitated by expeditions, received an additional boost with the founding of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society in the Netherlands by professor P.J. Veth of the University of Leiden in 1873.

From around 1850, a fascinating period unfolded, characterised by growing scientific interest in the East Indies. Ever more Dutch scientists began to immerse themselves into research in the colonies, focusing on the language, culture, physical environment, and plant and animal life of the Indies. As Sandra Harding noted, 'The world was added as a laboratory to modern science in Europe through European expansion'<sup>8</sup>. As a result,





Franz W. Junghuhn (1809-1864)

this group of scientists began publishing works in areas such as tropical medicine, biology (including botany, palaeontology, zoology, and volcanology), and increasingly on languages and culture.

The *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* [Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences], along with its *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* [Journal of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology of the Indies], developed into the central institute for the scientific study of Indonesia. Particularly under the leadership of Melchior Treub, the Bogor Botanical Gardens became a hub for innovative experimental research.<sup>9</sup> In his thesis *Zuivere en toegepaste wetenschap in de tropen* [Pure and Applied Science in the Tropics] Van der Schoor highlights the significance of biological research at private research stations in the East Indies from 1870 to 1940, emphasising the scientific importance of the tropics and the role of natural sciences, particularly biology, in tropical agriculture.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, ‘science’ became culturally significant as part of the civilising mission for both the Netherlands and its colonies.

Among Dutch scientists of this period which extended until World War II, many were affiliated with Utrecht University. This era was significant for the development of various disciplines in Utrecht, particularly in the natural sciences.

### Dutch universities in the nineteenth century<sup>11</sup>

Only after the French occupation did Dutch universities become part of a national system of higher education as outlined in the *Organiek Besluit* [Organisation Decree] of 2 August 1815. Until then, municipal authorities were responsible for their higher education institutions. Higher education had an enlightened humanist character. Article 1 of the *Organiek Besluit* stated: ‘Higher education refers to education aimed at preparing students, following primary and secondary education, for entering the learned class in society’. After 1815, three national public universities (referred to as ‘hogescholen’ at the time) existed: Leiden (founded in 1575), Groningen (founded in 1614), and Utrecht. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Municipal University of Amsterdam (established in 1877) and the privately funded Reformed Free University of Amsterdam (founded in 1880) were established. The ‘Hogescholen’ of Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht subsequently became *Rijksuniversiteiten* [state universities].

At the outset of this new era, the unity of the sciences was abandoned. Separate paths emerged for the humanities and the (experimental) natural sciences. The Higher Education Act of 1876 played a significant role in shaping the process of differentiation and specialisation in science. Research began to take centre stage within the academic sphere. As the groundwork for research within universities was being laid, professors in the expansive field of natural sciences in the mid-nineteenth century also stressed the importance of practical laboratory instruction for students.

In the title of his book *Nut en nog eens Nut* [Usefulness is paramount], Theunissen illustrates how science development was perceived as an embodiment of the ideal of societal civilisation. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the general moral education of young people from wealthy classes received particular emphasis. Self-interest was deemed secondary to the broader social interest. In this regard, 'Humboldtian individualists' were frowned upon. As the nineteenth century progressed, the research ethos increasingly came into its own, with special emphasis on research that would ultimately benefit society. Here, too, primacy was given to the common interest. According to Theunissen, the reason for this was also functional. The Dutch government was not generous in funding universities, let alone research. Professors and university authorities repeatedly emphasised to the government the importance of developing knowledge at universities that served vital societal interests. Science had to be useful, but universities also made a clear distinction between fundamental research at general universities and applied research, such as engineering or agricultural, conducted at institutions like the Wageningen agricultural college and Delft technical college.<sup>12</sup>

The advancements in research transformed the dynamics between faculties at Utrecht University. While the faculty of theology held sway in the early nineteenth century, the landscape within the university underwent a fundamental shift at the dawn of the twentieth century. The faculties of medicine and of mathematics and natural sciences experienced significant growth, not only in scale but also in influence. In 1925, the university welcomed a new addition to its faculties, as the Veterinary College was incorporated into the institution as the new veterinary faculty.

Following the *Organiek Besluit* of 1815, Utrecht established a separate faculty of mathematics and natural sciences, distinct from speculative philosophy and literature. Initially, its focus was on the natural sciences,

encompassing the observable material world. The concept of a unified field of general physics persisted, endorsed as it was by the professors.

Gradually, a research-oriented ethos emerged, accompanied by increased specialisation, transitioning from broad natural sciences to specific disciplines such as physics, astronomy, chemistry, pharmacy, and botany. This trend towards specialisation was formalised as professors were increasingly assigned to faculties with specific teaching mandates. The research ethos of 'pure science' as an integral component of the Western ideal of societal civilisation, gradually gained traction in the colony as well, even though this notion of civilisation was certainly not widely shared with the indigenous population, as we shall explore further.

Below, I explore the contributions of scholars associated with Utrecht University, both active collaborators and alumni, who engaged in diverse fields of science. This examination aims to shed light on the deep interaction between the colony and the development of science.

## G.J. Mulder

### *His students and the colony*

Let us start our examination of these developments at Utrecht University with the story of G.J. Mulder. In his *Levensschets* [Life Sketch], Mulder states:

The truth is that I have probably lived more in Java than in the Netherlands. In all these activities, the Ministry of Colonies has often been a source of great pleasure to me.<sup>13</sup>

Gerrit Jan Mulder is widely acknowledged as the pioneer of chemistry in Utrecht, championing a modern scientific method. He held the position of professor of chemistry from 1840 to 1868. Mulder advocated that research should yield practical knowledge and emphasised the necessity of well-equipped laboratory facilities, not only for research purposes but primarily as an essential component of education. The students were required to actively engage in laboratory work. Benefitting from his close ties with Van der Capellen, who assumed the role of president of the Board of Utrecht University upon his return from the East Indies, Mulder secured necessary funding to establish a new chemical laboratory.

In 1825, Mulder earned his doctorate with a dissertation entitled *De opio ejusque principiis, actione inter se comparatis*. This expertise in opium proved invaluable. While working as a physician and lecturer in chemistry and botany at the Rotterdam Clinical School from 1828 to 1840, Mulder conducted chemical research for the Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij. His investigations focused on assessing the quality of Javanese and Chinese tea in 1835 and various types of opium from Smyrna in 1834. Opium, a significant commodity (and contraband) for the VOC and later colonial administrations, occupied a prominent position in Mulder's professional engagements.

Mulder provided counsel on the transportation method of opium shipped from Smyrna, Turkey, through the Netherlands to Java. Complaints from primarily Chinese opium traders suggested that portions of the imported opium were spoiled upon arrival in the East Indies. Mulder proposed that, similar to the successful transportation of roasted hares and partridges in vacuum boxes to the Dutch East Indies, all opium should be sent in such containers. Mulder expressed strong dissatisfaction when, 40 years later, a decision was made to abandon this method to reduce transportation costs—a move he deemed unfortunate given the profitability of the trade.

Additionally, Mulder offered guidance on distinguishing between the quality of Levant and Bengali opium. However, he believed the variability in opium quality was too vast to draw meaningful conclusions about price discrepancies. Subsequently, Mulder assumed the role of scientific advisor to the Ministry of Colonies. In his 'Life Sketch', he reflects:

From years before my departure from Rotterdam until the present day (1872), a role of mine persists in affairs unknown to the outside world, sometimes engaging me as much, if not more, than my professorship. This role involves liaising with the Dutch Trading Company and the Ministry of Colonies.<sup>14</sup>

Partly due to his advisory position and strong personal connections at the ministry, Mulder was tasked with providing both theoretical and practical training for pharmacists destined for the army's medical corps in the East Indies. In 1848, at the request of the Minister of Colonies, the university Board was asked to allow aspiring pharmacists access to Mulder's chemistry laboratory. In response to this request, the president of the Board remarked somewhat disapprovingly:



G.J. Mulder (1802-1880)

Although it is desirable for the Chemistry Laboratory to be frequented by many individuals to enhance and broaden the previously neglected knowledge of chemistry, and thus it is advisable to occasionally admit individuals other than university affiliates, it must be acknowledged that as the number of individuals practicing chemistry increases [in 1848 there were 20 students, including 10 pharmacists for the East Indies and 5 others], the related costs also rise. Furthermore, these expenses are covered from funds exclusively allocated for college students; therefore, it is reasonable for the Department of Colonies to bear these costs.<sup>15</sup>

Thanks in part to Mulder's influential connections at the ministry, separate funding for this course was secured. Mulder recounts in his 'Life Sketch':

I obtained from the Department of Colonies an annual allocation of 100 guilders for each pharmacist to support the laboratory. With typically 8 to 12 pharmacists, averaging 10, this amounted to an annual sum of 1,000 guilders for the university, specifically for the laboratory.<sup>16</sup>

Trained in Mulder's Utrecht laboratory, numerous military pharmacists were dispatched to the East Indies in the years following 1848. Mulder believed that, alongside their duties as pharmacists, these individuals should also engage in natural science research. His pharmacy training 'nursery' produced many Utrecht alumni who subsequently conducted chemical research at the chemical laboratory of the army medical corps in Weltevreden, in then Batavia.

Following Mulder's recommendation, one of his PhD students, P.F.H. Fromberg, was dispatched to the Dutch East Indies in 1848 to conduct agricultural chemistry research. Fromberg established an agricultural chemistry laboratory in Buitenzorg, where other Utrecht alumni – Mulder's pupils – also worked. Their research primarily focused on the practical application of chemistry, including improving tin production, analysing minerals and mineral water, studying sugar cane, coffee, and tea, investigating trees and roots for therapeutic compounds, such as cinchona trees.

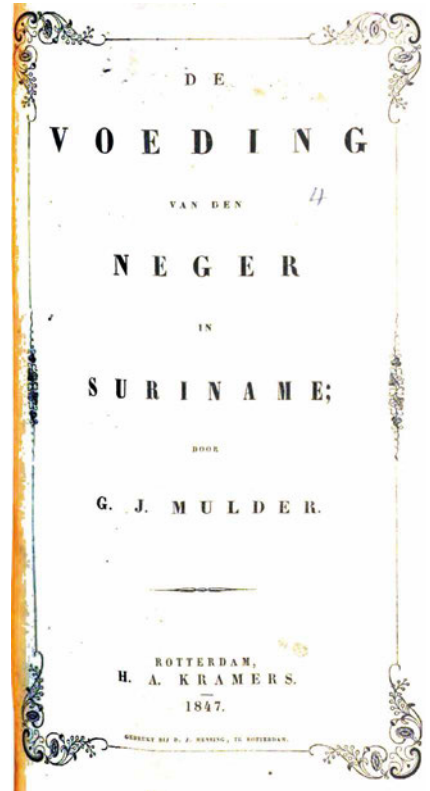
Drawing from his medical background and his belief in the usefulness of knowledge, Mulder was also actively engaged in public health issues, including those relevant to the colony. In 1847, he published a booklet *De voeding van den Neger in Suriname* [The Nutrition of the Negro in Suriname].

The majority of people on this earth live in poverty, lacking the freedom to choose their food or, at the very least, not having much say in what they eat. I would like to ask advocates for equal rights among individuals, those fighting for equality before the law, whether they would consider including in their plans for human advancement the dietary needs of humanity. For as long as some receive nutritious food while others are given meagre provisions, there exists inequality in rights, in thought, in feelings.<sup>17</sup>

These considerations apparently prompted the Minister of Colonies to inquire: 'Does the Negro in Suriname receive sufficient sustenance from the weekly provisions of bananas and fish?' In his booklet, Mulder attempts to address this question based on scientific analysis.

The poor man, surviving on potatoes, the Javanese subsisting solely on rice, the Negro who relies solely on bananas for sustenance – all lack vitality of body and mind; their labours weigh heavily upon them; exhortations, threats, even the lash, prove futile.<sup>18</sup>

This is why there is a 'high mortality among Negro children'. Based on his findings, Mulder suggests: 'Instead of only bananas, they should be provided with meat, grains, and fats in proportions equivalent to what European workers receive, enabling them to work with joy and health.' He frequently emphasises the importance of manure for plant growth and underscores: 'The colour of one's skin, whether brown or white, is insignificant here, much like the temperature of the air.'



Title page *De Voeding van den Neger in Suriname* by G.J. Mulder



In conclusion, Mulder acknowledges:

As a conclusion from the information provided, I gather that gratitude is owed to the High Government for taking up this important issue under its care; that the diet of the Negro is poor and must be improved; that the Negro cannot work with enthusiasm and vigour because he lacks necessary food; that Negro children cannot grow; women cannot give birth to healthy, strong children because neither children nor women receive what they need to increase their organic mass – bananas contain very little of what children and people are made of; that meat, fish, wheat, rye, and legumes must be provided, thereby replacing a portion of the bananas; finally, that the diet must be arranged in such a way as to provide some variety.<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, Mulder notes that these principles also apply to the people of the East Indies:

What has been discussed regarding the Negro also applies, with some adjustments, to the Javanese and millions of our fellow beings. While the lush tropical vegetation may dazzle with its abundance, it does not blind those who recognise the importance of food and nutrition and understand that the material and intellectual prosperity of each community is closely linked to its diet.<sup>20</sup>

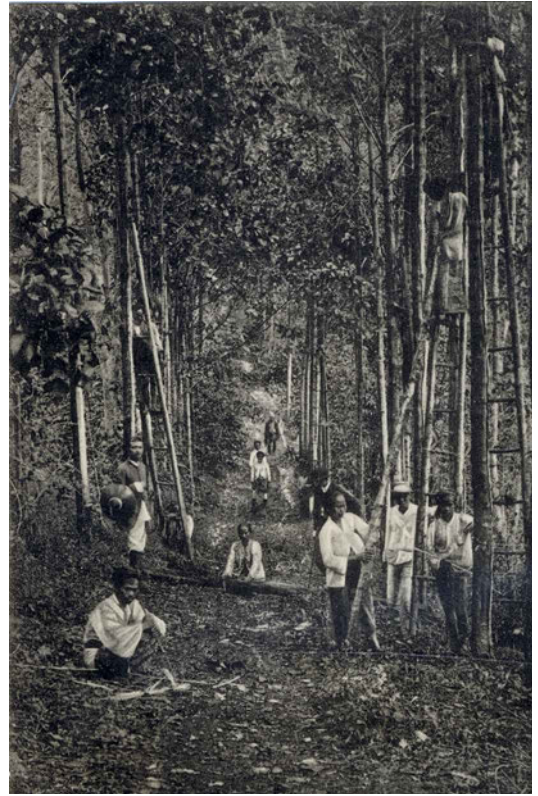
While Mulder does not explicitly address the enslaved status of ‘the Negro’, his name is cited in literature related to the abolition of slavery. Mulder was among the signatories of an 1842 Address – five years prior to the publication of *De voeding van den Neger in Suriname* – to the king advocating for the abolition of slavery. His Utrecht colleagues Vreede and Ackersdijck initiated this Address.

## G.J. Mulder and cinchona culture

An important and economically strategic field in which Mulder and his students from Utrecht played a significant role was the cultivation of cinchona and investigations into the ‘assimilation’ of Cinchona – an exotic plant native to Latin America – in the Dutch East Indies.<sup>21</sup> The bark of

the cinchona tree contains quinine, which has long been recognised as a vital remedy for malaria. The cinchona culture exemplifies the growing interaction between politics, science, and economics in the Dutch East Indies.

In 1851, Justus Karl Hasskarl, a German botanist working in the East Indies, was tasked by the then Minister of Colonies, Charles Ferdinand Pahud, to gather cinchona plants and seeds in Peru. Professor Miquel from Utrecht was among the advisors for this operation. Earlier, Miquel and Mulder had advocated for the acclimatisation of this tree in the East Indies. Hasskarl returned with the plant material in 1854 and became the inaugural director of the Colonial Government's Cinchona Company, overseeing the cultivation of cinchona trees.



Kina harvest in the Preanger, West-Java

Soon after, Wilhelm Junghuhn succeeded Hasskarl. Junghuhn focused on cultivating Cinchona Pahudiana.

When Mulder was approached for identifying a chemical expert for the Government's Cinchona Company, he recommended Karel Wessel van Gorkom. However, to Mulder's dismay, Junghuhn preferred Johan Eliza de Vrij, Mulder's successor at the Clinical School in Rotterdam. Van Gorkom (1835-1910) eventually departed for the East Indies, where he joined Fromberg's laboratory and contributed to cinchona research.

Meanwhile, doubts were mounting regarding the economic viability of the Pahudiana variety. Indeed, the Utrecht duo, professors Mulder and Miquel, were asked to advise. The findings of their 88-page report from 1862 were unfavourable concerning the economic prospects of the Pahudiana. Mulder and Miquel advised the minister to cease cultivation

of the Pahudiana as soon as possible. The matter gained prominence and was even extensively discussed on the parliamentary agenda in 1863. Meanwhile, De Vrij had returned to the Netherlands and Junghuhn passed away in 1864. Shortly thereafter, Van Gorkom, the pupil and protege of Mulder, was appointed as the new director of the colonial Government's Cinchona Company, entrusted with further developing cinchona cultivation. Van Gorkom's policies were strongly informed by the findings of scientific research. In this regard, he corresponded with 'Utrecht', specifically with Professor Miquel. Under Van Gorkom's leadership, emphasis shifted to the production of Cinchona Ledgeriana, resulting in a significant increase in cinchona production. One of his key scientific advisors locally was J.C. Bernelot Moens, again a former student of Mulder. Moens succeeded Van Gorkom as director of the colonial government's Cinchona Company in 1875. Van Gorkom was appointed superintendent of sugar and rice cultivation. Pieter van Leersum, who served as director of the colonial Government's Cinchona Company from 1884 to 1914, also came from Mulder's circle.

Mulder's students received a comprehensive education. Among them were individuals referred to as 'geological dilettantes', who engaged in work and research within the field of geology. Jan Hendrik Croockewit, a PhD student under Mulder's guidance, conducted a search for tin on Billiton. His initial conclusion, stating the absence of tin, was proven incorrect upon re-examination. It is likely that Croockewit had been misled by the native population. C.L. Vlaanderen, who earned his PhD from Mulder in 1854 for his research on the inorganic constituents of tobacco, was employed in the Dutch East Indies as a mining chemist. He conducted investigations on Banka tin and became associated with the development of a new and improved type of furnaces known as the Vlaanderen furnaces. Eventually, he rose to the position of chief administrator in the Billiton Company. They can be regarded as a generation of proto-geochemists.

Thus, we observe how, in the realms of politics, exploitation, and science, the Utrecht contribution ultimately had a decisive influence. Through these endeavours, chemists and pharmacists trained under Mulder in his Utrecht chemical laboratory played a crucial role in the surveying, chemical analysis, and subsequent exploitation of the mineral wealth offered by the Dutch colonial government, albeit with profound consequences for the deplorable predicament of workers within this exploitative system.

Moreover, Mulder epitomises the transition from the phase of descriptive classification of the plant and animal world in the colony to the emergence of laboratory-based natural science research in modern science within the colony – an area that, for the time being, remained the exclusive domain of the colonisers, excluding indigenous people.

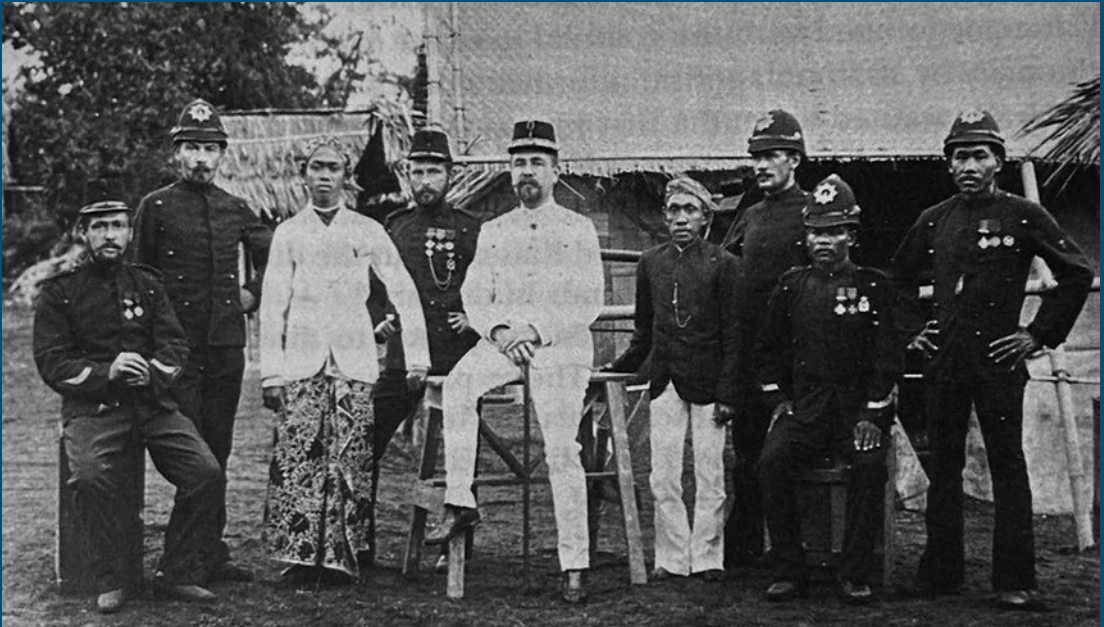
## The colony measured, observed, and explored

In the period leading up to the mid-nineteenth century, the Dutch East Indies, as previously discussed, were subjected to measurements, observations, and classifications. After 1850, these activities evolved into scientific research, employing increasingly sophisticated techniques and instruments. In the introduction to this book, reference was made to the work of Cohn and his concept of ‘investigative modalities’. This exploration represents one of these modalities, specifically the ‘survey modality’. At the same time, the significant impact of survey work on scientific development in Utrecht is also evident.

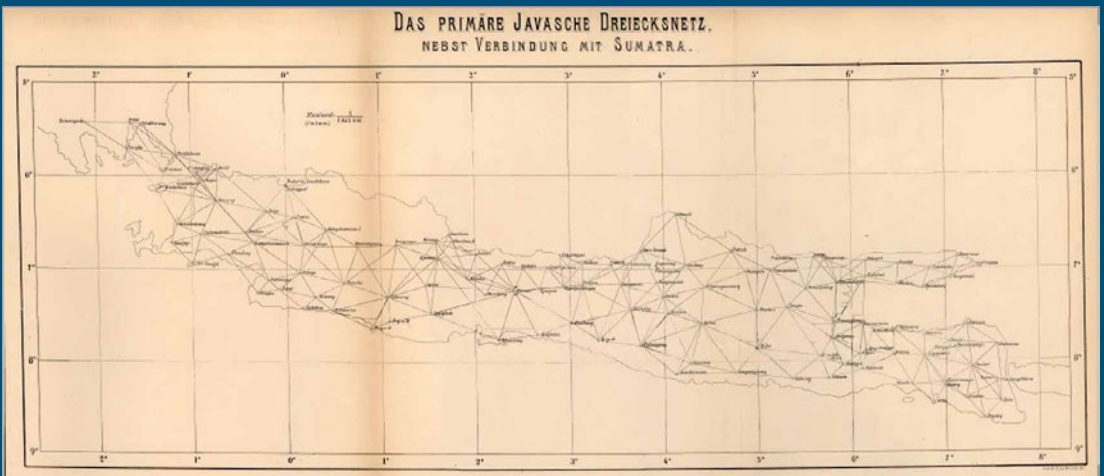
### J.A.C. Oudemans and triangulation

In 1856, J.A.C. Oudemans, who received his doctorate under Professor Frederik Kaiser, an astronomer in Leiden, was appointed as extraordinary professor in Utrecht. He also assumed the role of director at the Sonneborgh Observatory. However, he soon realised that the working conditions, including salaries, were less than ideal. Consequently, he opted for a position in the East Indies. In 1857, he was appointed as ‘chief engineer of the geographical service’ in the Dutch East Indies, where he was responsible for triangulation, particularly the triangulation of Java. The triangulation method is based on the principle that the shape of a triangle can be determined without knowing all of its features. For instance, if two angles and one side are known, the triangle’s other attributes can be calculated. It is worth noting that triangulation in this context was not solely an academic pursuit; it also had military implications. Hence, the Ministry of the Navy initiated this triangulation effort.

Triangulation, which falls more directly within the field of geodesy than astronomy, consumed much of Oudemans’ time. He documented his calculations in the publication *Die Triangulation von Java; ausgeführt vom Personal des Geographischen Dienstes in Niederländisch Ost-Indien* [The



J.A.C. Oudemans and his co-workers



Triangulation Java by J.A.C. Oudemans

triangulation of Java; carried out by the personnel of the Geographical Service in the Dutch East Indies], which was published in six volumes between 1875 and 1890.

However, Oudemans did not neglect his astronomical research. He participated in an expedition to Réunion in 1874 with the aim of observing the transit of Venus across the sun. Unfortunately, this attempt was somewhat hindered by adverse weather conditions. In 1875, Oudemans received an offer to return to Utrecht, which he accepted. He served as a professor of astronomy and director of the Observatory in Utrecht until his retirement in 1898.

In addition to his scientific pursuits, Oudemans authored a five-volume series titled *Ilmoe Alam* [Knowledge of Nature] or *Description of the World for The Inland Schools*, which was also translated into Malay.



J.A.C. Oudemans (1827-1906)



Title page *Ilmoe Alam* door J.A.C. Oudemans

These volumes covered topics such as the earth, the stars, the sun, the moon, and more. The material was presented as a dialogue between 'DE HEER' [the Lord] and 'ABDULLAH'. Oudemans provided the following introduction in the first part:

In a coastal area of Java, there resided a gentleman who possessed extensive knowledge spanning various subjects, including the earth, the stars, the sun, and the moon. Nearby lived a Regent, accompanied by his son named Abdullah. Abdullah, driven by a keen thirst for knowledge, often questioned his father about celestial phenomena such as the sun, the moon, and eclipses. However, the Regent, lacking scholarly expertise, found himself unable to provide satisfactory answers to his son's inquiries. On one occasion, the Regent talked to the learned gentleman about his son's insatiable curiosity, expressing regret over his own inability to fully address Abdullah's questions. He lamented how Abdullah's eagerness to comprehend the mysteries of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth often remained unfulfilled.

The ensuing dialogue between THE LORD and ABDULLAH unfolds as follows:

EFFECTS OF THE ROUNDNESS OF THE EARTH. GRAVITATIONAL FORCE.

'ABDULLAH: Sir, you previously informed me that the earth was round, akin to a sphere, but I have been pondering over that, and there are certain aspects which perplex me.

THE LORD: Well, Abdullah, that's very commendable. Please, enlighten me about what you find perplexing, and I shall endeavour to elucidate it for you.

ABDULLAH: My lord, if the earth is indeed round, and if, as you have explained, one can circumnavigate it by sailing, then I reasoned: on the opposite side of the earth, there must also be inhabited lands. However, do people reside there? Because if we stand upright here, and if we inhabit a spherical world, then the inhabitants on the other side must have their heads down and their feet up, walking as though we were walking on the ceiling of a room.

Wouldn't those individuals risk falling off the globe?

THE LORD: You have pondered deeply, and I shall endeavour to explain it for you.'

It is a remarkable contribution by a scholar from Utrecht to the advancement of indigenous education. However, simultaneously, we witness the dynamics of colonial relations and the role of knowledge aptly portrayed in the dialogues between THE LORD and ABDULLAH.

### **C.H. Buys Ballot, P.A. Bergsma and meteorology**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the Royal Netherlands Academy convened an Eclipse Commission to organise an expedition to study the eclipse in the East Indies in 1901, Oudemans served as a member. Joining him were his successor as of 1898, A.A. Nijland, and a young physicist named W.H. Julius, who had been appointed professor of experimental physics, meteorology, and physical geography in 1896. Julius gradually emerged as a prominent figure in solar physics. With Nijland and Julius on board, the Eclipse Commission increasingly bore the imprint of Utrecht University. Crucially, research conducted in the colony played a pivotal role in this endeavour. Julius had received his doctorate under Buys Ballot, and we thus embark on another avenue of 'measurement and observation'.

This avenue traces back to the journey of the newly appointed governor-general C.F. Pahud to the Dutch East Indies. Pahud's route took him through Berlin, where he met the renowned Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859). Humboldt, a naturalist and explorer, advocated for the Netherlands to join Russia, England, and Germany in conducting regular magnetic and meteorological observations in the East Indies. At Pahud's request, Von Humboldt wrote a letter dated 15 March 1856, reiterating the importance of these observations in 'stations magnétiques et météorologiques'. Humboldt had previously discussed this matter with Junghuhn (1809-1864), the German naturalist who conducted research in the East Indies under the colonial government's auspices. Consideration was given to establishing an observation station in Batavia.

Initially, Pahud considered entrusting this task to Oudemans, the newly appointed chief engineer of the geographical department. However, Oudemans declined, believing that his triangulation work could not be



combined with establishing a station for magnetic and meteorological observations. It was at this juncture that Utrecht professor C.H. Buys Ballot became involved. He detailed in a report how such a station could be established and recommended hiring his pupil P.A. Bergsma for the role. Buys Ballot anticipated that this appointment would also advance Utrecht's standing. However, the Board of the university believed that financial resources should come from the Ministry of the Colonies, viewing it as beyond the university's responsibility.

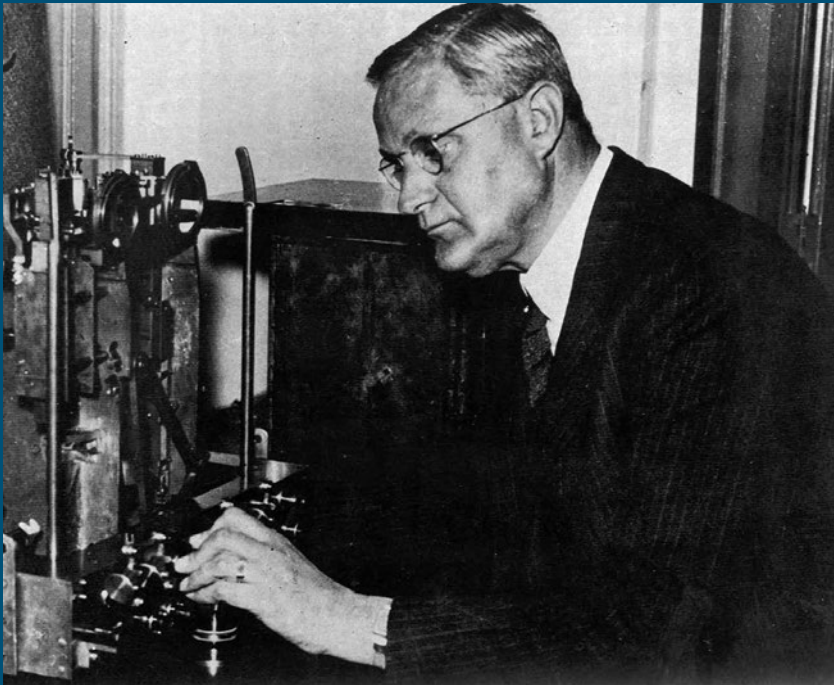
Bergsma eventually departed for the East Indies in 1861. It became apparent that despite vocal support from the Minister of the Colonies and colonial authorities for the venture (partly as a collaborative effort of 'civilised nations'), this enthusiasm did not translate into adequate funding for its realisation. Nevertheless, Bergsma succeeded in publishing the KMMO yearbooks from 1866 onwards, containing hourly meteorological observations conducted by indigenous personnel and others. In 1882, Bergsma returned to the Netherlands but tragically passed away en route. His successors subsequently established a network of observation stations across the East Indian archipelago. The data collected facilitated research and publications in Utrecht. For instance, in 1917, Anna Jean Marie van Vleuten received her doctorate under Professor E. van Everdingen with a dissertation on the daily variation of the earth's magnetism, much of which was gathered in Batavia. Some consider KMMO to have functioned as 'a branch office' of KNMI.<sup>22</sup>

### **Felix Vening Meinesz and gravity measurements**

Felix Vening Meinesz (1887-1966) followed another avenue of geodesy through his marine-gravimetric studies. Vening Meinesz, the son of Rotterdam's mayor, was a geodesist determined to further develop the mapping of the Earth's shape and dimensions by measuring gravity acceleration. These measurements were conducted using a pendulum device. While effective on land, this method proved impractical at sea due to excessive movement, resulting in measurement failures. Yet, since much of the Earth's surface is ocean, sea-based measurements were indispensable. The solution came in the form of measurements aboard submarines, which provided greater stability underwater. Between 1923 and 1939, Vening Meinesz, who stood nearly two metres tall himself, led numerous expeditions aboard Navy submarines. The pendulum device he used



KMMO, Royal Magnetic and Meteorological Observatory, Weltevreden



F.A. Vening Meinesz measuring gravity



F.A. Vening Meinesz on board Hr. Ms K XVIII, submarine of the Royal Netherlands Navy

earned the nickname ‘Golden Calf’. Crew members received additional compensation as they had to remain still in their bunks during measurements to minimise vibrations. Through these measurements, Vening Meinesz determined gravity levels at specific locations. Deviations indicated the presence of underwater mountains or deep-sea trenches, with the latter becoming known as ‘Vening Meinesz belts’.

It is notable that Vening Meinesz received cooperation from the navy during a tumultuous period, demonstrating the intertwining of science, expedition, and exploration. Van Hengel, in his dissertation on Vening Meinesz, highlights the navy’s desire for a more positive image, prompting their willingness to collaborate. In fact, a documentary film was produced of the expedition with the K XVIII submarine, which garnered significant publicity.

For Vening Meinesz, the Dutch East Indies held particular interest due to its deep trenches, making it a focal point for his geophysical research, which ultimately elevated him to international prominence. In 1927, he was appointed extraordinary professor of geodesy, cartography, and geophysics at Utrecht University. Subsequently, he served as a temporary

lecturer in Delft (1937) before being appointed there extraordinary professor of geodesy in 1939. From 1945 to 1951, Vening Meinesz also held the position of director of the KNMI and later served as chairman of the Board of Governors from 1952 to 1966.

### C.E.A. Wichmann and geological sciences

In the Royal Decree governing Reinwardt's appointment as director of Agriculture, Arts, and Sciences, Article 4 stipulated: '...he shall carefully observe the nature of the soil and its products, search for minerals'. Naturally, the earliest explorers and amateur botanists were intrigued by the physical environment of the regions they traversed and inhabited. Notably, Rumphius published about mineralogical, geological, and palaeontological findings. However, geology, as a separate field of study, did not crystallise into a scientifically practiced discipline until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The inaugural professor of geology at Utrecht, C.E.A. Wichmann, held Rumphius's work in high esteem, remarking: 'It was only towards the end of the 19th century that people established a connection and remembered the existence of his book [*D'Amboinsche Rariteitkamer* of 1705]'. Wichmann's appointment stemmed from the Higher Education Act of 1876, which mandated that the universities of Utrecht, Groningen, and Leiden teach physical geography, geology, and mineralogy.

Around the same time, a young German, K. Martin, was also appointed in Leiden. Both Wichmann and Martin found themselves compelled to conduct their work in Leiden and Utrecht, respectively, under rather inadequate conditions. The question naturally arose: where could a field geologist do research? The answer was obvious: the Dutch East Indies beckoned. They



C.E.A. Wichmann (1851-1927)

embarked on separate expeditions to the region, while other geologists and miners also sent materials back to the Netherlands.

Conditions for geological and mining research in the East Indies steadily improved in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The establishment of the Mining Bureau in the mid-nineteenth century raised demand for skilled miners. Following the abolition of the cultivation system and the implementation of the Sugar Act and the Agrarian Act, avenues for private enterprise expanded. Tin and coal exploitation gained significance, and the first oil explorations were conducted. Commercial oil extraction became feasible in Sumatra in 1884, albeit under strict government control. Exploration licenses were required, followed by concessions under stipulated conditions. Notably, Article 1 of the new Mining Act of 1899 specified the ownership of underground minerals in the Netherlands East Indies: 'In the Netherlands East Indies, a landowner is not entitled to the following minerals (including oil) on his land'. Landowners were prohibited from claiming ownership of resources such as oil.<sup>23</sup>

Wichmann embarked on an expedition to Sulawesi, Timor, and Flores in 1888-1889 under the auspices of the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society, where he reported the first Jurassic fossils from the archipelago on the island of Roti. In 1903, he led an expedition to northern New Guinea.

## Expeditions

Apropos Wichmann, I explore the phenomenon of expeditions. The term 'expedition' carries a sense of ambiguity. While it evokes military campaigns aimed at suppressing rebellions across the colony, particularly during the nineteenth century, it also encompasses scientific ventures. Organisations such as the *Maatschappij ter Bevordering van het Natuurkundig Onderzoek der Nederlandse Koloniën* [Society for the Advancement of Research in the Natural Sciences in the Dutch Colonies] (also known as the *Treub-Maatschappij*) and the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society actively orchestrated such scientific expeditions. Staff from Utrecht University often participated in these undertakings, with the objective of further exploring and opening up the colony, especially in areas beyond Java that had remained relatively uncharted.

One notable expedition was the Siboga expedition, conducted from March 1899 to February 1900. For this purpose, they travelled on the gunboat *Hr.Ms. Siboga*.



Siboga crew and the scientific staff of the Siboga with the Raja of Misool next to Anna Weber

The Amsterdam professor of zoology Max Wilhelm Carl Weber led the expedition. Weber had previously served as a lecturer in human anatomy at Utrecht in 1880 before relocating to Amsterdam in 1883. His wife, Anna Weber-van Bosse, an algologist and botanist, also joined the expedition. We will encounter her later when discussing the Utrecht botanist Went. Other expedition members included zoologists Jan Versluys and Hugo Nierstrasz, physician A. Schmidt, and draughtsman J.W. Huijsmans. Lieutenant commander Gustaaf Tydeman, the captain of the *Siboga*, oversaw hydrographic and cartographic surveys, exemplifying the merging of scientific, expeditionary, and naval interests.<sup>24</sup>

In *De Gids* of 1898, volume 62, Utrecht professor of zoology and anatomy (and secretary of the Society for the Advancement of Physical Research of the Dutch Colonies) A.A.W. Hubrecht introduced the *Siboga* expedition to readers:

As soon as she arrives there [one of the vessels mentioned by Hubrecht is the *Siboga*], the initial tasks assigned to her will not be of a belligerent nature, but rather profoundly peaceful. The highest authorities of our colonial administration and navy have recognised that, under certain circumstances, a warship, temporarily dedicated to scientific pursuits, can make significant contributions. A recent royal proclamation expressed this sentiment with great encouragement and accuracy, emphasising the potential for a ‘small country’ to achieve greatness. [...] It is worth noting that for centuries, our ‘small country’ on this side of the equator has effectively governed and developed vast territories both on and beyond the equator, yielding highly favourable outcomes. However, in these regions and waters, beyond the tangible benefits in agriculture, industry, and mining, lies an immensely fertile ground for further advancement. Here, the human intellect can labour towards expanding our knowledge and advancing science.

Zoologist Hugo Nierstrasz had received his training in Utrecht under Hubrecht. His research primarily focused on Solenogastres, a class of molluscs. Based on the data he collected during this expedition, he received his doctorate at Utrecht.

A.A.W. Hubrecht, who himself had received his PhD at Utrecht under Pieter Harting in 1874, had been actively involved for many years in collecting zoological material, particularly embryological specimens, from the East Indies.<sup>25</sup> As early as 1879, he authored *Handleiding bij het opsporen en verzamelen van voorwerpen uit het dierenrijk ook in Oost- en West-Indië* [Guide to the Detection and Collection of Objects from the Animal Kingdom, including the East and West Indies]. In 1882, he delivered his inaugural lecture in Utrecht *De hypothese der versnelde ontwikkeling door eerstgeboorte en hare plaats in de evolutieleer* [The hypothesis of accelerated development by primogeniture and its place in the theory of evolution]. Hubrecht himself embarked on an exploratory expedition from October 1890 to July 1891. Regarding this journey, he published *Embryological research on mammals from the Dutch East Indies, embarked on there in 1890 and 1891 on the instructions of the Royal Physical Society*.<sup>26</sup>

Hubrecht was particularly active in collecting embryos, often for a fee, as he believed that studying embryos would significantly contribute to the phylogenetic evidence supporting the theory of evolution. He held Charles



During lecture A.A.W. Hubrecht



A.A.W. Hubrecht (1853-1915)



Darwin's theory in high regard, referring to him as 'this Messiah of natural science' in his inaugural lecture in Utrecht in 1882, and corresponded with him. In his 1874 dissertation *Aantekeningen over de anatomie, histologie en ontwikkelingsgeschiedenis van eenige Nemertinen* [Notes on the anatomy, histology and developmental history of some Nemertines], he expressed his belief in the theory of evolution, stating that 'The human body is a modified animal form; its soul a potentiated animal soul' and 'Simple natural religion, based on clear knowledge of nature and its inexhaustible treasure trove of revelations, will in the future have a much more refining and perfecting influence on the course of human development than the diverse church religions of different peoples.' In 1910, Hubrecht resigned as ordinary professor and was appointed (part-time) extraordinary professor, with Nierstrasz succeeding him as the ordinary professor of zoology.

A.H. Schmidt, who joined as a physician, also possessed excellent zoological skills and had received training in Utrecht under Hubrecht. The Siboga expedition has been extensively documented in scientific papers, including works by Wichmann, who incidentally did not personally participate in the expedition. Additionally, Anna Van Bosse-Weber has provided a detailed account of the expedition in her book *One Year on Board H.M. Siboga*. This narrative includes a thorough discussion of interactions with indigenous people and personnel aboard the ship. Among other events, she recounts:

That afternoon, Weber and Tydeman accompanied the inspector and the Rajah, a sturdy man dressed in a neat white suit and wearing a sun hat, on a trip to the southern part of the island, where there are caves – known as death caves – accessible only from the sea, and where the indigenous people formerly buried their dead when they were still pagans.

It was evident that the sovereign and his people had completely distanced themselves from their pagan heritage, as they willingly assisted Weber in visiting the caves and permitted him to remove a coffin, skulls, and other skeletal remains, as well as some ethnographic artefacts, such as small blue cups that were traditionally placed with the deceased. [...] The Javanese crew members [aboard the *Siboga*] found it somewhat unsettling that WEBER brought back those coffins and skulls, and Samioen [one of the Javanese boatswains on board] walked the deck shaking his head, claiming to have heard ghostly noises.



Wichmann Expedition, Arthur Wichmann (seated, third from the left) and his expedition members. Back row from left to right: Lorentz and Van Nouhuys; front row from left to right: Dumas, Van der Sande, Wichmann, and De Beaufort

In 1903, Wichmann led the first official Dutch expedition to northern New Guinea. The primary objective of the expedition was to survey the north coast of the Dutch-controlled region of the island and assess the presence of exploitable coal deposits. Wichmann and his fellow expedition members extensively documented their findings from this venture.

It is insightful to hear from one of the expedition participants, H.A. Lorentz, regarding the composition of the expedition and the interactions between the members and the indigenous population. Lorentz, an alumnus of Utrecht University with degrees in law and biology, was the son of a tobacco planter in Java and had participated in numerous expeditions to New Guinea. He later served as consul-general in Pretoria and became the director of the Dutch Cultural History Institute in that city.

The expedition comprised Professor C. E. A. Wichmann, who oversaw the geological aspect; G. A. J. van der Sande, Medical Officer 1st class with the K.N.M., who, in addition to anthropological and ethnographic work, attended to the health needs of the expedition members and those seeking medical assistance.

Additionally, L.F. de Beaufort focused on zoological studies, with my assistance. We were also fortunate to have Mr J. M. Dumas, who possessed prior experience in New Guinea and had contributed significantly to the documentation of Lake Sentani by H. M. Cerani. Dumas was well-versed in jungle life and adept at constructing shelters using materials sourced directly from the forest. For botany, we were accompanied by Mas Djipja, the mantri of the National Botanic Garden at Buitenzorg, along with his assistant Atjip, nicknamed the 'sour Atjip' by us due to his less-than-pleasant temperament. Additionally, our support staff included Assang for the Professor, Johari for the doctor, Sario for De Beaufort, and Inggul for myself. These individuals were all secured through the National Botanic Garden at Buitenzorg. We also enlisted Maringi, a Ternatan, to assist Dumas. As hunters, we brought Rassip and Maringi from Ternate, both of whom had prior experience hunting birds of paradise in New Guinea. I must also mention, albeit with some reluctance, the thirty coolies, or rather, the disguised 'Dajakkers' [people from Kalimantan]... However, we recruited around thirty individuals from Bandjermasin [place in the southern part of Kalimantan], who unfortunately possessed a myriad of undesirable qualities. Moreover, they came from various parts of the Dutch East Indies; among them was even an Arab named Abdullah, who had to toil hard to sustain his miniature harem in Bandjermasin.<sup>27</sup>

Confrontation with the indigenous population stands out as another prominent aspect of this expedition. Upon reading Lorentz's travelogue, we observe a generally positive attitude towards the people encountered in New Guinea, albeit coloured with familiar stereotypes:

In assessing the character of the Tobadians, I find many similarities to children. They possess a natural cheerfulness, susceptible to charm, and respond well to friendly treatment. However, their propensity for greed is quite pronounced and manifests in all their dealings: 'nothing for nothing' appears to be their guiding principle.<sup>28</sup>



Papuans sitting near the tent of expedition member G.A.J. van der Sande

This expedition received considerable coverage, particularly from Wichmann himself. The line between scientific and military undertakings blurred significantly, as military expeditions followed soon after the Wichmann expeditions, drawing upon the experiences of participants in the scientific expedition. The *Report of the Military Exploration of Dutch New Guinea 1907-1915* (published in 1920) made frequent references to the Wichmann expedition of 1903. Consequently, scientifically driven expeditions emerged as crucial instruments for further integrating the former 'buitengewesten' [outlying regions] into the Dutch imperial empire. Medical Officer Van der Sande provided detailed accounts of his findings in the publication '*Nova Guinea Vol. 3: Ethnography and Anthropology*'.

### Geology and oil

Wichmann remained at Utrecht University for forty years. Part II of *De Utrechtsche Universiteit 1815-1936* stated that when Wichmann reached his formal retirement age in 1921 (he was seventy), the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij had made an offer of a large sum of money (500,000 guilders) for a large geological Central Institute, to be established at Utrecht University. The proposal included a professor funded by the university

itself, a professor to be funded by the government and a third to be funded by the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij. Although the government was positively inclined towards this proposal, it was ultimately not implemented.<sup>29</sup>

Wichmann was succeeded by L.M.R. Rutten. Rutten received his doctorate under Wichmann in 1909. He then left for the Dutch East Indies for an extended period. Rutten worked mainly as an exploration geologist looking for oil and having close ties to the Batavian Petroleum Company. From 1917 to 1919, Rutten led a scientific expedition to Ceram. Rutten also undertook expeditions to the West Indies. Under Rutten's leadership, the institute in Utrecht grew. More staff members joined. H.A. Brouwer came to Utrecht to lecture on tectonics and in 1929 J.I.J.M. Schmutzer was appointed to teach mineralogy and petrography. Brouwer and Schmutzer both had experience in the East Indies.

The Austrian-born and devoutly Catholic Schmutzer, in particular, was a striking figure. He had worked for Wichmann early on as his assistant and went to the Dutch East Indies with his wife. Together with his

brother, he ran a sugar factory in Bantoel and Ganjoeran (both in Java). They managed this factory in accordance with the principles of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, incorporating progressive socio-ethical policies. He briefly served as Minister of Colonies in the Dutch war cabinet. Schmutzer was enthusiastic about Java's indigenous art and culture, but also strongly supported the Catholic mission. In addition to Brouwer and Schmutzer, Vening Meinesz joined the institute to supervise geophysics. The number of students steadily increased, particularly in the field of exploration geology, which naturally enjoyed favourable market conditions.

In addition to his scientific contributions, Rutten played a significant role in disseminating geological knowledge of the East Indies to a broader audience, notably through his 'Lectures on the Geology of the Netherlands East Indies' (1927). Field geology in the East



J.I.J.M. Schmutzer (1882-1946)

Indies was subsequently continued by Rutten's student, S.G. (Gerrit) Trooster, who worked as a field geologist in various positions in the East Indies from 1928 onwards, including with the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij. Following his imprisonment in a Japanese internment camp, Trooster was eventually appointed professor of geology in 1946. Another of Rutten's students, Reinout van Bemmelen, carried on the tradition of field geology and exploration, partly in the service of the oil industry. Van Bemmelen's father, Willem, had previously served as an assistant at the meteorological institute in Utrecht and De Bilt, before becoming deputy director and eventually director at the Royal Magnetic and Meteorological Observatory in Batavia. Reinout van Bemmelen authored the seminal work *The Geology of Indonesia*, published in 1949.

### Geographical sciences

In addition to geology, physical geography flourished in Utrecht, particularly during the tenure of Professor J.W.K. Oestreich, who was appointed as professor of geomorphology in 1908. Physical geography found its counterpart in descriptive geography. The Aardrijkskundig Genootschap (later known as the Royal Dutch Geographical Society from 1888) was founded as early as 1873. Jan Frederik Niermeyer was appointed alongside Oestreich in 1908. The Dutch East Indies held a prominent place in Niermeyer's research and publication agenda, as evidenced by several books aimed at popularising knowledge about the East Indies in the Netherlands.

Niermeyer died in 1923. Karl Oestreich, the professor of physical geography, believed that the position did not necessitate a replacement and that a lecturer sufficed. Eventually, in 1927, Louis van Vuuren was appointed in Utrecht.<sup>30</sup> Born in Borneo to a father who served in the KNIL (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army), Van Vuuren attended secondary school in the Netherlands and continued his military education in Kampen. Departing for the East Indies in 1898, he worked in the service of Van Heutsz and became involved in the 'pacification' policy of the Pak Pak lands, a region west of Lake Toba in Sumatra. From 1908 to 1910, he studied at the Indische Bestuursacademie in The Hague. As part of this course, he wrote *First Measures in newly annexed territory* in 1910. Van Vuuren advocated improved infrastructure, establishment of educational facilities, and provision of medical care to pacify the population in annexed territories. Returning to the East Indies in 1910, he was appointed director

of the Encyclopaedic Bureau, tasked with collecting and interpreting data on colonial territories to assist native government officials. His significant work, *The Celebes Government*, was published in 1920, with its first volume primarily comprising physical geographical data.

After the Bureau was wound up, Van Vuuren returned to the Netherlands, initially working as a lecturer in colonial land description at the University of Amsterdam. His extensive experience in the colony undoubtedly contributed to his appointment at Utrecht. For him, geography was primarily a practical science. Van Vuuren aligned himself with the tradition of ethical politics, focusing on how to enhance prosperity in the colonies. According to his perspective, socio-economic conditions needed thorough analysis, upon which governments could then base plans. In 1941, Van Vuuren was appointed rector magnificus at Utrecht University. However, his tenure was not without controversy, leading to his resignation after World War II.

Thus, the East Indies played a significant role in the development of the broad field of geo(graphical) sciences in Utrecht, which has thrived at the intersection of scientific inquiry, land description, and the practical exploration (and subsequent commercial exploitation) of minerals in the East Indies.

## From Taxonomy to Morphology

*F.A.F.C. Went*<sup>31</sup>

Looking back at the century that started with the appointment of G.J. Mulder as professor of chemistry at Utrecht in 1840 and extended until the outbreak of World War II in 1940, two Utrecht professors stand out as paramount figures in shaping the colonial legacy of Utrecht University: G.J. Mulder and F.A.F.C. Went. Following the development of chemistry through the lens of modern scientific methods, a similar trajectory unfolded in biology during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Initially dominated by taxonomic surveying and classification, biology gradually shifted towards the growth of developmental biology and experimental laboratory research. The focus shifted from mere collection to a deeper comprehension of the growth process. Evolutionary morphology and the concept of natural selection advanced by Darwinism gained increasing prominence. This emphasis on experimental laboratory research inevitably drew attention to the tropics.



F(riedrich) A.F.C. Went (1863-1935)





Botanical Laboratory of the National Botanical Garden in Buitenzorg with director Melchior Treub in the front left and S.H. Koorders in the front right



Sugarcane Experimental station Kagok bij Tegal

In 1895, Amsterdam professor Hugo de Vries wrote an extensive essay in *De Gids* concerning the experimental stations in the East Indies and their significance in both research and the exploitation of sugar. Concluding his article almost lyrically, he writes:

Now the track is broken, the foundation laid. Handsome financial advantages in culture and factories are present, bearing vivid witness. Everywhere there is life, everywhere there is progress, where previously, in calm resignation, the refrain of 'we don't know' prevailed. But the experimental stations are proclaiming louder and louder: 'We shall know, we shall control!'<sup>32</sup>

One of Hugo de Vries's students was F.A.F.C. Went, born on 18 June 1863 and passing away on 24 July 1935. He attended the hbs school in Amsterdam, a newly established secondary school curriculum with a strong focus on mathematics and physics but no classical languages, which were obligatory at the grammar schools of the time. Young Went pursued his studies in biology at the University of Amsterdam supervised by Hugo de Vries in 1880. He earned his PhD cum laude in 1886 for a dissertation *De jongste toestanden der vacuolen* [The latest conditions of the vacuoles] supervised by Hugo de Vries. Vacuoles are small membrane-bounded organelles composed of fluid-filled spaces that help protect and clean the interior of a plant cell. Following his doctoral studies, Went conducted further research in Bonn and Paris. From 1888 to 1891, he worked as a teacher in Dordrecht and The Hague. Additionally, he was given the opportunity to conduct research at the zoological institute in Naples, which was renowned for its work in experimental botany.

His initial exposure to the colony occurred in 1890 during his stay at 's Lands Plantentuin in Buitenzorg from March to August. Under the directorship of Melchior Treub (1880-1909), this Botanical Garden evolved into a well-equipped laboratory infrastructure with extensive research facilities. His stay was paid for by the Buitenzorgfonds, which had been established shortly before.

Initiated by Treub in late 1887, this fund aimed to enable Dutch scientists to conduct research at the laboratory, a 'scientific station' affiliated with the Botanic Garden, for several months. Went became the first recipient of a grant from this fund. His study trip must have left a lasting impression on him. He returned to the Dutch East Indies a year later to assume the position of director at the West Java Sugar Industry Research

Station in Kagok, near Tegal. Initially established to conduct temporary research on the detrimental sereh disease of sugarcane, under Went's inspired leadership and in collaboration with his colleague J.H. Wakker from the East Java Research Station, all known sugarcane diseases at the time were meticulously documented. This endeavour resulted in the publication of *De ziekten van het suikerriet op Java* [Sugarcane diseases on Java] (1898), which remained the definitive work in this field for an extended period. As a result of his research, which encompassed practical applications as well as pure research, Went earned a commendable reputation among both entrepreneurs and the colonial government. Even during his tenure as a professor in Utrecht, his advice was still highly sought after.

For Went, research with practical application and pure research were both essential components of any civilisation, but needed to be strictly delineated. In a treatise for planters written in 1892, Went explained: 'True science is an ideal that ignores any practical application'. Elaborating on this, he asserted that research solely aimed at practical utility would yield limited results. Rather, he contended that achieving results at research stations necessitated conducting research on a purely scientific basis, with practical outcomes naturally ensuing.<sup>33</sup>

In a speech delivered at the International Rubber Conference in Batavia in 1914, Went reiterated the dichotomy between the man of practice and the man of research. He stated: 'The true man of science will rarely excel in practical activities, and vice versa; the practical man is ill-advised to delve into scientific research unless willing to risk setbacks in his field'. Went attributed this contradiction to differences in character and perhaps even brain composition! However, he was quick to emphasise that one was not superior to the other. Indeed, he also rejected the philosophical notion of efficiency in the natural sciences in his 1906 Rectoral Address, 'Ondoesmatigheid in de levende natuur' [Inefficiency in living nature].

It may be prudent to eliminate the concept of efficiency or inefficiency from the natural sciences entirely; indeed, it stems from the anthropocentric perspective we adopt, along with the simplistic way we view things, as I mentioned earlier. Due to the human tendency to believe that our actions are driven by a goal, we project this assumption onto nature, although in the case of lifeless nature, such notions no longer hold. However, we persist in applying them

to living nature. Yet, if we discard these outdated ideas, reminiscent of old philosophies of nature, and instead approach the study of living things in a purely causal manner, akin to physics and chemistry, as is increasingly the case, we will continue to advance.<sup>34</sup>

In 1896, Went returned to the Netherlands and was appointed as professor of botany at Utrecht, succeeding N.W.P. Rauwenhoff. In addition to teaching botany and pharmacognosy, he also lectured on medicine and pharmacy. Initially, his laboratory lacked adequate equipment for teaching and research. However, like Mulder, Went invested significant effort into modernising his lab in 1902 and 1917. Through his endeavours, the number of students expanded, and Utrecht's plant physiological research gained international recognition.

Between 1896 and 1934, a total of 65 PhD students were supervised by Went. The research conducted by him and his students, including A.H. Blauw and his son F.W. Went, primarily focused on growth phenomena influenced by external factors such as light and gravity in which chemical processes play a significant role. Blauw investigated the effects of light, while Went Jr explored the growth substance, later identified as the plant hormone auxin. This research on growth substances formed the cornerstone of the Utrecht School of Botany, earning global acclaim. The growing reputation of the school attracted more students to Utrecht and facilitated the recruitment of new faculty members, including August Pulle, initially as a lecturer and later as a professor of plant systematics in 1906.

Went was awarded an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University in 1930. He maintained extensive correspondence with his students and international colleagues. In 1898, Went was appointed a member of the Academy, and from 1921 to 1931, he served as chairman of the physics department of the Academy, thus also assuming the role of general chairman of the Academy every other year. Due in part to his proficiency in common conference languages, Went became a sought-after speaker at various international conferences. For example, he represented the Academy at the Third Pacific Science Congress held in Tokyo in 1926, and naturally attended the Fourth Pacific Science Congress organised in Java between 16 and 25 May 1929. The international community of scientists held great significance for Went. Following World War I, he dedicated considerable effort, through the Academy, to reuniting scientists from the various countries that had been adversaries during the war.

We have observed that Went held firm beliefs regarding the distinction between practical research and pure research, viewing one as no less important than the other. As early as 1917, he participated in the ‘Committee of Advice and Research in the Interests of Public Welfare and Resilience’, established by the Academy and chaired by physicist H.A. Lorentz. The committee’s mandate was to advise on ‘means and ways of deriving the greatest possible benefit from the limited resources available’. Consequently, it was tasked with formulating proposals for the establishment of an organisation responsible for actively conducting and coordinating applied research. In 1923, a new committee was formed, with Went assuming the role of chairperson. After two years, the committee produced a report advocating for the creation of an organisation comprising representatives from universities, society, technical colleges, and the government to coordinate applied research and allocate government funding. This report ultimately resulted in the enactment of legislation known as the ‘Went Act’, which established the Central Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) in 1930, with Went serving as its inaugural chairman.

Following his formal retirement from Utrecht in 1933, a special chair was established for Went in Leiden. Although he delivered an inaugural lecture *De Macht van het kleine* [The Power of the Small], his health prevented further activities. Having passed away on 24 July 1935, Went was succeeded in Utrecht by his student Victor Jacob Koningsberger, who had returned from the East Indies following a research career.

### Went, Utrecht and the colonies

In numerous publications, both scholarly and intended for a broader social audience, Went explored his relationship with the colonies in the West and the East. For Went, the focal point was the scientific and social significance of the colonies, and thus the social responsibility towards them. On 21 September 1896, Went delivered his inaugural address in Utrecht, wherein he highlighted the ‘botanical problems of the past 15 years’. He explicitly underscored the importance of plant research in the ‘heerlijke koloniën’ [enchanted colonies]. Went believed that part of scientific advancement lay in the study of non-European plants. Towards the end of his address, he directly addressed the students. Despite the relatively small number of students at the beginning of his tenure, he encouraged

them to primarily seek employment in the colonies, as there would be ample opportunities for research there.

A special word to you, Philosophers of Nature! My greatest aspiration is to guide you towards becoming independent, critical-thinking scientific individuals who will advance the frontiers of knowledge [...]. Botanical students, I hope your numbers are considerable because our nation needs you, particularly for the exploration of our enchanting colonies. During Miquel's time, research materials from Java were brought here. At that time, however, as in previous centuries, scientific research in our colonies was predominantly carried out by foreigners. While many of these individuals have since become Dutch citizens, it would have been more beneficial for our nation if we had taken charge of these endeavours ourselves. Fortunately, this scenario has changed over the past two decades, with numerous compatriots now engaged in scientific pursuits in Java and abroad, either for purely scientific purposes or for applied research. Nonetheless, the current situation is such that there is a scarcity of young botanists in our country, leading to a reliance on foreign talent for positions in Java once again. Let us hope that the number of botanists will soon increase to a level where such dependence becomes unnecessary! Botanical students, a splendid task awaits you; the work is exquisite, and the research opportunities are plentiful, presenting the perpetual challenge of selection! Come, come! I envision Java bathed in sunshine, unveiling its treasures to you, beckoning you to depart from your misty homeland and uphold the honour of the Netherlands on the other side of the equator!<sup>35</sup>

The significance of research in the colonies was once again explicitly underscored by Went in an article published in *De Gids*, 'De strijd tegen de ziekten der kultuurgewassen in Nederlandsch-Indië' [The Battle Against Cultivated Crop Diseases in the Dutch East Indies]. Went started his article by asserting that the Dutch government showed minimal interest in researching diseases affecting cultivated crops.

The lack of attention to this field in our country, it seems to me, can be attributed to a lack of awareness regarding the scientific methods available for combating ailments affecting our cultivated

plants. Many do not believe it is feasible to combat them successfully. To demonstrate that such battles can indeed be waged effectively, I wish to shed light on developments in the Dutch East Indies in the realm of phytopathology; this will also illustrate how, in certain respects, the colonies have acted as pioneers where the motherland lagged behind.

Financial concerns were the primary motivation for Java residents to turn to science for advice and support against dreaded plant diseases. Initially, attention was drawn to the sereh disease and the coffee leaf disease, with both prompting plantation owners to seek assistance from the National Botanical Gardens in Buitenzorg. However, at that time, the number of natural scientists employed there was limited, and besides, it was challenging to divert them from their primary duties for an extended period, regardless of their expertise in phytopathology.

While coffee planters managed to sustain profitability amidst the leaf disease and were content with Dr W. Burck's research efforts on this front, the situation differed with sugar production. Here, the onset of a destructive disease (the sereh) coincided with a significant crisis, prompting cane planters in their desperation to establish research stations.<sup>36</sup>

At the commencement of the 143rd General Meeting of the Provincial Utrecht Society of Arts and Sciences on 6 June 1916, Went, in his capacity as chairman of the board, delivered a speech 'De Plicht der Vaderlandsche Wetenschap jegens Tropisch Nederland' [The Duty of Patriotic Science towards Tropical Netherlands].<sup>37</sup> This speech echoes a colonial ethos as articulated by Went. He centred his discourse on the question of 'what duties are incumbent on every Dutchman towards our colonies'. Acknowledging the history of violence associated with colonisation, Went, in alignment with the principles of ethical politics, viewed it as a moral imperative to participate in elevating the colonies 'to a level of development that enables the Netherlands to confidently withdraw once they are capable of self-governance'.

Went asserted that every colonial power bore the responsibility 'to thoroughly understand its own country and people and to study its unique characteristics. Consequently, a nation that possesses colonies

cannot claim to be civilised if it neglects this obligation towards its colonies’.

He highlighted the long-standing neglect of this research, especially as VOC administrators actively hindered research in the natural sciences. It was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that he observed a change, particularly under the influence of G.J. Mulder and his students. In this address, the dichotomy between pure and applied research also featured prominently in Went’s reflections. He observed that, fortunately, practitioners eventually recognised the need for scientific inquiry. The reference to Snouck Hurgronje’s work<sup>38</sup> is intriguing: ‘ultimately, Snouck Hurgronje’s scientific contributions helped bring an end to the Atjeh [Aceh] war’.

Went acknowledged significant advancements in the field of natural science, particularly spurred by the efforts of Melchior Treub. To his satisfaction, Went observed that scientific exploration also persisted in the West Indies.

Went expressed the hope that this research would be conducted collaboratively with scientists in the Netherlands who could assist in studying our colonies. However, he cautioned against any semblance of tutelage over scientists in the East Indies.

At this juncture in his speech, Went could no longer contain his frustration with a remark made by one of his colleagues, Professor Van ’t Hoff. During a speech on 19 April 1895 at the fifth Dutch Natural and Medical Conference in Amsterdam, Van ’t Hoff had pondered: ‘What amount of intellectual power is annually ceded by the Netherlands to the colonies?’ He suggested that this could be one reason why the number of natural scientists in our country was steadily declining compared to other nations. Went attributed this perceived error by his colleague to the fact that ’t Hoff’s research was universal and lacked a direct connection to the



F.A.F.C. Went, *Urbi et Orbi* (1921)



tropics. Van 't Hoff was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1901 for his application of mechanical and thermodynamic principles in chemistry. Went vehemently disagreed with the notion that the presence of Dutch scientists in the tropics was essentially detrimental to Dutch science. On the contrary,

the Dutchman residing in the East and West Indies operates within a Dutch environment, contributes to the advancement of Dutch science, and discovers an expansive field of research comparable to that found in the motherland. Additionally, he establishes relationships that facilitate the continuation of his scientific pursuits, whereas such opportunities would likely be limited in the Netherlands.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, Went believed that a stay in the tropics significantly advanced the scientist's career upon their return to the Netherlands. Proudly, Went remarked: 'In fact, half of the members of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at Utrecht have personal experience with our colonies.'<sup>40</sup>

Among the fifty members of the mathematics and physics department of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam, Went identified around fifteen members who had spent varying amounts of time in our colonies. Out of the total membership of 240 in the *Nederlandsche Botanische Vereeniging*, 55 resided in the colonies. However, Went also recognised significant challenges in filling vacancies due to a shortage of biologists. He proposed a straightforward solution: admitting those who attended the hbs school directly into the faculty of mathematics and physics. Nonetheless, he encountered strong opposition:



F.A.F.C. Went in the jungle of Suriname next to the Cecropia tree

If only the rigid conservatives advocating the necessity of Latin and Greek for natural sciences students knew the extent of human happiness they have undermined! However, they remain unaware, because they are scholars and lawyers who are ignorant of the natural sciences.<sup>41</sup>

Went passionately argued for more intensive research. He advocated 'studies in the field of ethnology, particularly of peoples who have had minimal or no contact with Europeans, such as the Pesegems and other tribes in New Guinea or the indigenous peoples of Suriname'. He stressed the urgent need for research, warning that 'the unique characteristics of these indigenous peoples will soon vanish under the influence of advancing "civilisation"'. Went was not only concerned with indigenous peoples; he also lamented the rapid disappearance of primeval forests due to the expansion of cultivated areas, as seen in Sumatra. Concluding his speech, Went made a fervent appeal to the moral obligation of the Netherlands:

When science acts more decisively than it has so far to deepen our understanding of our colonies and to apply that knowledge for the benefit of the people in the East and West, then the Netherlands will not be able to erase a debt that can never be repaid. However, the present generation can at least fulfil its duty. Nowadays, there is much talk of external threats endangering our colonies. While a robust defence against potential adversaries is undoubtedly necessary, equally important is fortifying tropical Netherlands against external aggression by fulfilling the ideal responsibilities incumbent upon a civilised colonising power.

May this be the case! May a host of researchers venture into the azure mountains and verdant forests, the seas and shores of Insulinde, the majestic rivers and savannahs of Suriname, and the myriad peoples and tribes inhabiting tropical Holland!<sup>42</sup>

Went's perspectives found broad support within the university. During a speech marking the transition of the rectorship in 1916, the university's rector Ernst Cohen, himself a professor of chemistry, reiterated Went's sentiments. Cohen also advocated sending academically trained botanists to the research stations in the colonies. He underscored the distinction between science and application, noting that 'practical farmers' did

not receive their training at university. Cohen chastised members of the House of Representatives for their short-sightedness in advocating limiting the number of biologists sent to the colonies. Such a measure, he argued, would only result in 'a still larger number of foreigners joining the private research stations or entering state service than there already are at present'.<sup>43</sup>

The colony was ingrained in Went's innermost nature, and he sought to engage both scientific and non-scientific circles in his belief in the significance of research in the colony. Together with P. Romburgh, Utrecht's professor of organic chemistry, and L.Ph. de Bussy, a Utrecht professor in tropical state economics at the Indology faculty, Went served as an editor of the *Indische Mercur*, a weekly magazine covering trade, agriculture, industry, and mining in the Netherlands East and West Indies. For Went, the colony stood at the nexus of trade, agriculture, industry, and mining.

As we have read, Went was totally at odds with his colleague Van 't Hoff's assertion regarding the purported redundancy of natural scientists in the colony. Went argued that 'the Dutchman [who] stays in the East and West Indies in a Dutch environment' contributes to the advancement of Dutch science. However, this prompts the question of Went's stance on the dissemination of science from the West. He remains remarkably silent on the imperative of nurturing indigenous scientific potential in the Dutch East Indies. While many local officials were employed at the research stations and played pivotal roles in expeditions, scientifically trained individuals were conspicuously absent for an extended period. Went did acknowledge the potential of trained Javanese personnel, as evidenced by his remarks in his article 'The battle against diseases of cultivated plants in the Netherlands East Indies':

Firstly, Zehntner discovered the eggs and noted that they are consistently (with a solitary exception) laid in clusters on the young leaves. Although these eggs are exceedingly small, it became evident that the Javanese could quickly be trained to locate them.<sup>44</sup>

In fairness, it is unclear whether the negative connotation we associate with the term 'trained' (Went used the Dutch word *africhten*, more commonly used in reference to animals) in that context applied to Went.



Jacob Christiaan  
Koningsberger  
(1867-1951)

### Went's colonial entourage

Within Went's colonial circle, several prominent Utrecht botanists were actively engaged in the colony. Foremost among them was the 'Koningsberger dynasty'. Jacob Christiaan Koningsberger (1867-1951), the patriarch, studied in Utrecht and received his doctorate in 1891 under Rauwenhoff, Went's predecessor.

After completing his PhD, the Dutch East Indies beckoned, and in 1894 he began working as a biologist in Buitenzorg. From 1903 to 1911, he served as the head of the Department of Zoological Research and also as director of the Agricultural School. Between 1907 and 1911, he held the position of deputy director of 's Lands Plantentuin, and in 1911, he succeeded Melchior Treub as director. In 1914, Koningsberger delivered a speech entitled 'Horrea Replenda' [the storehouses must be replenished], at the opening of the Treub laboratory in Buitenzorg. In this address, he

underscored Melchior Treub's legacy, emphasising the importance of continually replenishing the stock of natural scientific knowledge, particularly in the tropics. Koningsberger quoted Amsterdam professor Max Weber who, in memory of Treub, remarked that the scientific exploration of a colony's uncharted territories is essential for its possession. Koningsberger emphatically asserted that 'the exploration of the unknown fields in our colony is a "charter of their possession."<sup>45</sup> He believed that knowledge equalled control. Koningsberger juxtaposed this scientific knowledge with the higher professional education that merely transmitted existing knowledge for practical purposes. Among his publications is a work on *De dierlijke vijanden [met name insecten] der koffiecultuur op Java* [The Animal Enemies [Especially Insects] of Coffee Culture in Java]. Starting from 1911, his vast knowledge of Javanese flora and fauna was compiled in his twelve-volume masterpiece: *Java, Zoological and Biological*.

After his tenure in scientific positions, he moved into the political arena. In 1918, he assumed the role of president of the Volksraad [People's Council], an advisory body without legislative power.<sup>46</sup> He returned to the Netherlands in 1919. In a speech delivered to the Provincial Utrecht Society of Arts and Sciences in June 1925 entitled 'The Relations between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, seen from a Scientific Point of View', he advocated quickening the pace of the pursuit of autonomy. Drawing an analogy, he likened the situation to the rapid developmental phases of a human embryo in the mother's womb.<sup>47</sup>

All of you are well aware of our ultimate goal: to expedite the attainment of full autonomy for the East Indies, thereby integrating it as an equal part of the Dutch empire alongside the motherland.<sup>48</sup>

Koningsberger also observed that there are differing perspectives on the pace of change, even at Utrecht. He stressed:

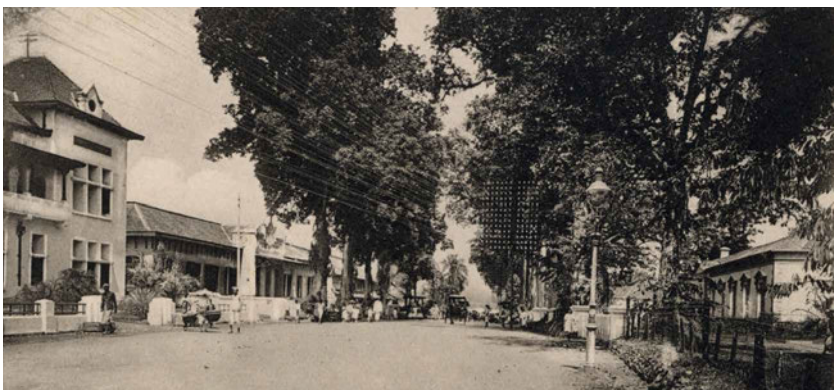
The extent of divergence among our most eminent compatriots is evident in the ongoing debate concerning the chairs of Indology at Utrecht University. This raises the important question of whether a remedy is being sought whose side effects could potentially be more harmful than the ailment it aims to cure.<sup>49</sup>

Koningsberger highlighted the establishment of the Indology faculty in Utrecht, which started in 1925, a subject I will come to shortly. From 1926 to 1929, he served as a politically independent member in the De Geer

government, holding the position of Minister of Colonies. During his tenure, the People's Council achieved an indigenous majority.

Victor Jacob (1895-1966), the eldest son of Jacob Christiaan Koningsberger, was born in Buitenzorg in 1895.<sup>50</sup> Tragically, his mother passed away during their journey to the Netherlands. He and his brother, Jacob Christiaan, were taken in by relatives and later foster families.<sup>51</sup> Following in his father's footsteps, Victor Jacob studied at Utrecht under Went, with whom he also received his doctorate in 1922, cum laude sine iudicio, for his thesis *Tropismus und Wachstum*. Victor Jacob also travelled to the East Indies, where in 1924 he became director of the Cheribon Division of the Java Sugar Research Station.

Two years later, in 1926, he accepted the position of director of the Cultivation Department at the Pasoeroean Research Station, an exemplary facility for the scientific training in cultivation practices of Java's sugar planters. Throughout his tenure, he maintained a productive correspondence with his mentor, Went. Koningsberger Jr faced challenges in his relationship with the director of the Research Station, Ph. van Harreveld, who favoured practical training over pure research. Nevertheless, the research questions posed by Koningsberger and Went were often rooted in identified practical problems, such as those encountered in sugar production. Koningsberger Jr spent a great deal of time liaising with sugar companies, and the demands of his managerial responsibilities sometimes interfered with his research activities.



Handelsstraat. Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, General Experimental Station for Agriculture, Analytical Laboratory, etc., Buitenzorg

A significant event for Koningsberger Jr was his prominent involvement in the Third Congress of the International Sugar Cane Society, held in Surabaya in 1929. During this congress, he emphasised the importance of the free exchange of research results and publications, in particular to allay the concerns of administrators about potential advantages for competitors. The comparison with the VOC's ambivalent attitude to research is compelling. As the sugar industry felt the effects of the global economic crisis, budgetary constraints led to necessary cutbacks at the Research Station, which Koningsberger worked diligently to address. However, he also indicated that his own position was under review.

Ultimately, his future lay outside the East Indies. When his mentor Went retired in 1933, Koningsberger Jr was appointed professor of botany at Utrecht University as his successor in 1934. Interestingly, Koningsberger Jr was not the initial candidate for the position; Frits Warmolt Went, who had gained international recognition for his research, was initially chosen, but the decision was overturned by the Minister. It is plausible that informal influence from Koningsberger Sr may have played a role in this decision. Under Koningsberger Jr's leadership, Utrecht's 'tradition' of growth research continued.



Victor Jacob Koningsberger

Victor Jacob Koningsberger was the first Dutch academic to openly protest against the *berufsverbot* [occupational ban] imposed on several Jewish colleagues when, on 25 November 1940, he declared: 'My conscience compels me, with deep sorrow and disappointment, to commemorate the dismissal of several Dutch colleagues solely on the grounds of their descent and faith.' A day later, Professor Cleveringa of Leiden University echoed this protest. Koningsberger was subsequently arrested and detained as a hostage in Sint-Michielsgestel alongside other prominent Dutch figures. He was released in December 1943 and granted sick leave, and returned to his duties in June 1944.

Shortly after the war, Koningsberger received an invitation from BENISO, the Association of Owners of Dutch-Indian Sugar Companies, to make an orientation trip to the East Indies

to assess the situation of the sugar companies. Koningsberger followed developments there closely and was highly critical of the supposedly extremist nationalists, while pinning his hopes on the moderate forces. Disillusioned by the Linggadjati Agreement,<sup>52</sup> he joined the *Nationaal Comité Handhaving Rijkseenheid* [National Committee for Maintaining National Unity], an ultra-conservative political lobby group where he reunited with his Utrecht colleague from the Indology faculty, professor Gerretson.

Koningsberger was unable to return to Indonesia until early 1948. He was appointed president of the General Syndicate of Sugar Manufacturers in the Dutch East Indies and became a member of the executive committee of the Indische Ondernemersbond. He actively visited working factories and lobbied the political authorities to explore ways of reviving sugar production. However, he observed the rapidly changing political landscape and noted a shift in the business community's support for the young republic. As a result, BENISO: 'Association of Owners of Dutch-Indian Sugar Companies' became BEVISO: 'Association of Sugar Companies in Indonesia'.

Görts portrays Koningsberger as someone who, despite his affection for Indonesia, continued to view matters through 'colonial glasses' and was highly critical of Dutch government's policy towards Indonesia. In his final letter from Indonesia on 1 May 1950, Koningsberger wrote:

I persevered in what seemed like my Sisyphian task to maintain this country as a destination for our biologists, and intellectuals in general. After all, it was here that Dutch botany flourished; even Went owes much of his greatness to his time in the East Indies. Perhaps these efforts will bear fruit eventually, but it will require more dedication from our generation. Only time will tell whether reason will prevail over sentiment in due course.<sup>53</sup>

The commitment to 'the colonies' remained a constant theme for him. By 1910, the Colonial Institute had been established in Amsterdam, primarily funded by contributions from the business community. Its objective was to disseminate knowledge about the colonies within the Netherlands and to promote scientific research to boost trade in colonial products. In 1926, it was relocated to an impressive building on Mauritskade, which was inaugurated by Queen Wilhelmina in the presence of the then Minister of Colonies, Koningsberger Sr. In 1945, the institute's name was changed to the



*Indisch Instituut*, and in 1950, it was renamed the *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen* [Royal Tropical Institute] (KIT). This institution became a key player in the field of development cooperation, particularly in agriculture and tropical medicine. Koningsberger remained its president until 1965.

We can observe a certain continuity in the career of Koningsberger Jr, including his affinity for a clear political conservatism, his commitment to fundamental research in the colonies, his attachment to the East Indies, and his interest in the broader field of 'development'. He served as rector magnificus of Utrecht University from 1952 to 1953.

Another person who was closely connected to Went, both literally and figuratively, was his son, Frits Warmolt Went (1903-1990). Frits Warmolt studied in Utrecht and earned his doctorate under his father's supervision with a dissertation, *Wuchsstoff und Wachstum*, that was entirely in the Utrecht 'Went tradition'. Frits also travelled to the East Indies, where he worked as a phytopathologist at the Buitenzorg laboratory and the Kebun Raya Cibodas in West Java from 1928 to 1932. His career trajectory evidenced how research in the colony could enhance an international scientific career. In 1933, he went to California, where he pursued further research on plant hormones at CALTEC, the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. In 1958, Went Jr. was appointed as director of the Missouri Botanical Garden and became a professor of botany at Washington University in Saint Louis. He gained international recognition as an authority on plant growth, ending his distinguished international career as the director of the Desert Research Institute at the University of Nevada-Reno.

The link with the colonies was also passionately supported by August Adriaan Pulle, one of Went's students.<sup>54</sup> Born in 1878, Pulle began studying pharmacy in Utrecht in 1896. As part of his studies, he attended Went's lectures. He switched to botany and graduated in 1902.

In 1900 he became Went's assistant at the botanical laboratory in Utrecht. He actively participated in scientific expeditions to collect material. With Went's support, he was able to travel to Suriname in 1902-1903 to take part in the Saramacca expedition. During this trip, Pulle collected plants that formed the basis of his dissertation, *An enumeration of the vascular plants known from Suriname, together with their distribution and synonymy*, for which he was awarded a doctorate cum laude in 1906. In the same year he was appointed lecturer in plant systematics and pharmaceutical botany



A.A. Pulle (1878-1955),  
South New Guinea Expedition of 1912-1913

at Utrecht. His research focused on the further inventory and description of the plant world in Suriname and later in the East Indies.

In 1906, he spent several months in West Java, and in 1912-1913, he participated in the Third South New Guinea Expedition. He published an illustrated travelogue about this expedition in 1914 entitled *Naar het sneeuwgebergte van Nieuw-Guinea* [To the Snow Mountains of New Guinea]. He revisited Suriname in the summer of 1920. In 1914, Pulle was appointed professor of special botany (plant systematics) and the theory of plant distribution. Pulle increasingly specialised in the flora of Suriname. In 1932, the first volume of the English-language standard work *Flora of Suriname* was published. In addition to continuing legacy of Miquel's *Flora*, Pulle was instrumental in initiating a major Utrecht project, *The Flora of the Guianas*, which covered the geographical area of French Guiana, Suriname and British Guiana.

Another important contribution to the further development of the flora of Suriname was made by Pulle's student Joseph Lanjouw (1902-1984). Lanjouw studied biology in Utrecht from 1922 and received his doctorate under A.A. Pulle in 1931 with the thesis *The Euphorbiaceae of Surinam*. After his doctorate, he worked as a curator at the Botanical Museum and Herbarium. In 1948, he led the botanical part of the scientific expedition to Suriname. In the same year, he was appointed professor of special botany and the theory of plant distribution, succeeding Pulle.

In 1999, the three herbaria of Wageningen, Utrecht, and Leiden were merged into the National Herbarium Netherlands, and in 2008, the Utrecht department was closed due to budget cuts and a changing research profile of the biology faculty. The collection was transferred to Naturalis in Leiden. This marked the end of centuries-long history of Utrecht's (colonial) practice in the field of systematic botany.

### Johanna Westerdijk<sup>55</sup>

Westerdijk was born in Amsterdam on 4 January 1883. She studied at the University of Amsterdam under Hugo de Vries. After graduating, she received her doctorate in Zurich in 1906 for a dissertation on mosses. She became the director of the 'Willie Commelin Scholten Phytopathological Laboratory', initially located in Amsterdam and later – partly thanks to Went's efforts – in Baarn at the *Villa Java*. This *Villa Java* had been bequeathed to Utrecht University in 1920 by August Janssen, director of the *Indische Cultuurondernemingen*. The former employees of the Phytopathology Laboratory also referred to themselves as 'oud-Javanen' [former Javanese].

In 1913, Westerdijk embarked on a trip to the Dutch East Indies, made possible by a grant from the Buitenzorgfonds and a contribution from the Dutch East Indies government. This trip enabled her to collect a large collection of plant diseases affecting cultivated crops such as coffee, tea, quinine, cocoa, tobacco, sugar, rubber, rice, potatoes, and coconut in the East Indies, particularly Java. She travelled back to the Netherlands via Japan and America. Upon her return to the Netherlands, Westerdijk began her career at Utrecht University in 1917 as extraordinary professor of phytopathology, becoming the first woman to be appointed as professor.

Her appointment as extraordinary professor meant that she could not serve on the university's Senate. In 1930, she was appointed extraordinary professor at the municipal university of Amsterdam. One of her assistants in Utrecht was Hanneke Went, 'daughter of', who had obtained a PhD under her supervision.

### Biologists in South Africa

Biologists' interest in the Dutch East Indies also sparked interest in South Africa and its physical environment in the Netherlands. In 1938, the



Installation professor Johanna Westerdijk. Present a.o. Mr Baron A.F. van Lynden (President of the Board of the university) (4), prof. P. van Romburgh (2), prof. J. Westerdijk (5), prof. B.C. de Savornin Lohman (17), prof. J. de Louter (20), prof. F.A.F.C. Went (21), prof. H. Nierstrasz (24), prof. J.F. Niermeyer (25), prof. W. Caland (29), prof. Chr. Eijkman (34), prof. A.J. van den Broek (39), prof. A.A. Pulle (40)

Commission on South Africa of the Biological Council of the Netherlands, chaired by Groningen professor M.J. Sirks, who had received his doctorate under Went, conducted a study trip to South Africa from September to October. The committee documented its findings in the 'Report on Biology in the Union of South Africa' by the participants of the 'Ekskursie van Nederlandse Bioloë in Suid-Afrika' (September-October 1938). Professors V.J. Koningsberger and Johanna Westerdijk from Utrecht were appointed as members. Westerdijk supervised two PhD students from South Africa, Margaretha Mes and Susarah Truter. Mes eventually became a professor at the University of Pretoria. Susarah Truter received her PhD under Johanna Westerdijk in 1947 and later became a professor and head of the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. She also became one of the first women to serve as dean of an agricultural faculty.

Koningsberger reported on plant physiology and expressed concern about the blending of applied and purely scientific research. He emphasised the urgent need for at least one chair in South Africa to establish a solid scientific foundation for education.

Particularly noteworthy is the report by Groningen professor and committee chairman M.J. Sirks on the section regarding 'genetics'. He observed that South Africa presented a unique opportunity for physical anthropology:

...yet this very field [physical anthropology] is of predominant importance: the intermingling of whites and coloureds (Hottentots, Bushmen, Bantu people) has great scientific significance, and it is probably not possible to point to another country in the world where physical anthropology (the study of physical features, resistance to disease, etc.) provides such extensive and rich study material.<sup>56</sup>

According to Sirks, there was still much research to be done: 'every "native location" provides excellent material for this purpose, the occurrence of actual albino negroes in numerous places in the Union, the Buys tribe Louis Trichardt described, which I know from my own observation, and others'.

Westerdijk's report focused on the phytopathology section. She emphasised the significant lack of education in plant physiology and the fact that Margaretha Mes, a former PhD student, as the only plant physiologist had to work in challenging conditions. Westerdijk also addressed the gender bias in scientific research:

In this context, it is peculiar that some people take a principled stand against women's participation in scientific research. 'Women have no chance' is a common sentiment. This is particularly ironic given the significant contributions made by many women in South Africa under difficult circumstances.<sup>57</sup>

### Agrochemical research

In the tradition of G.J. Mulder, agrochemical research focused on various crops such as tea, coffee, quinine, tobacco, and rubber. Dr P. van Romburgh, a chemist educated in Leiden, began working at the agrochemical laboratory in Buitenzorg in 1890. He was the head of the third department of 's Lands Plantentuin in Buitenzorg, Java, overseeing the nursery and agrochemical laboratory. Van Romburgh conducted research on numerous natural products, investigating both their scientific properties and their potential agricultural and industrial applications.

His research included investigations into the quality of rubber and the production of indigo. In June 1902, Van Romburgh was appointed as professor of organic chemistry in Utrecht. Upon his return from the Dutch East Indies in 1903, he delivered his inaugural lecture on *The Significance of Scientific Research on Organic Natural Products* on 4 May of that year. By 1920, Van Romburgh observed that ‘the chemical industry [...] in our colonies was still in its infancy.’ Apart from the sugar factories, the quinine factory, and the petroleum industry, ‘one does not find much actual chemical industry in the Dutch East Indies’.

As previously noted, Van Romburgh, along with his colleagues Went Sr. and L.Ph. de Bussy, also contributed to publications that explored the intersection of pure scientific research and its practical applications in agriculture and industry, as evidenced in their contributions to the journal the *Indische Mercur*.

## Animal health

Many Utrecht graduates have worked in this vast field in the East Indies. Animal care, and therefore veterinary medicine, was closely linked to colonial enterprises. This included the welfare of animals used as pack animals in agriculture. Of course, it also concerned the animals used by the army, the KNIL, from 1830 onwards. Horse in particular played a key role in transporting soldiers and their equipment. As a result, a Military Veterinary Service was established in the East Indies.

Veterinary graduates were sent to the East Indies from the nineteenth century, albeit on a relatively modest scale. They were mainly trained in the Netherlands, first at the institution known as ‘s-Rijksveeartsenijschool (1821-1918), later as the Veeartsenijkundige Hoogeschool (1918-1925). From 1925, this institution became part of Utrecht University as the Faculty of Veterinary Science (1925-1956), which eventually became the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (1956-1971). Before 1925, the new Faculty of Veterinary Science had already established a tradition of close links with the East Indies.

As early as 1837, the first government veterinarian was appointed. Article 1 of the 1839 instruction for this veterinarian stated:

The government veterinarian is generally tasked with maintaining continuous vigilance over the health of horses, cattle, water buffaloes, and other valuable domesticated animals. In the event of

diseases, it is his responsibility to thoroughly investigate the causes to the best of his ability. Additionally, he is expected to devise all necessary measures he deems most effective to mitigate or prevent these diseases.<sup>58</sup>

The East Indies gradually became a destination for veterinary graduates from Utrecht. In the early nineteenth century, efforts were made to provide veterinary training of East Indian youths. A 'Veterinary School' was established in Surabaya, which included a clinic and a farriery, but it proved to be unsustainable. There were still relatively few veterinarians practicing in Java. However, when rinderpest broke out in Java in 1879, the need to reorganise the veterinary service to better manage animal diseases became apparent. As a result, the colonial government increased the number of veterinarians it employed. The growing demand for bacteriological and microscopic research in the control of livestock diseases became increasingly evident. Although a dedicated veterinary laboratory had not yet been established, possibly due to a lack of expertise among Utrecht-trained veterinarians in this field and their limited training in modern research methods, a laboratory for pathological-anatomical and bacteriological research existed in Weltevreden since 1888, known as the 'medicinal laboratory'. Research on animal diseases soon started at this facility. This research laboratory was eventually relocated to a Veterinary Laboratory in Buitenzorg, established by L. de Blicck.

In 1908, De Blicck founded the Veterinary Institute and Laboratory in Bogor, modelled on the Rijksveeartsenijschool. Once again, the emphasis was on training East Indian youths with the aim of producing 'well-educated indigenous experts'.<sup>59</sup> Dr Gerrit Krediet also worked at the institute alongside De Blicck. Both De Blicck and Krediet later returned to Utrecht and were appointed as professors there.

The first indigenous graduate of the Veterinary Institute was Dr J.A. Kaligis in 1910. Kaligis became the first indigenous veterinarian in Indonesia, marking the beginning of the veterinary profession in the country. In 1914, the name of the institute was changed to *Nederlandsch-Indische Veeartsenschool* (NIVS) with a four-year curriculum. In 1918 Kaligis continued his studies in Utrecht. He completed his dissertation with Prof L. de Blicck in 1922. Other veterinarians who studied in Utrecht between 1919 and 1924 were F.C. Waworoentoe, Raden Soeratmo, Mas Soetisno and Mas Soeparwi. The Utrecht veterinarians carried out



Group portrait of the professors of the Rijksveeartsenijschool in Utrecht (including L. de Blicck top row, fourth from the left, and G. Krediet, top row, on the right) from 1921



J.A. Kaligis



extensive research in the Dutch East Indies, laying the foundations for the study of tropical and protozoan diseases. This expertise secured Utrecht a significant reputation in Africa in the years that followed.<sup>60</sup>

An important aspect of tropical veterinary research is the link between the Netherlands, the Dutch East Indies and South Africa. The German scientist Otto Nieschulz was appointed governor at the Institute of Parasitic and Infectious Diseases in 1921. Between 1924 and 1928, Nieschulz worked as a parasitologist at the Veterinary Institute in Buitenzorg, where his research focused on the transmission of 'surra', a disease affecting horses, buffalo and cattle. In 1931 and 1933, he conducted research at the Veterinary Institute in Onderstepoort, South Africa, investigating the transmission of equine plague and bluetongue disease. In 1936, Nieschulz was appointed as professor by Adolf Hitler himself. In 1942, the faculty was forced by the German occupation forces to appoint Nieschulz as a special professor of tropical veterinary entomology and protozoology. He was dishonourably dismissed on 5 May 1945 as a Nazi sympathiser.

In 1931, P.J.J. Fourie, deputy director of the Veterinary Institute at Onderstepoort, received his doctorate in veterinary science in Utrecht with a dissertation entitled *The haematology and pathology of haemonchosis in sheep*. Fourie was already a professor at Onderstepoort, which prompted the rector magnificus to announce that the senate would depart from its usual practice and pronounce its verdict immediately. His Utrecht supervisor, Professor Schornagel, recalled that Fourie was the first 'foreigner' to receive a doctorate in veterinary science from Utrecht. The rector magnificus remarked:

It is remarkable how cultural collaboration extends across distant corners of the Dutch community around the world and the keen interest with which the deliberate pursuit of complete autonomy, albeit within a broader group of nations, among our kin in South Africa is observed here at home.

In response to the report from Mr. P.J. Idenburg, secretary of the Board of Governors of the University of Leiden, who had investigated possibilities for academic exchange in South Africa, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine expressed its eagerness in 1938 to host South African veterinarians for training in Utrecht. The faculty also expressed a keen interest in facilitating Dutch veterinarians' visits to Onderstepoort 'to enhance their understanding, especially regarding parasitic and infectious diseases in

South Africa. The faculty believes that an exchange programme involving South African and Dutch veterinarians, who would temporarily serve as assistants in Utrecht and Onderstepoort respectively, would greatly benefit disease control efforts in the colonies'.<sup>61</sup> This initiative drew Utrecht's relationship with South Africa into the broader context of the colonial empire.

In his report on the 1937-1938 academic year, the rector magnificus of Utrecht University, Professor J. Boeke, expressed his delight that the Dutch government had allocated funds to the university to enable three South African students to study in Utrecht for a year as paid assistants. Boeke also noted 'A fourth assistant position, crucially needed at the university, particularly in the veterinary faculty, is still awaiting government appointment. These assistant positions will yield a fruitful cooperation with our compatriots in South Africa, which is mutually highly desired and valued'.

In 1936, the university commemorated its 300th anniversary, using the occasion to emphasise Utrecht's special connections with South Africa. The pinnacle of the festivities took place during the week of 22-25 June. Among the foreign official representatives listed was 'Prof J.W. Pont, University of Stellenbosch'. The Utrecht professor Pont had been invited by the rector of Stellenbosch University to represent the institution officially. During this celebratory event, an honorary doctorate was conferred upon Arnold Theiler, a Swiss national and the pioneer of veterinary medicine in South Africa, who served as the first dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Onderstepoort, part of the University of Pretoria. Professor J. Roos, chairman of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, delivered the concise formula *Arnoldum Theiler, Pretorianum, insignem exploratorem animalium morborum e parasitis et bacillis in Africa Meridionali nascentium, tam in pago Onderstepoort quam in urbe Pretoria novi laboratorii conditorem* [Arnold Theiler, a distinguished explorer of animal diseases and parasites, as well as bacteria originating in Southern Africa, both in the Onderstepoort district and in the city of Pretoria, founder of a new laboratory]. In response, Theiler replied in Afrikaans on behalf of those receiving honorary doctorates in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

The research conducted by the Utrecht Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the realm of parasitic and infectious diseases, internal medicine, and disorders in the mineral metabolism of large domesticated animals has

left a significant impact across all continents, particularly in Africa. [...] In closing, allow me a personal reflection: as a representative of the veterinary medicine community in South Africa, I wish to express my gratitude to your faculty for the invaluable support extended to us young Afrikaners in the past. Many of us have journeyed to Utrecht to enrich our knowledge and explore novel research methodologies, and I earnestly hope that this collaboration will persist in the future, to the benefit of South Africa and its people.<sup>62</sup>

Remarkably, in 1948, South Africa once again found itself on the agenda of the Utrecht Senate. That year, the university again bestowed honorary doctorates upon South African scientists. One such recipient was veterinarian P.J. du Toit, who had succeeded Arnold Theiler as dean of the veterinary faculty at the University of Pretoria in Onderstepoort. The laudatio delivered by the honorary supervisor, Professor L. de Blicck, extensively highlighted Du Toit's scientific accomplishments.<sup>63</sup> De Blicck also acknowledged Du Toit's contributions to 'our Overseas Territories'. Here, De Blicck referenced the support he himself had received from Du Toit in his early years in the East Indies in studying protozoal diseases. De Blicck also noted Du Toit's assistance after World War II to the veterinary science centre in Buitenzorg in Java, which had been neglected and partly destroyed during the war, by providing anthrax vaccine. De Blicck concluded: 'All this clearly demonstrates the significant impact of your work in South Africa on veterinary science worldwide, particularly for that part of our empire situated in the tropical zone'. Notably, De Blicck made no mention of the challenging process of decolonisation that led to the dissolution of 'our empire'. In his acceptance speech, Du Toit recalled the 'blood kinship', the 'language kinship', and the 'bond of friendship' between the Netherlands and South Africa.

The discipline of veterinary medicine stands out as a significant component of a 'Via Sacra' linking the Netherlands with South Africa and the East Indies colony. Utrecht University played a pivotal role in tropical veterinary medicine, particularly in the post-World War II era. We will observe that veterinary medicine continued to play a crucial role in Utrecht University's engagement with Indonesia and South(ern) Africa during the later phase of university development cooperation in the 1970s and 1980s.

## Human health

### *Medicine and tropical hygiene*<sup>64</sup>

Human health in the colonies was closely linked to both military-political and economic circumstances. Health was a primary concern for the colonial rulers and their families, as well as for the indigenous population, particularly those employed in production on plantations.

Godfried Wilhelm Schilling, born in 1733/34 in Wijk bij Duurstede, travelled to Suriname as a surgeon. Upon his return to the Netherlands, he received his doctorate from Utrecht University with a dissertation on leprosy *Dissertatio medica inauguralis De Lepra*. This dissertation was published in Dutch in 1771 under the title *Verhandeling over de Melaatsheid* [Treatise on Leprosy], indicating the significance of the subject matter. Schilling suggested that contagious leprosy was introduced to Suriname by enslaved Africans. Physical contact could transmit the disease to slaveholders, particularly if they succumbed to their desires ('Neque omittenda est Venus' [We should not ignore Venus (lust)]) and engaged in sexual relations with enslaved women due to a scarcity of European women ('Europæaum Fæminarum penuria'). As Kals similarly criticised the 'fornication' of plantation owners during this period, leprosy was perceived as a threat to the survival of the plantation economy based on slavery, leading to the segregation and isolation of lepers.<sup>65</sup> Schilling also frequently cited verses from the Old Testament portraying lepers as 'unclean', further stigmatising enslaved Africans. After completing his dissertation in Utrecht, Schilling returned to Suriname, where he gained a reputation as a physician and served as president of the 'Collegium Medicum', a medical supervision body in Suriname.

During the VOC period, *chirurgijnen* [surgeons] sailed from the Netherlands on VOC ships to serve in the colony, looking after the health of VOC officials and their families. In times of illness, the indigenous population in the East Indies sought assistance from indigenous healers known as *doekoen*. The *doekoen* practiced a blend of magic, through rituals, and empiricism, including the administration of medicinal herbs.

Surgeons did not typically possess an academic education. This began to change in the nineteenth century as more emphasis was placed in the Netherlands on training physicians, including those destined for colonial service. In 1822, for example, the 'Kweekschool voor militaire

geneeskundigen' [Training School for Military Medical Personnel] was established in Utrecht. This institution was affiliated with the 'Rijkshospitaal', where wounded soldiers were treated, and had ties to medical training at the university. F.C. Donders was among the educators at the Kweekschool. Alongside G.J. Mulder, he engaged in research activities. Mulder's efforts facilitated Donders' affiliation with the university, initially as an extraordinary professor. Donders increasingly focused on ophthalmology and physiology. He advocated the further integration of the Kweekschool into the university to enhance its academic standing. Although the Kweekschool relocated to Amsterdam in the mid-1960s and ceased to exist as an independent institute, Donders emphasised the importance of academic training for doctors, with a strong emphasis on modern research. The colonial context played a significant role in this regard. Colonial medicine was primarily aimed at safeguarding the health of colonial officials, Dutch entrepreneurs, and their families. However, growing attention was also paid to the health of the indigenous population, partly due to their contributions to colonial production, initially under the yoke of the cultivation system and later for private enterprises. Furthermore, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, advances in natural sciences and chemistry increasingly furthered the study of diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and malaria.

Efforts were already made early on to train promising young individuals from the indigenous population as physicians. One such attempt was the establishment of a 'Dokter-Djawa' school in 1851 which could be likened, using a term from our own jargon of the 1970s, to a 'barefoot doctor's school'.

In 1899, this training was modernised with the establishment of the *School Tot Opleiding Van Inlandsche Artsen* (STOVIA) [School for the Training of Indigenous Doctors]. This development facilitated the integration of Western medical insights into the education of indigenous physicians in the East Indies. In the 'honorary doctorates' chapter, we will explore how Utrecht University honoured several individuals who played outstanding roles in the education of indigenous people. The culmination of this process was the establishment of a medical college in the early twentieth century. Christiaan Eijkman, from Utrecht, served as the director of STOVIA from 1888 to 1896 and authored textbooks on physiology and chemistry as part of the curriculum. It was during Eijkman's tenure that attention turned to the study of beriberi (polyneuritis), a disease that



Entrance marked Dokter-Djawa School of the School for Training of Indigenous Doctors (STOVIA) on Hospitaalweg in Batavia

afflicted many in the indigenous population of the East Indies. The urgency for the colonial authorities to deal with this disease increased significantly when many soldiers died from it during the Aceh War (1873-1914).

Christiaan Eijkman followed medical training at the Military Medical School, affiliated with the Athenaeum Illustre in Amsterdam. He earned a doctorate in medicine cum laude in 1883. That same year, he embarked on a journey to the Dutch East Indies as a military doctor, accompanied by his wife. However, in 1885, he returned to the Netherlands on sick leave after contracting malaria. Despite his illness, he continued his research in bacteriology, collaborating with Robert Koch in Berlin.

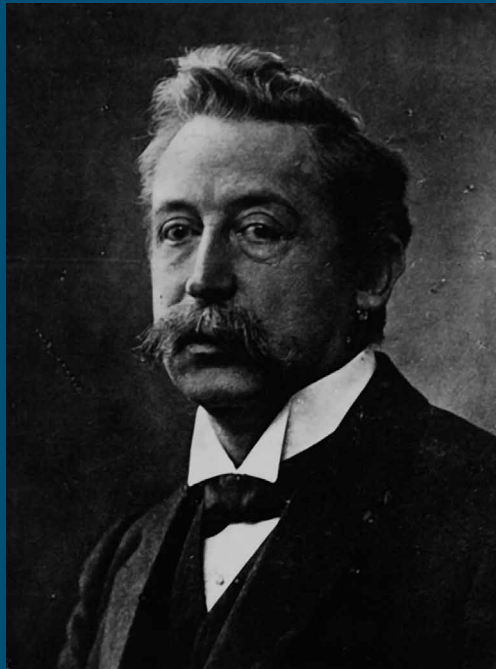
In October 1886, a government mission was sent to investigate the nature and cause of beriberi. The mission comprised pathologist C.A. Pekelharing, a professor in Utrecht, and neurologist C. Winkler, a reader in Utrecht.

It was thought to be a bacterial infection with neurological symptoms. On their way to the East Indies, they had visited their colleague Koch in Berlin. There they met Eijkman. Eventually, Eijkman was included in the

mission. Pekelharing and Winkler returned to the Netherlands in 1887, firmly convinced that beriberi was an infectious disease. As a result, they advocated disinfection, but also recommended further laboratory research. To facilitate this, a medical laboratory was set up at the military hospital in Weltevreden. In 1888, Eijkman was appointed director of the newly established laboratory at Weltevreden Military Hospital. He also took on the role of director of STOVIA.

In 1893, he founded the *Tijdschrift voor inlandsche geneeskunde* [Journal of Indigenous Medicine]. Eijkman was now able to continue his studies of beriberi and other infectious diseases in the laboratory. He initiated a study with chickens and observed that chickens fed unpeeled or 'passar' rice showed fewer symptoms of beriberi. This observation shifted the focus to diet in relation to infection. Could it be that the shell contained a substance that inhibited the bacteria in the rice? Eijkman moved from considering infection as the cause to exploring an intoxication model. Of course, this research was carried out exclusively in a laboratory with animals. Eijkman was assisted by Adolphe G. Vorderman, Inspector of the Civil Medical Board. Vorderman's research in prisons led him to conclude that prisoners who consumed passer rice were less likely to develop beriberi. He published his findings in the report *Research into the relationship between the nature of rice-based nutrition in Prisons in Java and Madura and the Occurrence of Beri-Beri among the Internees*. Meanwhile, Eijkman returned to the Netherlands in 1898, where he was appointed professor of health science, medical police, and judicial medicine at Utrecht. His inaugural lecture was 'Over gezondheid en ziekte in heete gewesten' [On health and disease in hot regions]. Research at the East Indies laboratory continued under the guidance of his collaborator Gerrit Grijns. Grijns explored the presence of an unidentified substance in the pericarp. In addition to infection and intoxication, he proposed a third model, that of deficiency. According to this theory, beriberi was the result of a deficiency in a vital substance, a 'partial hunger'. Grijns struggled to convince his mentor until researchers Barend C.P. Jansen and Willem F. Donath demonstrated the existence of an anti-beriberi vitamin at the Central Laboratory of the Public Health Service. This discovery finally convinced Eijkman.<sup>66</sup>

The research on beriberi illustrates the evolution of colonial medicine into tropical medicine, where modern insights from laboratory research became increasingly significant. Utrecht researchers played a crucial role



Christiaan Eijkman (1858-1930) (around 1900 in the East Indies)



C.A. Pekelharing (1848-1922)



C. Winkler (1855-1941) in his laboratory





Students of STOVIA

in this development, providing impetus for tropical research within the university itself.

We conclude this section with two individuals who were involved in both modern laboratory research and the medical training of indigenous students: Cornelis Douwe de Langen and Bernardus Jan van der Plaats.

De Langen joined the laboratory where Eijkman had worked in 1914. Like Eijkman, he took responsibility for STOVIA's training programme. In the 1920s, De Langen carried out a comprehensive historical study of beriberi research. Although he intended to present this study as his dissertation, he was somewhat overtaken by the developments described above. As a result, the University of Utrecht awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1927. In the same year, De Langen accepted a professorship at the Medical College in Batavia, which was founded on 17 August 1927.

At the end of 1927, De Langen approached B.J. van der Plaats and offered him a position as a radiologist. Van der Plaats, a protégé of W.H. Julius, had also received his doctorate under him in Utrecht in 1917. After finishing his dissertation he specialised in radiology. Van der Plaats and his wife, Agathe van der Plaats-Keyzer, also a qualified radiologist, accepted the offer and moved to Batavia. De Langen returned to the Netherlands in 1938 after being appointed professor of internal medicine in Utrecht. The Van der Plaats-Keyzers, however, remained in Batavia and continued their work there.

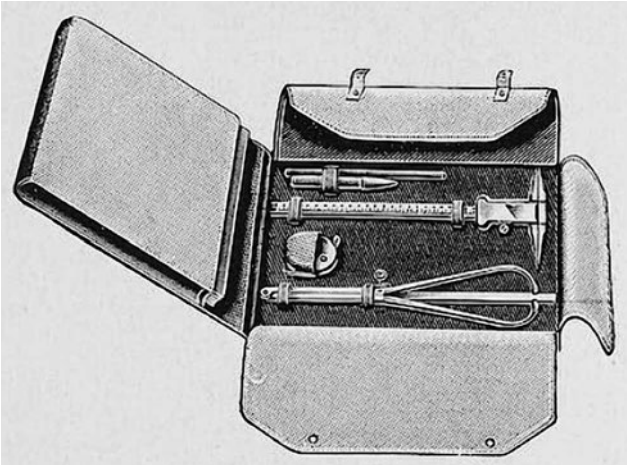
## The human species measured

### *Development of physical anthropology*

Differences in physical characteristics within the human species have long attracted the attention of researchers. During the voyages of discovery, Westerners encountered people with different physical characteristics, and this created a need for classification. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, systematic, empirical research in this field flourished. Following biological, geological, and geographical inventories and explorations, the human species in its natural habitat became subject to measurement. This research primarily originated among medically trained scientists and initially combined physical anthropology with anatomy. Their focus was on mapping physical differences between human groups and understanding the actual physical development of human races. They operated under the premise of the existence of a proto-human. This research encompassed various measurements of bodies, skeletons, skulls, as well as analyses of blood, skin colour, and hair. Swiss physician- and anthropologist Rudolf Martin (1864-1925) served as an inspiration, and many researchers followed his standardisations and instructions outlined in his comprehensive work, *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie in systematischer Darstellung: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der anthropologischen Methoden; für Studierende, Ärzte und Forschungsreisende* [Textbook of Anthropology in Systematic Presentation: with Special Consideration of Anthropological Methods; for Students, Physicians, and Explorers] (1914).

The notion of racially determinable differences between people teetered on the edge of racist ideology, and occasionally went over. At its core was a universal classification of human groups as distinct biological entities. Associated with this was a belief that external physical characteristics of human populations could be linked to behavioural, intellectual, moral and other qualities. The ranking of these groups in relation to each other was an integral part of the classification process. Differences were used to delineate stages of development, with Europeans clearly positioned at the top of the hierarchy. In this way, the imperial and colonial dimensions of such research were strongly emphasised.

During this period, the term 'anthropology' covered the intersection of medicine and physical anthropology. In 1898, the *Nederlandsche Anthropologische Vereeniging* [Dutch Anthropological Society] was founded, consisting mainly of people from the medical field, supplemented



Instrument satchel from  
Rudolf Martin, *Lehrbuch  
der Anthropologie in  
systematischer Darstellung*,  
1914

by ethnologists, archaeologists and linguists. Its first president was C. Winkler, professor of psychiatry and neurology at Utrecht and a student of F.C. Donders. Initially, he had great admiration for the biological determinism of the criminologist Lombroso, and in 1896 he conducted research in a Leeuwarden prison on the correlation between skull shape and criminality. However, he later distanced himself from Lombroso's ideas.

An integral part of this physical anthropological research was the collection of physical specimens from humans, including skulls, bones and various measurements. Physical anthropologists were often found on expeditions to the East Indies, especially into the interior regions, which were believed to be inhabited by populations living in isolation and thus closer to the 'proto-human'. These data and physical human components were then transported to the Netherlands for further study. Of course, this kind of research required direct interaction with indigenous communities.

What was the role of Utrecht scientists in this? Several of them were medically trained under the Amsterdam professor of anatomy, Lodewijk Bolk. Three of his students – Willem Mijsberg, Arnold van den Broek and Jo Kleiweg de Zwaan – were specifically involved in colonial physical anthropology. Kleiweg de Zwaan began working at the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam in 1915 and became a professor at the University of Amsterdam in 1919. Mijsberg and Van den Broek became professors in Utrecht.

After completing his studies at the University of Amsterdam under Bolk, Van den Broek passed his medical exams in 1902. He showed a keen

interest in anatomy and soon became a prosector (dissector). By 1905, he was appointed as an unsalaried lecturer in anatomy under Bolk. In 1909, Van den Broek became a professor in Utrecht. He was fascinated by physical anthropology and the palaeontology of man. For Van den Broek, the study of palaeontology focused on several correlations, including the relationship between 'fossil man' and modern man, their interrelationships and questions about their origins. He believed that skeletons, or parts of skeletons, provided insights into the actual ancestors of modern humans, and therefore they were of paramount importance to him.

Although he never travelled to the Dutch East Indies himself, Van den Broek received significant material through his contacts, especially from New Guinea, where numerous expeditions were conducted in the early twentieth century. In 1911, he wrote a short article in the 'Journal of the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society' discussing 'dwarf tribes' in southern New Guinea. Van den Broek acknowledged receiving ample anthropometric data from his former fellow student, M.A. de Kock. De Kock reported:

Like the people downstream, they are not headhunters, so it was not possible to obtain a skull. I had to content myself with measuring twelve men using Martin's anthropometer. I followed Bolk's instructions in 'The Pioneer'. It takes a lot of patience and persuasion, and above all, many items for exchange, to persuade these people to allow themselves to be measured. They believe they will be enchanted and fear the worst from those unfamiliar manipulations.<sup>67</sup>

Not long after, those skulls and skeletal materials arrived at Van den Broek's Anatomical Institute on Janskerkhof in Utrecht, where his predecessor Hubrecht also had an office. The physical characteristics of the 'dwarf races' of New Guinea were of great interest at the time. Were they perhaps among the oldest humans? Dirk Vlasblom referred to a 'pygmy fever'.<sup>68</sup> In his introduction to 'Untersuchungen an Schädeln aus Niederländisch-Süd-West-Neu-Guinea' [Investigations on Skulls from Dutch South-West New Guinea], Van den Broek explains how he acquired his material:

Among the rich treasure of objects brought home by the expedition under the leadership of Doctor of Law H. A. Lorentz in Dutch South-west New Guinea in the years 1909-1910, there is a considerable number of skulls and skull fragments. Through the kind

cooperation of the Society for the Advancement of the Natural Sciences Research in the Dutch Colonies as well as Dr Lorentz, these skulls were entrusted to me for scientific study. I extend my sincere gratitude to the aforementioned society and the naturalist and collector for this opportunity.

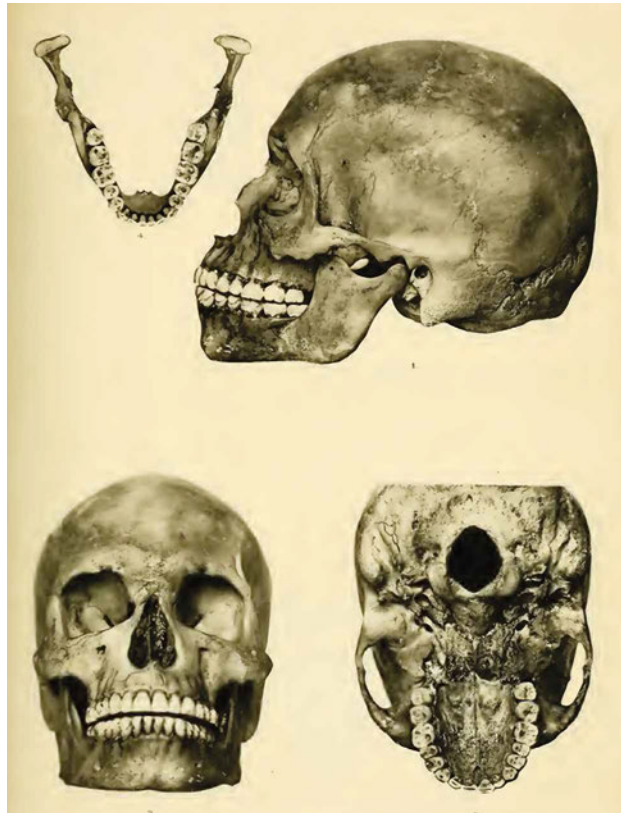
While I was occupied with the examination of the aforementioned skulls, I received a second series of skulls sent to me by Medical Officer A. L. De Kock. As these skulls originate from an area adjacent to Lorentz's collection site, I deemed it appropriate to include these skulls in my considerations as well, since increasing the number of skulls could only enhance the reliability of the results based on their examination. Finally, Professor Wichmann recently forwarded to me three skulls, originating from a hut near the Le Cocq d'Armandville river, collected by Lieutenant W.K.H. Feuilletau de Bruyn. I have also utilised some of these in my study.

Van den Broek published an article 'Das Skelett eines Peseghem. Ein Beitrag Zur Anthropologie Der Papuanen Von Niederlandisch Sudwest-Neu-Guinea', which was included in *Nova Guinea* 7, 1915. Van den Broek had received a skeleton of the Pesechem man in Utrecht.

The skeleton originates from a Papuan who fell during the raid on the 'Alkmaar' bivouac, at the Noord (now Lorentz) River at the foot of the mountains.

During the 1907 expedition, which included H.A. Lorentz, there was a skirmish with some Pesechem Papuan men which resulted in one death. Initially buried, the corpse was later exhumed, cleaned and sent to Van den Broek on the expedition's return. The Pesechem were 'mountain Papuans' who lived on the southern slopes of the Central Highlands.

The above quotes are intended to illustrate the gradual development of a network of scientists and 'amateurs' who amassed material, including human specimens, which subsequently became the subject of research and publication in universities across Europe, Utrecht among them. In one of Van den Broek's major articles, 'Zur Anthropologie Des Bergstammes Pësëchëm Im Innern Von Niederlandisch-Neu-Guinea', his Utrecht colleague A.A. Pulle is credited with providing the photographs and helping to process the material. It is worth noting that Van den Broek was cautious about drawing too far-reaching conclusions from the available material.



‘Das Skelett stammt von einem Papuanen, der bei dem Überfall des Biwaks ‘Alkmaar’, am Noord- (jetzt Lorentz-) Fluss am Fusse des Gebirges gefallen ist’

He also emphasised the importance of including ethnographic data in analyses. Van den Broek wrote several popular books on the development of early human history. He felt further research was needed, and that materials from the ‘East’ were indispensable for making progress in the academic field.

Through Van den Broek’s connections with his colleague Jo Kleiweg de Zwaan, Utrecht also gained access to plaster masks created by Kleiweg de Zwaan on the island of Nias. Plaster masks proved to be intriguing analytical tools as they offered a three-dimensional representation of the individuals from whom the masks were cast.<sup>69</sup> These masks are still housed in the University Museum, and they are the subject of ongoing contacts with a museum on Nias.<sup>70</sup>



A.J.P. van den Broek (1877-1961) at the Anatomical Institute

Van den Broek served on the board of the Netherlands National Bureau of Anthropology and was a member of the Utrecht Provincial Society of Arts and Sciences. He held the position of rector magnificus at Utrecht University from 1923 to 1924. In 1924, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Amsterdam, his alma mater.

Van den Broek was succeeded in Utrecht in 1948 by Mijsberg, who, after an academic career in the Dutch East Indies – where he served as a professor at the Medical College in Batavia from 1929 – worked as a professor of anatomy and embryology in Utrecht until 1958.

The tradition of physical anthropology and anatomy continued in Utrecht under the leadership of Professor G.H.R. Königswald (1902-1982), who worked as a palaeontologist in the Department of Geology. He held positions as both extraordinary and full professor of stratigraphy and palaeontology from 1948 to 1968. In 1967, Indonesian scientist Teuku Jacob earned his doctorate from Utrecht University under Königswald for his dissertation *Some Problems Pertaining to the Racial History of the Indonesian Region: A Study of Human Skeletal and Dental Remains from Several Prehistoric Sites in Indonesia and Malaysia*. This thesis was based on human remains stored in Utrecht. In 1976, Königswald was awarded an honorary doctorate from Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, where Teuku Jacob was now employed.

In addition to Königswald, it is important to mention Prof J. Huizinga, who served as professor of physical anthropology from 1972 to 1985 at the Faculty of Medicine. Huizinga established the Institute of Anthropobiology within the Faculty of Medicine. He continued the tradition through expeditions to Africa, focusing particularly on measurements and blood analyses. However, the Institute of Anthropobiology became increasingly controversial and was eventually closed.

### **J.H.F. Kohlbrugge**

*Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan*

[Glimpses into the Javanese man's inner life]

To conclude the section exploring the colony's influence on scientific work in Utrecht across biology, the broad spectrum of geographical sciences, and health sciences, I turn to an individual who embodies elements of these disciplines and also constitutes a link with the Indological Faculty, the phase of Utrecht's new training of students for civil service in the Dutch East Indies. J.H.F. (Jacob) Kohlbrugge was a physician, anatomist, physical anthropologist, and the first professor of ethnology in Utrecht, thereby laying the foundation for the development of anthropology in the context of colonial setting. Kohlbrugge wrote extensively on interpreting differences between the West and the East, both psychologically and culturally, and the implications of these differences for education.

Kohlbrugge came from a medical background and was a scientist engaged in multiple disciplines. Born in Wertherbruch, Germany, in 1865, he was raised by his mother as his father, who suffered from schizophrenia, was hospitalised. Kohlbrugge was the grandson of the renowned orthodox theologian H.F. Kohlbrugge, and throughout his life he followed in his grandfather's theological footsteps. After an unsuccessful attempt at military training in Germany, Kohlbrugge moved to the Netherlands and enrolled in medical studies at Utrecht University in 1884.

During his studies, he worked briefly with Max Weber in Amsterdam, in order to acquire knowledge in anatomy. Motivated by his orthodox Christian beliefs and opposition to Darwinism, Kohlbrugge sought to equip himself against Darwinian perspectives by studying anatomy. He once remarked: 'None of my teachers understood that I was actually a cuckoo's egg, that I was only studying and doing research in order to break down the way of thinking that all my teachers advocated.'<sup>71</sup> Following



Weber's advice, he pursued a PhD in Germany, focusing on a dissertation *Muskeln und periphere Nerven des Genus Hylobates* [Gibbons]. After obtaining his doctorate, he did further zoological research at the Stazione Zoologica in Naples and additional medical studies in Paris and Vienna.

In 1892, he left for the East Indies, settling as a doctor in Tosari, in the Tengger Mountains of East Java. There he treated Europeans recuperating from illness, as well as providing free medical care to the local population. His practice left him plenty of time for research. As well as studying tropical diseases, Kohlbrugge conducted meteorological, climatological and geographical studies to determine the effects of the mountain climate on health. He also focused his attention on the Tengger people, the only surviving representatives of the ancient Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit culture, that had been extensively documented in the literature. Kohlbrugge's research findings were written up in various publications, including a comprehensive ethnological study *Die Tënggëresen. Ein Alter Javanischer Volksstam*.<sup>72</sup> Kohlbrugge wrote:

As Indonesians they belong, in anthropological terms, to the older, i.e., purer tribes [...] It is assumed that the more long-headed Indonesians once inhabited the Malay Archipelago and only later intermixed closely with a broad-headed race of 'Malays'.

The esteemed scholar G.P. Rouffaer had hoped for a comprehensive study on the Tengger people, but in 1921, he commented that Kohlbrugge's 'very poorly done essay could by no means pass for one'.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Kohlbrugge continued his work in comparative anatomy.

In 1899, Kohlbrugge returned to the Netherlands with his wife, a planter's daughter, and their two daughters. They settled in Utrecht. Kohlbrugge continued further studies in embryology and bacteriology. During this period, he also conducted physical anthropological research among a Dutch population group, the fishermen of Marken. Although he was admitted to the university as an unsalaried lecturer in climatology and tropical medicine, a professorship eluded him. Kohlbrugge believed that opposition within the medical field came from professors who felt that tropical medicine should only be taught in tropical regions.

Despite the lack of a professorship, this period in the Netherlands proved academically fruitful for Kohlbrugge. However, he took the opportunity to return to the East Indies in 1901, serving as a government doctor in the Sidoardjo province of the Surabaya Residency. He was put in charge

of a vaccination programme and provided medical care in prisons. He also ran a private clinic, which also provided care to the employees of various sugar companies. It was during this time that he became acutely aware of social injustice. Kohlbrugge campaigned for an equitable distribution of profits from sugar cultivation to benefit indigenous workers. He found support from some businessmen to establish and fund a hospital with infirmary and staff. Having witnessed abuses within the sugar industry, and believing that colonial justice and education policies were at odds with the indigenous way of thinking, Kohlbrugge's focus shifted to understanding the psychology of indigenous peoples. This became a central theme in his thinking.

In 1906, Kohlbrugge returned to the Netherlands permanently. He published his brain-anatomical study *Die Gehirnfurchen der Javanen. Eine vergleichend-anatomische Studie* [The Brain Sulci of Javanese: A Comparative Anatomical Study] (1906) and followed up with *Die Gehirnfurchen Malayischen Völker verglichen mit denen der Australier und Europäer. Ein Beitrag zur Evolutionslehre* [The Brain Sulci of Malay Peoples Compared with Those of Australians and Europeans: A Contribution to the Theory of Evolution] in 1909. Additionally, he continued to develop his theories on the psychology of indigenous identity, which contradicted prevailing ethical policies in the Netherlands. Publications such as *Psychologische koloniale politiek* [Psychological Colonial Politics] and *Zielkunde als grondslag van koloniaal beleid* [Psychology as the Basis of Colonial Policy] appeared during this period. In 1907, he published *Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan en zijner overheerschers* [Glimpses into the Inner Life of the Javanese and his Masters].

The enigmatic image on the front cover of the book is an 1896 artwork by Russian artist Sascha Schneider (1870-1927), entitled *Das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit* [The Sense of Dependence]. Kohlbrugge wanted the image to emphasise the Javanese people's dependence on the magical world around them:

Or I think of Sascha Schneider's drawing 'Das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit'. For this is one of the most prominent features of the Javanese character, its sense of being dependent and the resulting lack of individuality.

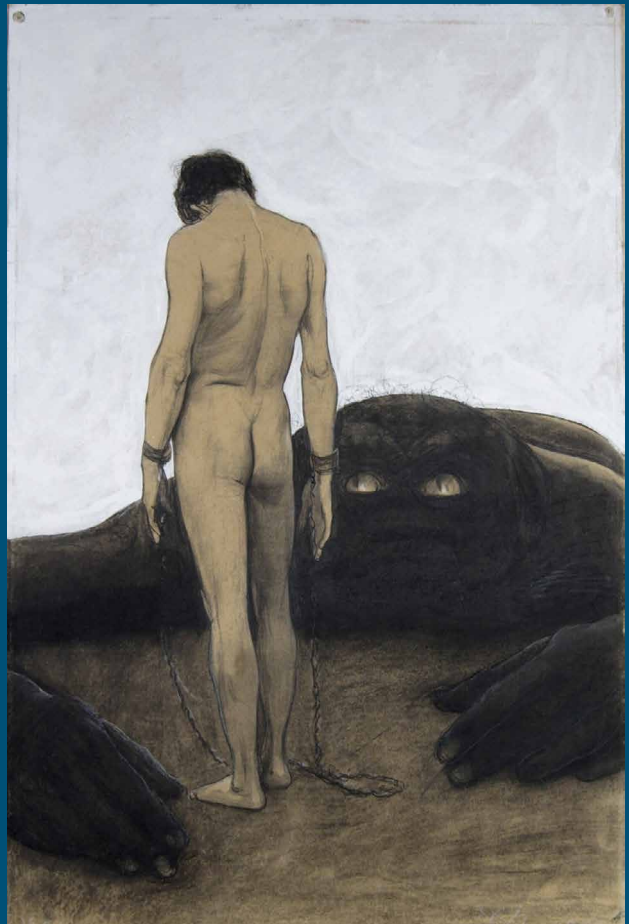
The booklet presents a mixture of everyday observations and pseudo-scientific psychological reflections typical of the turn of the century.

Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan en  
zijner overheerschers, door J. H. F. KOHLBRUGGE.



BOEKHANDEL EN DRUKKERIJ, VOORHEEN E. J. BRILL,  
LEIDEN 1907.

Title page *Blikken in het zieleleven van  
den Javaan en zijner overheerschers* by  
J.H.F. Kohlbrugge



Sascha Schneider (1870 – 1927),  
entitled *Das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit*

Kohlbrugge posits various contrasts between the West and the East: movement and the pursuit of progress versus tranquillity and lethargy; piety and reverence for the old versus freedom, independence and individualism; collectivism, despotism, fear and indifference versus freedom of thought, intellect and reason.

Kohlbrugge's cultural relativism is reflected in his insistence that colonial policy should take greater account of the living conditions and experiences of indigenous peoples. He accuses advocates of ethical politics of promoting the 'Europeanisation' of the Javanese elite, which he believes will only lead to deep frustration. The Leiden Arabist Snouck Hurgronje, in particular, sharply disagreed with Kohlbrugge's views. In the 1908 *De Gids* yearbook, Snouck Hurgronje published a scathing critique of Kohlbrugge's *Blikken in het zieleleven*.

In a letter dated 9 May 1907, Kohlbrugge had written to Snouck, expressing their mutual agreement on the need to promote the independence of the colonies. However, Kohlbrugge acknowledged that their paths diverge on how to achieve this goal. Kohlbrugge requested Snouck to withhold judgment on his treatises until he had fully developed his ideas, mentioning an upcoming lecture in Amsterdam. Kohlbrugge indeed gave a lecture *Een en ander over de psychologie van den Javaan* [Some Aspects of the Psychology of the Javanese] on 14 May, as part of the 'Seventeenth mixed general meeting of the society for the promotion of physical research in the Dutch colonies'.

On 6 November 1908, Kohlbrugge gave a lecture to the Motherland and Colonies Association 'Which path should we follow to develop the Javanese?' In this lecture, he vigorously addressed the contributions of Mr. C. Th. Van Deventer and Snouck Hurgronje in *De Gids* in July and August 1908, respectively. Kohlbrugge concluded his lecture by challenging Snouck Hurgronje's assertion that the training of leaders should be the primary focus of governmental concern, emphasising instead the importance of educating the peasant class.<sup>74</sup>

Kohlbrugge also announced his decision not to respond to Snouck's criticism of his work *Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan en zijner overheerschers* [Glimpses into the Inner Life of the Javanese]. He did mention, however, that Snouck's criticism had resulted in him being excluded from future events of the Indische Genootschap [East Indies Society]. Kohlbrugge was informed that, regardless of the validity of Snouck's criticism, his reputation had been tarnished to such an extent

that it was considered undesirable for him to speak at their events for the next twelve months.<sup>75</sup> Following this ban, the debate between Kohlbrugge and proponents of ethical politics temporarily subsided.

Despite these challenges, Kohlbrugge published another booklet *Is land lease to sugar factories a blessing or a curse for the Javanese?* in 1909. In this publication, he passionately condemned the exploitation of the indigenous population by the sugar industry, provoking criticism from its leaders.

Meanwhile, in Utrecht, Kohlbrugge took up the post of professor of ethnology at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy in 1913. The first few years of his professorship were devoted to familiarising himself with the subject. In a sense, ethnology was another academic pursuit for Kohlbrugge, and he wanted to prepare himself thoroughly by immersing himself in the literature and documentation of the discipline. He enlisted the help of a private assistant, Hermina Grolman, who would later publish works on folk customs in the Netherlands. Together they compiled a 'Centrale Volkenkundige Catalogus' [Central Ethnographic Catalogue].

In 1930 Kohlbrugge published his *Systematisch en beschrijvend leerboek der volkenkunde* [Systematic and Descriptive Textbook of Ethnology]. This was followed in 1932 by his 's *Menschen Religie, Deel I: Inleiding tot de vergelijkende volkenkunde* [Human Religion, Part I: Introduction to Comparative Ethnology] and *Deel II: Voorstellingen der volkeren betreffende de ziel* [Volume II: Representations of Peoples Concerning the Soul] in 1933.

Kohlbrugge's involvement in colonial policy continued when he was appointed professor in the Indology faculty with a teaching assignment in Comparative Ethnology. This appointment anticipated the establishment of the Indology faculty, which began teaching in Utrecht in 1925. Kohlbrugge used this opportunity to



J.H.F. Kohlbrugge

revive discussions with the 'ethicists' in Leiden. In 1927, he published *De Inlandsche Beweging en de Onrust in Indië* [The Native Movement and the Unrest in the East Indies]. *Lectures given in October 1927 at the opening of the Indology faculty of the Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht*. Kohlbrugge wrote:

My work in the psychological field was much less satisfactory. [...] the aspiration to establish a 'psychological colonial policy'. With this ambition, I challenged the prevailing ethical paradigm, which deemed permissible only the ethics and idealism of its proponents. To me, the ethical approach felt overly patronising and pedantic. It aimed to impart our civilisation and knowledge to the natives through purely intellectual means, often resorting to coercion if guidance was not willingly embraced. Its pedantry stemmed from the belief that what worked well in our society should naturally succeed in our colonies, oblivious to the nuances of moral development and overly reliant on knowledge alone.<sup>76</sup>

I envisioned a shift away from intellectualism, which had wrought havoc in Europe and fostered mental instability in the Dutch East Indies, towards a more adaptive approach geared towards 'education towards autonomy'. The most effective system would emerge organically from within the society itself. Hence, my philosophy advocated 'more waiting, than imposing!' The colonial dilemma is primarily a psychological and pedagogical one. Dealing with psychological issues demands far greater wisdom and tact than addressing political matters. While politics involves power struggles, psychology entails a battle for the souls. Guiding souls is akin to 'serving and educating'.<sup>77</sup>

Let us demonstrate our capability of meeting the challenge ahead by heeding the call: 'Everyone must do his duty and even go beyond the call of duty.' Only by respecting its own culture, social institutions, and the legal traditions of the indigenous population can we collaborate effectively and endeavour to provide them with the means to achieve independence without forsaking their own culture. Consequently, each entity will progressively learn to govern itself, resulting in a gradual reduction of our intervention.<sup>78</sup>

Kohlbrugge was writing at a time when escalating political unrest in the Dutch East Indies had put ethicists on the defensive. Kohlbrugge also sought to come to terms with his own perspectives:

We must acknowledge that, albeit unintentionally, we have nurtured and sustained the native movement through our actions and oversights. I have provided sufficient evidence to support this assertion.<sup>79</sup>

This text is said to have prompted a complaint from the Handels Vereniging Amsterdam, one of the fund's supporters, to the Board of the Indology Faculty. However, the Board decided not to take any action on the complaint, pointing to the professors' freedom of expression. Kohlbrugge's views were largely in line with the conservative ideology of some influential figures within the Utrecht Indology Faculty.

### **G.A.G.Ph. van der Capellen** *Governor of the colony and the university*

When I observe that in the Netherlands, liberalism is understood as the protection of European landowners at the expense of the indigenous population, completely losing sight of the latter, which is so dear to me, in order to help the plans of a few speculators and adventurers succeed, then I must declare myself to be an ultra-anti-liberal.

Van der Capellen in a letter to J.C. Baud.<sup>80</sup>

From 1636, the university was governed by a delicate balance between professors and governors. Initially, the mayors of the city of Utrecht supervised the university. In the nineteenth century, the university was governed by governors and a secretary. These governors met under the leadership of their president to discuss and decide on university matters. In practice, the president and the secretary formed an executive board. They regularly consulted with the senate, which was chaired by the rector (the rectorate rotated annually). The president was appointed by the Minister of Education and his position was explicitly an administrative one, that was often filled by representatives of the local nobility. This position was crucial for the representation of the university in political circles.

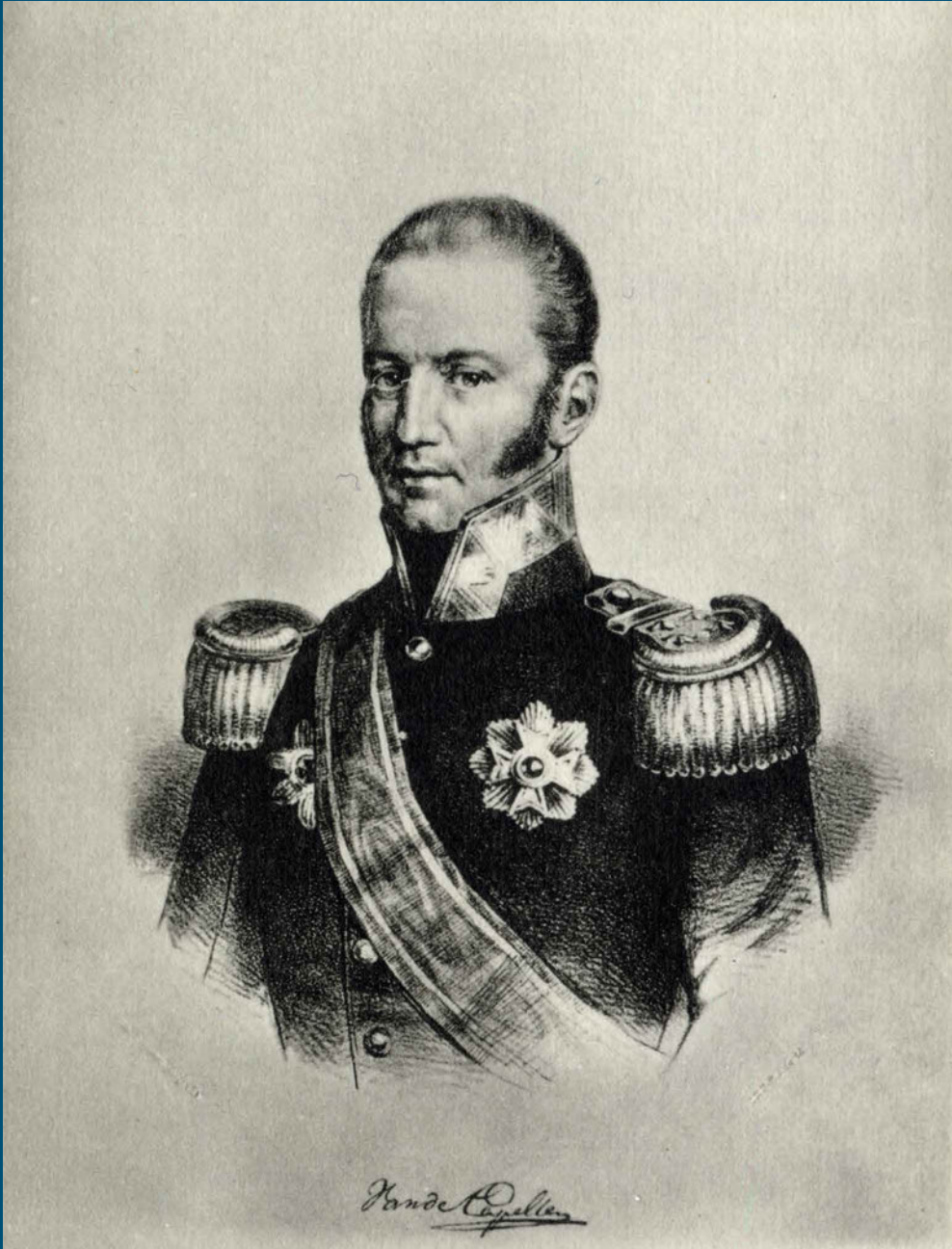
The Board in Utrecht was sometimes reluctant to invest in the colonial activities of professors. They were quick to pass the bill on to the government, i.e. the Minister of Colonies. It is worth noting that several Ministers of Colonies were alumni of Utrecht University. For example, Sprenger van Eyk, who studied law in Utrecht and specialised in tax law, was Minister of Colonies from 1884 to 1888. From 1926 to 1929, J.Ch. Koningsberger senior, a biologist educated in Utrecht, was Minister of Colonies in De Geer's extra-parliamentary cabinet. In 1945, the geologist J.I.J.M. Schmutzer, a staunch Catholic and former professor at Utrecht, served briefly as Minister of Overseas Territories in the Gerbrandy war cabinet. From 1952 to 1956, the Arabist W.J.A. Kernkamp was Minister of Overseas Territories. During his tenure, the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands was established, granting Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles a more independent status. Kernkamp had previously been a professor of Arabic in the Indology faculty.

I would like to highlight one remarkable administrator who had extensive experience in colonial administration, who actively promoted an environment for researchers, and who later took over the leadership of Utrecht University: G.A.G.Ph. van der Capellen (1778-1848). Interestingly, his personal life showed a deep connection with the colony: from 1814 to 1819, he was one of the three commissioners-general (alongside Elout and Buyskes). In 1819, Van der Capellen was appointed governor-general of the Dutch East Indies and commander-in-chief of the land and naval forces east of the Cape. An enlightened administrator, he resisted proposed changes to the land rent system and the establishment of the Nederlandse Handel-Maatschappij (NHM) to regulate crop exports.

In 1818, the government introduced regulations that allowed European planters to settle in the East Indies and lease land for plantations, a policy Van der Capellen vehemently opposed. He saw these planters as 'a parasitic plant, winding its way along dark and tortuous paths, entwining itself around the native population, constricting it and hindering its growth'.<sup>81</sup> Coolhaas described him as 'more and more the colonial ethicist *avant la lettre*, who saw only misfortune in European colonisation'.<sup>82</sup> He characterised Van der Capellen as:

a grand-seigneur, but from a lineage of patriots [...], a man with a compassionate heart and somewhat vain, with a strong desire to display this.<sup>83</sup>





Godert Alexander Gerard Philip, Baron van der Capellen (1778-1848)

As an enlightened liberal, Van der Capellen also recognised the importance of increasing knowledge about the colony. In 1826, he however, was eventually recalled to the Netherlands by the king because of his perceived lack of success in improving the colony's revenues for the Dutch treasury. During his tenure as governor-general, Van der Capellen demonstrated a keen interest in research and actively supported the *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*.

Upon his return to the Netherlands, he retired to the Vollenhoven estate in Zeist. He brought two Papuan children with him to his home in De Bilt: Ourika Jacoba Elisabeth Salawatta and Rolla Godert Alexander. Ourika Jacoba Elisabeth married Jan Willem Stittelaar in Utrecht and they resided in a tied house near Vollenhoven, where she passed away at a young age. Rolla Godert Alexander eventually returned to the East Indies. In the attic of the house at Vollenhoven, Van der Capellen had assembled a 'Cabinet of Oriental Rarities', which attracted many visitors, including members of the Royal Family.

Following his colonial career, he was appointed president of the Board of the Hogeschool in Utrecht, as the university was known in the nineteenth century. He held this post from 1829 to 1848. Van der Capellen maintained connections with individuals in The Hague and Batavia, and was regarded as an authoritative figure by colonial minister J.C Baud, who sought his advice. In a letter from Jean Chrétien Baud (Minister of Colonies 1840-1848) to Jan Jacob Rochussen (governor-general 1845-1851), Baud recounted a conversation with Van der Capellen regarding 'rice peeling': 'Baron van der Capellen spoke to me about it some weeks ago, and I informed him of my response. He fully approved it and vehemently opposed any attempt to deprive the Javanese of their padi [rice plants] by persuasion or other means'.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, Van der Capellen intervened to nominate his nephew, Minister Van Hoëvell, for high honours.<sup>85</sup>

One of his friends in Utrecht was G.J. Mulder, who recalled in his 'Life Sketch' how Van der Capellen wholeheartedly supported Mulder in establishing his laboratory, where many individuals were trained for service in the East Indies. Mulder assisted Van der Capellen in his later years until his somewhat mysterious death in 1848. Mulder mentioned visiting Van der Capellen almost daily towards the end of his life.

## Pure science in the colony or purely colonial science?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was a circular movement in the broad field of natural sciences. Dutch students were educated at universities in the Netherlands and often found employment in the colonies. Many young scientists carried out experimental research at stations in Suriname and the East Indies, where they also collected various materials, including human specimens. On their return to the Netherlands, they continued their academic careers, enriched by their experiences in the tropics, and contributed to science in their home country. However, this academic enrichment also impacted a different type of enrichment: the exploitation of resources in the colonies. This movement was not merely circular; it also fostered the development of a network of scientists that included recent graduates and established academics. They collaborated both in the colonies and in the Netherlands, especially in areas where disciplinary specialisation was not so pronounced.

Between 1915 and 1950, several publications aimed to provide an overview of scientific developments in the colonies with contributions from Dutch scientists. One such publication was *Indisch natuuronderzoek: een beknopte geschiedenis van de beoefening der natuurwetenschappen in de Nederlandsche koloniën* [Natural science research in the East Indies; A brief history of the practice of natural sciences in the Dutch colonies] (Amsterdam: Koloniaal Instituut, 1915). The author, M.J. Sirks, obtained his doctorate under F.A.F.C. Went at Utrecht University, and his work became a standard work in the field.

In addition, the international dimension of research conducted in the colonies gained attention. The report *The history and present state of scientific research in the Dutch East Indies* (Amsterdam: International Circumpacific Research Commission of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Amsterdam, 1923) provided insights into various scientific disciplines in the East Indies.

In preparation for the Fourth Pacific Science Congress in 1929, a comprehensive overview of science in and about the Dutch East Indies was published under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Sciences in the report 'Science in the Netherlands East Indies' (Amsterdam: Royal Academy of Sciences, 1929). The editor of this report was L.M.R. Rutten, a professor of geology at Utrecht University. The aim of the report was 'to provide the congress attendees with a scientific survey of the Netherlands East

Indies and to inform them about the results of scientific research in the Archipelago' (Preface). The preface also emphasised that this publication should demonstrate the strength of the scientific connections between the Netherlands East Indies and the mother country. This sentiment was reiterated in a speech by Went at the inaugural session of the congress.

'Science in the Netherlands East Indies' which was entirely composed by scientists in the mother country with the financial support of different scientific institutions in Holland. But is it not rather natural that we in Holland did this, because after all Holland and what we formerly called its colonies – which we are no more permitted to do so officially – are one, especially in the scientific domain? Our Dutch scientists go to the East Indies as young men, spend there a shorter or longer time of their life and generally afterwards return to Holland, where many of them have got a position, which enables them to continue their scientific work about the East Indies or to act as a guide to young scientists who in their turn want to go to the East in order to do scientific research work there. Of course, the bulk of the work is done here and can only be done here; [...] We feel this indivisibility of science in the East Indies and in the mothers-country so much, that we did not hesitate one moment, when you asked us to come to this congress in as great numbers as possible.<sup>86</sup>

A publication entitled *The Effect of Western Influence on Native Civilisations in the Malay Archipelago* was also published in the same year. The editor of this volume was Professor B. Schrieke, who worked at the College of Law in Batavia. This publication aimed to counterbalance the dominance of the natural sciences at the conference by providing a comprehensive overview of various aspects of anthropology written by scholars working in the region. Contributions on religion, ethnography, administration and law, agriculture and languages highlighted the 'opening up' of static, traditional societies as a result of European influence and civilisation. Traditional ties to the group gradually gave way to the emancipation of the individual. Schrieke concluded that contact with the West sparked an economic, intellectual, spiritual and social revolution in native society. Dr O. de Vries, director of the Rubber Research Station at Buitenzorg and professor of chemistry at the Medical college in Batavia, served as the president of the Fourth Pacific Science Congress held in Java from 16 to 25 May

1929. The congress was attended by representatives from Australia, China, Japan, Hawaii, Vietnam, the Philippines, New Zealand, Malaysia, and America, among others. He was assisted by Dr H.J. Lam, who had previously worked with Went and Pulle in Utrecht and then worked at Buitenzorg at Went's recommendation, serving as the first General Secretary, and Dr H.J.T. Bijlmer, a military doctor and anthropologist, serving as the second General Secretary. The *Proceedings of the Fourth Pacific Congress* extensively documented the congress, including the contributions of scholars from both within and outside the East Indies, as well as the field visits.

In addition to the numerous presentations, a significant part of the congress programme was a series of excursions to sites such as Krakatau, Tangkoeban Prahoe craters, and Borobudur, among others. There was also an excursion to an 'Exhibition of Native Crafts' in Yogyakarta. A similar exhibition was organised in Batavia, featuring representatives from various indigenous groups. This exhibition caused considerable controversy, with the *Sumatra Post* of 22 May 1929 commenting under the headline 'An Odd Exhibition' that it had become 'actually more of a folk exhibition than an exhibition of folk crafts'.

The representatives of the more primitive peoples of the archipelago were absolutely humiliated, especially by some of the Pacific Science Congress delegates, who brutally snipped locks of hair from their heads, pried open their mouths to examine their teeth, measured their skulls with instruments, groped and scrutinised the women, in short: treating the people like livestock at a cattle market. Due to the enormous influx of Europeans, natives, and Chinese, the people were practically herded, leaving them not a moment of peace during the opening hours.

[...] All ethnic groups are lumped in together. No distinction is made between the mountain Alfoers of Djailolo and West Ceram and the more developed Palembangers, Djarabiërs, and Redjangers. The Balinese and the Lampung people saw themselves treated exactly the same as the Papuans.

At the opening of the congress, a photo was taken of all the participants, and it was striking that almost all of them were white (and dressed in white) scientists. On the list of 'home participants', which contained some three hundred names, only four were listed with indigenous names.



Fourth Pacific Science Congress; Final General Meeting. Front row, third from right, F.A.F.C. Went

The extensive publication *Science and Scientists in the Netherlands Indies* was released in 1945, edited by Pieter Honig and Frans Verdoorn, both of whom had been active in natural sciences research in the East Indies. Published under the auspices of the 'Board for the Netherlands Indies, Suriname, and Curaçao' based in New York, this voluminous publication (with very small print) offers a multifaceted but somewhat disjointed overview of the development of science, particularly the natural sciences, in the East Indies. Many contributions were existing Dutch articles translated into English specifically for this publication.

The *Report of the Scientific Work Done in the Netherlands on Behalf of the Dutch Overseas Territories during the Period between approximately 1918 and 1943* was published in 1948 (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company). This comprehensive work was the result of the efforts of Professor B.J.O. Schrieke, professor of ethnology at the University of Amsterdam, at the request of the 'working community of scientific organisations in the Netherlands'. Schrieke initiated this work during World War II and continued it during his imprisonment in Sint-Michielsgestel from December 1943. The report was completed and published with the assistance of the Colonial

Institute, now renamed the Indisch Instituut. The preface states that this report complements the aforementioned *Science and Scientists in the Netherlands Indies* as well as the report by J. Barnouw and B. Landheer, *The Contribution of Holland to the Sciences*. The report distinguished between '(a) a review of the work done in the various departments of science, and (b) a report of the achievements of institutions whose activities are connected either directly or indirectly with the Netherlands Overseas Territories' (Introduction). Thus, it addressed science development in the Netherlands and the contribution of scientific organisations connected to the 'Netherlands Overseas Territories' (a new term for 'colony').

A notable distinction, as identified by H.J. Lam, lies in the typology of research in botany. He categorises it into research conducted by scientists analysing data collected from the East Indies in the Netherlands, researchers with brief periods in the East Indies, young researchers who completed their PhD studies in tropical research, and a group of researchers who, despite lacking direct experience in the tropics, engage in tropical research using material gathered by others.

The last publication I will mention is *Een eeuw natuurwetenschap in Indonesië* [A Century of Natural Science in Indonesia] 1850-1950: *Gedenkboek Koninklijke Natuurkundige Vereeniging*. It serves as a commemorative book marking one hundred years of the Koninklijke Natuurkundige Vereeniging, whose inaugural chairman was Pieter Bleeker, an honorary doctor of Utrecht. In the reports, there is a noticeable increase in interaction between research conducted in the colony and the advancement of science at the Netherlands' own universities.

Goss rightly points out that the main purpose of such publications was to emphasise the image of 'pure science', especially within the natural sciences.<sup>87</sup> For academics like Went and many of his colleagues, including those from Utrecht, the development of pure science in the colonies was seen as an essential part of a (Western) civilising endeavour. *Pure science in the colonies*, however, often translated into *purely colonial science*, which in part served the advancement of science in the 'mother country', especially in institutions such as the University of Utrecht.

## Western scientists with indigenous assistants

In 1955, Maria Dermoût (born 1888 in Pekalongan, Java, died 1962 in The Hague) published the book *De tienduizend dingen* [The Ten Thousand

Things], which included a story ‘The Professor’, which in some sense reflected the prototypical colonial system of scholarship.

A bell outside in the corridor, a head around the door. ‘Soeprapto must report to the director’s office immediately!’ Raden Soeprapto had been waiting for this, bent over his plant preparations, yet a jolt went through him; he stood up. [...]

This study tour throughout the Moluccas with the famous foreign professor, a Scottish professor: a scientific assignment to prepare a new standard work on the vegetation on this island belt, following New Guinea, based on Rumphius’ *Kruydboeken*. [...]

Seated around the table in front of the writing desk were the director of the National Botanical Gardens and the professor. The professor sat directly opposite the door, facing him. His professor! Yes, how do you feel about that, Raden Mas Soeprapto? Your professor? [...] Soeprapto will be a great asset to you; he is exceptionally accurate; he has the most beautiful handwriting of all of us here, and his drawings are also commendable.

Indigenous collaborators have historically played a crucial role in shaping the colonial scientific landscape. Particularly during the exploration phase of botany and fauna, indigenous individuals made a significant contribution by using their extensive knowledge of their environment to inform the Western body of colonial knowledge. Rumphius, for instance, relied heavily on indigenous assistance to produce his *Ambon Book of Herbs* and *Ambon chamber of curiosities*. Similarly, Van Rheede tot Drakenstein’s *Hortus Malabaricus* owed much of its substance to indigenous personnel, whom Van Rheede referred to as ‘Gentiles Philosophos’.

Wille notes that around 1890, the foundation of the Lands Plantentuin Buitenzorg had some two hundred indigenous employees. Primarily serving as clerks, they were responsible for categorising the plant world and producing drawings, similar to Soeprapto in ‘The Professor’. One notable individual, Mas Kromohardjo, contributed extensively to the herbarium with numerous drawings.<sup>88</sup> He was also allowed to study lithography in the Netherlands and was awarded a medal of merit for his contributions. Kromohardjo also worked on J.J. Smith’s publication on the orchids of Java from 1905 to 1914. However, specific laboratory and microscopic tasks were typically reserved for Western scientists.



Wille emphasises a clear hierarchy in colonial scientific endeavour: Western scientists were at the top, followed by indigenous supporters and clerks. The group of Indo-Europeans, however, posed a challenge to classification. Born in the colonies but often lacking the financial means for a European education, they posed a dilemma for scholars. Considered insufficiently qualified for academic roles, yet too culturally 'Dutch' for simple manual labour, their potential was a subject of disagreement among researchers.<sup>89</sup>

Indigenous collaborators played a crucial role in research involving languages and translation. Their input was also invaluable as staff on expeditions. As seen in Wichmann's expedition, indigenous personnel were integral to the organisation of and security on the expedition to North New Guinea. Additionally, two *mantri* [officials] from the National Botanical Gardens, Mas Djipja and his assistant Atjip, were assigned to a scientific expedition to New Guinea to do classification work.

However, the expeditions also involved indigenous people in another 'role'. They served as objects for anthropometric activities in which Western scientists sought standardised data in a supposedly 'objective' manner. Kohlbrugge, acting as both physician and physical anthropologist, carried out measurements, observations and physical examinations. Wichmann's 1903 expedition and subsequent expeditions to New Guinea involved close observation, photography and physical examination of indigenous people. Mak refers to this as 'touch in anthropometry'.<sup>90</sup> While some individuals were receptive to these activities, others were hostile. In some cases, however, individuals were willing to be measured, especially if it led to benefits such as medical treatment – a form of *quid pro quo*. In a following chapter, I explore the topic of the development of a system of education in the East Indies. The Dutch colonial government made incremental efforts to cultivate a higher echelon within the indigenous population. Some students from affluent indigenous families were sent to the Netherlands for higher education. However, until Indonesia gained independence, the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the involvement of indigenous academics remained limited. It largely persisted as a colonial system of science.

## HONORARY DOCTORATES FOR (COLONIAL) THINKERS AND DOERS (1815-1940)

From 1815 onwards, honorary doctorates were awarded on a modest scale to individuals who had pursued a distinctive career path, either in academia or in society. Between 1815 and 1940, Utrecht University awarded honorary doctorates to various people who, in the university's opinion, had made commendable contributions to the colony. In doing so, the university also made its colonial ambitions known.

### 1828 Dirk Lenting

Dirk (or Didericus) Lenting was born in Arnhem in 1789 and died in Voorst on 2 January 1877. He studied theology at Utrecht University and is listed in the *Album studiosorum* in 1808 on 24 September as 'DIRK LENTING Arnhemiensis, Th'. In 1815, he was appointed as a minister and departed for the East Indies in 1816, where he served as a minister in Semarang. In 1819, he journeyed through the Moluccas and worked in Banda. During the same year, he visited the Minahassa. In 1823, he exchanged Semarang for Batavia.

In 1835, Lenting returned to the Netherlands on leave. In that year, an edition of



Dirk Lenting (1789-1877)

the ‘New Testament in Low [i.e. of the ordinary people] Malay’ was published under Lenting’s supervision and with the assistance of the English missionary Medhurst. Also in 1835, Lenting was appointed to the ‘Commission to promote the study of the Malay language’, with the aim of enabling missionaries to learn the language in the Netherlands before departing. Lenting then accepted an invitation to Zeist, where he served as a minister from 1839 to 1855. In 1848, he led the funeral service of Van der Capellen, the president of the Board of the university.

On 20 June 1828, well before his final return to the Netherlands, he was awarded an honorary doctorate in theology from Utrecht University.

### 1849 Pieter Bleeker

Pieter Bleeker was born in Zaandam on 10 July 1819 and died in The Hague on 24 January 1878. From 1838 to 1840 he attended the clinical school in Haarlem. In 1840 he successfully passed the examination for ‘city surgeon and country doctor’ and joined the East Indian army as a medical officer. In March 1842 he arrived in Batavia, where he served as ‘adjutant to the chief of the medical service’. Bleeker immediately became involved in research in the East Indies. He was the founding editor of the *Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, a journal that became an important platform for sharing scientific research in the colony. In 1849, his work ‘Dysentery from a Pathological-Anatomical and Practical Perspective’ was published. In recognition of this scientific contribution, he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Utrecht in 1849. He had previously received a similar honour from the University of Leiden.

In 1851 Bleeker became the first director of the ‘Dokter-Djawa’ school. This institution for indigenous youth later became



Pieter Bleeker (1819-1878)

STOVIA (School for the Training of Indigenous Doctors). Bleeker gained considerable recognition for his publications in the field of ichthyology, the study of fish. In the course of his study of iodine in water, he also suggested the probable presence of oil in the Gunung Sahari area.

### 1857 Geerlof Wassink

Geerlof Wassink was born on 30 May 1811 in Utrecht and passed away in Batavia on 17 October 1864. He served as a doctor and chief of the Medical Service in the Netherlands East Indies Army from 1830 to 1864 and was awarded the Military Order of William for bravery during the third military expedition to subdue Bali in 1849.

Geerlof Wassink took the initiative to establish a school for Indian midwives. This school, like the Dokter-Djawa school for Indian doctors, was located on the premises of the military hospital in Weltevreden. As the medical officer, Wassink was responsible for supervising the school. In 1863, Wassink presented reform proposals to enhance the curriculum of the 'Dokter Djawa' School, increase student numbers, and enhance the facilities and status of the Djawa doctors. Graduates were now entitled to a salary equivalent to that of teachers in the East Indies. Initially, the school's training objective was formulated as preparation for 'the profession of indigenous medicine and vaccinator'. This was revised in 1864 to focus on training 'practical doctors and surgeons'.

Wassink spearheaded renewed research into the effects of traditional East Indian herbs. In 1850, a 'Hortus Medicus' was established on the hospital grounds in Weltevreden for this purpose. Researchers were dispatched to study the remedies and practices of traditional East Indian healers, aiming to gather pharmacological knowledge and debunk quackery. Wassink published a series of articles on this subject



Geerlof Wassink (1811-1864)

*Onderzoekingen naar de geneeskrachten van inlandsche geneesmiddelen* [Research into the Healing Powers of Indigenous Medicines] in the *Geneeskundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (GTNI) [Medical Journal for the Dutch East Indies]. For his contributions to indigenous medical education, he was awarded an honorary doctorate in medicine from Utrecht University on 27 February 1857 (*Rei medicae in studia Orientali praefectus primarius. Med. et Chir. Doctor*). His supervisor was Prof G.J. Loncq.

## 1861 Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk

Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk was born in Malacca on 23 February 1824 and died in Surabaya on 17 August 1894. Although trained as a lawyer, his true passion was for Oriental languages, a subject he read in Leiden under Roorda. At the time, the Protestant Dutch Bible Society was trying to translate the Bible into a language spoken in Sumatra. Aware of Van der Tuuk's exceptional knowledge of Oriental languages, they invited him to Sumatra as a linguistic delegate. He chose to concentrate on the Toba-Batak language. Due to illness, however, he did not arrive until the early 1850s. He travelled

into the interior from close to Siboga, and during one of his journeys he is said to have been the first European to see Lake Toba. Van der Tuuk returned to the Netherlands in 1856 due to severe illness. There, he devoted himself to translating Bible books into Batak, resulting in an 1861 Batak dictionary and a two-volume Batak grammar published in 1864 and 1867. In 1870, he departed for Bali to work on a Balinese dictionary. Although he was sent out by the Dutch Bible Society, he held ambivalent views towards Christianity and the mission. He viewed the mission as a force for civilisation that could counteract the spread of Islam. This ambivalence is evident in the following quote:



Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk (1824-1894) in front of his home in a desa south of Singaradja

If you translate taking the requirements of a language into account, the missionary will accuse you of raping God's word. If you sacrifice language to the Bible, the linguist will make a fuss.<sup>1</sup>

Primarily a linguist, Van der Tuuk held his profession to high standards, often leading to many conflicts with other linguists, including Roorda, his professor in Leiden.

Living in seclusion from the Western world in Bali, Van der Tuuk earned great respect among the Balinese. He immersed himself in their language, morals, and customs to such an extent that one chief remarked: 'There is only one man in all of Bali who knows and understands the Balinese language, and that man is Goesti [Lord] Dertik [Van der Tuuk].'<sup>2</sup>

He was nominated for an honorary doctorate by H.C. Millies. Plans were made to award him an honorary doctorate in Leiden, but Professor Roorda, due to his strained relationship with Van der Tuuk, prevented it. Later, Millies himself fell out with Van der Tuuk. Millies had advised colonial authorities to reject a Batak textbook by Van der Tuuk, citing 'pagan colour' and 'unchaste stories.' Van der Tuuk could not accept this narrow-mindedness and broke off contact with Millies.<sup>3</sup> The philologist Professor Simon Karsten was his supervisor.

## 1886 Karel van Gorkom

Karel Wessel van Gorkom (Zutphen, 22 August 1835 - Baarn, 10 March 1910) was a graduate of Utrecht University. He studied pharmacy under Gerrit Jan Mulder and worked as a pharmacist in a large military hospital until 1857. He then became Fromberg's assistant at the agricultural chemical laboratory in Buitenzorg. As mentioned earlier, in 1864 he succeeded Franz Junghuhn as head of the government's



Karel van Gorkom (1835-1910)

quinine (kina) factory in Buitenzorg, Java. Van Gorkom was very successful in developing the quinine industry.

From 1875 to 1878, Van Gorkom was superintendent of sugar and rice cultivation. He returned to the Netherlands in 1880. He taught on East Indian crops at the agricultural school in Wageningen and became school inspector in the district of Amersfoort (1885-1901). He also wrote many practical and scientific works. Recognised by his peers, he was elected to numerous scientific societies. When his bid for a seat in the House of Representatives, supported by his electoral association, failed, he became a municipal councillor in Baarn. In 1886 he received an honorary doctorate in pharmacy from his alma mater.

### 1886 Jacobus P. Sprenger van Eyk

Sprenger van Eyk was born in Hilvarenbeek on 20 January 1842 and passed away in Utrecht on 21 March 1907. He studied law at Utrecht University, specialising in finance and taxation. His career in the East Indies began in 1872 when he was appointed as an expert for an investigation into financial management, taxation, and administration in the colony. In 1873, he was tasked with reviewing accounting management in the East Indies. By 1874, he had been promoted to chief inspector and director of finance in the Dutch East Indies. In 1877, he took up the post of general secretary at the General Secretariat of the Government in Buitenzorg. He joined the Council of the Indies in 1879 and remained a member until early 1884.

Sprenger van Eyk was then appointed as Minister of Colonies, a position he held from 27 February 1884 to 21 April 1888. During his tenure as minister, he was awarded an honorary doctorate. Pieter Brooshooft, an early proponent of later ethical politics, remarked somewhat scathingly about Sprenger van



J.P. Sprenger van Eyk (1842-1907)

Eyk that he had not managed to initiate a single reform in the tax system.<sup>4</sup> After his colonial career, he served as Dutch Minister of Finance from 1894 to 1897. Following this, he continued his administrative career with the Dutch Railways.

### 1894 Jacques Spanjaard

Jacques Spanjaard (Haarlem, 6 July 1846 - The Hague, 7 November 1910) was a professor at the Indian Institution in Delft. He began his studies in 1864 at the National Institution for Education in Indian Language, Land, and Ethnology in Leiden, followed by the Municipal Institution for Education in the Language, Land, and Ethnology of the Dutch East Indies in Delft, also known as the 'Indische Instelling' [Indian Institution]. In 1869, he started to work there as a lecturer and was later appointed professor in 1872, despite lacking formal scientific training and having no scientific publications to his name. Indeed, the Indische Instelling in Delft was not an academic institution.

On 20 January 1894, he was awarded an honorary doctorate in political science from Utrecht, with De Louter as his supervisor. Six years later, the Indian Institution in Delft was closed, leading to Spanjaard and other teachers being dismissed. Subsequently, the training of East Indian civil servants merged into the University of Leiden. Spanjaard's honorary supervisor, De Louter, played a pivotal role in establishing the Indology faculty in Utrecht, which became a competitor to the Indological education in Leiden.



Jacques Spanjaard (1846-1910)





Adolphe G. Vorderman (1844-1902)

### 1900 Adolphe G. Vorderman

A.G. (Adolphe) Vorderman (The Hague, 12 December 1844 - Weltevreden (Batavia), 15 July 1902) was a Dutch physician, medical officer and ornithologist. He is best known for his contribution to the study of beriberi. In 1881, he was stationed in Batavia as a public health inspector. Vorderman wrote papers on East Indian nutrition and pharmacy, in particular investigating the correlation between the quality of rice and the prevalence of beriberi in prisons in Java and Madura. His research revealed that prisoners who consumed brown rice had significantly lower rates of beriberi. This research

was documented in his 1897 publication: *Onderzoek naar het verband tusschen den aard der rijstvoeding in de gevangenissen op Java en Madoera en het voorkomen van Beri-Beri onder de geïnterneerden* [Investigation into the connection between the type of rice consumption in prisons on Java and Madura and the occurrence of beriberi among internees]. Vorderman received an honorary doctorate from Utrecht University for his contributions.

### 1909 Gijsbert A.J. van der Sande

Gijsbertus Adrian Johan van der Sande (Arnhem, 1863 - Surabaya, 1910) was a Dutch army doctor. He studied medicine in Amsterdam and was appointed as navy medical officer in 1890. Shortly thereafter, he departed for the East Indies, where the tropical flora and fauna piqued his scientific interest. Van der Sande participated in the Aceh War under General van Heutsz and was awarded the Military Order of William fourth class in 1901 for gallantry.

Returning to the Netherlands in 1901, he turned his focus to photography and physical anthropology. He attended the anthropometry seminars in Zurich of Rudolf Martin, an internationally renowned physical

**Gijsbertus Adrian Johan van der Sande**  
(1863-1910)

anthropologist in order to enhance his skills in anthropometry and thus served as a prelude to his participation in the first expedition to northern New Guinea in 1903, also known as the 'Wichmann expedition', that I discussed earlier. The objective of this expedition was to explore the north coast of the Dutch part of the island and assess the presence of exploitable coal deposits. Van der Sande served as a doctor, physical anthropologist, ethnologist, and photographer for this expedition. He documented his discoveries in a comprehensive volume *Nova Guinea Vol. 3 Ethnography and Anthropology*, which was richly illustrated with photographs and lithographs.



In 1909, Van der Sande decided to conclude his scientific work and began working as a doctor in Surabaya. That same year, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Utrecht. Sadly, Van der Sande passed away only a year later.

### **1910 Anna Weber-van Bosse**

Anne Antoinette Weber-Van Bosse (Amsterdam, 27 March 1852 - Eerbeek, 29 October 1942) was a botanist and an expert on algae. In 1880, Van Bosse began attending botany lectures as an auditor at the University of Amsterdam under the supervision of professors C.A.J.A. Oudemans and Hugo de Vries. Particularly De Vries was not very welcoming of women in the lecture hall or the laboratory. Among her fellow students was F.A.F.C. Went. Her first husband passed away at a young age. Anna Bosse then married Max Weber in 1883, a zoologist, anatomist, and physiologist who was a professor in Amsterdam. Before that, Weber had been working as a lecturer in human anatomy in Utrecht from 1880.

Weber co-authored an account of her participation in the 1899-1900 Siboga expedition with her husband. In the autumn of 1903, she published



Anne Antoinette Weber-van Bosse (1852-1942)

a travelogue intended for a wide audience entitled 'One Year aboard Hr.Ms. *Siboga*'.

In a *Liber Amicorum* to mark Went's 70th birthday, Anna Weber recalled:

Do you remember, esteemed Professor Went, how in the year 1881 three ladies somewhat shyly entered the hall where Professors Oudemans and De Vries were giving lectures? The ladies waited modestly in a small room until the professor appeared, then they entered together with him! None of the three paid

attention to the students; they only had eyes for the professor, his plants, the blackboard, and Professor De Vries's brilliant experiments in the physiology class. The candour based on the sense of equal rights of contemporary female students had not yet been acquired at that time.<sup>5</sup>

Her scientific contributions were so significant that in 1910, on Went's initiative, she became the first woman in the Netherlands to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Utrecht. She apparently did not attend the award ceremony. This is clear from the letter Went wrote to her after the ceremony:

The fact that your great modesty prevents you from personally receiving your doctorate saddens me greatly, and I have also heard from other members of the Senate that they expressed their regret about it. But they must, of course, respect your decision, even though I would have liked to take this opportunity to convince you that your merits in the field of botany are not as insignificant as you estimate them to be.<sup>6</sup>

### 1913 Albert C. Kruyt

Albert Christian Kruyt was born on 10 October 1869 and died on 19 January 1949. He was a Dutch missionary, ethnographer, and theologian.<sup>7</sup> Born in Mojowarno, East Java, he grew up in a missionary family where his father worked as a missionary teacher for the Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap. In 1877, Kruyt was sent to the Netherlands to receive training as a missionary at the mission house in Rotterdam. He returned to the East Indies with his wife and in 1892 was sent by the Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap to Poso on the south shore of Tomini Bay to establish a new mission post. Two years later, language scholar Nicolaus Adriani, sent by the NBG, also arrived to work there. The mission expanded through the highlands and mountains to the Gulf of Bone in the south. Kruyt permanently returned to the Netherlands in 1932.

In his missionary work, Kruyt believed in thoroughly studying the society and its religious system first. He argued that without adequate ethnological knowledge, missions would not be successful, and there was no point in forcibly converting the local population to Christianity. His works on ethnography and evangelisation, especially in Central Sulawesi, were considered influential sources of information. Together with Nicolaus Adriani, he wrote an ethnography *De Bare'e-sprekende Toradja's van Midden-Celebes* [The Bare'e-speaking Toradjas of Central Celebes]. In 1925, he published *Van Heiden tot Christen* [From Heathen to Christian], outlining his missionary philosophy. At its core was an evolutionary transformation process from 'paganism' through a temporary experience of Christianity to the acceptance of the true Gospel. Kruyt also aligned himself with ethical theology, emphasising the individual believer's experience of the divine. This ethical theology was strongly promoted in Utrecht at the time, including by Professor Valeton.



Albert Christian Kruyt (1869-1949)

Upon returning to the Netherlands, Kruyt became a teacher at the Missionary School established meanwhile in Oegstgeest and authored publications on religious studies. Towards the end of his life, he witnessed how his work in Poso led to the establishment of an independent, indigenous church. Kruyt was elected a corresponding member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences as early as 1898, becoming a full member in 1933. His extensive knowledge of languages, cultures, and religions in the East Indies, along with his modern interpretation of the missionary task, prompted Utrecht to award him an honorary doctorate.

### 1927 Cornelis Douwe de Langen

Cornelis Douwe de Langen (Groningen 1877 - Zeist 1967) joined the lab where Eijkman had worked in 1914. Like Eijkman, he also became responsible for STOVIA training. De Langen conducted a comprehensive historical study on how beriberi was studied from the perspective of the concept of infection in the 1920s. He intended this study as his dissertation but was overtaken by the developments in vitamin research, as outlined earlier. As a result, De Langen did not receive a PhD for his study,<sup>8</sup> but, Utrecht

University offered him an honorary doctorate in 1927. In the same year of his honorary doctorate, De Langen also became a professor at the College of Medicine in Batavia, founded on 17 August, before later being appointed as professor of internal medicine in Utrecht in 1938.

In June 1936, Utrecht University celebrated its 300th anniversary. The event was attended by many domestic and foreign official representatives, including from 'Nederlandsch-Indie': Professor J. Clay from the Technical College in Bandoeng, Professor J. Boeke and Professor W. F. Donath from the Medical



Cornelis Douwe de Langen (1877-1967)

College in Batavia, and Professor B. J. O. Schrieke from the Law College in Batavia. Representing the Medical College in Batavia, Prof J. Boeke presented on behalf of this sister institution to the jubilee University two precious Chinese vases from the early Ming period, which were then placed in the faculty room of the Faculty of Medicine. In his speech, the rector magnificus, Professor Vollgraff, stated:

In 1925, the bold creation of the Fund for Indological Studies enriched our university at once with a complete education of future civil servants in the Netherlands East Indies. It is a gratifying phenomenon that the attention of an ever-growing group of students is now increasingly focused on the needs of the overseas parts of the empire.<sup>9</sup>

Among the many recipients of honorary doctorates in 1936, there were a number of individuals who, in the university's view, had made meritorious contributions in or towards the colonies.

### 1936 Cornelis Andries Backer

Backer (born 1874 in Oudenbosch, and died in 1963) left for the East Indies in 1901. Trained as a teacher, he worked at the primary school of a boarding school in Weltevreden from 1901 to 1905, where he soon began collecting plants. Melchior Treub, the director of 's Lands Plantentuin in Buitenzorg, appointed Backer to write a school flora of Java and to teach at the secondary agricultural school in Buitenzorg. From 1905 to 1924, Backer was associated with the botanical garden. During this period there was an intense conflict over the scientific quality of a flora by one of his colleagues, S.H. Koorders. In this conflict, Backer saw himself as the



Cornelis Andries Backer (1874-1963)

true scientist (despite his lack of formal qualifications). In the end, four professors were consulted, including Went and Pulle from Utrecht. In fact, Backer had also been critical of Pulle. Although their report is not known, it seems that they considered Backer's criticisms to be largely valid.

He worked at the Research Station for the Java Sugar Industry in Pasuruan, East Java, from 1924 to 1931, where he studied weed species in the sugar cane fields. In 1931, Backer and his family returned to the Netherlands, where he continued to work on his magnum opus, the English-language *Flora of Java*, which was published posthumously in three volumes (1963, 1965, 1968).

In 1936, on the recommendation of Professors Victor Jacob Koningsberger and August Adriaan Pulle, the Senate of Utrecht University awarded Cornelis Andries Backer an honorary doctorate in recognition of his outstanding achievements in botany.

### 1936 Paul Christiaan Flu

Flu studied at the Medical School in Paramaribo and continued his studies at Utrecht University, where he passed his medical finals at the age of 22. His plan was to specialise in ophthalmology, and to this end, he trained at the ophthalmology clinics of Professor Snellen in Utrecht and Professor Galezowski in Paris. However, his true passion lay in bacteriology and parasitology, leading him to become an assistant in bacteriology with Professor Spronck in Utrecht. From 1908, he spent three years in Paramaribo as a Medical Officer at the military hospital. In addition to his general medical practice, he worked as an eye specialist and headed the Pathology Laboratory, while also teaching at the Medical School. By Royal Decree on 24 July 1911, Flu was posted



Paul Christiaan Flu (1884-1945)

to the Dutch East Indies, where he was appointed Medical Officer at the Weltevreden Medical Laboratory.

He conducted extensive scientific work and became an expert on plague, cholera, dysentery, and typhoid. In 1921, he returned to the Netherlands and was appointed professor of tropical hygiene at Leiden University, also becoming the director of the newly established Institute of Tropical Medicine in Leiden. In 1938, he was appointed rector of the university of Leiden. In 1936, he received an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Utrecht University.

### 1936 Louis ('Lou') Otten

Otten was born in Rijswijk in 1883 and died in The Hague in 1946. Trained as a doctor, he was also captain of the Dutch football team. In 1911, he travelled to Batavia for the first time to do field work in Java. He received his doctorate in medicine on 1 December 1913. In 1914, he returned to the East Indies to work in the pest control department. In Bandoeng, he was assigned to 's Lands Koepok Inrichting and the Pasteur Institute.

He also held the position of extraordinary professor of Hygiene, Bacteriology and Serology at the Medical College in Batavia. In the early 1930s, he developed a vaccine against bubonic plague. This live vaccine was first used in Java in 1934 and saved many lives. In recognition of this achievement, the university awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1936.



Louis ('Lou') Otten (1883-1946)



## 1936 Hendrik Kraemer

Hendrik Kraemer was born in Amsterdam on 17 May 1888 and died in Driebergen in 1965. He was a linguist, missionary, religious studies researcher, and missiologist. Orphaned at a young age, he grew up in the Diaconie orphanage in Amsterdam. From 1905 to 1909, he was trained at the missionary school to become a missionary for the Utrecht Missionary Society. On the advice of Dr N. Adriani, a colleague of A.C. Kruyt, he enrolled in Leiden University to study Indonesian language and literature with Snouck Hurgronje, under whose supervision he received his doctorate in 1921. Prior to departing for Java in the service of the NBG, Kraemer spent three months in Paris and four months in Cairo studying Islam.

Between 1922 and 1937, Kraemer worked in Java. Here, he was not only engaged in Bible translation work, but also served as an advisor on missionary issues in general. He raised awareness among missionaries about the significance of emerging Indonesian nationalism and established contacts with leaders of *Boedi Oetomo*, a movement against colonial rule formed by students of STOVIA, and the *Muhammadiya*, an Islamic-nationalist movement. Kraemer advocated independence for the Indonesian churches that had emerged from missionary work. The Higher Theological School founded in Buitenzorg in 1934 aimed to train leaders for this purpose, later relocating to Jakarta.

In 1938, Kraemer published *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, applying Karl Barth's dialectical theology to missionary work. He rejected any mixing of Christianity with non-Christian religions, emphasising that mission was fundamentally about encounter.

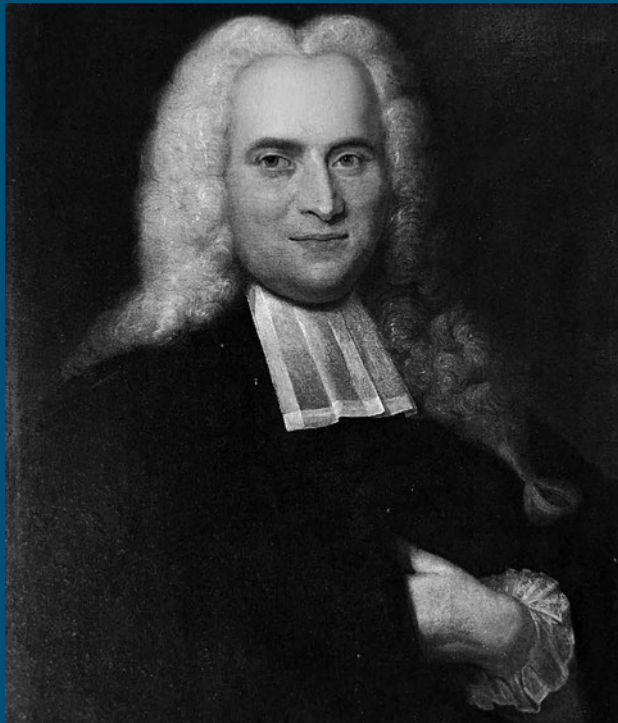
From 1937 to 1948, Kraemer served as professor of religious history and religious phenomenology at Leiden University. He was also the first director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, which functioned as



Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965)

a think tank of the World Council of Churches. The Hendrik Kraemer Institute, which provided joint missionary training for the Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands from 1971 to 2012, is named in his honour.

In 1936, Kraemer expressed his gratitude on behalf of the *doctores honoris causa* in theology. Exactly fifty years later, in Utrecht, the Indian theologian Stanley Samartha received an honorary doctorate, working entirely in the tradition of Kraemer as the director of the World Council of Churches' department of dialogue with non-believers.<sup>10</sup>



Christiaan Hendrik Trotz (1703-1773)

### Utrecht University and the issue of slavery

What exactly were the university's ties to slavery? In the preceding text, I have occasionally pointed out some connections with slavery. From a strong Western-colonial superiority perspective, the university was continuously in contact with the 'Other' — those who were yet to come to believe in 'our' Christian faith and those deemed 'as yet undeveloped' in 'our' science. This sense of superiority is deeply rooted in (Western) modernity, which had a necessary counterpart in the coloniality of the Other. It is this sense of superiority and slavery that are so uncomfortably closely related. The book *Slavernij en de stad Utrecht* [Slavery and the City of Utrecht] emphasises that the university educated people who ultimately were part of the elite, often the economic elite, and who were linked, sometimes through shares, to the plantation economy in Suriname and the East Indies, which was based on slavery. A striking example is that of Christiaan Hendrik Trotz, professor of law at Utrecht (1755-1773) and, during his term of office, rector (1757-1758), who was a co-owner of the Georgia plantation in Essequibo (now Guyana).

He likely purchased that plantation around 1760. This made Trotz a wealthy man and wanted to display his wealth, but not share it. Boswell referred to him as a miser. When a slave revolt erupted in Berbice (in present-day Guyana) in 1763, many plantations were destroyed. In 1764, Trotz instructed his son George to investigate the situation there. This marked the beginning of a colonial career for his son. George eventually rose to prominence and became the director-general of the colony of Essequibo and Berbice, serving from 1772 until the British occupation in 1781, and as commander from 1802 to 1803.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the economic ties of the university elite, Utrecht University's connection with slavery can also be observed through the way various disciplines addressed the phenomenon of slavery. The discipline that has been particularly involved in this since the university's inception is theology. The obvious starting point is Voetius. In his theology, he adhered to the maxim of 'Sola Scriptura': only Holy Scripture is normative. Through this approach, he actually arrived at a moderately anti-slavery position, citing in particular the Ten Commandments and the golden rule in Matthew 7:12, which reads in the King James Version: 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.' This view was also shared by other pietistic movements. Voetius and some of his followers, like the Zeeland minister Georgius de Raedt, opposed the more 'broad-minded' theologians of their time who allowed slavery if the enslaved were treated well.

In 1637, the minister Udemans sought Voetius' advice 'quatenus liceat mercatoribus societas indicae, tam occidentalis, quam orientalis, mancipia indica emere et vendere?' [to what extent were merchants of the East India Company or the West India Company allowed to buy or sell slaves?]. Udemans asked Voetius this question in part for his book *'t Geestelyck Roer van 't Coopmans Schip* [The Spiritual Rudder of the Merchant Ship] published in 1638, in which he stressed the duty of Christians in the treatment of enslaved people. Unfortunately, Voetius' response is unknown, but Schutte refers to statements in the *Catechesis* of Cornelius Poudroyen published in Utrecht in 1653.<sup>2</sup> This Catechesis, examined by Voetius himself, can be considered the words and vision of Voetius, who was the teacher of his catechumen Poudroyen:

Isn't that also a human theft / that one transports the people away / and sells them into slavery / and thus robs them of their most precious good / that is freedom / as happens so often in East and West India? Yes.<sup>3</sup>

So it is not fitting for Christians to engage in this brutal, unseemly, confused, perilous, and unfair trade, and by doing so increase someone's suffering, and be the agent of someone's torment and misery. But if anyone wants to let some good come from that suffering, he should buy him, to redeem and free him from such great servitude of the cruel tyrants, and have him, if possible, educated in the Christian religion.<sup>4</sup>

In the attitude of theologians and missionaries to slavery we often see an implicit opposition between *money* and *morality*. And we should fairly point out that this position was also strongly motivated by anti-papist sentiments. What prevailed was a half-hearted Christian compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. Kals – educated in the Voetian tradition – took a more radical anti-slavery stance, as we have already seen.

Voetius' moderate anti-slavery concept coincided with a strong idea of the superiority of Christian man over the Other, whose religion was 'false'. For Voetius, there was of course only one true religion. Colonial practice was therefore an indispensable tool for spreading the true faith throughout the world. This is also reflected in Voetius' views on infant baptism, as discussed in Janneke Stegeman's article in *Slavery and the city of Utrecht*. The question on the table at the Synod of Dordt was:

Whether one may baptise the children of the heathen in the East Indies, who have entered the family of Christians, and who have a Christian who promises to bring them up in the Christian religion.<sup>5</sup>

Voetius wrote an advice advocating limiting baptism to ethnic children who were old enough to profess their faith. By 'ethnic', he meant adherents of indigenous religions, excluding Jews or Muslims who rejected the Christian faith. This created a division between 'the believers and their seed' and 'the pagans'. This exclusivity made the practice of baptism more selective. The connection between Christian faith and freedom, even for an enslaved person, made many hesitant to extend the practice of baptism. The exclusivity of Protestantism was thus increasingly equated to the exclusivity (and superiority) of white individuals. Protestantism, as the true religion, became part of a superior civilisation and an indispensable element of colonial practice.

Interestingly, owning enslaved people was not uncommon among ministers. Some ministers were even directly involved in the slave trade. For example, Johan Basseliers, a minister and planter, owned about 50 enslaved people on his plantation. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, Utrecht alumnus Adriaan de Mey from Ceylon had thirty enslaved people and proudly displayed them.

Not uncommonly, owning enslaved people involved acts of violence. Even among ministers, the use of violence against enslaved individuals was not considered taboo. Van Troostenburg de Bruijn recounts the story

of Utrecht alumnus Jakobus Buren (Burenius). Born in Utrecht, he studied theology there and arrived in the East Indies in March 1667. That same year, he was called to Gala (Ceylon) and became a minister in Colombo by 1668. Buren also served as an assessor of the church assembly in Ceylon. However, Buren faced charges of mistreating an enslaved man who died as a result. Consequently, he was transferred to Ternate in 1676, where he and most of his children died. The minister and chronicler Francois Valentijn, incidentally himself an owner of numerous enslaved people, referred to the incident as an ‘accident’ that had befallen Buren.

Apart from theology, the university’s involvement in slavery also took other forms. Many Utrecht faculty members travelled to the East and West to conduct research and provide advice on the optimal cultivation of various export crops. This brought collecting, exploration, experimentation, (commercial) exploitation, and the use of enslaved people on plantations closely together.

## Utrecht University and the ‘friends of slaves’ [Slaven-vrienden]

In the nineteenth century, the Protestant religion, a cornerstone of colonial practice, began to voice stronger opposition to slavery. A line can be traced from Voetian pietism to the ‘Réveil’, the pietistic revival movement of the early nineteenth century. This Réveil, which stood against rationalism and the values of Enlightenment, found many followers in Utrecht. Under its influence, questions about slavery began to come to the fore. In fact, British Quakers had already taken steps toward abolition before the Dutch Réveil. In 1807, the British government abolished the slave trade with the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. The Netherlands followed suit in 1814 with a ban on the transatlantic slave trade using Dutch ships. The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 in Britain subsequently abolished slavery in British territories.

Those who opposed slavery were called ‘friends of slaves’. Apart from religiously motivated opponents, there were also pragmatic conservatives and liberal thinkers who spoke out against slavery for various reasons. At Utrecht University, a group led by Professors J. Ackersdijck and G.W. Vreede took a more rational-economic stance against slavery.

However, a unified front of ‘friends of slaves’ from the Réveil and the Liberals proved to be a bridge too far. Eventually, they each followed their



Jan Ackersdijck (1790-1861)



G.W. Vreede (1809-1880)



own path. The Réveil minister Heldring made an interesting observation in a circular letter dated 15 May 1845 to his Réveil friends:

The Utrecht gentlemen, slave-friends, mostly rational men, call on me to join them in their fight against slavery. I have done so, clamans in deserto [calling in the desert]. Yet even this cause is of God: deep is the curse that is upon us, that we do not realise it, do not look after it! Should I continue under my opponent or keep silent?<sup>6</sup>

The stance against slavery of the people of the Réveil was not motivated by an enlightened spirit, but by a desire to uphold traditional Christian values.<sup>7</sup>

Ackersdijck and Vreede took a different approach. Ackersdijck, in particular, was the exponent of a new movement of liberals who, following the example of French thinker August Comte (1798-1857), became increasingly involved in the public debate on moral citizenship. This involvement covered areas such as education, suffrage, alcohol, child labour, and also slavery. They followed a positivist-scientific approach, grounded in the principles of state economics and statistics. Seeking to stimulate the development of opinions on the colonies and the abolition of slavery, Ackersdijck and Vreede started publishing the journal *Bijdragen tot de kennis der Nederlandsche en vreemde koloniën, bijzonder betrekkelijk de vrijlating der slaven*. [Contributions to the Knowledge of the Dutch and Foreign Colonies, particularly regarding the emancipation of slaves]. Ackersdijck and Vreede served on the editorial board of this journal, which existed from 1843 to 1848. The liberal 'friends of slaves' would convene weekly at Ackersdijck's residence on Monday evenings. On the initiative of Ackersdijck and G.W. Vreede in particular, an address was presented to the King in 1842. The following professors from Utrecht were signatories: J. Ackersdijck (economics), H. Bouman (theology), A. van Goudoever (arts), G.J. Mulder (chemistry), R. van Rees (physics), J.H. Royaards (theology), J.F.L. Schröder (mathematics and physics), J.L.C. Schroeder van der Kolk (anatomy), J.C. Swijghuisen Groenewoud (Oriental literature), H.E. Vinke (theology), and G.W. Vreede (constitutional and international law).

Following this address to the King, an address to the members of Parliament was published in 1848. The list of signatories shows strong Utrecht slant, with many Utrecht professors led by Ackersdijck: J. Ackersdijck (economics), G.W. Vreede (law), R. van Rees (physics), A. van Goudoever (literature), S. Karsten (philosophy), B.J.L. de Geer (law), C.W.

Opzoomer (philosophy), J.C. Swijghuisen Groenewoud (Oriental literature), A. Numan (veterinary medicine), and H.C. Millies (theology). The address described the reasons for abolition from the point of view of the administrator/magistrate, the minister, and the merchant:

It is therefore the voice of right and humanity, and it is moreover the voice of interest, which urgently demand that slavery cease.<sup>8</sup>

Utrecht students also made their voices heard. In the 1859-1860 issue of the *Journal* published on Behalf of the Dutch Society for the Promotion of the Abolition of Slavery, the following message was printed:

The administrators of the Utrecht Netherlands and West Indies Student Union wrote an address to His Majesty the King in June of this year requesting a decision to bring about the rapid and complete abolition of slavery.

The writers consider it unnecessary to plead the cause of the unfortunate slaves once more, as the voices of religion and humanity have long given their verdict. However, they express concern that those interested in preserving slavery might use the current state of Europe as a reason to delay the swift realisation of emancipation. This gives them reason to note that it is precisely the clouds on Europe's horizon that are an incentive to expedite emancipation as soon as possible. This is to prevent peace from being disturbed in the Dutch colonies and to ensure that the smouldering spark of discontent among the enslaved population does not flare up into flame.

The address concluded with an appeal to 'the Dutch Nation' to send similar addresses in order to 'promote the speedy emancipation of slaves'.<sup>9</sup>

The 'friends of slaves' of the Réveil also remained active, founding the Society to Promote the Abolition of Slavery in 1853. The first principle was: 'Slavery, as it also exists in the Dutch colonies, is incompatible with the instructions, spirit and intent of God's holy Word.' In 1854, a book by W.R. baron van Hoëvell was published: *Slaven en Vrijen onder de Nederlandsche wet* [Slaves and Free Persons under Dutch Law]. This book was highly influential in shaping opinion in the Netherlands on slavery. Among the 'friends of slaves' was also Nicolaas Beets, the well-known Utrecht-based minister, writer poet, and professor.

Based on his religious beliefs, Beets declared himself emphatically opposed to slavery. He wrote the following poem about slaves in 1853:

O Dutch mighty and brave!  
Break our yoke;  
Bring, bring your poor Negro slaves  
Yet finally, finally out of bondage.  
Though we are black,  
we do have hearts,  
just as you.  
And if your hearts are better,  
Redeem ours from pain!  
Much we suffer.

‘Though we are black, we do have hearts’ – there is no better way to express Christian superiority thinking.



Nicolaas Beets (1814-1903) in his study

In this overview we should also mention H.C. Millies, whom we have already come across as the instigator of the honorary doctorate of linguist and Bible translator Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk.

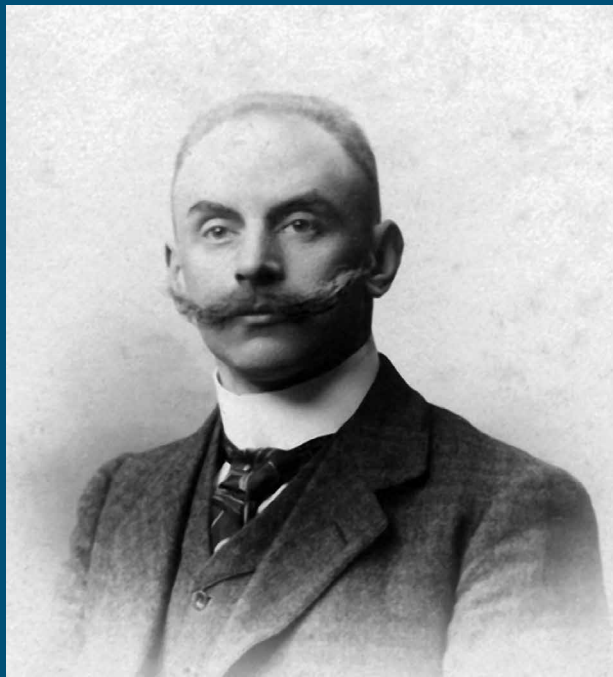
H.C. Millies studied at the Lutheran Seminary from 1827 and then read theology and Semitic languages under Taco Roorda in Leiden. In 1832, he became a proponent within the Lutheran church and subsequently served as a minister at Kuilenburg [Culemborg], Haarlem, and Utrecht. He also worked in South Sulawesi on behalf of the Dutch Bible Society. Appointed as professor at the Lutheran Teacher Training School in 1847, he later became a professor of oriental language and literature in Utrecht in 1856. Millies possessed extensive knowledge of oriental languages and was particularly proficient in Malay and Javanese.

A prominent figure in the Dutch Bible Society, Millies supported the abolition of slavery. In 1847, he made his views known in the newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad*. An article published on 3 December 1845 in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* had stated: 'While Christianity does not forbid slavery, slavery in no way excludes Christianity. One can be slave and Christian at the same time. Nor is the Christian necessarily a hypocrite because he owns slaves'. Millies responded with a pamphlet 'Can the Christian own slaves? Against the Alg. Handelsblad of 3 Dec. 1847' (Amsterdam, 1847).<sup>10</sup> He believed that slavery and Christianity were irreconcilable. Slavery is nothing more and nothing less than 'manstealing' and is therefore contrary to 'all true religion', including Christianity. Millies was concerned with a more comprehensive social transformation through Christianity: 'It was not merely some defects in man, some abuses in society and the state that our Lord wished to reform; but to recreate and renew man himself and through him also the household, society, the entire state'.

The Netherlands abolished slavery in different phases. First, slavery was abolished in most of the East Indies in 1860 with the 'Wet vaststelling van het Reglement op het beleid der regering van Nederlandsch Indië' [Act on the Establishment of the Regulations on the Government Policy of the Dutch East Indies]. In the West Indies, slavery was abolished on 1 July 1863 with the 'Emancipation Act'. The abolition of slavery was seen as emancipation! Mulder rightly points out the paradox that it was the conservative-Christian, and thus anti-modern, part of Dutch society that eventually helped promote this 'enlightened' and modern development of the abolition of slavery.<sup>11</sup>



H.C. Millies (1810-1868)



Herman Jeremias Nieboer  
(1873-1920)

## Herman Jeremias Nieboer

### *Slavery as an industrial system*<sup>12</sup>

In 1900, a dissertation was published in Utrecht on slavery, which was considered one of the earliest modern – for that time – social science studies on the topic. It remained authoritative for many years, especially among anthropologists and historians concerned with the phenomenon of slavery in regions that were not, or in any case not directly, part of the ‘Western’ sphere of influence. This was the dissertation of Herman Jeremias Nieboer (1873-1920), *Slavery as an Industrial System*, with which he obtained his doctorate under De Louter, a professor in the Utrecht law faculty.

Nieboer was an exponent of the development of social sciences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was strongly influenced by the work of S.R. Steinmetz (1862-1940), who was from Leiden, where he studied law. However, Steinmetz’ views had been impacted especially by G.A. Wilken (1847-1891), the Leiden professor of geography and ethnology of the Dutch East Indies. Wilken had conducted extensive research on kinship and traditional legal systems. Steinmetz had obtained his doctorate with his dissertation *Ethnologische Studien zur ersten Entwicklung der Strafe: nebst einer psychologischen Abhandlung über Grausamkeit und Rachsucht* [Ethnological Studies on the Early Development of Punishment: Along with a Psychological Treatise on Cruelty and Vengeance].

In 1895, Steinmetz was appointed as a private lecturer in ethnology at Utrecht. He accepted the position with a public lecture on ‘The proper place of sociology and ethnology as university subjects.’ Steinmetz was among the pioneers to introduce sociology in Utrecht, defining it as ‘the study of all the phenomena of human social life as such’. This comprehensive study, akin to the natural sciences, aimed to uncover laws and regularities in the broad field of social phenomena. Like Ackersdijck, he was drawn to a positivist-empirical approach to science, seeking coherence in social phenomena primarily through statistical data.

As Steinmetz pointed out, ethnology was basically the introduction to sociology, explaining the lifestyles of ‘less developed’ peoples through a modern empirical scientific method. He elaborated upon this in his public lecture in 1895:

The vast palace contains not only halls but also layers: the cellars of primitive history, the basement of wild peoples, and then the courts, gardens, small chambers, and extensive series of rooms belonging to barbarian, semi-civilised, and fully civilised peoples. [...] Ethnology has now evolved into a positive science, yielding results of increasing certainty and value. It shares a close relationship with sociology in more than one aspect. It can be seen as the sociology of less developed peoples, *the first chapter of social science*. [...]

The primary significance of ethnology for sociology lies in the fact that we all have reason to consider the social conditions and civilisation of wild peoples as an earlier stage of our own much higher development. This insight, owed to the general theory of evolution and thoroughly confirmed by positive experience, has made ethnology uniquely important for the history of civilisation. [...]

The savages, who have received our bullets, syphilis, alcohol, and adventurers in such abundance, might indeed learn some sweeter fruits of civilisation from us. Only a *narrow-minded* interpretation of Darwinism would lead to an uncharitable theory in this regard. [...]

The study of uncivilised peoples is also highly attractive as ethnography, as pure description, statistics, and (where occasionally possible) history, and fully justified within the system of sciences.<sup>13</sup>

**This imposes particular requirements on the ethnographer:**

We now expect the following from the ethnographer, if he is to be capable of performing the most important task, the only task that we truly need now: sufficient knowledge of the language, intimacy with the people, a lengthy stay, and as personal qualities, especially those necessary for this practical work: tact, courage, good health, powers of observation, and so forth. When these initial requirements are met, it becomes impossible for the ethnographer to investigate more than just a few peoples, or one large, developed people. [...]

This is why ethnology is required as a modern, comparative science:

Well then, comparative ethnology, pursued to the strictest requirements, demands first and foremost from the researcher personal knowledge of many related sciences, extreme versatility and patience, the ability to search and delve calmly and at length into countless books; every ethnological investigation, if its results are not to totter at the slightest critical push, must proceed from and constantly make use of the comparison of as many peoples as possible, and this requires a great deal of time, although we may feel that we are in possession of greatly improved tools for these studies, which can and must certainly be achieved through collaboration.<sup>14</sup>

[...] but in return, sociology offers so much. All these studies gain a new, fresh, and profound significance through it, often accompanied by new stimulating *Forschungsmotive*, such as the anthropological-sociological exploration of the rise and fall of peoples and cultures. Through sociology, the young scholar will find new, powerful, and enduring interest in his actual professional studies.<sup>15</sup>

I have quoted extensively from his 1895 public lecture to provide insight into the complexity of, on the one hand, a prelude to modern empirical social science, and on the other, the familiar pattern of evolutionary developmental thinking. After five years in Utrecht, Steinmetz moved to Leiden and then to Amsterdam, where he taught ‘political geography, ethnography and the geography and ethnology of the East Indian Archipelago’.

Steinmetz’s work in Utrecht eventually led to H.J. Nieboer’s dissertation, *Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological Researches* in 1900. Nieboer completed his PhD in the law faculty under De Louter, but his true mentor was unmistakably Steinmetz. Nieboer acknowledges Steinmetz in his preface: ‘This work was written under the direction of my teacher and friend Dr. S.R. Steinmetz, to whom I wish to tender my warmest acknowledgments. It was Dr. Steinmetz who first showed me the beauty of the social sciences [...]’. A revised version of this dissertation was published in 1910.<sup>16</sup> Nieboer’s dissertation has become a classic that still holds an esteemed place in anthropological literature today.

Nieboer aimed to investigate the conditions that made slavery a successful industrial system and the circumstances under which slavery had to yield to free labour. While Nieboer restricted his research to ‘wild tribes’,



he was not focused on reconstructing early human history. 'It is sociological laws that we want in the first place' (1910: xvi), he emphasised. In this manner, he radically departed from the prevalent evolutionary perspective of his era, demonstrating himself to be a modern social scientist. He employed the comparative method in his research.

Nieboer began by offering a definition of slavery: 'The slave as a man who is the property or possession of another man, and forced to work for him.'<sup>17</sup> He then condensed this definition to a shorter form: 'Slavery is the fact that one man is the property or possession of another.'<sup>18</sup> After defining slavery, Nieboer made a comprehensive list of all wild peoples in which he noted whether or not they knew slavery. In the first edition, Nieboer listed 176 positive and 164 negative cases; in the second edition, he expanded his list to 210 tribes with slaves and 181 without slaves.

Nieboer formulated a general rule: 'Slavery, as an industrial system, is unlikely to exist where livelihoods depend on material resources that are present in limited quantity.'<sup>19</sup> He then proposed a division into peoples with open resources and peoples with closed resources, following the example of the Frenchman Loria.<sup>20</sup>

Resources include especially land. Nieboer concluded that among peoples with open resources, slavery or serfdom could exist because there was no other means to force people to work for others. Conversely, among peoples with closed resources, only free workers would be found who depended solely on wages.<sup>21</sup> He immediately acknowledged that there were exceptions to this rule. This concept of open and closed resources as an explanation for the occurrence or absence of slavery remains a framework of analysis to this day. While it has been modified at times, the core of the framework has endured.

Interestingly, Nieboer drew parallels to his own time, comparing the situation to that of the working class in modern Europe, which he believed was no better than that of slaves in many respects. He became convinced of the necessity and reasonableness of the socialist alternative and joined the Social Democratic Workers Party.

In his survey of the history of anthropology in Utrecht, Jan de Wolf concludes:

'If there is one Dutch cultural anthropological study deserving the designation 'classic', it is this work. Scholars engaged in the study of slavery cannot ignore it.'<sup>22</sup>

Complementing and partly contrasting Nieboer's quantitative-sociological dissertation, in 1937 Aaldrik Hendrik Ruibing earned his doctorate under Utrecht professor Fischer, who had been appointed to the Indology faculty in 1936. The title of Ruibing's dissertation was *Ethnologische studie betreffende de Indonesische slavernij als maatschappelijk verschijnsel* [Ethnological Study on Indonesian Slavery as a Social Phenomenon]. Ruibing had previously served as an assistant resident in Ambon and later worked in Celebes. Drawing from extensive ethnographic material, Ruibing offered a nuanced perspective on the concept of 'slavery as an industrial system'. His focus was on the diversity of slavery as a social phenomenon. Among various peoples in Indonesia, slavery was often of minor economic significance, and the enslaved individuals, frequently acquired as war booty, were not viewed exclusively as part of the owner's wealth.

The societies of the peoples we are discussing almost without exception featured a closed household, meaning they are predominantly economically self-sufficient and produce little, if anything, for market trade with others. Consequently, slavery holds little value for these societies as an 'industrial system'.<sup>23</sup>

While slavery everywhere was founded on distinctions in the status of enslaved and free individuals, as well as on varying levels of authority exerted by their masters, there were otherwise significant differences existed.

When the Government abolished slavery, this impossibility [land use rights for the former slaves] becomes evident. It now becomes apparent that the former slaves, lacking rights to use the land, continue to rely on their former masters. [...] Given that the freedmen remained dependent on their former masters to exercise these land use rights, it is not surprising that we find references indicating that the relationship between free individuals and former slaves was largely preserved.<sup>24</sup>

In his preface, he expressed gratitude to his supervisor Fischer, Ms Grolman, Prof Kohlbrugge's assistant, and to the 'very learned Kruyt'. He was referring to the missionary ethnologist A.C. Kruyt who, as we have already mentioned, received an honorary doctorate in Utrecht in 1913. Kruyt, incidentally, had himself published an extensive article on slavery in Celebes in 1911.

While ethnologists in Leiden placed more emphasis on the underlying structural similarities between the different groups in the East Indies, viewing this as the basis for Indonesian nationalism, in Utrecht the emphasis was on the significant differences between the peoples of the archipelago. These differences, it was argued, could only be overcome through a 'Rijkseenheid' [Unity of the Empire] initiated from the Netherlands. In line with this dissertation, Ruibing concluded with several theses, including thesis VI:

It should be condemned that the candidate government official in the East Indies can complete his studies without knowledge of the comparative ethnology of the Netherlands East Indies and the institutions of Islam.

## Anthropology and Suriname

I would like to touch briefly on the later significant anthropological work in Utrecht concerning Suriname. In 1971, H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen was appointed professor of cultural anthropology. He had authored a dissertation on the political system of the Ndjuka 'Maroons' of Suriname and regularly published on this population group during his tenure in Utrecht. Additionally, as part of the national concentration policy in anthropology, Latin America and the Caribbean had been identified as a focal area for Utrecht. H. Hoetink succeeded Van Baal in this context, having authored a dissertation on Curaçao.

Wim Hoogbergen completed his studies at Utrecht University in 1978. He earned his doctorate in 1985 with his dissertation '*The Boni wars, 1757-1860: Marronage and guerrilla warfare in eastern Suriname*' (Utrecht, 1985), which was later published in 1992 as *De bosnegers zijn gekomen!* [The Maroons are here!]: *Slavernij en rebellie in Suriname*.

It was Hoogbergen in particular who extensively published about the Boni Maroons in Suriname. He devoted considerable time and energy to disseminating information about this group of Maroons, the escaped enslaved people in Suriname, to a broad audience in the Netherlands. Wim Hoogbergen's influence is clearly evident in Ellen Neslo's dissertation. She focused on the history of the population group of free people of colour in Paramaribo. In her 2016 dissertation *An Unknown Elite: The Rise of a*



*March thro' a swamp or Marsh in Terra-firma.*

London, Published Dec<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>o</sup> 1794, by J. Johnson, St. Pauls Church Yard.

March thro' a swamp. Blake after John Gabriel Stedman. *Narrative of Five Years Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Suriname*

*Coloured Elite in Colonial Suriname 1800-1863*, she illustrates how former enslaved people managed to ascend in colonial society and pursue economically significant professions. Moreover, through manumission, the act of buying enslaved people's freedom, they undermined the institution of slavery from within.



## TRAINING & CONTROL (1925-1950): THE 'OIL FACULTY'

### The Indology faculty 1925-1950<sup>1</sup>

This chapter delves into a specific era in colonial history when individuals both inside and outside Utrecht University were particularly interested in utilising education and training of students to further knowledge about the colonies. However, this was done with a very distinct approach and motivation.

The connection between politics and the colonies had already been acknowledged by the university in 1723. In November 1723, Nicolaus Konradus Hupka from Frankfurt am Main received his doctorate under the supervision of Professor E. Otto, who was a professor of civil law, public law, and feudal law. Prior to this doctorate, Otto reported to the Senate that the candidate had, without his knowledge, added a proposition which read as follows:

‘Navigatoriam, negotiationis causa, extremos ad Indos inire societatem, ubi omnibus aliis, ita et Austriaci Belgii populis gentium jure licitum semper erit atque permissum.’

[The establishment of a shipping company for trade in the Indies will always be permitted to all peoples, including those of the Austrian Netherlands].<sup>2</sup>

At the time of Hupka's promotion, a serious dispute was ongoing between the Dutch Republic and the government of the Austrian Netherlands (the Southern Netherlands) regarding the Generale Keizerlijke Indische Compagnie (or Compagnie Générale Impériale et Royale des Indes), which was founded in Ostend in December 1722. The Dutch Republic was concerned about the competition it posed to its own *societas navigatoria*,

the VOC. The Senate was cautious about getting involved in this political arena. Taking a stance on this issue was deemed an undesirable political stand by the Senate ('de illa controversia iudicium'). Hupka was asked to remove the challenged proposition, and he agreed to do so, allowing the promotion to proceed.<sup>3</sup>

In 1925, an article 'The Onslaught on Leiden' was published in *De Gids*, signed by six professors associated with Leiden University. What did they mean by this 'Onslaught? To understand, we need to look back a little further in time. An article by C.Th. Van Deventer in *De Gids* in 1899 discussed 'A Debt of Honour' of the Netherlands to the East Indies and its inhabitants, which had a significant impact at the time. In 1901, journalist Pieter Brooshooft published a leaflet *The Ethical Course in Colonial Politics*.



Journalist and writer  
Pieter Brooshooft  
(1845-1921)

In the same vein, Queen Wilhelmina, upon the government led by Abraham Kuyper taking office, addressed the Netherlands' stance towards the East Indies in her speech from the throne on 17th September 1901:

As a Christian power, the Netherlands is obliged to better regulate the legal status of the indigenous Christians in the Indian Archipelago, to support the Christian mission more firmly, and to permeate its entire government policy with the awareness that the Netherlands has a moral calling to fulfil towards the people of these regions.

These statements marked the inception of the ostensible 'ethical policy' towards the East Indies. With this ethical policy, the Netherlands aimed to distance itself from the notion that the East Indies was merely a region to be exploited for profit and solely serving Dutch interests. Instead, the indigenous population was to be given opportunities for development through training and education. As part of the political emancipation of the indigenous population, the 'Volksraad' [People's Council] was established in 1918. This council was permitted to advise the government in Batavia, with some members elected and others appointed by the governor-general. Initially, Europeans held a disproportionately large number of seats. Nationalist sentiments among politicians, particularly those active in Java and Sumatra, were not satisfied. These nationalist sentiments also gained ground among Indonesian students in the Netherlands, especially in Leiden.

However, as is often the case with labels like 'ethical politics', they are ambiguous and challenging to divide into distinct periods. The Netherlands aimed to be a 'preacher' but also certainly wanted to remain a 'merchant'. Perhaps the term 'paternalism' lies at the core of colonial policy during this era. Certainly, indigenous people were to be provided with more opportunities for development and education, but under the guidance of the mother country. Elsbeth Locher highlights that it was precisely during the period of ethical politics – or perhaps better described as a part of it – that the Netherlands strengthened its grip on the regions beyond Java. Ethical politics also doubled as ethical imperialism.

Many individuals involved in our colonial venture expressed discontent with these developments. Increased education, including higher education, and the empowerment of sections of the indigenous population might lead them to better understand their position and could potentially lead to colonial rule being challenged. This could lead to a questioning of



paternalistic authority. These individuals viewed it as a perilous development that might even foster ideas of independence among the indigenous people. Where do we find these concerned individuals? A number of businessmen with significant interests in the colony observed these developments with dismay. Their point of view was ‘Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren’ [Indies lost, disaster born].<sup>4</sup>

Leading this group was Willem Treub, former finance minister and then chairman of the *Ondernemersraad* [Council of Entrepreneurs] for the Dutch East Indies, and brother of Melchior Treub, former director of the Lands Plantentuin [National Botanical Gardens] in Bogor. The Council of Entrepreneurs was a lobby group representing the business community with substantial investments in sectors such as oil, sugar, rubber, and quinine. Willem Treub chaired this lobby group from 1921 to 1930.

However, one also found dissenters in conservative circles: intellectuals – including at universities – who opposed Enlightenment ideals and viewed the path towards universal suffrage as entirely misguided. They could be found among law professors who had been influenced by the historical school of law from Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Two notable figures, Treub and the historian Gerretson, found common ground in their dissatisfaction with the colonial views of the ethical policy, particularly as they were propagated in Leiden. It was precisely at the Indology school of this university that senior officials were trained for positions in the civil service in the East Indies.

Gerretson, who published a very successful collection of poetry titled *Experiments* in 1911 under the nom de plume Geerten Gossaert, served as the executive secretary of the ‘Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij’ [Batavian Petroleum Company] under Colijn. He authored a memorandum for the Council of Entrepreneurs outlining ideas for an education that would set Leiden’s programme on a more conservative course, focusing on the concept of ‘what history has brought into being’, also in colonial relations. Initially, he considered the possibility of establishing a special chair in Leiden, but this idea was soon dismissed as pointless. The prevailing perception was that Leiden would never accept it. Eventually, Gerretson proposed starting a new Indology curriculum with a number of professors by special appointment. Through Treub’s connections in business, sufficient capital was gathered to finance this endeavour.

Thus, on 26 January 1925, the foundation 'Fonds ten behoeve van Indologische Studiën aan de Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht' [Fund for the Indological Studies at Utrecht University] was formally established. The objective of the fund was formulated as:

to promote the development of the Dutch East Indies along the lines of historical growth as much as possible, by opening up the opportunity to train scientifically educated individuals for social and official roles there on a broader scale than currently available in the Netherlands, and also to strengthen the ties between both parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The fund received contributions from various companies, including 'De Bond van Eigenaren van Nederlandsch-Indische Suikerondernemingen' [Association of Owners of Dutch East Indies Sugar Companies] and the Batavian Petroleum Company. The minutes of the Batavian Petroleum Company Council meeting on 9 October 1924 recorded the following about the contribution to the Fund:

such with the intention of counteracting, together with other interested entrepreneurs in the Netherlands East Indies, the largely leftwing and insufficiently practical training of East Indies officials at Leiden.<sup>5</sup>

Initially, the Koloniaal Instituut in Amsterdam was considered to host this educational programme, but this idea was dismissed as the Koloniaal Instituut expressed reluctance to enter the field of (higher) education. The University of Amsterdam was also ruled out due to the expected opposition there to the conservative 'ideology' of the plan. Eventually, Utrecht was chosen. The later secretary of the Fund, Van Gybland Oosterhoff, wrote in the 1925-1935 Memorial Book: 'Utrecht was spiritually the most appropriate university'. He was not entirely mistaken in this assessment. The arrangement for the education received considerable support in Utrecht, particularly from a number of law professors, including Prof J. de Louter, Prof B.C. de Savornin Lohman, and especially Prof J.Ph. Suyling, as well as from the university's Board. Suyling himself had earlier suggested in 1916 the desirability of the establishment of an 'Indian faculty' in Utrecht.<sup>6</sup>

This idea was partly influenced by the philosophical ideas of the *historische rechtsschule* [historical school of law] in Germany. Central to

these ideas was the emphasis on the individual character of a particular country, section of the population, or nation; the prominence of organic links between popular character, law, and political education; the need for cautious, gradual reforms; and the concept that ‘the new’ should be rooted in ‘the old’. Development had to be mindful of what had grown in history, and therefore possessed legitimacy.

Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779-1861) is considered the founder of this historical school of law, which had a substantial influence in the Netherlands. A.C. Holtius, Utrecht professor of philosophy of law from 1831 to 1857, maintained an extensive correspondence with Savigny and hosted him during his visit to Utrecht on a trip to the Netherlands.<sup>7</sup>

Friedrich Julius Stahl, a scholar of constitutional and ecclesiastical matters, philosopher of law, and politician, took the principles of the historical school of law further.<sup>8</sup> He opposed revolutionary thought characterised by the demand for popular sovereignty, unlimited freedom, and a strict separation of church and state as a radical departure from the past. Stahl acknowledged the necessity for reforms but rejected the core of revolutionary thought: the idea that public life is based on man’s will rather than God’s orders. According to Stahl, only Christianity could counteract revolutionary thinking, with Protestantism at its core. He emphasised God’s *geschichtliche* [historical] action in history, thereby granting legitimacy to institutions that have evolved within that history. In this view, even the state cannot be neutral. Within the state, Stahl envisioned a central role for the monarch, who, on the one hand, had a divine right but, on the other, was also part of a constitutional state governed by laws. Stahl’s ideas revolved around *Autorität, nicht Majorität* [authority, not majority]. In the Netherlands, this maxim later resonated particularly among Christian-historical pioneers in their opposition to universal suffrage. Stahl was an important source of inspiration for Groen van Prinsterer (*‘le Stahl de la Hollande’*) and several Utrecht professors who followed his ideas.

This conservative Christian-historical perspective was prominent especially among those who founded the Oil faculty in Utrecht. Through his contact with the Christian-historical leader Professor A.F. de Savornin Lohman (1837-1924), Gerretson had established contact with his nephew, B.C. de Savornin Lohman, who was appointed professor of constitutional and administrative law at Utrecht in 1912. In 1931, he delivered an address ‘Het eigen Recht der Overheid’ [The Government’s own Right] on the

295th anniversary of Utrecht University. In this address, he stated, among other things: 'Recognition of the government's own right is, in my opinion, rightly considered a prerequisite for the recovery of the ailing state'.<sup>9</sup>

The 1925 article 'The Onslaught on Leiden' in *De Gids* by Leiden professors was part of a heated debate in the Dutch national newspapers regarding Utrecht's intentions. The supporters of the Utrecht education programme vehemently opposed 'Leiden' and its (perceived) ethical ideology. Gerretson emphasised the discrepancy between the 'Leiden ideology' advocating extensive self-determination for a future unified Indonesian state, and the 'Indian reality' representing historical Indonesian diversity that could enable a divide-and-conquer policy in favour of Dutch interests.<sup>10</sup>

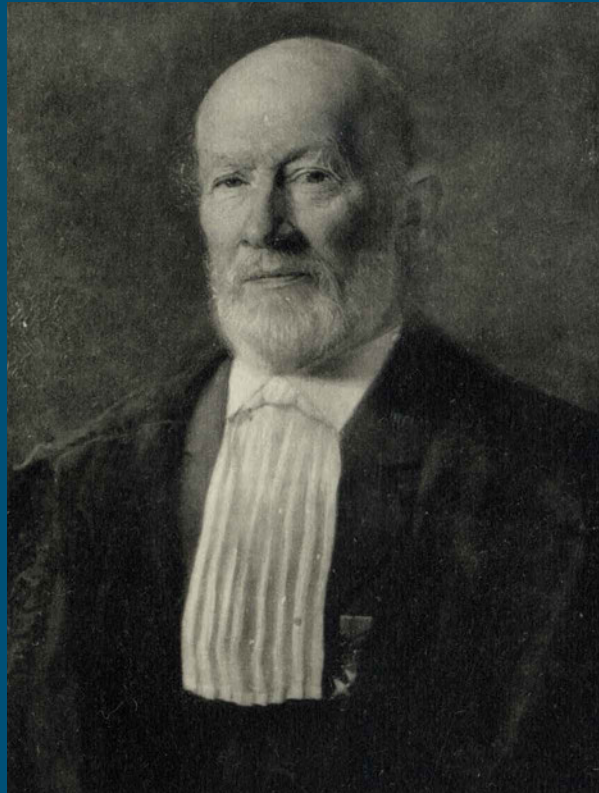
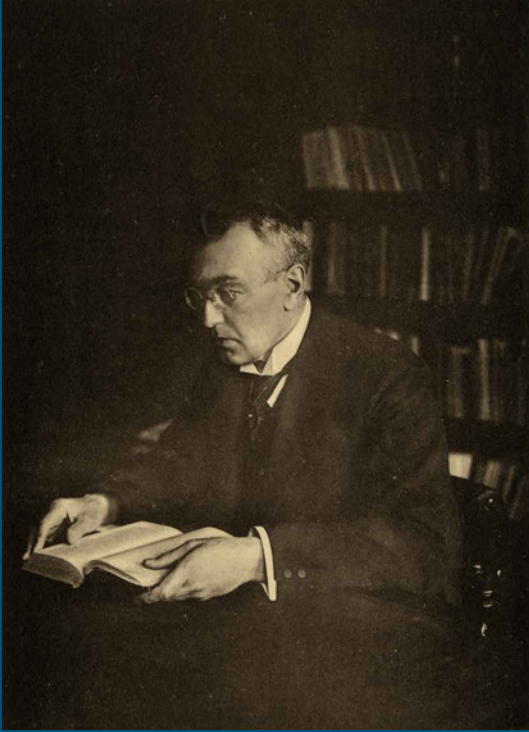
The crux of the criticism aimed at Leiden focused particularly on Professor Van Vollenhoven, an expert on international law, and the Arabist Snouck Hurgronje. Van Vollenhoven even spoke about 'the Indonesian' and the unitary state of 'Indonesia'. This was regarded as sacrilege by the colonial lobby.

'The Onslaught on Leiden' served as a rebuttal from Leiden to Gerretson and his supporters' criticisms. Criticism also came from other universities. The social-democratic daily *Het Volk* sarcastically referred to the 'Petroleum Faculty'.<sup>11</sup> Professor R. Kranenburg at the University of Amsterdam wrote

Sol Iustitiae illustra nos [...] Yes, yes. Lovely at the end of an inaugural speech; or a toast. From now on, the planter's hat will shelter her from the blinding light of the sun of justice.<sup>12</sup>

There was also opposition from several professors within Utrecht University. Seventeen professors opposed the establishment of the Indology faculty. A significant part of this criticism focused on the business funding of the special chairs. The concept of chairs by special appointment ('bijzondere leerstoel') had been formalised by law in 1905, aiming to establish such chairs at general universities through various organisations with a religious or philosophical foundation. Within the universities, there was some resistance to this concept. In Leiden, people talked about *secte-katheders* [cult chairs], a potential threat to independent scholarship. For some professors, a special chair, seemingly serving a political purpose and funded by business donations, was a bridge too far. It raised concerns about the scientific integrity of the chair, particularly in terms of pure science. The Indology faculty, with its professors by special

J.Ph. Suyling (1869-1962)



J. de Louter (1847-1932)

appointment, represents a notable early example of the debate about the intimate relationship between business and science through the funding of special chairs.

Professor De Louter, a conservative liberal, wrote a positive pre-advice to persuade the university Senate to approve the establishment of the Indology faculty due to its 'national importance'.

Eventually, the initiative as conceived by Gerretson received the approval of the university authorities as well as the Dutch government, under interim Minister of Colonies Hendrik Colijn, who was Gerretson's former employer at the Batavian Petroleum Company. Under the Higher Education Act, the government had to formally authorise the Fund to establish the special chairs. The Upper House of Parliament engaged in extensive debates regarding these special chairs in connection to the Fund's funding. Additionally, a story circulated that Queen Wilhelmina hesitated to sign the Royal Decree due to her alleged pro-Leiden sentiments.

The Fund for Indological Studies established several special chairs at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Arts. Operating as 'united faculties', they provided education in 'Indology studies' and 'Dutch East Indies law' respectively. The programme started in 1925 in the crowded Domkerk, attended by various dignitaries, including Colijn himself, who served as Minister of Colonies from 4 August to 1 October 1925. Due to its funding of the Fund for Indological Studies, it soon became known as the Oil Faculty or Petroleum Faculty; some argue – also quite convincingly – that the Sugar Faculty would be a more appropriate name.

The fund was supervised by a board consisting of B.C.J. Loder, former president of the Permanent Court of International Justice. Loder, a conservative liberal, had earned a doctorate with a dissertation *De leer der volkssoevereiniteit in hare ontwikkeling, aanbeveling en bestrijding historisch-kritisch beschouwd* [The doctrine of popular sovereignty in its development, recommendation, and opposition considered in its historical-critical context]. He was a follower of the German historical school of law and rejected popular sovereignty as the foundation of the state.<sup>13</sup> Other members included H.N.A. Swart, former lieutenant-general of the Royal Dutch East Indies Army; D.A.P.N. Koolen, the speaker of Parliament, who was sometimes mockingly referred to in the press as the 'Catholic Colijn'; W.H. de Savornin Lohman, president of the Supreme Court, son of the Christian-historical party leader A.F. de Savornin Lohman, as well as

nephew of the Utrecht professor B.C. de Savornin Lohman; and F.A.C. van Lynden van Sandenburg, former Queen's Commissioner in Utrecht and member of the Board of Utrecht University.

The scientific council of the Fund comprised several full professors: C. Eijkman (medicine), B.C. de Savornin Lohman (law), Suyling (law, chairman from 1925 to 1938), C.W. Vollgraff (Greek language and literature), H. Zwaardemaker (medicine/physiology), J. de Louter (law), and F.A.F.C. Went (biology).

The first professors appointed to the Faculty of Law were: Prof I.A. Nederburgh with the research remit 'The Constitutional and Administrative Law of the Dutch Colonies and Indigenous Adat Law in the Dutch East Indies'; Prof Nolst-Trenité with the research remit 'Dutch East Indies Criminal and Criminal Procedure Law and Dutch East Indies Agricultural Law'; Prof F.J.H. Cowan with the research remit 'Dutch East Indies Civil Procedure Law'; Prof Heyman with the research remit 'Dutch East Indies Civil and Commercial Law'; Prof J.C. Kielstra with the research remit 'Tropical Management Law'; and Prof L.Ph. le Cosquino de Bussy with the research remit 'Tropical Management Law, in particular knowledge of tropical cultures'.

The first professors in the Faculty of Arts were: Prof A. Baumstark with the research remit 'The Institutions of Islam', Prof Th. W. Juynboll with the research remit 'Arabic and the Institutions of Islam' (he was also appointed full professor of Hebrew and Israelite antiquities); Prof T.J. Bezemer with the research remit 'Javanese language'. Prof C. Spat with the research remit 'Malay language'; Prof F.C. Gerretson with the research remit 'Ancient and modern history of the Dutch East Indies and comparative colonial history, in addition to comparative ethnology of the Dutch East Indies', and Prof J.H.F. Kohlbrugge with the research remit 'Ethnology and comparative ethnology'.

Mas Prijohoetomo, who came from the East Indies, was recruited to teach Javanese. He attended the opening ceremony in the Dom Church in October 1925 in 'national costume'. His role within the Indology faculty led to his exclusion from the 'Perhimpoean Indonesia', the association of Indonesian students in the Netherlands, in which Mohammed Hatta (later vice-president of the Republic of Indonesia) played a leading role. The revolutionary magazine *Njala*, published in Batavia, reported in April 1926 that there were several disloyal Indonesian students in the Netherlands, mentioning them by name:



Group portrait of professors (first row right, F.C. Gerretson) at the opening of the Indology faculty 7 October 1925



Mas Prijoetomo



Third: Mas Pryohoetomo, who sold himself to the oppressive capitalists, was expelled for accepting the position of lecturer at the Indology faculty in Utrecht, an institution of the Indian Council of Entrepreneurs headed by Mr Treub. 'He thus participates', the writer states, 'in training *sinjo-sinjo kontelir* [young men – inspectors] who will be sent to the East Indies to reinforce the ranks of government officials.'<sup>4</sup>

Mas Prijohoetomo completed his doctoral studies in Leiden and in 1934 obtained his doctorate in Utrecht under J. Gonda, a professor of Malay and Javanese language and literature, with a dissertation on 'Nawaruci: introduction, middle-Javanese prose text, translation compared with the *bimasutji* in old-Javanese metre'. Nawaruci was an old-Javanese manuscript 'discovered' by linguist (and Utrecht honorary doctor) Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk.

Before long, the faculty evolved into a 'regular' Indology degree programme. There is no evidence that funders actively interfered with the content of the curriculum. Presumably, the choice made by students between Leiden or Utrecht was merely practical. Illustrative is the content of the 'Handbook' for the academic year 1929-1930, published by the Utrechtsche Indologen Vereeniging. Many sections of the teaching programme reference books by the 'reviled' authors from Leiden.

Some full professors from various faculties also taught in the programme. Additionally, as previously mentioned, prominent Utrecht professors sat on the academic council.

### F.C. Gerretson

The linchpin of the faculty was undoubtedly Gerretson – poet, historian, advocate of the 'Groot-Nederlandse Gedachte' [Greater Netherlands idea], conservative, briefly leader of the National Union – a fascist splinter party –, supporter of the Christian-Historical Union political party, and until 1939 a professor of special appointment with the research remit 'The ancient and recent history of the Netherlands East Indies and comparative colonial history', as well as 'comparative ethnology of the Netherlands East Indies'. His inaugural lecture bore the significant title 'The historical training of the civil servant'. Central to Gerretson's writings was the concept of 'historical growth'.



Group portrait of the members of the Utrechtsche Indologen Vereeniging (UIV) during the celebration of its first lustrum in the Grand Auditorium of the Academy Building (Domplein 29) in Utrecht. In the background are some professors including Gerretson with Utrecht Mayor J.P. Fockema Andreae on the left.

To his friend and ally in the Greater Netherlands idea, full professor Pieter Geyl, Gerretson expressed bitterness regarding his position as professor of special appointment. He was deeply hurt by his perceived lack of recognition by a full professorship. He believed that as a professor of special appointment he was essentially outside the academic community. Partly due to Geyl's efforts, Gerretson was finally appointed an extraordinary professor at the Faculty of Arts in 1939, with the research remit 'The Constitutional History of the Kingdom of the Netherlands'. 'Extraordinary' in this context meant that the chair was not funded by the state but by the university itself, and thus, unlike in the case of a chair of special appointment, made one part of the academic community.

As the Oil Faculty began to establish itself as a ‘normal’ faculty, some of the professors asserted themselves in the public arena of the 1930s. Gerretson, known for his strong conservatism, expressed his thoughts in 1938 (!) in his very own ornate style, writing about the cultivation system, which many now detested:

We must, in appreciating this system, fundamentally detach ourselves from the mockery and slander which liberal dogmatism has so firmly engrained in our good people, that every high school student and every college professor, when hearing the words ‘Indian cultivation system’, automatically snaps back with a disdainful expression, ‘Netherlands’ shame’. The cultivation system (and it is time to say it out loud) has been the greatest benefaction the Netherlands has bestowed on the East Indies; a blessing for which, when it will one day understand its own history, it will thank us forever.<sup>15</sup>

Gerretson was one of the founders of the National Union, a study association that turned into fascist territory, prompting Gerretson to turn his back on it. Utrecht professor H.P. Blok, professor of ancient art history of Egypt and the Near East, was also a member of the National Union.<sup>16</sup> Blok held ultra-conservative views and expressed them in various articles. Another professor, Prof H. Westra, was an avowed member of the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB), the Dutch Nazi-party, and was eventually appointed mayor of The Hague.

Another rather unconventional professor, J.L Pierson, briefly held the chair of Japanese within the Indology faculty and was an avowed fascist. His letterhead boldly proclaimed: ‘Fascismo è salvezza’ [Fascism is salvation]! Pierson dedicated much time to translating the *Manyōshū*, a collection of Japanese poetry. Volume III was dedicated to Benito Mussolini, welcomed as ‘the greatest man in the world of all times’, while Volume V (1938) was dedicated to Adolf Hitler, described as ‘the personification of good will and the master of well-timed action’.

Pierson was married to the writer Lucy Mary Franssen (1878-1959), who authored several novels under the nom de plume Ellen Forest. She also translated Italian books about Benito Mussolini, with whom she and her husband were acquainted. When Pierson was instructed to admit a student carrying a pin with a broken rifle to his lecture, he resigned.



F.C. Gerretson (1884-1958)



H. Westra (1883-1959)



J.L. Pierson (1893-1979)

Gerretson was an outspoken advocate of the Greater-Netherlands movement, which suggested a linguistic-cultural connection between the Netherlands and Flanders. This movement soon extended its reach to South Africa, where Afrikaans began to occupy a more prominent position. Gerretson's involvement included writing the 'Hollandsche Kroniek' in the magazine *Dietsche Stemmen: tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Stambelangen* [Dutch Voices: journal for the interests of the Dutch Tribe] which appeared from 1915 to 1918. In addition to the 'Hollandsche Kroniek', there were also a Flemish and a Suid-Afrikaanse Kroniek (the latter written by H.D.J. Bodenstein, a professor at the University of Amsterdam and, from 1920, at the University of Stellenbosch). *Dietsche Stemmen* also regularly featured an economic chronicle that often focused on the economic importance of the East Indies.

Gerretson steered the line of conservative-liberal professors in Utrecht in an extremely conservative-confessional direction. After World War II, he became a member of the Upper House for the Christian-Historical Union. He was one of the leaders of the *Nationaal Comité Handhaving Rijkseenheid* [National Committee for Maintaining National Unity], a conservative lobby group formed in 1946 in response to the Linggadjati Agreement.

### Students at the Indology Faculty

Mindful of the political emancipation of East Indian students in Leiden, Utrecht was particularly concerned about the situation of 'inlandsche jongelui' [indigenous young men]. The draft minutes of the Supervisory Board of the Indology Fund on 31 January 1925 recorded:

Mr Stork expressed concern that when young indigenous men come to study in Utrecht, extremist elements might attempt to influence them early on, and he had pondered what could be done about this. He acknowledged that the indigenous young men live together in cramped conditions in Leiden and that some of them lead a miserable life which, combined with the contrast they observe in student life, could drive them towards the revolutionary side. He considered whether the best approach to guide these young individuals towards better paths might be to create something akin to the English University system. He envisioned a residence for them, overseen by a married couple, where they could live, receive guidance, and be introduced to proper circles. He believed this could serve as a counterbalance against negative influences.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, students were being prepared to go to the East Indies to work as civil servants in the colonial administration. After its beginning in 1925, the Indology faculty attracted a reasonable number of students. In the 1933-34 academic year, 138 students were enrolled, compared to 256 in theology, 232 in law, and 179 in arts and philosophy. By 1939, the Indology faculty had 198 students, including 19 women. There was an 'Indology Reading Room' in the University Library and a 'Reading Portfolio for Students in Indology Studies' at the Ethnological Institute at Achter de Dom. People mockingly referred to it as 'Oliedom achter de Dom' [Oil dumb behind the Dom (Cathedral)]. Gerretson had his study in the Geographical Institute on Drift.

One of the students, A. Alberts, became a prolific writer, who told amusing stories about the 'remarkable' Gerretson (pp. 42-49) and the 'Oil Faculty' (pp. 35-40) in *De Utrechtse herinneringen* [Memories of Utrecht]. Alberts received his doctorate from Gerretson in 1939 for his dissertation *Baud en Thorbecke*.

### Dissertations at the Indology faculty

The Indology faculty started its teachings in September 1925. In 1934, we find the first dissertation defence by S.L. van der Wal, who, thirty years later – following a stay in the East Indies – was appointed professor of 'History of the relations of the Netherlands (and other European countries) with the overseas world in Utrecht'.

The dissertations of the Indology faculty were included in the series *De Utrechtsche Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis, het Staatsrecht en de Economie van Nederlandsch-Indië* [Utrecht Contributions to the History, Constitutional Law, and Economy of the Dutch East Indies]. Gerretson supervised most of the dissertations (23). Three of the dissertations were published outside this series. Additionally, six dissertations were completed as part of *De Utrechtse Bijdragen* by H. Westra.

There was some controversy regarding some of the dissertations supervised by Gerretson. Strong rumours circulated that Gerretson himself had written parts of these dissertations. Indeed, Gerretson openly and – apparently – sometimes proudly admitted to this. His argument was that these PhD candidates were his own, and they had limited time to complete their dissertations before departing for service in the East Indies. Therefore, he closely followed their studies and thus also guided them through a relatively brief PhD research process. However, the controversy did not solely concern the method of production of some dissertations. On 14 October 1938, Mr J.W. Naarding received his doctorate from Gerretson with the dissertation *Het conflict Snouck Hurgronje – Van Heutsz – Van Daalen. Een onderzoek naar de verantwoordelijkheid*. [The conflict Snouck Hurgronje – Van Heutsz – Van Daalen. An investigation into responsibility]. Naarding (or rather, Gerretson?) sought to rehabilitate Van Daalen, the military commander and governor in Aceh from 1905-1908, in the conflict he had with governor-general Van Heutsz (1904-1909). Van Heutsz was depicted in this thesis in a less than academic manner:

Indeed, leaving out half a dozen turns of phrases, his [Van Heutsz's] soul was as devoid of ethical values as an overturned ashtray. Anyway, what did it matter? In Aceh, such values were unmarketable; they wouldn't even buy a drink in the canteen.<sup>18</sup>

In the stifling heat of the deck cabin of the Government steamer overnight, the ethical principle sprouted up like a miracle tree in his heart overnight. [...] By the grace of a belated conversion, Janus the Ethicist was now cooked for historical popular consumption.<sup>19</sup>

A spicy detail: until 1930, Gerretson was married to Van Daalen's daughter. This particular doctorate faced considerable criticism. Even during the defence, Professor of Geography, L. van Vuuren, himself a former Aceh officer, remarked it was a 'sad proof of the incompetence of you and your

supervisor'. However, criticism also arose from another angle. It was discussed by the Board of the Indology faculty. The dissertation and its portrayal of harsh military policy (attributed to Van Heutsz) would not reflect well on the image of the Netherlands as a colonial power. It was feared that it would give fuel to the critics of the Indology faculty in Utrecht. There were also concerns it might dissuade the Board of the university from appointing Gerretson as an extraordinary professor. Gerretson expressed regret and promised to prevent the dissemination of the dissertation. Finally, Gerretson's appointment did proceed.

The criticism regarding language and the intertwining of politics and academia was also raised in dissertation no. XXIII in the 'Utrecht Contributions' by D.J.M. Kleymans, *Het Trojaanse paard. Voorgeschiedenis der gemeentelijke en gewestelijke raden in Nederlands-Indië, 1856-1897* [The Trojan Horse: History of municipal and provincial councils in the Dutch East Indies, 1856-1897] in 1948. It was Gerretson's friend and colleague Pieter Geyl who, during the defence, criticised the doctoral candidate's language: 'Mr doctoral candidate, this is the word of a poet.'<sup>20</sup> Everyone knew which poet Geyl had in mind!<sup>21</sup> In this thesis as well, the ideas of Gerretson, along with those of several colleagues in the Indology faculty, were prominent. The concept of the internal decentralised organisation of 'Indonesia' – which they believed the country was not yet prepared for – was likened to bringing in the Trojan horse .

### Masdoelhak Nasoetion

The other professors of the Indology faculty also supervised doctoral candidates. In 1943, the Indonesian student Masdoelhak Nasoetion received his doctorate under H.Th. Fischer, endowed professor of ethnology and comparative ethnology. Nasoetion was friends with Mohammed Hatta and married to the Dutch Adriana van der Have. Later, Nasoetion became the secretary of the Indonesian delegation in negotiations with the Dutch government. Tragically, he was killed by Dutch soldiers in Kaliurang in December 1948.<sup>22</sup>

Indonesia's independence marked the end of the Oil Faculty.





Masdoelhak Nasoetion (with beret)



Horace Hugo Alexander van Gybland  
Oosterhoff (1887-1937)

## H.H.A. van Gybland Oosterhoff

### *The ideology of the 'Utrecht colonial school'*

The Oil Faculty also played a crucial role in further disseminating (ultra-) conservative Christian-historical thought. In 1929, as part of the Indology faculty, the journal *Politiek Economisch Weekblad. Orgaan ter versterking van de Rijkseenheid Nederlands-Indië* [Political Economic Weekly. Organ for Strengthening the Imperial Unity of the Dutch East Indies] was established. Van Gybland Oosterhoff, the secretary of the Indology faculty (and former colleague of Gerretson as Colijn's executive secretary at the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij), became the editor-in-chief of this magazine. Among the 'regular contributors', alongside the professors of the Indology faculty, were Prof C. Eijkman, Prof J. de Louter, Prof A.A. Pulle, Prof L.M.R. Rutten, Prof L. van Vuuren, and Prof F.A.F.C. Went. After only one year, the weekly was renamed *De Rijkseenheid. Staatkundig economisch weekblad ter versterking van de banden tusschen Nederland en de Indiën*, [The Imperial Unity. Constitutional economic weekly for strengthening the bonds between the Netherlands and the East Indies], which further propagated this conservative ideology. The magazine evolved into a mouthpiece of the colonial lobby and ideology. In this context, Van Gybland Oosterhoff emphatically referred to the 'Utrecht Colonial School'.<sup>23</sup> Through this magazine, efforts continued to promote the ideology of 'Unity of the Dutch Empire'. The tone was predominantly staunchly anti-socialist, inevitably bringing the Dutch political scene further into the picture. Van Gybland Oosterhoff would also demonstrate his activism in this arena.

In October 1932, Van Gybland Oosterhoff advocated a 'Nationaal Herstel Concentratie' [National Restoration Concentration] in an editorial in *De Rijkseenheid*. Eventually, he became one of the leaders of the 'Verbond voor Nationaal Herstel' [Alliance for National Restoration], a highly conservative political group that included several members of the teaching staff of the Indology faculty and centred on the traditional values of God, Holland, and the monarch.<sup>24</sup> This Alliance aimed to unite conservative to ultra-conservative forces in the Dutch political arena into one movement. The Indology faculty's magazine allowed Van Gybland Oosterhoff to continue promoting the ideology of unity of the Dutch empire. This advocacy received a significant boost soon after.

The events of February 1933 reinforced Van Gybland Oosterhoff's belief in the urgent need for national restoration in the Dutch political

system. This tragic event, as described by A.A. de Jonge, ‘apparently acted like an anti-democratic whiplash on a number of hitherto semi-liberal citizens.’<sup>25</sup> Due to the economic crisis, the navy in the East Indies was forced to reduce the salaries of its personnel. This led to significant unrest, also among Indian personnel. The situation affected the personnel on the naval ship *De Zeven Provinciën*, where a mutiny broke out among the Indian personnel during a training trip around Sumatra in early February 1933. Although the mutineers had initially indicated their intention to return the ship to the commander, a bomb struck the vessel, resulting in nearly twenty deaths, most of them among the Indian personnel. These events reverberated through Dutch society like a shockwave. It seemed as if the unity of the Empire of the Netherlands, the Dutch East Indies, and the Monarchy was teetering on the edge. It also galvanised the anti-democratic parties in the Netherlands, who believed that parliamentary democracy had reached its limits.

Just days after the mutiny, *De Rijkseenheid* published a ‘Manifesto of the Alliance for National Recovery’. This manifesto, signed by those directly involved in the weekly *De Rijkseenheid*, expressed fear of a socialist revolution, a profound crisis of authority in society, and a longing for restoration. Led by Van Gybland Oosterhoff, who had now left the Christian Historical Union, this movement did not aim to be a political party but rather a coalition of authoritative figures seeking to bring about a restoration in the Netherlands to save the country from what they saw as a certain socialist ruin. They held an ambivalent stance towards the parliamentary system. There were initial discussions with the NSB, but the loyalty of the National Restoration movement to the monarchy clashed with the NSB’s leadership principle, preventing further integration.<sup>26</sup> The poster of the Alliance for National Recovery was revealing: ‘Down with Moscow, no Mussert [leader of the NSB], only Orange’.

However, the parliamentary system proved robust, and the Alliance for National Recovery saw no alternative but to participate in the 1933 elections. They enlisted the controversial but popular figure of General C.J. Snijders as their standard bearer. Following the elections, the Alliance secured a seat in Parliament, occupied by Mr. W.M. Westerman, who later defected to the NSB. Throughout, Van Gybland Oosterhoff emerged as the primary spokesperson, the driving force behind the scenes.

The ideology of the Alliance for National Recovery aligned well with the series of major and minor crises of the interbellum, as described by

A.A. de Jonge. It was not the major crisis of a profound fascist upheaval, but rather the minor crisis of a parliamentary democracy that had perhaps gone off the rails, based on universal suffrage and marked by a desire for authority and order. De Jonge observed a 'leading centrist group, which was anti-democratic and very conservative, but not truly fascist'. Van Gybland Oosterhoff himself felt most comfortable in this middle ground.

However, in January 1937, he died suddenly of acute peritonitis at a young age, unmarried and with no descendants. His funeral in The Hague showcased his prominent position on the conservative wing of Dutch politics, evidenced by the presence of numerous dignitaries. Meanwhile, in another part of The Hague, one of his friends, Wouter Lutkie, a priest and leader of the early Catholic fascist movement in the Netherlands, said mass in memory of Van Gybland Oosterhoff. The deep-seated desire for restoration had brought together the Catholic fascist priest Lutkie and the Protestant stalwart Van Gybland Oosterhoff.

## 'Copyright'

### *Dutch entitlement to the Indies*

A notable aspect of the ideology of the 'Utrecht Colonial School' was contributed by one of the professors of the Indology faculty in Utrecht, the lawyer I.A. Nederburgh. Nederburgh had risen to director of the Department of Justice and judge at the Supreme Court in the East Indies before joining the Indology faculty. In the inaugural issue of the Political Economic Weekly on 4 October 1929, he wrote an article 'Indisch-Staatsrechtliche Vertoogen, I. Nederlandsch Recht op en in Indië' [(East) India Constitutional Discourses, I. Dutch Law in and Title to the East Indies]. In this article, he delved into the concept of 'copyright' and posed the question:

Is the right that one acquires to a country by being born there – at least by no fault of one's own – stronger than any other? Judged from a moral standpoint, is not the right of the one who made a country, higher or at least as high as that of the one who happened to be born there? [...] In the East Indies, the population the Dutch found there increased more than tenfold and reached a higher level of prosperity and development. [...] In this respect, the Dutch right to the Indies is at least as valid as that of the native. [...] If we

adhere to the situation as it has developed up to our time, it can be concluded that the Dutch people have a right to the East Indies by virtue of possession and by virtue of copyright [Nederburgh used the Dutch word 'auteursrecht', which translates as the 'right of the author'] which is not inferior to the birthright of the natives. The Netherlands makes very moderate use of this right, while also devoting its best efforts to the welfare, not least of the indigenous people. It fully realises that in this case, as in most, right and duty go together. It must fulfil this duty, the high calling it has in the tropics, to the best of its ability; but it is folly to want to separate this duty from the right to which it is attached and from which it springs.

A European power that had brought civilisation, justice, economic development, infrastructure, and so forth to a colony had thereby acquired 'copyright', the right to maintain a defining position in the colony.

This concept of 'copyright' then went on a journey. In 1932, Van Gybland Oosterhoff made a trip through South Africa, about which he reported extensively in his *Indrukken van een Reis naar Zuid-Afrika*, [Impressions of a Journey to South Africa] published in 1933. In it, he spoke of the 'Via Sacra, a Sacred Road, for our nation'. This holy road ran along the Cape to 'our great, overseas empire'.<sup>27</sup> In his travel report, Van Gybland Oosterhoff noted with some satisfaction 'that the position of the Utrecht Colonial School had the strong sympathy of the Afrikaners'. Van Gybland Oosterhoff gave lectures in Cape Town, Pretoria, and Bloemfontein, among other places, on the main theme of the threat of 'Bolshevism and the coloured races'; a theme on which he had previously published in *De*



[J.A. Nederburgh (1861-1941)]

*Nederlander*, the Christian-historical daily. Van Gybland Oosterhoff believed that South Africa faced a major challenge, that of the 'Naturellen question' [the case of the Natives]. What would the future look like in a country where whites were nevertheless a minority? Van Gybland Oosterhoff introduced at length to his audience the concept of 'copyright' as developed by Nederburgh in relation to the East Indies.

When you have this country [South Africa] before you with its cities, its roads and railways, its farms and mines, that country was purely and exclusively made by the white man. There is not a tittle or an iota of indigenous guiding influence in this work. The white man has the copyright, he alone. If that copyright were infringed, if the decision on the work created were left in the hands of the majority of the population, who cannot do it, according to the democratic system of half plus one, the whole thing would collapse. [...] The European conqueror has turned this area into a flourishing country: he has created order and security there, introduced justice, built ports, roads, and other means of transport, vigorously promoted the state of health. [...] It has become something else, a creation of the European occupier. [...] In this chain of thought, the power that occupied the country can therefore be said to be the author of this new population. [...] So, one has here a copyright, which is more respectable than the right by birth, which is obtained involuntarily, or than the right by conquest, which is based on force. For the copyright is obtained by beneficence.<sup>28</sup>

The Afrikaners were keen to appropriate that copyright in their own situation. Van Gybland called for an 'expert and systematic training of government officials in South Africa'; the Indology faculty as an export commodity! That was necessary:

to extract as much from indigenous society as is feasible. Only then can a proper segregation policy be pursued, and it seems to me that this should be fundamentally worked out as soon as possible, because the longer the matter is postponed, the more difficult it becomes.<sup>29</sup>

This view, according to Van Gybland Oosterhoff, was welcomed by certain circles in South Africa:

It goes without saying, therefore, that when I spoke about this copyright, especially in nationalist circles, who are in favour of keeping the white and black spheres as separate as possible, it appealed to them as it provided a scientific consideration for their practice, which they had instinctively followed in the footsteps of the Voortrekkers.<sup>30</sup>

In this way, the attention to South Africa was gradually brought within a colonial aspect, and Utrecht scholars provided a scientific basis for the system of segregation in South Africa based on their colonial views.



## LEGACY OF THE 'OIL FACULTY'

The Oil Faculty, in any case, was tainted by the unsavoury connections of some key figures at the Indology faculty with right-wing authoritarian or even fascist groups and parties. This continued until after World War II in the conservative National Committee for Maintaining National Unity 1946-1950, in which Gerretson played a central role.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, the undertaking of the Indology faculty was symbolic of the increasing focus on 'the tropics' in Utrecht in the first half of the twentieth century. As we have seen, this attention for the tropics coincided with the growing emphasis on research in the East Indies, in particular. Professors from Utrecht travelled the 'Via Sacra' to the tropics, and some researchers who had distinguished themselves in the East Indies became professors in Utrecht.

In his Report on the state of the University of Utrecht for the academic year 1920-1921, rector magnificus Vogelsang remarked: 'The expansion of scientific activities and institutions in every field noticeable, must, of course, also benefit the Dutch colonies'. Partly for this reason, the university organised the annual 'Indische Week' [Indies Week], which aimed to generate interest in a career in the tropics by providing information. Vogelsang reported in 1921 that this 'Indische Week' attracted many interested parties, and the Ministry of Colonies had now established a 'regular information service' where a ministry official on location provided information at regular intervals. In line with Gerretson's ideas, the university also had a Committee for Academic Indian Lectures, which organised lectures at the university. When it appeared that the lectures could no longer continue due to budget cuts in 1931, the Senate intervened, and the committee – chaired by Professor Went – was asked to continue its work.



## Jan Gonda and the Oriental language and culture tradition in Utrecht

There are direct lines connecting the Oil Faculty to the linguistic Indology tradition in Utrecht through the work of the world-renowned professor of Sanskrit, Jan Gonda.

Naturally, there were professors of Oriental languages who also focused on the Indies in the broader sense. The university began training ministers in 1636, marking the start of Oriental languages being taught in Utrecht. In his highly informative 1981 book entitled *Een bescheiden onderkomen: Historisch overzicht van de studie van de Oosterse talen en kulturen aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht* [Modest Quarters: Historical overview of the study of Oriental languages and cultures at the University of Utrecht], Teun Goudriaan provides an overview of the various languages falling under the heading of 'Oriental'. Initially, this included Hebrew, the Lingua Sancta, and other Semitic languages. Hebrew initially held the position



Jan Gonda  
(1905-1991)

of the 'mother tongue'. Additionally, there were the modern Islamic languages such as Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, and finally, the languages of South, South-east, and East Asia, including Sanskrit, Dravidian languages, Indonesian languages, Chinese, and Japanese.

From this broad range, Voetius was the first professor of Oriental languages. He and his successors, such as Johannes Hoornbeeck, Johannes Leusden, Friedrich Lampe, Gijsbert Bonnet, Sebald Rau, J.H. Pareau, and J.C. Swijghuijsen Groenewoud, also taught Hebrew and often focused on Jewish antiquities. Voetius also had a moderate grasp of Arabic. Initially, the study of Eastern languages was closely intertwined with theology, with Hebrew and Jewish antiquities playing central roles among the Oriental languages. However, there was a gradual 'emancipation' of Oriental languages from theology. Until the nineteenth century, professors of Oriental languages often held positions in both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Theology. It was only in the late nineteenth century that a clear split between theology and the arts emerged.

From the university's foundation, there was a specific focus on Islam, particularly through the work of Voetius and some of his successors who recognised the importance of studying Arabic. Sometimes this interest was purely academic, while at other times, knowledge of Arabic was seen as a necessary tool to engage effectively with Islam. Following Voetius, the tradition of studying Arabic and Islam continued with prominent specialists such as Adriaan Reland (professor of Oriental languages from 1701-1718), who also delved into the study of Malay, David Mill (Millius, 1692-1756), and later in the nineteenth century, Pieter de Jong (1869-1890), M.Th. Houtsma (1890-1917), and Theodor Willem Juynboll (1917-1936). Houtsma and Juynboll taught Hebrew, but were primarily known as Arabists. Both showed significant interest in the legal theory and practice of Islam. Undoubtedly, this coincided with the colonial administration during that period.

The establishment of an endowed chair in Arabic and knowledge of Islam at the Indology faculty in 1936 was a result of the colonial administration's efforts to prepare administration officials. This chair was occupied by W.J.A. Kernkamp, who had previously received his doctorate from the Faculty of Law on the topic of Islam and Women. Kernkamp later became a professor of constitutional law in 1946, and from 1952 to 1956, he served as Minister of Overseas Affairs.

It was not until later in the twentieth century that an autonomous study of Islam as a religious subject developed, initially within the faculty

of theology with J.J. Waardenburg. This study later detached from the missionary element of the theology course and continued with R. Kruk, R. Otten, F. de Jong, M.M. van Bruinessen, and, more recently, Chr. Lange. An intermediary figure in this development was Professor H.C. Millies (1810-1868), who, in his inaugural address in 1856 emphasised the importance of languages in the East Indies, particularly for the spread of Christianity. Millies was a member of the board of the Dutch Bible Society and advocated sending language scholars to the East Indies to facilitate Bible translations in indigenous languages.

The university historian Kernkamp records that, in 1865, there was a proposal submitted to the Council of the City of Utrecht outlining ambitious plans for the establishment of an institute dedicated to 'Oriental studies', encompassing disciplines such as land studies, linguistics, ethnology, agricultural science, and botany related to the East Indies. This initiative was inspired by similar institutions in Leiden and was aimed at establishing a comparable centre in Utrecht. However, the true foundation of the Indology tradition can be traced to the study of Sanskrit towards the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The emancipation of Oriental languages from theology into the study of Asian languages and cultures took a significant step forward when Willem Caland (1859-1932) assumed the role of professor in 1906. Caland, who had received his education under the renowned Sanskrit expert J.H.C. Kern in Leiden before starting as an unsalaried lecturer in Utrecht, was appointed as professor of Sanskrit, Avestic, Old Persian, principles of Indo-Germanic linguistics, and principles of general linguistics. Among his notable students was the Indian scholar Raghu Vira, who completed his doctorate under Caland's supervision in 1929. Raghu Vira, a disciple of Gandhi, gained recognition in the Netherlands for his 1931 publication *Uit de praktijk der geweldloosheid* (From the Practice of Nonviolence), featuring an introduction by Henriette Roland Holst (1869-1952), a famous Dutch poet and socialist. He later returned to India, where he played a prominent role in politics and served as a member of parliament following the country's independence.

The *eminence grise* of this Indology tradition was unquestionably Jan Gonda, who assumed the role of professor of Sanskrit, Avestic, Old Persian, and the principles of Indo-Germanic linguistics in 1932. Concurrently, he was also appointed professor at the Indology faculty of with a research remit of Malay and Javanese language and literature. Gonda's appointment

heralded an international golden age of Sanskrit studies in Utrecht, spanning from 1932 to 1975. Following the closure of the Indology faculty in 1950, several language positions were transferred to the Faculty of Arts. Gonda was instrumental in establishing a globally renowned institute for Oriental Languages & Cultures, with a progressively deepening emphasis on India. Upon Gonda's retirement, he was succeeded by Henk Bodewitz (1976-1990).

This golden age persisted until the 1980s when, because of university reorganisation efforts, the Institute of Oriental Languages & Cultures was dismantled and somewhat controversially 'merged' with its counterpart in Leiden. This event marked the end of the Indology tradition in Utrecht, prompting consideration on whether it was the final 'Onslaught of Leiden on Utrecht'.

## Anthropology born of the colonial mind

Another element in the university's colonial legacy is the development of the discipline of (cultural) anthropology. For a comprehensive exploration of this development, I recommend Jan de Wolf's insightful publications on the development of anthropology at Utrecht University.<sup>2</sup> Here, I will specifically focus on the transition from physical anthropology, Indological studies (in the Oil Faculty), and ethnology to the modern discipline of anthropology. In the earlier section on slavery, I already mentioned the work of Hoogbergen and fellow scholars on the Maroons in Suriname.

We have seen how Steinmetz played a pivotal role in Nieboer's influential social science dissertation on slavery, a work that remains authoritative in contemporary scholarship. Furthermore, the appointment of physician and physical anthropologist Kohlbrugge (1865-1941) as professor of ethnology in 1913 marked a period of increased interest in characterising population groups and delineating differences among them through the measurement of physical traits. Prior to this era, the field of anthropology was predominantly focused on physical anthropology.

However, Kohlbrugge had already demonstrated his interest in the psychology of colonial subjects with his 1907 book *Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan en zijner overheersers* [Glimpses into the Soul Life of the Javanese and Their Rulers]. Consequently, in 1925, he was appointed as a professor of comparative ethnology, a position within the Indology

faculty established through the Fund for Indological Studies. However, this temporary appointment ended in 1930.

During his tenure, ethnological work faced challenges as Kohlbrugge also had to teach sociology due to a vacancy in the geography course. In his teaching, he placed significant emphasis on social work. Between 1925 and 1931, he published seven volumes of his *Practical Sociology*, focusing on how social work could prevent or alleviate social ills. This sociological perspective received criticism from some colleagues, who viewed his work as more pedagogical than sociological. In his dissertation on *Social Pedagogy in the Netherlands, 1900-1950* (Leiden 1998), Hiskia Coumou characterises Kohlbrugge as a 'social pedagogue malgré lui' [a social pedagogue despite himself].

In 1930, Kohlbrugge published his *Systematic and Descriptive Textbook of Ethnology*, followed by *Human Religion: An Introduction to Comparative Ethnology*. Kohlbrugge himself expressed the need for such works, stating: 'In teaching ethnology, I often felt the lack of textbooks and summary studies on the most important parts of comparative ethnology'. Through these publications, he aimed to address this gap in the field. His Indology faculty tenure ended in 1930, and he retired in 1935.

As noted by Coumou, Kohlbrugge engaged in a threefold struggle against Darwinism, ethical politics, and abstract-theoretical sociology. However, this struggle, as Coumou observed, 'had borne little fruit and had made him more enemies than friends'. Kohlbrugge no longer found it meaningful to fight for or against such ideas, recognising that 'everything changes and disappears by itself, including with the death of the exponents'.

Following Kohlbrugge, H.Th. Fischer (1901-1976) was appointed as professor of ethnology and comparative ethnology at the Indology faculty. Fischer, born in the East Indies where his father worked as a teacher, read geography in Utrecht. This academic path afforded him the opportunity to delve into the study of the land and peoples of the East Indies. To further his understanding of ethnology, he embarked on a study trip to the East Indies, resulting in the publication of *Zending en Volksleven in Nederlandsch-Indië* [Mission and Folk Life in the Dutch East Indies] in 1932.

Fischer's appointment at the Indology faculty resolved the problem that after Kohlbrugge's retirement, students in Utrecht could not receive a doctorate in ethnology. In 1946, he was appointed full professor at the

Faculty of Arts. His research remit remained unchanged throughout this period and he continued in this role until his retirement in 1970.

Fischer, a protégé of Kohlbrugge, received his doctorate in 1929 for his dissertation *Het Heilig huwelijk van hemel en aarde* [The Sacred Marriage of Heaven and Earth]. In 1936, he delivered his inaugural lecture 'Modern Ethnology as a Historical Science'. This lecture offers insight into Fischer's perspectives on the significance of ethnology (at the time, the term 'anthropology' referred to physical anthropology). He posited that modern ethnology, drawing upon the works of anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955), is characterised by a historical rather than an evolutionist focus. It seeks to understand cultural differences within a historical context. Moreover, Fischer highlighted the perceived obsession of physical anthropology with skeletal analysis, which he humorously referred to as 'skeleton mania'. This term was originally coined at a congress in Paris in 1878, reflecting the prevailing focus of physical anthropology at that time.

Just as anthropology and biology sought to develop an image of primitive man's physique and, going even further back to the 'missing link' to the animal world, drew up a genealogy of the contemporary physical human, so did the ethnology of that era aim to describe the development of human culture, from primitive man that was closely related to the ape to the cultured man of Western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Fischer highlighted that this evolutionist, ethnological cultural history was based on a 'similar psychological predisposition', a concept termed the *Elementargedanke* by Adolf Philipp Wilhelm Bastian (1826-1905). Bastian viewed these *Elementargedanke* as the building blocks of human cultural evolution, akin to cells for biologists. According to Bastian, there were certain laws governing the historical progression of cultural life in humanity. Fischer, however, rejected this idea of a deterministic developmental course, finding reality to be more complex.

With the deductively constructed developmental schemas reaching richly varied reality, one classifies it into one of the designed stages, with which it seems most in accordance, and explains all phenomena that do not fit there as survivals and infiltrations. It hardly needs to be argued that what was called historiography here

is only pseudo-history. There was no question of any inductive historical research.<sup>4</sup>

Fischer then introduced Malinowski and the concept of functional anthropology, emphasising the examination of cultural characteristics in their present functioning, a method crucial for colonial officials. Instead of deduction, he argued for inductive research focused on fieldwork and the production of ethnographic monographs. Additionally, alongside Radcliffe-Brown, Fischer believed that functional anthropology should not disregard historical understanding. He concluded his inaugural lecture as follows:

It [modern ethnology] should not seek to write the history of human culture, from primitive man to the present, but should confine itself to the historiography of particular peoples or groups of peoples, within what Josselin de Jong [professor of ethnology at Leiden] in his last inaugural lecture referred to as 'ethnological fields of study' and in American literature, with a more transparent term, 'culture areas'. One learns what is adopted, how it is adopted and why it is adopted when two alien cultures come into contact, all of which be of equal interest to the administrators, missionaries and European traders in the colonies.<sup>5</sup>

Concluding, Fischer thanked the gentlemen of the Indology faculty for his appointment as a professor, as this reinstated his right to confer doctoral degrees. 'For all the diversity of personalities, we are closely united by the same love for the East Indies and the idea of the unity of Empire'. I have explored this inaugural lecture in more detail because it illustrates how Fischer, in particular, shifted from physical anthropology to a modernising ethnology, later termed cultural anthropology. His introduction to cultural anthropology was translated into Bahasa.

The decolonisation and independence of Indonesia had significant implications for many Dutch scientists working in the tropics. They were compelled to travel the 'Via Sacra' in the opposite direction now. Several scientists who had devoted themselves to studying non-Western countries – the new terminology for the former colonies – found a new scientific avenue in Africa, and certainly in South Africa.

One such individual was Jan Prins (1903-1995). He graduated in Indian law at Leiden University in 1927. After serving as an administrative officer

in South Sumatra and Lombok, he became the secretary of the Lombok and Bali region from 1937 until the Japanese invasion in 1942. Following the war, he returned to the Netherlands on extended sick leave in mid-1946 and was discharged from further service in late 1948. During this period, he wrote a dissertation *Adat en Islamitische plichtenleer* [Adat and Islamic doctrine of duties], with which he obtained his doctorate from Leiden on 19 May 1948. In early 1949, he was appointed professor of adat law at the Indology faculty in Utrecht, where he delivered his inaugural lecture on Christian influence on adat law on 23 May, shortly before the transfer of sovereignty. Adat law was a crucial part of the curriculum for colonial administration officers and the East Indian lawyers.

For Prins, the close of the Indology degree programme signified a shift in research focus and area. In 1955, he was appointed as an extraordinary professor at the Faculty of Arts, with non-western sociology as his research remit. In 1968, he was appointed full professor in the newly established Faculty of Social Sciences, within the subfaculty of socio-cultural sciences.

As part of the cultural agreement between South Africa and the Netherlands, Prins spent the 1962-63 academic year in South Africa, researching the social status of 'coloureds' as a distinct population group. During his stay, he delivered lectures in Stellenbosch on 'The Background of Indonesian National Consciousness' and in Grahamstown on 'Race Relations in East Asia in the First Half of the Twentieth Century'. Prins was particularly engaged in research about the government's attempts to regulate the position of coloureds under the apartheid policy.

The official definition of a 'coloured' person was not established until 1950 when the newly elected National Party of South Africa determined that the population should be racially categorised, with coloureds identified as one of the four groups alongside whites, Asians, and Bantus. While Prins visited coloured neighbourhoods and families and observed working conditions in factories in Johannesburg and on farms near Stellenbosch, the method of participatory observation to systematically describe the coloureds' environment from their viewpoint was not yet central to his approach. In the preface of his book, Prins acknowledges his indebtedness to Erika Theron, a professor at Stellenbosch University, and her associates, who assisted him in gaining insight into this field of study.

The study visit culminated in the publication of a book *De beknelde kleurling* [The trapped coloured] published in 1967. Prins critically



assessed the apartheid ideology, highlighting its absurdity in defining 'civilisation' exclusively as white civilisation, unreachable for those not born to 'pure' white parents:

...of one of the most racially mixed groups in the world, it is assumed, for the sake of the political system, that they are 'a race' in themselves; of a group which, in terms of language and civilisational attributes, is more than 90% similar to the Westerner in South Africa, except for the poverty and illiteracy prevalent among broad strata, it is claimed that its members can never be 'white'...<sup>6</sup>

He considered it sociologically significant that in South Africa, the notion of the Christian 'guardianship' provided a theological justification for domination over tribe-aligned and non-tribal Bantus.<sup>7</sup> Prins identified a clear resemblance between this attitude and the paternalism seen in Dutch colonial politics. He referred to this paternalistic rule, characterised by 'with you, over you, without you' in national politics over many generations, as 'remarkable'.

Finally, in this overview of the transition from the Indology faculty with its ethnology to cultural anthropology, Jan van Baal is significant.

Van Baal (1909-1992) was trained in Leiden as an administrative officer, where he earned his doctorate under Josselin de Jong in 1934 for a literature review on the Marind-Anim of southern New Guinea, 'Religion and Society in Dutch South-New Guinea'. He then returned to the East Indies, working in Bali and Lombok. During the negotiations on the transfer of sovereignty, no agreement was reached on New Guinea. As a result, the Netherlands continued to administer New Guinea until 1962. When the former Utrecht-based professor W.J.A. Kernkamp was minister, the Dutch government established the Kingdom Statute. Kernkamp was responsible for the last remnant of the colonial empire in Asia: Western New Guinea. Kernkamp appointed the anti-revolutionary Member of Parliament Jan van Baal as governor, making Utrecht the centre of expertise for this part of the empire. A crucial role of non-Western sociology in Utrecht was the training of administration officials for New Guinea. Van Baal assumed leadership of the Bureau of Population Affairs and later became governor. During this period, New Guinea once again became a focal point of anthropological research. In March 1958, Van Baal returned to the Netherlands. He became a staff member and later director of the Cultural and Physical Anthropology Department at the KIT (Royal



Jan van Baal with two Papuans. The person on the right is a kampong chief, South New Guinea

Tropical Institute, 1959-1969). He also held an extraordinary professorship in cultural anthropology in Amsterdam (1961-1969).

He was appointed as a lecturer in 1959 and became extraordinary professor of sociology and ethnology of religion at the Faculty of Arts in Utrecht in 1960. This teaching position was converted into an extraordinary professorship of religious ethnology and the ethnological theory of acculturation in 1961. In 1969, he assumed the position of full professor of cultural anthropology, particularly focusing on religious ethnology and the ethnological theory of acculturation at the newly established Faculty of Social Sciences, subfaculty of Social and Cultural Sciences in Utrecht.

However, dissatisfied with the developments at the university, he resigned from his full professorship in early 1973. Van Baal believed that activists among students and young staff had gained excessive influence, especially within his faculty. In an article published in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* on 3 February 1973, Van Baal provided an extensive account of the situation at the subfaculty. One of the students' demands was 'that minorities should be the subject with which anthropology in Utrecht should engage'. These minorities primarily referred to the 'guest workers' present in the Netherlands!

Despite his resignation from the full professorship, Van Baal continued to work as an extraordinary professor at the theological faculty, focusing on the anthropology of religion until his retirement in 1974. He retired in 1975.

With Van Baal the transition from Indology studies, particularly the ethnology section, to modern cultural anthropology was completed. Kohlbrugge, Fischer, Prins, and Van Baal all began their careers in colonial service and went from the colony to academia. The founders of the Indology faculty held conservative views on governance and the future of the Indies. However, they also played a role in facilitating the development towards modern cultural anthropology in Utrecht.

Indology transformed into non-Western sociology, with ethnology initially playing a central role. Ethnology, incidentally, remained part of human geography, a fact that did not change even with the new University Statute that came into force in 1955. With this statute, the subject was renamed cultural anthropology and became an independent major in the educational programme. In April 1959, the Institute of Ethnology and Non-Western Sociology opened in the Lucasbolwerk 6 building with a section

on Cultural Anthropology. Only in 1969 was the Institute of Ethnology and Non-Western Sociology renamed the Institute of Cultural Anthropology Utrecht. Furthermore, in 1965, within the subfaculty of geography, the only chair of Social Geography was split, creating a chair of Non-Western geography held by Jan Hinderink. This chair was later renamed the Chair of Human Geography of Developing Countries.





## EDUCATION IN THE COLONY<sup>1</sup>

What was the situation regarding education in the colonies up to independence? If we define the objectives of education as qualification, socialisation, and personality development, and we bring these goals into a colonial and segregated society like in the Netherlands East Indies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we immediately see the tensions this caused among colonial administrators. After the new constitution was introduced in the Netherlands in 1848, the Government Regulation for the Dutch East Indies was subsequently introduced in the Dutch East Indies. Article 128 stated that education was a subject of continuous concern for the governor-general. Education and upbringing of indigenous young people was traditionally part of the work of missionaries in the nineteenth century. Education and Christianisation went hand in hand. The Muslim population had its own education in the Quranic schools, which were widespread and often offered the only form of education.

The colonial government attempted to gradually fulfil the mandate of 'continuous care' from 1854 onwards. Several 'chiefs' schools' were established for children whose parents worked for the colonial government. Additionally, there was a 'training school for indigenous teachers', and as we have already seen, the Dokter-Djawa School was established in Batavia in the medical field. Altogether, the infrastructure for indigenous education was minimal.

Meanwhile, there was a system of European primary schools and secondary education, including a grammar school in Batavia, but these schools were only accessible to Europeans and children from mixed marriages. There was increasing pressure from indigenous regents to open European schools to their children. The colonial government did not want this because they feared a lowering of standards. They did, however, proceed with the establishment of indigenous primary schools and the so-called 'dessa' [village] schools.



Primary school in a desa

Gradually, however, an indigenous bureaucratic elite also developed, which increased pressure for access to European education. By the end of the nineteenth century, indigenous primary education was divided into first and second-class schools. Dutch was a subject in first-class schools, enabling pupils to transition into Western education.

The announcement of the ethical policy meant increasing pressure to promote an educational system for the indigenous population. The 'chiefs' schools' were now transformed into fully-fledged secondary-level civil service colleges. The Dokter-Djawa school was succeeded by a strengthened curriculum at the School for the Training of Indigenous Doctors (STOVIA). The first-class primary schools were cautiously transformed into 'Dutch-Indigenous schools' with Dutch as the language of instruction, supplemented by Malay or another regional language as a subject. A comparable development was the model of 'Dutch-Chinese schools' where Dutch was the language of instruction. However, the colonial government did not want to offer Chinese as an optional subject in these schools: 'We must guide the development of Dutch East Indies residents of Chinese descent in a Western manner, not according to traditional Chinese customs'.

In 1913, the education system for the indigenous population was expanded with a three-year junior secondary school. This was considered

the pinnacle of the system. The higher civic schools (hbs) were usually seen as out of reach, although students who passed the entrance exam were not refused admission.

The colonial education system was essentially public, but naturally followed a general Christian perspective based on Western educational values. Additionally, it adhered to the 'concordance principle', whereby education for Europeans had to align with education in the Netherlands.

Lelyveld lists the following numbers of students in primary education around 1920. For a population of 48 million and 876,000 'Alien Orientals' (Chinese and Arabs), there were 132 Dutch-Indonesian schools with nearly 27,000 students, 1,845 standard schools (formerly second-class schools) with 241,414 students, and another 116,556 in private primary education. The number of village schools was approximately 7,200 with a school population of 396,000 children. Additionally, there were 48 Dutch-Chinese schools with just over 10,000 students, of which 330 were of Indonesian descent and 150 were Europeans.

With the introduction of the grammar school and the hbs (secondary modern school), there was also discussion about the necessity of starting university education in the Dutch East Indies. Initially, the colonial government was not in favour of this idea. They believed that the universities in the Netherlands should continue to provide higher education. Several nationalist indigenous leaders had indeed travelled to the Netherlands for university studies at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, eventually, in the 1920s, it conceded. In 1920, the Technische Hogeschool [Technical College] was established in Bandung, followed by the Rechtshogeschool [Law College] in 1924 and the Medische Hogeschool [Medical College] in 1927, both located in Batavia.

From colonial administrators to colonial scholars, there was considerable thought and writing on education in the colony and, consequently, on the future of the colony. This was reinforced by the focus on education in the context of the ethical policy. After all, education would aid in uplifting the people. But did this apply to the entire population? Following the concept of *association*, especially the Leiden Islamologist and Arabist Snouck Hurgronje advocated for the inclusion of excellent students of indigenous descent in Western education. Thus, the colonial government could work towards building a new elite that would develop within Western 'civilisation', thereby keeping this elite within the colonial sphere of influence with the prospect of a certain degree of independence.



However, this was a rather long-term aspiration. We have seen that his Utrecht counterpart, Jacob Kohlbrugge, had already indicated in 1907 that education modelled on Western standards for the indigenous population would have very detrimental consequences and would also lead to frustrations among the newly educated elite, who would not be able to establish their own position. Kohlbrugge and Snouck were overtaken by the growth of nationalist, and consequently anti-colonial, movements such as Boedi Oetomo [The Bright Endeavour] (founded in 1908, primarily composed of young individuals pursuing medical education), and Sarekat Islam (established in 1912). Particularly in the 1920s, this led to agitation against the colonial government and subsequent counteraction by the same colonial administration. These movements were driven by Indonesians who had received their education in the Dutch East Indies and in the Netherlands. Education was a key priority for these movements.

Snouck probably realised that education was hastening the end of the colonial era faster than he had anticipated (or perhaps desired). In 1927, Kohlbrugge drew further attention to the impact of Western education on indigenous discontent in the Dutch East Indies. However, he also acknowledged that the Western-educated indigenous elite were rapidly ushering in the end of the colonial era.

Universities were established in Indonesia and Suriname during the colonial period. Some of Indonesia's current universities can trace their origins back to colonial-era institutions of higher learning. The Technical College in Bandung became the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) in 1959, making it the oldest technical university in Indonesia. The Law College and the Medical College were integrated into Universitas Indonesia. The Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), known as the Bogor Agricultural University, originated from colonial-era educational institutions in Bogor. The Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR) in Surabaya evolved from the Dutch-Indonesian Medical School (NIAS), with the School Tot Opleiding Van Indische Tandartsen (STOVIT) also serving as a precursor to UNAIR. Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta was established on 19 December 1949. Also, before World War II, Suriname had a nascent higher education system with a Medical college and a Law School. The Anton de Kom University was formally established in 1966.

From the 1920s onwards, Indonesian students began to travel to the Netherlands for higher education. A survey by Poeze et al. shows that Utrecht received relatively few students, most of whom were enrolled in

the Faculty of Medicine or Veterinary College (after 1925, in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine).<sup>2</sup> Some Indonesian students also pursued doctoral studies, such as Ronald Tumbelaka from Minahassa, who defended his dissertation on Redlich-Alzheimer's disease under the supervision of Professor Winkler in 1919. In 1924, the former STOVIA student Jonas Andreas Latumeten from Ambon completed his thesis on the nuclei of the oculomotor nerve, again under the supervision of Winkler. In 1942, R. Abdoelrachman, another former STOVIA student, received a doctorate under Professor Julius for his dissertation on water research using a bacteriophage method. This thesis was mainly based on research carried out in Leiden under the supervision of Professor Flu.

During this period, several veterinary scientists at Utrecht University were awarded their doctorates, including J.A. Kaligis in 1922 with his dissertation 'Bijdrage tot de kennis van anaplasmosis bij rund en buffel' [Contribution to the knowledge of anaplasmosis in cattle and buffalo] supervised by De Blicck, Raden Soeratmo in 1923 with 'Een studie van de rundveeteelt in de residentie Kedoe en omliggende regentschappen' [A study of cattle farming in the Kedoe residency and surrounding regencies] under the supervision of H.M. Kroon, and F.C. Waworoentoe in 1924 with 'Bijdrage tot de kennis van het konijnen-coccidium' [A contribution to the knowledge of rabbit coccidiosis] supervised by De Blicck.

In January 1931, a tragic event occurred. One of the students studying at the veterinary faculty, Mas Soeparwi, departed for his doctoral examination in the morning. Having arrived in Utrecht in 1929 with his wife, two children, and a servant named Sono, the family and the servant resided in De Bilt. Upon returning home after a successful examination, Mas Soeparwi discovered his wife and two children murdered, while the servant Sono had attempted to take his own life. The motive behind Sono's heinous act has never been entirely clear. An article published in the Amersfoortsch Dagblad: De Eemlander on 19 June 1931, under the headline 'Psychological defence', extensively covered the trial's appeal. Sono was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment in Utrecht. Notably, the defence counsel's oral arguments were put forward by E.J. Dommering, appointed by the court due to his experience in the Dutch East Indies, where he had served as a deputy registrar at the Landraad in Bandoeng and Soemedang. In his arguments, Dommering outlined two potential causes for Sono's actions.

The education of young indigenous people often allows for the expression of all whims and caprices. Another factor contributing to psychological instability is the lingering influence of animism, wherein individuals attribute their actions to external forces. [...] The delicate equilibrium in such a childlike psyche can be abruptly disrupted. [...] The defendant, in this case, is classified as possessing an explosive temperament, marked by exceptional lack of control and excitability.

The gist of the defence was force majeure, drawing upon both references from relevant literature and personal experiences. Given the context, it is plausible that Kohlbrugge's work was included among the referenced literature.

Indonesian students in the Netherlands had set up the *Perhimpoeanan Indonesia*, a student group that espoused radical nationalism and strived for Indonesian independence. Given the distinctive focus of the



Meeting of the Perhimpoeanan Indonesia, presumably in Leiden

Indology faculty in Utrecht, which attracted a relatively limited number of Indonesian students, it is not surprising that the relationship between Utrecht and the *Perhimpoean Indonesia* was fraught. As previously stated, the Javanese lecturer Mas Prijohoetomo was expelled from the group on the grounds of perceived collaboration with ‘oppressive capitalists’. It is alleged that students from the Indology faculty disrupted a public meeting of the *Perhimpoean Indonesia* held in Utrecht.

In addition to students from the Dutch East Indies, Utrecht University also attracted students from Suriname and the Caribbean. Historically, students from Suriname were less common in Utrecht in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the majority specialising in law and medicine. As previously mentioned, Paul Flu studied medicine at Utrecht at the beginning of the twentieth century. Flu was one of the recipients of an honorary doctorate from Utrecht. Most Antillean students were from Curaçao, including Cola Debrot (1902-1981), who was originally from Bonaire but raised in Curaçao.

From 1921 to 1927, Cola Debrot pursued a degree in law at Utrecht University. He resided in rooms at Oudegracht 341, where the renowned painter Pyke Koch also resided. Debrot established connections with prominent individuals, including the writers Martinus Nijhoff and Jan Engelman. He then moved to Paris, where he met his future wife, the dancer Estelle Reed. Upon returning to the Netherlands, he started medical studies at the University of Amsterdam, subsequently establishing himself as a general practitioner. After World War II, Debrot served as a medical practitioner on the island of Curaçao, gradually becoming more involved in the political affairs of the Dutch Caribbean. He assumed the roles of Plenipotentiary Minister of the Netherlands Antilles in The Hague



Cola Debrot (1902-1981)

and Governor of the Netherlands Antilles from 1962 to 1970. In his later years, Debrot returned to the Netherlands. He spent his final years in the *Rosa Spierhuis* old people's home in Laren. He suffered from severe depression and was admitted to a psychiatric institution for a period. Debrot's literary corpus reflects the profound internal contradictions that characterised his personality, in a manner reminiscent of the concept of 'double consciousness' elucidated by W.E.B. Du Bois in his seminal work *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).

World War II, with the Japanese occupation of the East Indies, and then the period between the declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945 and the final recognition by the Netherlands in 1949, was a period in which the development of science was not a top priority. During this turbulent period, Dutch scientists in the East Indies were either repatriated to the Netherlands or interned in Japanese camps. They faced further challenges during the *politioenele acties*<sup>3</sup> between 1945 and 1949. After World War II and Indonesian independence, Indonesian scientific institutions were determined to take an independent position. Nevertheless, cooperation with Dutch universities, including Utrecht University, was sought to re-build and re-establish scientific networks.



## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (1950-1990) ETHICAL POLITICS REVISITED?

Indonesia declared independence on 17 August 1945. After an unsuccessful war with the nationalists, the Netherlands transferred sovereignty on 27 December 1949, except for West New Guinea. Suriname became independent on 25 November 1975. Large-scale decolonisation processes also took place in Africa. Initially, the West referred to these nations as 'underdeveloped', but this negatively charged term was quickly replaced by the more positive notion of 'developing countries'. The world was then divided into the First World (the West, i.e. Europe and America), the Second World (countries behind the Iron Curtain) and the amorphous group of the Third World. And if there are developing countries with developing educational systems, there is a logical framework of an ethical (development) policy that universities in the First World, including those in Utrecht, can assist in such development.

### University Development Programme<sup>1</sup>

In his article 'Hoe de dominee de koopman versloeg' [How the Minister Beat the Merchant] (2006), Paul Hoebink describes the period from 1945 to 1965 as 'the twilight zone between colonial policy and the formulation of a new development policy'. On 20 January 1949, President Harry S. Truman delivered his second Inaugural Address, outlining his foreign policy in four points. The fourth point, subsequently known as the *Point Four Programme*, stated:

Fourth, we must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of

disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas.

For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve suffering of these people.

[...] I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realise their aspirations for a better life. And, in cooperation with other nations, we should foster capital investment in areas needing development.

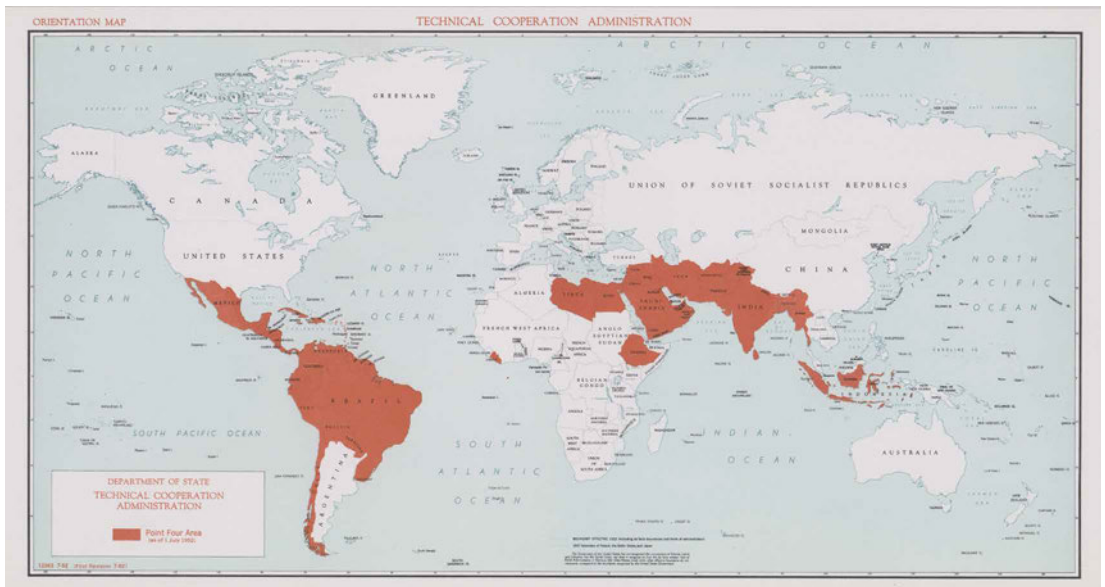
Our aim should be to help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing, and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens.

We invite other countries to pool their technological resources in this undertaking. Their contributions will be warmly welcomed. This should be a cooperative enterprise in which all nations work together through the United Nations and its specialised agencies whenever practicable. It must be a worldwide effort for the achievement of peace, plenty, and freedom.

[...] The old imperialism -- exploitation for foreign profit -- has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a programme of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing.<sup>2</sup>

It represented one of the initial endeavours to formulate a 'modern' development policy that assigned a significant role to the United Nations. This formulation was very much in line with the Basalla-Rostow model of modernisation, albeit with a notable absence of substantial portions of Africa.

Even before the formal recognition of Indonesia on 27 December 1949, the Netherlands established an interdepartmental working group to shape a Dutch development policy. During this transitional period, discussions initially revolved around providing 'aid' to 'less developed countries'. Speed was of the essence as there was a concerted effort to preserve tropical expertise, particularly among the emerging technocratically-minded engineers employed by the 'Binnenlandse Bestuur' [Interior Administration] in the Dutch East Indies. These individuals sought



#### Point 4 around the world

opportunities to preserve the colonial-era expertise that the Netherlands had accumulated over centuries, searching for places to take this legacy forward globally. Consequently, in Utrecht, the decision was made to remodel Indology studies into a non-western social studies discipline, integrating ethnology. This transformation laid the foundation for the emergence of cultural anthropology and human geography focused on developing countries. Meanwhile, in The Hague, the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) was established to cater to students from developing countries themselves.

It was during this period that an opportunity arose to integrate the use of experts with input from industry. Initially, a limited programme was set up through the multilateral channel of the United Nations. It was not until New Guinea was handed over to Indonesia that a separate civil service was established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1964, aid administration was placed under the Directorate General of International Cooperation.

In the Den Uyl government, which took office in 1973, Jan Pronk became a prominent advocate of integrating development cooperation into



Dutch government policy. Many of his ambitious goals were outlined in the 1976 memorandum *Bilaterale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: Om de kwaliteit van de Nederlandse Hulp* [Bilateral Development Cooperation: For the Quality of Dutch Aid]. Central to this document were the concepts of ‘self-reliance’ and ‘economic, political and social empowerment’. The aim was to provide ‘as much aid and as directly as possible to the poorest of the poor’, a group that was found in great numbers throughout the Third World. In this paradigm, the ethos of the minister prevailed over that of the merchant. This marked a revival of the old ethical politics, characterised by calling, paternalism and a technocratic approach, albeit in a modern guise.

Education gradually gained importance in development cooperation policy. In the 1970s, funds were allocated from the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation to support long-term collaboration between Dutch universities and their counterparts in developing countries. Utrecht University participated in this University Development Cooperation Programme, administered by Nuffic (Netherlands Foundation for International Cooperation). This initiative primarily adhered to the principles of ‘self-reliance’, focusing on fostering self-sufficiency of universities in developing nations. The underlying premise was that ‘sustainable development’ could be facilitated through the cultivation of qualified higher education and research capabilities in these countries. In this context, the scientist realigned with the minister and the merchant in pursuit of common objectives.

Utrecht University nurtured collaborative partnerships with several institutions in Indonesia, Africa – particularly Southern Africa – and Latin America. The university’s engagement stemmed from a moral imperative to aid sister institutions, often referred to as ‘counterparts’, in their developmental stages. This commitment to an ‘ethical policy’ was notably intensified during the rectorship (1986-1997) of human geographer Hans van Ginkel who, incidentally, was born in the East Indies. Collaboration with Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta held particular significance for Utrecht, with Van Ginkel himself spending several months teaching at the university before assuming his role on the Executive Board of Utrecht University.

However, these university partnerships faced challenges in the 1980s due to the deteriorating human rights situation in Indonesia. Intense

debates ensued, particularly between the Executive Board and the University Council, on whether to sever ties with Indonesian universities. Previously, students from the student union USF had protested against the awarding of an honorary doctorate to Indonesian professor R.M. Koentjaraningrat. An article in *NRC Handelsblad* dated 27 March 1976 documented the students' banners bearing slogans such as 'No honours for the Suharto regime' and 'Honorary doctorates for true democrats'. The students argued that the accolade aimed to enhance contacts with Indonesian universities was 'highly dubious', given that scholars were still being imprisoned in Indonesia for expressing dissenting political views. Interestingly, Koentjaraningrat had served as a visiting professor at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology in Utrecht from 1966 to 1968, conducting research on social and cultural factors of economic development in Spakenburg and Urk.

In the 1980s, a collaborative research programme on medicinal plants used in Sri Lanka was conducted between the Pharmacy Faculty's Department of Pharmacognosy, under the leadership of Professor R.P. Labadie, and the Department of Chemistry at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. This initiative aimed to explore the potential for advancements in Ayurvedic traditional medicine development. Specifically, the project focused on standardizing ingredient quality and implementing quality control measures. Additionally, chemical and clinical research was undertaken to facilitate standardised production. This collaborative effort raised questions about the nature of the relationship between ancient indigenous knowledge about the 'active substances' in plants, reminiscent of Hendrik van Reede's work, and its translation into modern medical, biological, and chemical terms within the context of natural science.

In Africa, Utrecht University engaged in collaborations with various institutions, including the University of Benin, but gradually shifted its focus towards Southern Africa. This shift was influenced, in part, by the evolving situation in South Africa. Despite some reluctance, Utrecht also participated in the academic boycott of South African universities. However, it seized an opportunity to establish ties with the University of the Western Cape in the early 1990s. Under the leadership of its rector, Jakes Gerwel, who later served as Nelson Mandela's Director-General of the Presidency, the University of the Western Cape actively positioned itself as an anti-apartheid institution, making it an attractive partner

for Western universities. This collaboration led to the formation of a 'UNITWIN partnership' in the early 1990s, comprising four European and four Southern African universities, getting attention from organisations such as UNESCO. In the North, the participating universities included Utrecht University, Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany, Universidade do Porto in Portugal, and Lunds Universitet in Sweden. The four Southern African universities were the University of Zimbabwe, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique, the University of Namibia, and the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Utrecht University acted as the coordinator of this network.

In the chapter on science development during the late nineteenth century, I explored various disciplines. It should come as no surprise that these disciplines – including veterinary medicine, geology, geography, chemistry, biology, and medicine – re-emerged in university development cooperation efforts. Part of this collaboration was driven by an enlightened self-interest. Following World War II, Utrecht University boasted an internationally renowned department of tropical veterinary medicine, in which Professor Dick Zwart playing a pivotal role. Such departments thrive on collaborative ventures. During this period, Utrecht also housed a department of social geography of developing countries, led by Professor Jan Hinderink. In the early 1970s, Utrecht University embarked on a notable project whose abbreviation RUU/GUA/KIT-1 BIOTROP I remember vividly. This research initiative involved collaboration between Utrecht University, Biology, the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the Department of Biology, the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), and BIOTROP, a regional research institute in Bogor. BIOTROP had its origins in research facilities established during the colonial period in the late nineteenth century, with contributions from Utrecht scientists. The project focused on research on 'weed biology', maintaining a traditional approach centred on collection and experimentation.

Biology continued its work, building upon projects like the *Flora of the Guyanas* and establishing a tropical forest programme in British Guiana. This program also sought research opportunities in Suriname. In 1994, spurred by initiatives from the Utrecht Botanical Garden, the Trésor Foundation was founded. With support from the university, the foundation acquired land in French Guiana in 1995 for research and educational purposes in biodiversity.

The moral imperative guiding Utrecht University's engagement with counterpart institutions in developing countries extended to the Faculty



Wardian case Bogor (front row, second from right: 'To the Director of the Hortus Utrecht')

of Theology, which initiated a cooperation project with the University of Zimbabwe in the field of African religions in the mid-1980s. Spearheading this collaboration was special professor of missiology, J.A.B. Jongeneel. The focus shifted from conversion to supporting education in African religions. Indigenous churches and religions became subjects of cooperation and research in international contexts, marking a departure from conversion efforts. The changing landscape of missionary work prompted discussions within the Dutch Missionary Society, culminating in the establishment of the Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research in 1969. This institute aimed to integrate Utrecht and Leiden into a unified context; while the section of ecumenical research was situated in Utrecht, the section of missiological research resided in Leiden. Concepts such as liberation theology challenged the Eurocentric missionary model, leading to calls for a moratorium on all missionary activities. Additionally, there was a renewed commitment to fostering international connections.

I referred to a continuation of ‘ethical politics’. This term is not intended to be mocking or ironic, rather, it underscores the persistence of the developmental concept that underpinned this commitment. Utrecht scientists embarked on a mission, reaching out to their counterparts in countries that were ‘not yet developed’. However, colleagues in developing countries were not always willing to accept the role of the ‘fellow scientists not yet developed’. Tensions arose when attitudes became overly patriarchal, but the unequal relationship, particularly in terms of financial resources, persisted. The perceived superiority of the assisting party remained evident, with the implicit notion of ‘them catching up’ and ‘us assisting them’.

In his work ‘Indische Lessen’, the sociologist Van Doorn compellingly demonstrates how this sense of ethical politics, with its inherent superiority, also influenced perceptions of multiculturalism in the Netherlands. He notes: ‘And as in the East Indies, the public debate in the Netherlands also suffers from an excess of moral judgments and prejudices; the ‘ethical politics’ is here, in new form, continued unabated’.<sup>3</sup>

## Utrecht University after 1990

### *The international university*

The 1990s saw a gradual shift in the perception of higher education development cooperation. Developing countries, and their universities in particular, continued to assert their autonomy, often gaining better control over funding from major donors. Nationally and within universities, development cooperation began to lose relevance. According to the Dutch government’s website, the focus in Indonesia shifted to areas where Dutch expertise could contribute to achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, such as security and the rule of law, water and food security, and nutrition. As the Netherlands reduces its development cooperation programme, attention has shifted to promoting sustainable trade and investment. Furthermore, in 2020, the developmental relationship with Indonesia was replaced by a more intensified trade-based one.<sup>4</sup>

In the late 1990s, the Utrecht Executive Board decided to shift its focus to the ‘true’ Asian tigers, China and India, at the expense of partnerships with Indonesian universities. The university management believed that there were greater opportunities for development in these regions. Similarly, in Southern Africa, less emphasis was placed on collaborations

with universities in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia, and more on partnerships with South African universities. These included, in the terminology of the time, former 'historically advantaged institutions', i.e. the former predominantly white universities such as the University of Stellenbosch.

A notable case study is veterinary cooperation in Southern Africa. Historically, there was a close relationship with Onderstepoort, the veterinary institute in Pretoria. However, due to the academic boycott and the European policy of supporting what were thought of as frontline states, Brussels invested heavily in the establishment of a veterinary faculty in Zimbabwe. Utrecht was asked to support the development of this faculty through teaching and research. In the early 1990s, as the political landscape in South Africa changed with the formal abolition of apartheid and the deterioration of the political situation in Zimbabwe, the link between Utrecht and Onderstepoort was revitalised.

On 19 June 1999, European education ministers signed the Bologna Treaty, which required universities to adapt their educational structures to facilitate the exchange of staff and students within Europe. Bologna also served as a strong impetus for Utrecht University to aspire to the status of an international university, encouraging an increasing influx of students and staff from abroad. As a result, Utrecht University became a 'global' institution. However, to this day, the international presence remains predominantly from the Western world, highlighting the lack of significant social diversity at Dutch universities, including Utrecht University.

There is a sense of nostalgia when recalling the era of 'development cooperation' and the missions undertaken during that time. Some lament the decline of development cooperation, while others see it as a reflection of changing global dynamics. The dichotomy of 'First World' and 'Third World' has given way to a more interconnected global intellectual community facing common challenges. But has the world really erased the traces of inequality? Have we really left behind our ideas of superiority and development?





## IN RETROSPECT

### KNOWLEDGE, POWER & SUPERIORITY

#### Utrecht University & ‘Development’

##### *The ‘master narrative’ as the ‘narrative of the Masters’*

I am now trying to reach a conclusion. I have tried to follow Utrecht University and the people who worked there with heart and soul on their journeys to distant lands. Their pursuits resulted in the discovery of ‘exotic’ flora and fauna, in encounters with diverse cultures, in exploration of varied religious systems, in insights into distinct geological formations, of raw materials and how to make the best use of them, in endeavours to combat threats to human and animal well-being, in ‘pure research’ in the laboratories at the forefront of emerging natural sciences, in involvement in the education of Dutch colonial officials guided by an exceedingly conservative ideology, in contributions to development assistance for emerging universities in former colonies, and participation in collaborative initiatives with scholars at these establishments.

We also saw how we extracted knowledge from the colony and exploited it in our own university. The development of the natural sciences at our university has undoubtedly benefited from the exploration in the colony. Perhaps ‘benefited’ is too weak a qualification. Particularly the natural sciences were able to develop in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thanks to the colonies. Went had a keen eye for reality when he stated that ‘where the mother country lagged behind, the colonies have in a sense acted as pioneers’.

A unifying theme runs through this diverse range of activities: the concept of ‘development’. Development is part of the DNA of a university. If development is viewed as the antithesis of stagnation, then it must constitute the central mission of any university. Ultimately, education and research are always in search of development – development of young minds and of new advancements in research.



However, there is a deeper layer of complexity within this concept. By examining the history of the colonial affiliations of the university and its constituents, a specific interpretation of development emerges. 'Development' was not neutral but unfolded in a framework of linear progression. Within this linear paradigm, 'we' occupied the apex of the developmental hierarchy, while those deemed not yet developed were placed below us. At the core of this overarching narrative, the 'master narrative' (i.e. the 'narrative of the Masters') of development, is the notion of human evolution and progress through successive stages, moving from 'lower races' to high modernity. This narrative emphasises the idea of an inherently rational, self-governing human being – an autonomous individual in his own right. Our own society, rooted in these inherently rational, autonomous individuals, was perceived as more advanced – at least compared to the still underdeveloped 'non-Western' and, more pejoratively, 'primitive' societies we encountered during our expeditions. It embodied a form of 'enlightened developmentism'.

Our development also involved for a long time the dissemination of the Christian religion, the one true faith. Consequently, individuals classified as 'infidels' or adherents of a *religio falsa*, a false religion, were encountered. And unbelieving also meant undeveloped. That linear path of development, including Christianisation, brought about a belief, an ideology, and an attitude of superiority. This superiority also extended along the gender line. It is, thankfully not exclusively, but mostly our – white – men from the university whom we have encountered in our story.

This sense of superiority occasionally materialised as a profound disdain for the 'other', the underdeveloped. This contempt, frequently reinforced by economic interests, facilitated the widespread enslavement and transportation of these 'others' across vast distances. However, we increasingly observe a transformation of this sense of superiority into patronage, particularly towards those perceived as not yet developed. Ministers educated at Utrecht, for instance, sought to introduce unbelievers to the true faith, preferably in the Voetian – i.e., Utrecht – tradition. Similarly, Utrecht professors assumed the role of advancing a civilising mission by introducing science and 'pure research' to the colony. It is noteworthy that significant ambivalence existed regarding whether the 'natives' should be developed in our Western image. Consequently, efforts to establish education, including university education, in the colony were initiated relatively late. What is striking is that the civilising mission, particularly as undertaken

by Utrecht professors, paid scant attention to the possibility and desirability of educating the indigenous elite at the university level. As we transition into the twentieth century, we only observe limited early attempts to educate indigenous individuals in medicine, as illustrated by Dokter Djawa and STOVIA. Utrecht even considered conferring honorary doctorates upon certain Dutch leaders involved in these educational initiatives!

Subsequently, we transition to the era when the colonies underwent a metamorphosis into 'underdeveloped countries', later rebranded as 'developing countries'. To employ the metaphor of a ladder: we represented the First World, with a Second World obscured by the Iron Curtain. Consequently, the developing countries assumed the label of the Third World, further categorised based on their developmental stage, including the designation of 'least developed countries'. At the Bandung Conference in 1955, co-chaired by our former colony Indonesia, the developing nations sought emancipation from patronage by asserting their identity as 'non-aligned' nations.



Bandung conference 1955. The key players of the group of 'non-aligned countries' Jawaharlal Nehru (India) Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt) Sukarno (Indonesia) and Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia) (photo from 1960)

However, echoing attitudes of superiority and patronising tendencies, we once again embarked on missions to ‘aid’ emerging universities, such as those in Indonesia, in their ‘development’. Here, I must acknowledge and not evade the personal dimension. In my role in university development cooperation, there were instances where I undertook missions reminiscent of a ‘secular missionary’, imparting the ‘gospel of modern science’ to those regarded as heathen or not yet fully developed. Perhaps a bit like a *sinjo-sinjo kontelir*?

It encapsulated the presumption and self-elevation of the intellectual tradition originating from Europe, the tradition of progress and linear development, the tradition of a dominant mode of knowledge, an ‘episteme of development’. Is there truly nothing new under the ‘Sun of Justice’?



## LOOKING AHEAD

### TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL UNIVERSITY?

My perspective is based on various discussions in the postcolonial literature, on the emerging field of global intellectual history, and on the views of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas on the ‘colonisation of the lifeworld’.

First, the debate in the postcolonial literature articulates the demand for decolonisation. Universities in former ‘developing countries’ are urged to liberate themselves from the dominance of Western epistemologies. While this primarily pertains to institutions in former developing countries, it extends beyond these boundaries to encompass Western universities that have historically exercised scientific hegemony. Utrecht, as demonstrated, is no exception to this dynamic. Therefore, the episteme of Western academic superiority must be challenged, and the institutional vestiges of a colonial past dismantled. Illustrative of this attempt is the trajectory of the University of Cape Town. Starting around 2015 with the removal of the statue of the notorious British colonialist, Cecil Rhodes, this movement towards decolonisation has continued to encompass reforms in education and research practices.

The term ‘episteme’ refers to the underlying system of knowledge and understanding within a particular historical period or society, as conceptualised by French philosopher Michel Foucault. In the context of academia, it encompasses the prevailing paradigms, methodologies, and assumptions that shape scholarly inquiry and discourse. Indeed, it is essential to acknowledge that the expression of epistemic challenges varies across disciplines. In fields such as ‘African Studies’, there is a valid expectation for substantial scholarly contributions from African perspectives. This recognition stems from a commitment to fostering inclusive dialogue and acknowledging diverse voices within the academic discourse. However, the application of these principles might become more nuanced in disciplines like molecular cell biology. Laboratory experiments

in such fields are inherently objective and do not attribute significance to the gender, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics of the researcher. Or do they? It is increasingly evident that even in seemingly 'objective' domains like medicine, the perspectives and experiences of different demographic groups can significantly impact research outcomes. For example, studies have revealed that medical research often defaults to the white male as the norm, potentially overlooking nuances in health outcomes for women, children, or individuals from diverse backgrounds.

This realisation underscores the intricate interplay between scientific research and its social and cultural context. Research and education transcend mere technical pursuits, being deeply enmeshed within broader social, economic, and historical frameworks. Consequently, all stakeholders in the scientific enterprise must cultivate a profound sensitivity to these multifaceted dimensions, acknowledging and engaging with cultural, social, economic, epistemological, and historical distinctions to foster equitable and inclusive knowledge production.

The second contribution emanates from the realm of global intellectual history. Traditionally, it has been perceived that the evolution of the modern world system entailed the diffusion of Western cultural and intellectual paradigms. Within this framework, a prevailing intellectual tradition gradually emanated from the European continent, extending its reach across the globe as part of Europe's expansion. Throughout this process, alternative knowledge traditions were assimilated, to some extent, into the ambit of Western science. Some other knowledge traditions were marginalised. However, the relatively new field of global intellectual history attempts to substantially reassess this narrative. Rens Bod, in his work *A World of Patterns: The History of Knowledge* (2019), elucidates on 'the human search for patterns and principles in the world around us', encompassing diverse scientific cultures with rich historical lineages. As Arthur Lovejoy aptly noted, ideas are 'the most migratory entities in the world.'<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it was not merely a diffusion of Western scientific thought, nor a unilateral flow from the West, but rather a convergence and occasionally, a clash of heterogeneous intellectual traditions.

This perspective is underscored by the reality that contemporary society no longer conforms to the model of largely homogeneous nations with correspondingly uniform modern cultures, including within the realm of science. Increasingly, transnational communities are emerging, even within what were once regarded as 'enlightened' urban centres. Arjun

Appadurai, in *Modernity at Large*, delves into the concept of a 'diasporic public sphere', while Kwame Anthony Appiah explores the notion of multiple and overlapping 'cosmopolitan identities'. The antiquated notion of 'Europe' as a 'white empire' has become obsolete. This prompts the question of whether Western universities are able to embark on the path of decolonisation, shedding the veneer of superiority, and welcoming individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Within the 'Enlightened university', it still appears that representatives of 'diasporic cultures' must be sought out with a metaphorical flashlight (a 'Sol Iustitiae?'). Hence, it becomes imperative for Western institutions like Utrecht University to bolster their relationships with universities in other continents and cultural contexts. However, this engagement should not be driven by a paternalistic desire to 'develop' them, but rather to foster genuine critical dialogue that facilitates mutual growth alongside partners possessing distinct identities. University websites, including that of Utrecht, are increasingly advocating the importance of 'equity', 'diversity' and 'inclusion'. However, while it is one thing to establish an elaborate website promoting diversity, built upon the notion of a harmonious mosaic underpinned by 'easy pluralism', it is quite another to implement an active 'critical diversity' policy aimed at identifying and addressing exclusionary and marginalising mechanisms, particularly within academia.

Moreover, there exists a third theoretical dimension to decolonisation. In 2012, in collaboration with my fellow anthropologist Wil Pansters, I contributed to the *Liber Amicorum* for Willem Koops, the former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Utrecht. In this contribution, we attempted to draw inspiration from Habermas' work to analyse the 'lifeworld' of the university. In his seminal work 'The Theory of Communicative Action', published in 1981, Habermas developed a diagnosis of the advance of modern societies and the resultant social pathologies, utilising the concepts of 'lifeworld' and 'system'. The lifeworld encompasses the resources, including culture, institutions, and socialisation, that individuals require to navigate society and make sense of their experiences. It is responsible for the symbolic reproduction of society. Within the system, Habermas distinguishes between the apparent *Wirtschaftssystem* (economy) and the *Verwaltungssystem* (state), which are tasked with the material reproduction of society. Money and power ensure the efficient and effective execution of these tasks.

In the shift from a traditional to a modern society, marked by increasing rationalisation and modernisation, the lifeworld and system, with its two subsystems of state and economy, are becoming increasingly disconnected. With the influence of power and money, the subsystems of state and economy progressively exert their influence on the lifeworld, including the realm of (higher) education. It becomes problematic when the symbolic reproduction of society becomes subjected to the imperatives of the state and the economy. This phenomenon, termed by Habermas as 'the colonisation of the lifeworld', occurs through processes of bureaucratisation and monetarisation. Consequently, lifeworld transforms into a sphere where individuals communicate and act solely in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, rather than in accordance with principles of justice and solidarity based on normative dialogue and consensus.

This colonisation is also observable within the global university system, a fundamental component of Habermas' lifeworld. In alignment with neoliberal economic ideologies, there has been advocacy for the transformation of the traditional hierarchical and bureaucratic model of governance into a more adaptable and dynamic 'market model'. A key element of this transition is the prominence of control, accountability, and auditing. There is a continual striving to quantify performance and quality, involving calculations, tabulation, graphical representation, establishment of metrics and indicators, and implementation of auditing procedures. Critics contend that the preoccupation with efficiency, ongoing accountability, and control within such an environment increasingly impedes the ability of academics and intellectuals to fulfil their traditional roles.

A notable yet lamentable example illustrating how the colonisation of lifeworld by the neoliberal market model, characterised by efficiency and a strong emphasis on control, accountability, and audit, is intertwined with enduring global colonial relations, is provided by an analysis conducted by several researchers from the United Nations University. In their recent UNU-IIGH Briefing Paper *World-class Universities? Interrogating the Biases and Coloniality of Global University Rankings*, they contend that ranking systems have, in fact, perpetuated existing colonial relations:

The fact that the high rank of some universities is partly due to wealth generated historically from former colonies or the slave trade adds moral weight to the charge that global ranking systems are both unfair and colonial. Furthermore, ranking systems may

continue exploitation by enabling higher ranking universities in the Global North to extract higher quality students and staff from the Global South, further strengthening their ability to improve or maintain their high-ranking positions.

'Decolonisation' entails, for every university, including Utrecht University, the imperative to seek out a new public sphere within a transformed social landscape characterised by greater critical cultural diversity encompassing aspects such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, and beyond. This pursuit necessitates a recognition that we are not the sole originators of our knowledge system – thereby relinquishing any semblance of superiority – but rather participants situated at various junctures of diverse knowledge modalities that can inspire the ongoing advancement of our educational and research endeavours. Decolonisation is not solely an external venture; it is equally pertinent within our own institution.

Since its inception, the emblem of Utrecht University has been *Sol Iustitiae Illustra Nos* [Sun of Justice, shine upon us]. Derived from the prophet Malachi, who declares in his prophecies: 'But to you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise, and there will be healing under its wings' (Malachi 4:2). Although Utrecht University has long operated as a secular institution, I conclude this book with a profound conviction that the *Sol Iustitiae*, interpreted as the 'sun of Justice within the realms of knowledge and science', will illuminate the path that we must travel.









## NOTES

### 1. INTRODUCTION: UNIVERSITY, KNOWLEDGE & THE COLONIES

- 1 Since its foundation in 1636, Utrecht University has undergone several name changes. Initially, it was often referred to as the Academia Ultrajectina or Utrechtse Academie. Until 1815, the university was clearly associated with (the city of) Utrecht. Only after 1815 did the city university become part of a national higher education system and was then called 'Utrechtse Hoogeschool'. After the Higher Education Act of 1876, Utrecht University became a state university, sometimes referred to as the 'Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht'. During the modernisation of university governance and supervision in the 1970s and 1980s, the term 'Universiteit Utrecht' became common parlance. In this English version of my book, I will only use the name Utrecht University.
- 2 See Walter D. Mignolo, *The darker side of Western modernity: global futures, decolonial options* (Durham 2011). Mignolo was inspired by the Peruvian philosopher/sociologist Anibal Quijano. See Anibal Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality', *Cultural Studies* 21 2-31 (2007), pp. 168–178 and Anibal Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', *International Sociology* 15 (2000), pp. 215–232.
- 3 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (New Haven, Conn. 1998), p. 331.
- 4 Siep Stuurman, *De uitvinding van de mensheid: korte wereldgeschiedenis van het denken over gelijkheid en cultuurverschil* (Amsterdam 2010), p. 314.
- 5 Henk van Rinsum, 'Blijf niet steken bij de slavernij, onderzoek het hele koloniale verleden van de UU', *DUB* 20 April 2022.
- 6 David Livingstone in an address to students at the University of Cambridge in December 1857: "Those two pioneers of civilisation – Christianity and commerce – should ever be inseparable".
- 7 It is intriguing to observe how the terminology has continually evolved: from colony to underdeveloped countries to developing countries or the Third World, or in their own terms 'Non-Aligned countries' (established after the Bandung Conference in 1955). Nowadays we speak of the 'Global South'.
- 8 See e.g. the second part of my dissertation *Slaves of Definition: In Quest of the Unbeliever and the Ignoramus* (Maastricht 2001). See also Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of scholars: universities, networks and the British academic world, 1850-1939* (Manchester 2015).

- 9 Robert-Jan Wille, 'Een Indische geschiedenis van parasitisme en symbiose. De tropen als laboratorium voor de vervlechting van politiek, wetenschap, maatschappij en natuur', *Groniek* 200 (2014), pp. 295-316, 309. See also his dissertation, *De Stationisten: Laboratoriumbiologie, imperialisme en de lobby voor nationale wetenschapspolitiek, 1871-1909*, (Nijmegen 2015), also published as *Mannen van de microscoop: de laboratoriumbiologie op veldtocht in Nederland en Indië, 1840-1910* (Nijmegen 2019).
- 10 See for the University Leiden: Willem Otterspeer, *Leiden Oriental Connections, 1850-1940*, Studies in the History of Leiden University, 5 (Leiden 1989). And recently the Cleveringa lecture *Moed en miskennen*, on 24 November 2022 by Gert Oostindie, in which he argued for colonial historiography: 'Colonial history in the narrow sense is nearly past, but the legacies endure, whether it's racism, inequality, or climate injustice. Reflecting on these is also part of the duties of our universities'. Oostindie, *Moed en Miskennen*, p. 13.
- 11 In writing this section, I have drawn primarily on: Joseph Hodge, 'Science and Empire: An Overview of the Historical Scholarship' in: Brett M. Bennet and Joseph M. Hodge (eds.), *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks of Science across the British Empire, 1800-1970* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: 2011), pp. 3-29.
- 12 Roy MacLeod, 'On Visiting the "Moving Metropolis": Reflections on the Architecture of Imperial Science', in: Nathan Reingold and Marc Rothenberg (eds.), *Scientific Colonialism: A Cross-Cultural Comparison*, (Washington 1987), pp. 217-249, p. 219.
- 13 Joseph Hodge, *Science and Empire*, p. 3.
- 14 George Basalla, 'The Spread of Western Science. A three-stage model describes the introduction of modern science into any non-European nation', *Science*, 156 (1967), pp. 611-622.
- 15 Johan Galtung, 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research* 8 (1971) 2, pp. 81-117.
- 16 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York 1978), p. 3.
- 17 Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: the British in India* (Princeton, NJ 1996), p. 5.
- 18 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xii.
- 19 See Stephen Howe, *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (London; New York 2010) and Remco Raben, 'A New Dutch Imperial History? Perambulations in a Prospective Field', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 128 (2013) 1, pp. 5-30.
- 20 See Rens Bod, *World of Patterns, A Global History of Knowledge* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022).
- 21 See Poskett, James, *Horizons: A Global History of Science* (Penguin Books, 2022).
- 22 Arthur O. Lovejoy, 'Reflections on the History of Ideas', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1940) 1, pp. 3-23, p. 4.
- 23 See also Dag Herbjørnsrud, 'Beyond decolonizing: global intellectual history and reconstruction of a comparative method', *Global Intellectual History* (2019), pp. 1-27.

## 2. CONFESSION & CONVERSION (1636-...)

- 1 See H.A. van Andel, *De zendingsleer van Gisbertus Voetius* (Kampen 1912).
- 2 See in particular the work of the Utrecht missiologist Jan Jongeneel, *Utrecht University: 375 years mission studies, mission activities, and overseas ministries* (Frankfurt am Main 2012).
- 3 Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678) is known as the 'first female student'. She attended lectures in a booth hidden behind a curtain.
- 4 <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2018/09/a-new-display-of-southeast-asian-manuscripts-from-the-sloane-collection.html> (accessed 8 November 2024).
- 5 See in particular J.M. van der Linde, *Surinaamse Suikerheren en hun Kerk: Plantagekolonie en Handelskerk ten tijde van Johannes Basseliers, Predikant en Planter in Suriname, 1667-1689* (Wageningen 1966).
- 6 See Van der Linde, *Surinaamse Suikerheren*, p. 74.
- 7 From his *Neerlands hoofd- en wortelonde* Part II, pp. 46-49 cited in Ursy Lichtveld en Jan Voorhoeve, *Suriname: Spiegel Der Vaderlandse Kooplieden: Een Historisch Leesboek* (Zwolle 1958).
- 8 See in particular the biography by J.M. van der Linde, *Jan Willem Kals 1700-1781; Leraar der hervormden; Advocaat van Indiaan en Neger* (Kampen 1987).
- 9 See J. van Goor, *Jan Kompenie as Schoolmaster; Dutch Education in Ceylon 1690-1795* (dissertation Utrecht 1978).
- 10 The *Maandelykse Nederlandsche Mercurius*, Eerste deel, Amsterdam, 1756, pp. 82-83.
- 11 Michiel Christiaan Vos, *Merkwaardig verhaal aangaande het leven en de lotgevalen van Michiel Christiaan Vos, als predikant der hervormde christelijke gemeente op onderscheidene plaatsen in Nederland, Afrika en Azië; van zijne Jeugd af tot den tijd van zijn Emeritusschap: door hem zelve in den jare 1819 briefsgewijze aan eenen vriend* (Amsterdam 1824). See also Van Rinsum, *Sol Iustitiae en de Kaap*, pp. 27-31.
- 12 S. Huigen, 'Michiel Christiaan Vos: de eerste zwarte schrijver in Zuid-Afrika', *Tydskrif vir Nederlands & Afrikaans* 4 (1997) 2, pp. 203-209.
- 13 E.M. Conradie, *Hollandse Skrywers uit Zuid-Afrika; 'n kultuur-historiese studie Deel I (1652-1875)* (Pretoria 1934) p. 174.
- 14 J.C. Neurdenburg, *De Christelijke zending der Nederlanders in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Rotterdam 1891), pp. 94-95.
- 15 J.J.P. Valeton, *De Utrechtsche Zendingsvereniging* (Utrecht 1909), p. 1.
- 16 An old Afrikaner term used to refer to an old black man or a black servant.
- 17 This is the title of a book written by the missiologist Hendrik Kraemer and published in 1958. Kraemer was awarded an honorary doctorate by Utrecht University in 1936.

## 3. EXPLORATION & CLASSIFICATION (c. 1636-1850)

- 1 Gerhard Moll, *Verhandeling over eenige vroegere zeetogten der Nederlanders* (Amsterdam 1825), p. 2-4.
- 2 Pieter Harting 'George Everard Rumphius', *Album der natuur*, 34 (1885) 1, pp. 1-15.
- 3 M. Greshoff, *Rumphius gedenkboek: 1702-1902* (Haarlem 1902), p. 164.
- 4 See J. Heniger, *Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein (1636-1691) and Hortus Malabaricus: a contribution to the history of Dutch colonial botany* (Rotterdam 1986).

- 5 H.K. s]Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala, 1663-1701: de memories en instructies betreffende het commandement Malabar van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* [*The Dutch in Kerala, 1663-1701: the pleadings and instructions concerning the Malabar command of the United East India Company.*] ('s-Gravenhage 1976).
- 6 See for example, Venkata Meghana Kuppa, '*Hortus Malabaricus*' or '*Hortus Europae in Malabarica*'? *Situating the Hortus Malabaricus in the history of Malayali Botany and the Dutch Empire* (Leiden 2022).
- 7 LYK-ZANGEN *Over 't afsterven van den Wel-Edelen Hooggeleerden HEERE EVERT JACOB VAN WACHENDORFF, Hoog - Leeraar in de Genees - Kruid- en Scheikunde. Godvruchtig in den HEERE ontslaapen Binnen Utrecht den 22sten begraven den 29sten van Wintermaand 1758*, 6.
- 8 See in particular F.A. Stafleu, 'F.A.W. Miquel, Netherlands botanist'. *Mededelingen van het Botanisch Museum en Herbarium van de Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht 220* (1966) 1, pp. 1-95.
- 9 Zaheer Baber, 'The Plants of Empire: Botanic Gardens, Colonial Power and Botanical Knowledge'. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46 (2016) 4, 659-679, p. 18.
- 10 Most of the text on Adriaan Reland appeared earlier in Henk van Rinsum, '1705: Een nieuwe visie op de islam', in: Lex Heerma van Voss e.a. (red.), *Wereldgeschiedenis van Nederland* (Amsterdam 2018), pp. 299-304. See also Bart Jaski, Christian Lange, Anna Pytlowany en Henk J. van Rinsum (eds.), *The Orient in Utrecht: Adriaan Reland (1676-1718), Arabist, Cartographer, Antiquarian and Scholar of Comparative Religion* (Leiden 2021).
- 11 Amersfoort, J. van, and W.J. van Asselt, *Liever Turks dan Paaps?; de visies van Johannes Coccejus, Gisbertus Voetius en Adrianus Relandus op de islam* (Zoetermeer 1997), pp. 113-114.
- 12 Maria Holtrop has rightly pointed out to me that the image accompanying this text depicted black enslaved people. It is also striking that two enslaved people are apparently tied up while another black person offers gifts. In a personal communication, Guillermo Pupo Pernet pointed out to me the one wearing the red 'skirt' is offering handmade products rather than traditional slavery representations such as fruit and vegetables. Guillermo raises the possibility that this person might have been a *matelot* and traded produce and slaves.
- 13 See Cohn, *Colonialism and its Form of Knowledge*, pp. 3-5; Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture*, p. 3.

#### 4 EXPERIMENTATION & EXPLOITATION (1850-1959)

- 1 A 'wingewest' is an economically exploited region.  
I have drawn on the survey works: Herman Burgers, *De geroeda en de ooievaar: Indonesië van kolonie tot nationale staat* (Leiden & Boston 2010); J.J.P. de Jong, *De waaier van het fortuin: van handelscompagnie tot koloniaal imperium: de Nederlanders in Azië en de Indonesische archipel 1595-1950* (Den Haag 1999); and Jur van Goor, *De Nederlandse koloniën: geschiedenis van de Nederlandse expansie, 1600-1975* (Den Haag 1994).  
I also refer to the publications of Jan Breman, especially his recent *Kolonialisme en racisme: een postkoloniale kroniek* (Amsterdam 2021).

- 2 D.W. Schiff, 'De Koloniale Politiek Onder Den Raadpensionaris Rutger Jan Schimelpenninck', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 12th Vol., 5th Afl., (1864), pp. 377-389, q.v. 378.
- 3 Jan Breman, *Kolonialisme en racisme*, p. 228.
- 4 See especially Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'Dutch Expansion in the Indonesian Archipelago Around 1900 and the Imperialism Debate', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25 (1994) 1, pp. 91-111. See also the recent biography of the governor-general Idenburg: Hans van der Jagt, *Engelen uit Europa: A.W.F. Idenburg en de moraal van het Nederlands imperialisme* (Amsterdam 2022).
- 5 M.J. Sirks, *Indisch natuuronderzoek: een beknopte geschiedenis van de beoefening der natuurwetenschappen in de Nederlandsche koloniën* (Amsterdam 1915), p. 89.
- 6 Sirks, *Indisch natuuronderzoek*, p. 97.
- 7 Peter de Ruiter, *Het Mijnwezen in Nederlands-Oost-Indië 1850-1950* (Utrecht 2016).
- 8 See the chapter 'Voyages of Discovery' in Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialisms, Feminisms, and Epistemologies* (Indiana 1998), p. 58. See also Kapil Raj, in *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Scientific Knowledge in South Asia and Europe*.
- 9 See e.g. Andreas Weber, 'A Garden as a Niche: Botany and Imperial Politics in the Early Nineteenth Century Dutch Empire', *Studium*, 11 (2018) 3, pp. 178-190 and Andreas Weber & Robert-Jan Wille, 'Laborious Transformations: Plants and Politics at the Bogor Botanical Gardens', *Studium*, 11 (2018) 3, pp. 169-177.
- 10 Wim van der Schoor, *Zuivere en toegepaste wetenschap in de tropen: biologisch onderzoek aan particuliere proefstations in Nederlands-Indië 1870-1940* (Ridderkerk 2012).
- 11 See Bert Theunissen, '*Nut en nog eens nut*': *wetenschapsbeelden van Nederlandse natuuronderzoekers, 1800-1900* (Hilversum 2000) and Jamin Hervé, *Kennis als opdracht: de Universiteit Utrecht 1636-2001* (Utrecht 2001).
- 12 Theunissen, *Nut*, pp. 189-192.
- 13 G.J. Mulder, *Levensschets van G.J. Mulder, door hem zelfden geschreven en door drie zijner Vrienden uitgegeven* (z.p. 1881), p. 267. See also the informative article by H.A.M. Snelders, 'Gerrit Jan Mulders bemoeienissen met het natuurwetenschappelijk onderzoek in Nederlands-Indië', *Tijdschrift voor de geschiedenis der geneeskunde, natuurwetenschappen, wiskunde en techniek*, 13 (1990) 4, pp. 253-264.
- 14 Snelders, 'Gerrit Jan Mulders bemoeienissen', p. 262.
- 15 J.P. Fockema Andreae a.o., *De Utrechtsche Universiteit 1815-1936* (Utrecht 1936), p. 61.
- 16 Mulder, *Levensschets*, p. 148.
- 17 G.J. Mulder, *De voeding van den neger in Suriname* (Rotterdam 1847), p. 1.
- 18 Mulder, *De voeding van den neger*, p. 7.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 21 For more information, I refer to the publications of Arjo Roersch van der Hoogte and Toine Pieters on 'Colonial Agro-Industrialism'.
- 22 See Huug van der Dool, 'Ons Filiaal in Indië', *Meteorologica* 2 (2011), pp. 12-16.
- 23 De Ruiter, *Het mijnwezen*, p. 157.

- 24 See G.M.W. Acda, *Op de deining van de wetenschap: leven en werk van Gustaaf Frederik Tydeman (1858-1939), zeeofficier en hydrograaf* (Franeker 2019). In particular in Chapter 4, Acda explores this interdependence and also refers to the work of Vening Meinesz in this context.
- 25 See also the chapter on Hubrecht in Wille, 2015/2019.
- 26 Expeditions seemed to be a family affair: his son, Paul Francois, was a geologist on the 3rd South New Guinea Expedition of 1912-13 and the Central New Guinea Expedition of 1920-1922.
- 27 H.A. Lorentz, *Eenige maanden onder de Papoea's* (Leiden 1905), pp. 2-4.
- 28 Lorentz, *Eenige maanden*, p. 31.
- 29 J.P. Fockema Andreae, et al., *De Utrechtsche Universiteit 1815-1936* (Utrecht 1936), p. 336.
- 30 See Ben de Pater, 'Louis van Vuuren (1873-1951): grondlegger van een praktijkgerichte sociale geografie', in: *Geografie* 7 (1998), no. 4, pp. 24-29.
- 31 See for example the short biography by R.P.W. Visser, 'Friedrich Went (1863-1935) Botanicus', in *Geleerd in Utrecht*.
- 32 Hugo de Vries, 'De proefstations voor suikerriet op Java', *De Gids* 59 (1895), pp. 283-303, q.v. 302-303.
- 33 See Wim van der Schoor, *Biologie en Landbouw F.A.F.C. Went en de Indische Proefstations*, 1994, p. 15. See also Wim van der Schoor, *Zuivere en toegepaste wetenschap in de tropen*.
- 34 F.A.F.C. Went, *Went, Ondoelmatigheid in de levende natuur* (Utrecht 1906), p. 29.
- 35 F.A.F.C. Went, *Botanische problemen der laatste 15 jaren* (Amsterdam 1896), p. 19-20.
- 36 F.A.F.C. Went, 'De strijd tegen de ziekten der kultuurgewassen', *De Gids* 63 (1899) 1, pp. 75-185, q.v. 178.
- 37 F.A.F.C. Went, *De plicht der vaderlandsche wetenschap jegens tropisch Nederland: redevoering uitgesproken bij de opening der 143e algemene vergadering van het Provinciaal Utrechtsch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen op 6 juni 1916* (Utrecht 1916).
- 38 Snouck Hurgronje was a famous Arabist and expert on Islam. He advised the colonial government on matters related to the Aceh war in Sumatra.
- 39 Went, *De plicht der vaderlandsche wetenschap*, p. 23.
- 40 Van der Schoor (2012) reports: 'Many biologists, for example, had studied under Went in Utrecht; at one point, someone counted as many as 40 Utrecht graduates in Java and Sumatra.' (p. 75). P. Faasse, in *Profiel van een Faculteit*, notes: 'And in many cases, this was also based on clever political maneuvering: by threatening to go to the Dutch East Indies himself, Went succeeded in getting Pulle appointed as a lecturer in 1906, for example. When the latter announced in 1912 that he was considering an offer from the Dutch East Indies, Went used that offer to convert Pulle's lectureship into a full professorship.' (p. 89, note 10).
- 41 Went, *De plicht der vaderlandsche wetenschap*, p. 26.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 43 Ernst Cohen, *Dingen en mensen* (Utrecht 1916), p. 25.
- 44 F.A.F.C. Went, 'De strijd tegen de ziekten der kultuurgewassen', p. 180.

- 45 Jacob Christiaan Koningsberger, *'Horrea replenda': toespraak gehouden bij de opening van het Treub-Laboratorium te Buitenzorg, op 4 mei 1914*. (Buitenzorg 1914), p. 12.
- 46 At first it was called the 'Colonial Council'. At Minister Pleyte's suggestion, this was changed to 'People's Council'. Pleyte was referring to the People's Council that the Boers – a kindred people, according to the minister – had set up in South Africa! See N.S. Efthymiou, *De organisatie van regelgeving voor Nederlands Oost-Indië: stelsels en opvattingen (1602-1942)* (Amsterdam 2005), p. 381.
- 47 Interestingly, Koningsberger here made use of Hubrecht's 1882 inaugural, *The hypothesis of accelerated development by first birth and its place in the theory of evolution*.
- 48 Jacob Christiaan Koningsberger, *De verhoudingen tusschen Nederland en Indië, beschouwd van natuurwetenschappelijk standpunt; Toespraak gehouden den 3den juni 1925 op de 152ste Algemeene Vergadering van het Provinciaal Utrechtsch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Utrecht 1925), p. 17.
- 49 Koningsberger, *De verhoudingen tusschen Nederland en Indië*, p. 19.
- 50 See more in particular: C.P.M. Görts, *Victor Jacob Koningsberger 1895-1966: De Hoogleraar die zijn rug recht hield* (Utrecht 2014).
- 51 Jacob Christiaan became a well-known minister who served as a chaplain to the Dutch military during the 'policee actions' in the Dutch East Indies.
- 52 The Linggardjati Agreement was a political agreement concluded on 15 November 1946 between the Dutch colonial administration and the unilaterally declared Republic of Indonesia in the village of Linggajati. In this agreement, the Dutch recognised the republic as exercising de facto authority in Java, Madura, and Sumatra.
- 53 Quoted in Görts, *Victor Jacob Koningsberger*, p. 101.
- 54 R.P.W. Visser, 'Pulle, August Adriaan (1878-1955)', in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*.  
URL: <http://resources.huylens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn4/pulle> [12/11/2013]
- 55 See in particular Patricia Faasse's biography of Westerdijk, *Een beetje opstandigheid: Johanna Westerdijk. De eerste vrouwelijke hoogleraar van Nederland* (Amsterdam & Antwerpen 2012).
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## 6 UTRECHT UNIVERSITY & SLAVERY

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- 7 **TRAINING & CONTROL (1925-1950): THE 'OIL FACULTY'**
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- 24 Henk J. van Rinsum, 'Secretaris van de restauratie in het interbellum: Horace Hugo Alexander van Gybland Oosterhoff (1887-1937)', *Tijdschrift voor Biografie* (2014), pp. 58-68. See for the history of the Verbond voor Nationaal Herstel: Ad Zwaga, *Verbond voor Nationaal Herstel: een conservatieve groepering in Nederland tijdens het interbellum* (Utrecht 1985).
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- 6 J. Prins, *De beknelde kleurling. Zuid Afrika's Vierstromenbeleid* (Assen 1967) p. 148 and p. 150.
- 7 Prins, *De beknelde kleurling*, p. 37.
- 9 EDUCATION IN THE COLONY**
- 1 In particular, I rely on J.E.A.M. Lelyveld's 1992 dissertation, "...Waarlijk geen overdaad, doch een dringende eisch..." *Koloniaal onderwijs en onderwijsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië 1893-1942* 2 (Utrecht 1992).
- 2 H.A. Poeze, C. van Dijk and I. van Meulen, (1986) *In het land van de overheerser* (Dordrecht 1986).
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**10 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (1950-1990): ETHICAL POLITICS REVISITED?**

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**12. LOOKING AHEAD: TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL UNIVERSITY?**

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## IMAGE CREDITS

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- p. 30 Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676). Collection Utrecht University
- p. 33 Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617-1666). Rijksmuseum RP-P-1907-3000
- p. 34 Voetius, *Een Volmaeckte Cataloge [...]*, 1636. Collection University Library Utrecht
- p. 36 Johannes Leusden (1624-1699). Noord Hollands Archief, Collection, no. 1965
- p. 37 Title page *De Hoop van Israël* by Menasseh Ben Israël. Wikimedia. John Carter Brown Library
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- p. 39 John Eliot preaching to the Indians. Metropolitan Museum.
- p. 43 Plantation of 'Mr. Basselier' (bottom right)  
Encyclopedievanzeeland.nl/Johannes\_Basseliers
- p. 45 Title page *Neerlands hooft- en wortel-sonde* by Jan Willem Kals  
[https://books.google.nl/books?vid=KBNL:UBL000012186&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.nl/books?vid=KBNL:UBL000012186&redir_esc=y)
- p. 48 Title page *Disputatio Theologica De Conversione Indorum* (1675). University Library Utrecht.
- p. 53 Title page *Voorbeeldt des openbaeren Godtsdiensts* by Francois Caron  
University Library Utrecht
- p. 54 Newspaper article in *De Maandelykse Nederlandsche Mercurius*, 1756
- p. 56 Michiel Christiaan Vos (1759-1825). RKD, IB2020032
- p. 58 Gijsbertus Bonnet (1723-1805). Rijksmuseum RP-P-1909-1093
- p. 62 The Board of the Utrecht Missionary Society with Professor J.J.P. Valetton in the centre. The Utrecht Archives - 105279
- p. 66 Gerrit Moll (1785-1838). University Museum Utrecht 0285-13317
- p. 68 Rumphius. Rijksmuseum RP-P-OB-46.529
- p. 69 Title page *Het Amboinsche Kruid-Boek*
- p. 69 Title page *D'Amboinsche Rariteitenkamer*.
- p. 70 Memorial Stone for Rumphius in Ambon. KITLV 4866

- p. 71 Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein. Wikipedia Commons
- p. 73 The Three Brahmins, co-workers of Van Reede  
<https://hortusindicusmalabaricus.wordpress.com/>
- p. 74 Johannes Munnicks (1652-1711). The Utrecht Archives – 105800
- p. 74 Title page *Horti Indici Malabarici Pars quinta*, mentioning Johannes Munnicks
- p. 75 *Hortus Malabaricus*, Vol. 3. contact VOC – Indigenous people
- p. 75 *Hortus Malabaricus*, Carim-pana (Palm)]
- p. 76 Evert Jacob van Wachendorff (1702-1758). Wikimedia
- p. 77 Title page *Icones Plantarum Rariorum*. <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>
- p. 78 (son) Steven Jan van Geuns (1767-1795). The Utrecht Archives - 104754
- p. 78 (father) Matthias van Geuns (1735-1817). The Utrecht Archives - 105751
- p. 78 Protea Calycina (*Icones Plantarum Rariorum*)
- p. 80 F.A.W. Miquel (1811-1871). The Utrecht Archives - 31973
- p. 82 Title page *Systema Naturae* by Carl Linnaeus, 1735. [https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/)
- p. 83 Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778). Library of Congress
- p. 84 Carl Linnaeus, MAMMALIA PRIMATES. Homo
- p. 86 Title page of *Vocabulaer, ofte Woorden-boeck* by Frederic Gueynier (1668-1682)
- p. 87 Title page *Indiana* by J.F.G. Brumund
- p. 88 Adriaan Reland (1676-1718). Rijksmuseum RP-P-1903-A-23425
- p. 89 Title page *De Religione Mohammedica* by Adriaan Reland, 1705
- p. 94 Gisbertus Cuper (1644-1716). Wikipedia
- p. 94 Nicolaes Witsen (1641 -1717). Wikimedia
- p. 94 Cornelis de Bruijn (1652-1727). Rijksmuseum SK-A-1280
- p. 96 Insulae Javae pars occidentalis – pars orientalis edente Hadriano Relando. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53065259n?rk=171674;4#>
- p. 96 Detail Insulae Javae pars occidentalis – pars orientalis edente Hadriano Relando. Library of Congress
- p. 98 Headquarters of Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM) in Batavia. KITLV 45057
- p. 104 Franz W. Junghuhn (1809-1864). KITLV 37C45
- p. 109 G.J. Mulder (1802-1880). Collection Utrecht University
- p. 111 Title page *De Voeding van de Neger in Suriname* by G.J. Mulder
- p. 113 Kina harvest in the Preanger, West-Java. KITLV 181938
- p. 116 J.A.C. Oudemans and his co-workers. Pyenson, 1989, 28
- p. 116 Triangulation Java by J.A.C. Oudemans. From: Oudemans, *Die Triangulation von Java*
- p. 117 J.A.C. Oudemans (1827-1906). The Utrecht Archives - 106013
- p. 117 Title page *Ilmoe Alam or Description of the World* by J.A.C. Oudemans
- p. 121 Royal Magnetic and Meteorological Observatory, Weltevreden. Meteorologica 2 – 2011.
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- p. 122 F.A. Vening Meinesz on board Hr. Ms K XVIII, Royal Netherlands Navy submarine. National Archives Number access 2.24.05.02, File number 023-0599
- p. 123 C.E.A. Wichmann (1851-1927). The Utrecht Archives - 107125
- p. 125 Siboga crew and the scientific staff of the Siboga with the Raja of Misool seated next to Anna Weber. Wikipedia Commons.
- p. 127 A.A.W. Hubrecht during lecture. The Utrecht Archives - 105094
- p. 127 A.A.W. Hubrecht (1853-1915). The Utrecht Archives - 105096
- p. 129 Wichmann Expedition, Arthur Wichmann (seated, third from the left) and his expedition members. Back row from left to right: Lorentz and Van Nouhuys; front row from left to right: Dumas, Van der Sande, Wichmann, and De Beaufort. National Museum World Cultures, Coll.nr. TM-60012038
- p. 131 Papuans sitting near the tent of expedition member G.A.J. van der Sande. National Museum World cultures, Coll.nr. TM- 60010117
- p. 132 J.I.J.M. Schmutzer (1882-1946). National Archives 935 - 1145
- p. 135 F(riedrich) A.F.C. Went (1863-1935). The Utrecht Archives - 107078
- p. 136 Botanical Laboratory of the National Botanical Garden in Buitenzorg with director Melchior Treub in the front left and S.H. Koorders in the front right. KITLV 33398
- p. 136 Sugar cane research station Kagok at Tegal. KITLV 10765
- p. 143 F.A.F.C. Went, *Urbi et Orbi* (1921). *Excursiekrant* 12, 1921.
- p. 144 F.A.F.C. Went in the Suriname jungle next to a Cecropia tree. Collection University Museum Utrecht, nr. 0285-111731
- p. 147 Jacob Christiaan Koningsberger (1867-1951). Rijksmuseum - SK-A-3823
- p. 149 Handelsstraat. Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, General Research Station for Agriculture, Analytical Laboratory, etc., Buitenzorg. KITLV 1401403
- p. 150 Victor Jacob Koningsberger. The Utrecht Archives - 21671
- p. 153 A.A. Pulle (1878-1955), South New Guinea Expedition of 1912-1913. Wikipedia commons
- p. 155 Inauguration professor Johanna Westerdijk. The Utrecht Archives - 98644
- p. 159 Group portrait of the professors of the Veterinary School in Utrecht (including L. Blicke and G. Krediet), 1921. The Utrecht Archives - 106726
- p. 159 Dr. J.A. Kaligis. *Sumatra Post* 1 July 1938
- p. 165 Entrance marked Dokter-Djawa School of the School for Training of Indigenous Doctors (STOVIA) on Hospitaalweg in Batavia. KITLV 35810
- p. 167 Christiaan Eijkman (1858-1930) c. 1900 in the East Indies. KITLV 15344
- p. 167 C.A. Pekelharing (1848-1922). The Utrecht Archives - 106033
- p. 167 C. Winkler (1855-1941) in his laboratory. The Utrecht Archives 32240
- p. 168 STOVIA Students. KITLV 5185
- p. 170 Instrument satchel from Rudolf Martin, *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie in systematischer Darstellung*, 1914
- p. 173 'Das Skelett stammt von einem Papuanen [...]'. *Nova Guinea VII*.

- p. 174 A.J.P. van den Broek (1877-1961) at the Anatomical Institute. Collection University Medical Centre Utrecht
- p. 178 Title page *Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan en zijner overheersers* door J.H.F. Kohlbrugge (1865-1941)]
- p. 178 Sascha Schneider (1870 – 1927), *Das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit* [The Sense of Dependence]. Wikipedia Commons
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- p. 184 Godert Alexander Gerard Philip, Baron van der Capellen (1778-1848). The Utrecht Archives 104298
- p. 189 Fourth Pacific Science Congress; Final General Meeting. In the front row, third from the right, F.A.F.C. Went. Proceedings Fourth Pacific Science Congress
- p. 193 Dirk Lenting (1789-1877). Rijksmuseum RP-P-1909-893
- p. 194 Pieter Bleeker (1819-1878). Wikipedia Commons
- p. 195 Geerlof Wassink (1811-1864). Wassink family archive Wikipedia Commons
- p. 196 Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk (1824-1894) in front of his home in a desa south of Singaradja. KITLV 408210
- p. 197 Karel van Gorkom (1835-1910). Wellcome\_V0026463
- p. 198 J.P. Sprenger van Eyk (1842-1907). The Utrecht Archives 106520
- p. 199 Jacques Spanjaard (1846-1910). Wikipedia Commons
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- p. 201 Gijsbertus Adrian Johan van der Sande (1863-1910). Wikipedia Commons
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- p. 205 Cornelis Andries Backer (1874-1963). Naturalis
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- p. 215 G.W. Vreede (1809-1880). The Utrecht Archives 106972
- p. 218 Nicolaas Beets (1814-1903) in his study. The Utrecht Archives - 38799
- p. 220 H.C. Millies (1810-1868). The Utrecht Archives - 105721
- p. 220 H.J. Nieboer (1873-1920). [geni.com/people/Herman-Nieboer](https://www.geni.com/people/Herman-Nieboer)
- p. 227 March thro' a swamp. Blake after John Gabriel Stedman. *Narrative of Five Years Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Suriname*. Wikimedia Commons
- p. 230 Journalist and writer Pieter Brooshoofd (1845-1921). KITLV 4515
- p. 236 J.Ph. Suyling (1869-1962). The Utrecht Archives - 106594
- p. 236 J. de Louter (1847-1932). The Utrecht Archives - 105582
- p. 239 Group portrait of professors at the opening of the Indology faculty, 7 October 1925. The Utrecht Archives 106683
- p. 239 Mas Prijohoetomo. Permission H. Poeze, *Het Land van de Overheerser*, p. 281

- p. 241 Group portrait of the members of the Utrechtsche Indologen Vereeniging (UIV) during the celebration of its first lustrum in the Grand Auditorium of the Academy Building (Domplein 29) in Utrecht. In the background are some professors, including Gerretson. Utrecht Mayor J.P. Fockema Andreae on the left. The Utrecht Archives - 853202
- p. 243 F.C. Gerretson (1884-1958). Utrecht University Museum - 3555
- p. 243 H. Westra (1883-1959). The Utrecht Archives - 107098
- p. 244 J.L. Pierson (1893-1979). The Utrecht Archives - 106061
- p. 248 Masdoelhak Nasoetion (with beret). KITLV 31497
- p. 248 H.H.A. van Gybland Oosterhoff (1887-1937). The Utrecht Archives - 104870
- p. 252 I.A. Nederburgh (1861-1941). The Utrecht Archives - 105850
- p. 256 Jan Gonda (1905-1991). Collection Utrecht University
- p. 265 Jan van Baal with two Papuans. The person on the right is a kampong chief, South New Guinea. KITLV 14187
- p. 270 Primary school in a desa. KITLV 2684
- p. 274 Meeting of the Perhimpunan Indonesia, presumably in Leiden. KITLV 53604
- p. 275 Cola Debrot (1902-1981). City Archives Amsterdam
- p. 279 Point 4 around the world. US Department of State - Department of State - Technical Cooperation Administration
- p. 283 Wardian case Bogor (front row, second from right: 'To the Director of the Hortus Utrecht'). National Museum World Cultures, Coll.nr. TM-10010760
- p. 289 Bandung conference 1955. WikiCommons







# INDEX

## OF PERSONS

### A

Abdoelrachman, R. 273  
Abdullah 118, 119, 130  
Acda, G.M.W. 302, 311  
Ackersdijck, Jan 112, 214-216, 221, 334  
Adas, Michael 311  
Adorno, Theodor W. 14  
Adriani, Nicolaus 203, 208  
Alberts, A. 245  
Amersfoort, J. van 300, 311  
Andel, H.A. van 299, 311  
Appadurai, Arjun 293  
Appiah, Kwame Anthony 293  
Appu Bhatt 72  
Assang 130  
Asselt, W.J. van 300, 311  
Atjip 130, 192

### B

Baal, Jan van 226, 264-266, 335  
Backer, Cornelis Andries 9, 205, 206, 334  
Bacon, Francis 6, 90, 323, 331  
Barnouw, J. 190  
Basalla, George 21, 22, 278, 298, 311, 324  
Basseliers, Johan 5, 7, 26, 43, 44, 213, 299, 321, 331  
Bastian, Adolf Philipp Wilhelm 261  
Baumstark, C.A.J.M.D. 238  
Beets, Nicolaas 217, 218, 334  
Bemmelen, Reinout van 133  
Bemmelen, Willem van 133  
Bergsma, P.A. 8, 119, 120  
Bernard, Jean-Frédéric 92, 322  
Bernelot Moens, J.C. 114  
Bezemer, T.J. 238  
Bijlmer, H.J.T. 188  
Bijvanck, W.G.C. 31  
Blauw, A.H. 139

Bleeker, Pieter 9, 190, 194, 195, 334  
Blieck, L. de 158, 159, 162, 273, 333  
Blok, H.P. 242  
Bod, Rens 24, 292, 298, 312  
Bodenstein, H.D.J. 244  
Bodewitz, H.W. 259  
Boeke, J. 161, 204, 205  
Bolk, Lodewijk 170, 171  
Bonnet, Gijsbertus 57-59, 61, 257, 331  
Boomgaard, P. 312  
Bosch, Johannes van den 100  
Bosma, Ulbe 312  
Bossenbroek, Martin 312  
Bouman, H. 216  
Brahmins 42, 50, 72-74, 332  
Breman, Jan 101, 102, 300, 301, 312, 330  
Broek, A.J.P. van den 155, 170-174, 304, 312, 313, 334  
Broek, Johannes van den 53  
Brooshooft, Pieter 198, 230, 334  
Brouwer, H.A. 132  
Brijn, Caspar Adam Laurens van Troostenburg de 41, 53, 213, 328  
Brijn, Cornelis de 93, 94, 332  
Bruinessen, M.M. van 258  
Brumund, Jan Frederik Gerrit 8, 86, 87, 332  
Burck, W. 142  
Buren (Burenus), Jakobus 214  
Bussy, L.Ph. le Cosquino de 146, 157, 238  
Buys Ballot, C.H. 8, 119, 120  
Buyskes, Arnold Adriaan 100, 183

### C

Cabralsch, Benjamin 53  
Caland, Willem 155, 258  
Capellen, Goderd Alexander Gebard Philip, Baron van der 9, 70, 100, 107, 182-185, 194, 327, 334

Carneiro, Emanuel 72  
 Caron, Francois 52, 53, 331  
 Casearius, Johannes 72  
 Clay, J. 204  
 Cleveringa, R.P. 150, 298, 323  
 Cohen, Ernst 145, 146, 302, 313  
 Cohen, H.F. 313  
 Cohn, Bernard S. 23, 95, 115, 298, 300, 313  
 Colijn, Hendrik 232, 237, 249, 320  
 Comte, Auguste 216  
 Conradie, Elizabeth 59, 299, 313  
 Coumou, Hiskia 260, 304  
 Cowan, F.J.H. 238  
 Croockewit, Jan Hendrik 114  
 Cuper, Gisbertus 93, 94, 332

D

Darwin, Charles 128, 134, 175, 222, 260  
 Daubanton, Francois E. 63  
 De Beaufort, L.F. 129, 130, 333  
 De Santo Josepho, Mattheus 72  
 Debrot, Cola 275, 276, 335  
 Dermoût, Maria 190  
 Descartes, René 14, 89, 90, 316  
 Deventer, C.Th. van 179, 230  
 Dirks, Nicolas B. 300, 313, 314  
 Doedes, J.I. 61  
 Doel, H. W. van den 304, 314  
 Dommering, E.J. 273  
 Donath, Willem F. 166, 204  
 Donders, F.C. 164, 170  
 Doorn, J.A.A. van 284, 309, 313  
 Drayton, Richard Harry 314  
 Du Bois, W.E.B. 276  
 Du Toit, P.J. 162  
 Dumas, J.M. 129, 130, 333

E

Eijkman, Christiaan 155, 164-168, 204,  
 238, 249, 318, 333  
 Eliot, John 37, 39, 331  
 Elout, Cornelis Theodorus 100, 183  
 Emmer, P.C. 314  
 Engelman, Jan 275  
 Erpenius 90

F

Faasse, Patricia 302, 303, 314  
 Fafié, G. 307, 314  
 Fasseur, C. 306, 314, 315  
 Feddema, H. 306, 307, 315  
 Feuilletau, W.K.H. de Bruyn 172  
 Fischer, H.Th. 225, 247, 260-262, 266, 308,  
 315, 329  
 Flu, Paul Christiaan 9, 206, 273, 275, 334  
 Fourie, P.J.J. 160  
 Frank, Andre Gunder 22, 315  
 Franssen, Lucy Mary 242  
 Fromberg, P.F.H. 110, 113, 197

G

Gaastra, F.S. 315  
 Galtung, Johan 22, 298, 315  
 Gerretson, F.C. 9, 151, 232, 234, 235, 237-  
 247, 249, 255, 306, 307, 313-315, 317, 335  
 Gerwel, Jakes 281  
 Geuns, Matthias van 77-79, 332  
 Geuns, Steven Jan van 77-79, 332  
 Geyl, Pieter 241, 247  
 Gibbon, Edward 90  
 Ginkel, Hans van 11, 280  
 Golius 90  
 Gommans, Jos 314  
 Gonda, Jan 10, 28, 240, 256, 258, 259, 316,  
 335  
 Goor, J. van 299, 300, 307, 316  
 Gorkom, Karel Wessel van 9, 113, 114, 197,  
 198, 334  
 Görts, C.P.M. 151, 303, 316  
 Goss, Andrew 190, 305, 316  
 Gossaert, Geerten 232, 307  
 Gouda, Frances 316  
 Goudoever, A. van 216  
 Goudriaan, Teun 256, 316  
 Groen van Prinsterer, Guillaume 234  
 Groeneboer, Kees 305, 316, 323  
 Grolman, Hermina 180, 225  
 Gueynier, Frederic 8, 41, 85, 86, 332  
 Gybland Oosterhoff, H.H.A. van 9, 233,  
 248-253, 308, 316, 324, 335

## H

Habermas, Jürgen 291, 293, 294  
 Hamilton, Alastair 316, 317  
 Happart, Gilbertus 8, 41, 85, 86  
 Harding, Sandra 103, 301, 317  
 Harreveld, Ph. van 149  
 Harting, Pieter 70, 126, 299, 317  
 Hasskarl, Justus Karl 113  
 Hatta, Mohammed 238, 247  
 Have, Adriana van der 247  
 Heijnen, Armand 317  
 Heniger, J. 299, 317  
 Henssen, Emile 306, 307, 317  
 Herbjørnsrud, Dag 298, 317  
 Heringa, Jodocus 61  
 Hervé, Jamin 301, 317  
 Hesselink, Liesbeth 304, 317  
 Heutsz, van Jo 133, 200, 246, 247, 307, 322  
 Heyman, B. 238  
 Hinderink, Jan 267, 282  
 Hodge, Joseph M. 21, 298, 317  
 Hoebink, Paul 277  
 Hoetink, H. 226  
 Hoëvell, W.R. Baron van 85, 185, 217  
 Hoff, J.H., van 't 143, 144, 146  
 Holtius, A.C. 234, 307  
 Honig, Pieter 189, 317  
 Hoogbergen, Wim 226, 259  
 Hoornbeeck, Johannes 33-35, 89, 91, 257, 331  
 Horkheimer, Max 14  
 Houben, Vincent J.H. 318  
 Houtsma, M.Th. 257, 330  
 Howe, Stephen 298, 318  
 Hubrecht, A.A.W. 125-128, 171, 302, 314, 333  
 Hubrecht, Paul Francois 302  
 Huijsmans, J.W. 125  
 Huisman, F.G. 304  
 Huizinga, J. 175  
 Hunt, Lynn Avery 322  
 Hupka, Nicolaus Konradus 229, 230

## I

Idenburg, A.W.F. 301, 318  
 Idenburg, P.J. 160  
 Irwin, Robert 318  
 Itty Achuden 72

J

Jacob, Margaret C. 322  
 Jacob, s' H.K. 318  
 Jacob, s' E.H. 318  
 Jagt, Hans van der 301, 318  
 Janse, Maartje 306, 318  
 Jansen, Barend C.P. 166  
 Janszen, Bastiaan 54  
 Janzen, Franciscus (Franciscus Jansz., Jansse of Jansze) 53  
 Johari 130  
 Jong, F. de 258  
 Jong, J.J.P. de 300, 318  
 Jong, Pieter de 257  
 Jonge, A.A. de 250, 251, 307, 308, 318  
 Jongeneel, J.A.B. 283, 299, 318  
 Josselin de Jong, J.P.B. 262, 264  
 Jouwe, Nancy 305, 319, 327  
 Julius, W.H. 119, 168, 273  
 Junghuhn, Franz W. 103, 104, 113, 114, 119, 197, 332  
 Juynboll, Th.W. 238, 257  
 Juynboll, W.M.C. 319

## K

Kaligis, J.A. 158, 159, 273, 333  
 Kals, Johann Wilhelm 7, 44-46, 163, 213, 299, 321, 331  
 Karsten, Simon 197, 216  
 Kern, J.H.C. 258  
 Kernkamp, G.W. 258, 307, 319  
 Kernkamp, W.J.A. 183, 257, 264  
 Kielstra, J.C. 238  
 Kleiweg de Zwaan, Jo 170, 173  
 Kleymans, D.J.M. 247  
 Koch, Pyke 275  
 Koch, Robert 165  
 Kock, M.A. de 171, 172  
 Koentjaraningrat, R.M. 281

Kohlbrugge, J.H.F. 8, 175-182, 192, 225, 238,  
259-261, 266, 272, 274, 304, 319, 329, 334  
Kom, Anton de 272  
Königswald, G.H.R. 174, 175  
Koningsberger, Jacob Christiaan 147-151,  
183, 303, 319, 333  
Koningsberger, Victor Jacob 140, 149-152,  
155, 206, 303, 316, 319, 333  
Koolen, D.A.P.N. 237  
Koops, W. 293, 306, 308, 320, 330  
Koorders, S.H. 136, 205, 333  
Korbeld, Christian 305, 320  
Kraemer, Hendrik 9, 208, 209, 299, 334  
Kranenburg, R. 235, 307, 320  
Krediet, Gerrit 158, 159, 333  
Kruk, R. 258  
Kruyt, Albert C. 9, 62, 203, 204, 208, 225,  
305, 323, 334  
Kuipers, Matthijs 305, 319, 327  
Kuitenbrouwer, Maarten 306, 309, 320  
Kummeling, Henk 7, 12  
Kuppa, Venkata Meghana 300, 320

L

Labadie, R.P. 281  
Lam, H.J. 188, 190  
Lamers, Gijsbert Hendrik 61  
Lampe, Friedrich 257  
Landheer, B. 190  
Lange, Chr. 258, 300, 318  
Langen, Cornelis Douwe de 9, 168, 204,  
334  
Langeveld, Herman 320  
Lanjouw, J. 153  
Latumeten, Jonas Andreas 273  
Leersum, Pieter van 114  
Legêne, Susan 321  
Leidelmeijer, Margaret 321  
Lelyveld, J.E.A.M. 271, 308, 321  
Lenting, Dirk 9, 87, 193, 194, 334  
Leur, J.C. van 321  
Leusden, Johannes 7, 35-37, 39-41, 87,  
257, 331  
Leydecker, Melchior 89  
Leydecker, Melchior 42, 86

Linde, J.M. van der 5, 299, 321  
Linnaeus, Carl 8, 14, 76, 82-84, 332  
Livingstone, David N. 321  
Livingstone, David 18, 297  
Locher-Scholten, Elsbeth 102, 231, 301,  
321  
Lodenstein, Jodocus van 43  
Loder, B.C.J. 237, 307  
Lombroso, Cesare 170  
Loncq, G.J. 196  
Lorentz, H.A. 129, 130, 140, 171-173, 302,  
321, 333  
Loria, A. 224, 306, 321  
Louter, J. de 155, 199, 221, 223, 233, 236-  
238, 249, 334  
Lovejoy, Arthur O. 24, 292, 298, 309, 321  
Lutkie, Wouter 251  
Lynden van Sandenburg, F.A.C. van 155,  
238

M

Maat, Harro 321  
MacLeod, Roy M. 21, 298, 321, 322  
Maetsuyker, Joan 86  
Malan, Daniel Francois 63  
Malinowski, Bronislaw 261, 262  
Maringi 130  
Martin, K. 123  
Martin, Rudolf 169-171, 200, 322, 333  
Mas Djipja 130, 192  
Mas Kromohardjo 191, 305  
Mas Prijohoetomo 238-240, 275, 334  
Mas Soeparwi 158, 273  
Mas Soeprapto 191  
Mas Soetisno 158  
Masdoelhak Nasoetion 9, 247, 248, 335  
Matherus, Crescentius [Increase  
Mather] 37-40, 331  
Medhurst, W. 85, 194  
Menasseh Ben Israel 37, 331  
Mes, Margaretha 155, 156  
Mey, Adrianus Henr. F. de 7, 40, 46-50,  
52, 213  
Mey, Louis (Ludovicus) de Louis 46  
Mignolo, Walter 14, 23, 25, 297, 322

- Mijnhardt, W.W. 322  
 Mijsberg, Willem 170, 174  
 Mill (Millius), David 257  
 Millies, H.C. 61, 197, 217, 219, 220, 258,  
     306, 322, 334  
 Miquel, F.A.W. 8, 70, 79-81, 113, 114, 141,  
     153, 300, 327, 332  
 Mohrmann, J.M. 322  
 Moll, Gerrit 65-67, 299, 322, 331  
 Montezinos, Antonio de 37  
 Moon, Suzanne 322  
 Muijzenberg, O. D. van den 306, 307, 315  
 Mulder, Elly 306, 322  
 Mulder, G.J. 8, 17, 79, 107-115, 134, 139, 143,  
     156, 164, 185, 197, 216, 219, 301, 320, 322,  
     326, 332  
 Munnicks, Johannes 74, 77, 332  
 Mutter, Cornelis 93
- N
- Naarding, J.W. 246, 307, 322  
 Ndjuka 226  
 Nederburgh, I.A. 238, 251-253, 335  
 Neiman, Susan 323  
 Neslo, Ellen 226, 228  
 Neubronner van der Tuuk, Herman 9,  
     196, 197, 219, 240, 305, 323, 334  
 Neurdenburg, J.C. 299, 323  
 Nieboer, Herman Jeremias 9, 220-225,  
     259, 306, 323, 329, 334  
 Niermeyr, Jan Fredrik 133, 155  
 Nierstrasz, Hugo 125-126, 128, 155  
 Nieschulz, Otto 160  
 Nijhoff, Martinus 275  
 Nijland, A.A. 119  
 Nolst-Trenité, G.J. 238  
 Nouhuys, Jan Willem van 129, 333  
 Numan, A. 217
- O
- Ondaatje, Peter Philip Jurriaan 53  
 Ondaatje, Willem Jurriaan 53, 54  
 Oostindie, Gert 298, 323  
 Opzoomer, C.W. 217  
 Oestreich, J.W.K. 133
- Otten, Louis ('Lou') 9, 207, 334  
 Otten, R. 258  
 Otterspeer, W. 298, 323  
 Otto, E. 229  
 Oudemans, C.A.J.A. 201, 202  
 Oudemans, J.A.C. 8, 115-119, 323, 332
- P
- Pahud, Charles Ferdinand 81, 113, 114, 119  
 Pareau, J.H. 257  
 Pekelharing, C.A. 165-167, 333  
 Pesegem (Peseghem, Pësëchëm) 145,  
     172, 313  
 Philipsz, Hendrik 53, 54  
 Picart, Bernard 92, 322  
 Pierson, J.L. 242, 244, 335  
 Pieters, Toine 301, 322, 325  
 Pieterse, A.G.M. 323  
 Pietsch, Tamson 297, 323  
 Plaats, Bernardus Jan van der 168  
 Poeze, Harry A. 272, 308, 323, 334  
 Poley, J.Ph. 323  
 Pont, J.W. 161  
 Poskett, James 24, 298, 323  
 Poudroyen, Cornelius 212, 305, 323  
 Prins, Jan 262-264, 266, 308, 324  
 Pronk, Jan 279  
 Pulle, August Adriaan 81, 139, 152, 153,  
     155, 172, 188, 206, 249, 302, 303, 333  
 Pyenson, Lewis 324, 332
- Q
- Quijano, Aníbal 14, 23, 25, 297, 324  
 Quint, Hermina 53
- R
- Raben, Remco 298, 305, 312, 319, 324, 327  
 Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald 261,  
     262  
 Raden Soeratmo 158, 273  
 Raedt, Georgius de 212  
 Raffles, Thomas Stamford 100, 102  
 Raghu, Vira 258  
 Raina, Dhruv 324  
 Raj, Kapil 301, 324

- Ranga Bhatt 72  
 Rassip 130  
 Rau, Sebald 257  
 Rauwenhoff, N.W.P. 139, 147  
 Reed, Estelle 275  
 Reede tot Drakenstein, Hendrik Adriaan  
     van 47, 71-74, 76, 281, 299, 317, 332  
 Rees, R. van 216  
 Reinwardt, C.G.C. 102, 103, 123, 328  
 Reland, Adriaan 4, 8, 26, 65, 85, 87-97,  
     257, 300, 311, 317, 318, 332  
 Rhodes, Cecil 291  
 Rinsum, Henk J. van 3, 4, 11, 297, 299,  
     300, 306, 308, 318, 320, 324, 330  
 Roersch van der Hoogte, Arjo 301, 325  
 Rolla Godert Alexander 185  
 Romburgh, P. van 146, 155-157  
 Romein, Jan 325  
 Roorda, Taco 196, 197, 219  
 Rostow, Walt 22, 278, 325  
 Rouffaer, G.P. 176  
 Royaards, J.H. 216  
 Ruibing, Aaldrik Hendrik 225, 226, 306,  
     325  
 Ruiten, Peter de 301, 325  
 Rumpf, Georg Eberhard (Rumphius) 67-  
     71, 123, 191, 299, 316, 317, 331  
 Rutten, L.M.R. 132, 133, 186, 249, 325
- S
- Said, Edward 22, 23, 25, 298, 319, 325  
 Salawatta, Ourika Jacoba Elisabeth 185  
 Samartha, Stanley 209  
 Samioen 128  
 Sande, Gijsbertus Adrian Johan van  
     der 9, 129-131, 200, 201, 325, 333, 334  
 Sario 130  
 Savornin Lohman, A.F. de 234, 237  
 Savornin Lohman, B.C. de 155, 233, 234,  
     238, 307  
 Savornin Lohman, W.H. de 237  
 Scharphuizen, Johan van 43  
 Scharphuizen, Sara van 43  
 Scheffer, R(udolph).H.C.C. 81  
 Schilling, Godfried Wilhelm 163, 326  
 Schmidt, A.H. 125, 128  
 Schmutzer, J.I.J.M. 132, 183, 333  
 Schneider, Sascha 177, 178, 334  
 Schoor, Wim J. van der 105, 301, 302, 326  
 Schornagel, H. 160  
 Schrieke, B.J.O. 187, 189, 205  
 Schroeder van der Kolk, J.L.C. 216  
 Schutte, G.J. 212, 305, 317, 326  
 Schurman, Anna Maria van 35, 299  
 Schwegman, Hendrik 77  
 Scott, James 14, 297, 326  
 Senguerdus, Wolferdus 90  
 Sens, Angelie 326  
 Sike, Heinrich 89  
 Sirks, M.J. 155, 156, 186, 301, 326  
 Sluijs, Cornelis van der 7, 40-42  
 Snelders, H.A.M. 301, 326  
 Snelders, Stephen 304, 322, 327  
 Snouck Hurgronje, Christiaan 92, 143,  
     179, 208, 235, 246, 271, 272, 302, 307,  
     322, 327  
 Sono 273  
 Spanjaard, Jacques 9, 199, 334  
 Spat, C. 238  
 Specht, Hermanus 7, 40-42  
 Specht, Philippus 42  
 Spoor, Andreas 54  
 Sprenger van Eyk, J.P. 9, 183, 198, 334  
 Stahl, Friedrich Julius 234, 307, 314  
 Steenbrink, Karel A. 327  
 Stegeman, Janneke 213, 305, 327  
 Steinmetz, S.R. 221, 223, 259, 306, 327  
 Stevens, R.J.J. 308, 327  
 Stevens, Th. 327  
 Stittelaar, Jan Willem 185  
 Stuchtay, Benedikt 327  
 Stuurman, Siep 15, 297, 327  
 Suyling, J.Ph. 233, 236, 238, 334  
 Swart, H.N.A. 237  
 Swijghuijsen Groenewoud, J.C. 216, 217,  
     257  
 Sylva, Petrus de 53  
 Sysling, Fenneke 304, 327

## T

Tan, Sian Nio 327  
 Taselaar, Arjen 327, 328  
 Teelinck, Willem 43, 52  
 Tengger 176, 304, 319  
 Teuku Jacob 174  
 Theiler, Arnold 161, 162  
 Theron, Erika 263  
 Theunissen, Bert 106, 301, 328  
 Thijs, Isaac van 42  
 Thoden van Velzen, H.U.E. 226  
 Thomas, Nicholas 328  
 Treub, Melchior 27, 103, 105, 136, 137, 143, 147, 148, 205, 232, 333  
 Treub, Willem 232, 240  
 Trooster, S.G. 133  
 Trotz, Christiaan Hendrik 210, 211, 305, 320, 334  
 Truman, Harry S. 277, 309  
 Truter, Susarah 155  
 Tumbelaka, Ronald 273  
 Tydeman, Gustaaf 125, 128, 302, 311

## U

Udemans, Godefridus Cornelisz. 212  
 Uyl, J. den 279

## V

Valentijn, Francois 40, 93, 214  
 Valetton, J.P. 62, 63, 203, 299, 328, 331  
 Van Daalen, G.C.E. 246, 307, 322  
 Vartija, Devin J. 15, 328  
 Vening Meinesz, Felix 8, 120-123, 132, 302, 332, 333  
 Verdoorn, Frans 189, 317  
 Versluys, Jan 125  
 Veth, P.J. 103  
 Vinayaka Pandit 72  
 Vinke, H.E. 61, 216  
 Vlaanderen, C.L. 114  
 Vlasblom, Dirk 171, 304, 328  
 Vleuten, Anna Jean Marie van 120  
 Vlis, C.J. 85  
 Voetius, Gisbertus 7, 25, 30, 32, 34, 35, 41, 43, 48, 52, 85, 89, 91, 212, 213, 257, 299,

300, 311, 331  
 Vogelsang, W. 255  
 Vollenhoven, C. van 235, 328  
 Vollgraff, C.W. 205, 238  
 von Humboldt, Alexander 77, 119  
 von Savigny, Friedrich Carl 234, 307  
 Voorhelm Schneevoogt, G. 77, 79  
 Vorderman, Adolphe G. 9, 166, 200, 334  
 Vorm, Petrus van der 86, 93  
 Vos, Michiel Christiaan 7, 55-57, 59, 60, 299, 318, 331  
 Vreede, G.W. 112, 214-216, 334  
 Vries, G. de 35  
 Vries, Hugo de 137, 154, 201, 202, 302, 328  
 Vries, O. de 187  
 Vrij, Johan Eliza de 113, 114  
 Vuuren, Louis van 133, 134, 246, 249, 302, 323

## W

Waardenburg, J.J. 258  
 Wachendorff, Everard Jacob van 76, 300, 332  
 Wakker, J.H. 138  
 Wal, S.L. van der 245, 328  
 Warner, Levinus 90  
 Wassink, Geerlof 9, 195, 334  
 Waworoentoe, F.C. 158, 273  
 Weber-van Bosse, Anna 9, 125, 128, 201, 202, 333, 334  
 Weber, Andreas 301, 328  
 Weber, Max Wilhelm Carl 125, 128, 148, 175, 176  
 Wenckebach, W. 328  
 Went, F.A.F.C. 4, 8, 81, 125, 134, 135, 137-147, 149-152, 154, 155, 157, 186-190, 201, 202, 206, 238, 249, 255, 287, 302, 305, 326, 328, 329, 333, 334  
 Went, Frits Warmolt 150, 152  
 Wesseling, H.L. 329  
 Westerdijk, Johanna 8, 154-156, 303, 314, 333  
 Westra, H. 242, 243, 246, 335  
 Wichmann, C.E.A. 8, 70, 123, 124, 128-132, 172, 192, 201, 333



## REGISTER

Wilken, G.A. 221  
Wille, Robert-Jan 19, 191, 192, 298, 301,  
302, 305, 328, 329  
Winkler, C. 165-167, 170, 273, 333  
Witsen, Nicolaes 93-95, 332  
Wolf, Jan J. de 224, 259, 306, 308, 329, 330

## Z

Zaheer Baber 81, 300, 311  
Zwaardemaker, H. 238  
Zwaga, Ad 308, 330  
Zwart, Dick 282



# INDEX

## OF PLACES AND THINGS

- A**  
Adat 238, 263, 318  
Address 112, 216, 217  
Africa 13, 14, 18, 28, 44, 59, 61, 92, 160, 162, 163, 175, 262, 277, 278, 280, 281, 283-285, 291, 328, 329  
Agrarian Act 101, 124  
Alliance for National Restoration [Verbond voor Nationaal Herstel] 249, 250, 330  
Ambon 40, 42, 52, 67, 70, 191, 225, 273, 331  
Amsterdam 35, 37, 47, 53-55, 57, 79, 86, 89, 92, 93, 102, 105, 125, 134, 137, 143, 144, 148, 151, 154, 164, 165, 170, 174, 175, 179, 182, 186, 189, 200, 201, 208, 219, 223, 233, 235, 244, 266, 275, 282, 297, 299, 300-304, 306-309, 312, 314, 316-330, 335  
Association 271  
Association of Owners of Dutch-Indian Sugar Companies [Bond van Eigenaren van Nederlands-Indische Suikerondernemingen (BENISO)] 150, 151, 233  
Association of Sugar Companies in Indonesia [Bond van Eigenaren van in Indonesië gelegen Suikerondernemingen (BEVISO)] 151  
Aceh war [Atjeh oorlog] 143, 165, 200, 246, 302  
Asia 18, 28, 34, 53, 55, 60, 257, 258, 263, 264, 284, 299-301, 305, 311, 314, 316, 318, 320, 321, 324, 330
- B**  
Bali 188, 195, 196, 197, 263, 264  
Banda 193  
Bandung (Bandoeng) 204, 207, 271, 272, 273, 289, 297, 305, 324, 335  
Batavia 41, 42, 46, 52, 54, 60, 85, 86, 93, 98, 110, 119, 120, 133, 138, 165, 168, 174, 185, 187, 188, 193-195, 200, 204, 205, 207, 231, 238, 269, 271, 305, 311, 323, 324, 332, 333  
Batavian Petroleum Company [Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij] 27, 131-133, 232, 233, 237, 249  
Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences [Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen] 85, 87, 105, 185  
Berbice 45, 211  
Beriberi 164-166, 168, 200, 204, 305, 319  
Boedi Oetomo 208, 272  
Bogor 81, 103, 105, 158, 232, 272, 282, 283, 301, 328, 335  
Bologna Treaty [Verdrag van Bologna] 285  
Book of Nature [Boeck der Natuere] 16, 81  
Borneo 95, 133  
Boston 37, 300, 313  
Botanical Garden Utrecht 4, 67, 76, 77, 282, 317  
Brahman/Brahmin 42, 50, 72-74, 332  
Buitenzorg 27, 103, 110, 130, 136, 137, 142, 147, 149, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 187, 188, 191, 197, 198, 205, 208, 303, 319, 329, 333  
Buitenzorgfonds 137, 154
- C**  
Cabinet of curiosities [Rariteitenkabinet/Rariteitkamer] 43, 67, 69, 123, 185, 331  
California Institute of Technology (CALTEC) 152  
Caribbean 226, 275, 320  
Celebes (Sulawesi) 124, 134, 203, 219, 225, 305, 323

Central Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) 140  
 Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 31, 39, 40, 47, 52-55, 60, 72, 213, 214, 299, 316  
 Choromandel 46, 72  
 Christendom/Christianity 5, 16, 18, 31, 34, 39, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 55, 59, 60, 63, 85, 86, 89, 175, 196, 203, 208, 211-213, 216, 218, 219, 231, 234, 258, 263, 264, 269, 271, 288, 297, 305, 306, 318, 322-324  
 Christian-Historical 28, 234, 237, 240, 244, 249, 253, 317  
 Cinchona [Kina] 8, 20, 103, 110, 112-114, 198, 325, 332  
 Civilisation 3, 15, 18, 20, 27, 34, 61, 63, 101, 102, 105-107, 120, 138, 143, 145, 181, 187, 190, 196, 213, 222, 252, 264, 271, 288, 297  
 Classification 8, 14, 23, 26, 65, 76, 81, 82, 115, 134, 169, 192, 261  
 Cochin 54, 72, 73  
 College of Law [Rechtshogeschool te Batavia] 187, 205, 271, 272  
 College of Medicine in Batavia [Geneeskundige hogeschool in Batavia] 168, 174, 187, 204, 205, 207, 271, 272  
 College of Technology, Bandung 204, 271, 272  
 College of Law [Rechtshogeschool in Paramaribo] 272  
 College of Medical Paramaribo [Geneeskundige hogeschool in Paramaribo] 272  
 Colombo 42, 53-55, 214  
 Colonialism / Colonial / Coloniality *passim*  
 Commerce 18, 31, 69, 86, 99, 149, 297, 333  
 Constantinople [Konstantinopoles] 89, 90, 92  
 Copyright 9, 251-254  
 Council of Entrepreneurs for the Dutch East Indies [Ondernemersraad voor Nederlandsch-Indië] 232, 240  
 Cultivation system [Cultuurstelsel] 100-102, 124, 164, 242, 314

D

Dependency model 22, 23  
 Desa-school 270, 335  
 Development *passim*  
 Development cooperation 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 26, 28, 29, 64, 152, 162, 277, 279, 280, 282, 284, 285  
 Deventer 93  
 Diffusion 21, 22, 24, 25, 292  
 Directorate-General International Cooperation [Directoraat-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking (DGIS)] 279  
 Discipline:  
   Anatomy 22, 125, 128, 169, 170, 171, 174-176, 201, 216  
   Anthropobiology 175  
   Anthropology (incl. physical) 8-10, 20, 91, 131, 156, 169, 171, 174, 175, 187, 200, 201, 224, 226, 259, 261, 262, 264, 266, 267, 279, 281, 305, 306, 322, 325, 327-330  
   Arts 67, 87, 102, 105, 123, 142, 148, 174, 216, 237, 238, 241, 245, 257, 259, 261, 263, 266, 316, 321  
   Astronomy 65, 107, 115, 117  
   Biology 19, 20, 70, 81, 105, 129, 134, 137, 144, 146, 147, 151, 153-155, 169, 170, 175, 183, 238, 261, 281, 282, 291, 298, 301-303, 305, 325, 326, 328, 329  
   Botany 76, 77, 81, 103, 105, 107, 108, 130, 137, 139, 150-154, 190, 191, 201, 202, 206, 258, 299-301, 317, 320, 328, 329  
   Cartography 4, 8, 26, 65, 87, 122, 125, 300, 318  
   Chemistry 77, 79, 107, 108, 110, 134, 144, 145, 146, 157, 164, 187, 216, 281, 282  
   Ethnography 62, 103, 131, 173, 180, 187, 201, 203, 222, 223, 225, 262, 325  
   Ethnology 87, 105, 145, 170, 175, 176, 180, 189, 199, 201, 221-223, 225, 226, 238, 240, 245, 247, 259-262, 264, 266, 267, 279, 306, 308, 315, 323, 325, 327, 330  
   Pharmacy 107, 108, 110, 114, 139, 152, 195, 197, 198, 281, 327

- Geography 8, 21, 28, 81, 87, 92, 103, 105, 119, 123, 133, 134, 175, 176, 221, 223, 246, 260, 266, 267, 279, 282
- Geology (Geodesy, Geofysics, Mineralogy, Paleontology, Petrography) 8, 70, 103, 114, 115, 120, 122-124, 130-133, 169, 174, 183, 186, 282, 287, 302
- Law 53, 129, 171, 183, 187, 198, 205, 211, 216, 221, 223, 229, 232-235, 237, 238, 245, 246, 251, 257, 262, 263, 271, 272, 275, 318
- Mathematics 65, 77, 106, 137, 144, 216
- Medicine 8, 76, 77, 79, 105, 106, 139, 152, 157, 160-166, 168, 169, 175, 176, 195, 196, 200, 204, 205, 207, 217, 238, 273, 275, 281, 282, 292, 303, 311, 325
- Meteorology 8, 119-121, 133, 176, 301, 314, 328, 332
- Natural Sciences 11, 14, 17, 27, 72, 90, 103, 105-107, 110, 115, 124, 138, 143, 145, 164, 186, 187, 189, 190, 221, 281, 287, 314, 326, 328
- Philosophy 13, 14, 24, 61, 77, 89, 90, 106, 180, 216, 217, 234, 245
- Psychiatry 170
- Psychology (colonial) 177, 179, 181, 221, 259
- Sociology 221-223, 260, 263, 264, 266, 267, 297, 306, 313, 324, 327
- Theology 13, 20, 25, 26, 32, 40, 42, 44, 47, 52, 53, 55, 59, 61-63, 85, 90, 91, 106, 193, 194, 203, 208, 209, 212, 214, 216, 217, 219, 245, 257, 258, 283
- Veterinary Medicine 157, 161, 162, 217, 273, 282, 303
- Zoology 70, 103, 105, 125, 128, 160
- Diversity (critical diversity) 285, 293, 295
- Doekoen 163
- Dokter-Djawa School 164, 165, 194, 195, 269, 270, 289, 333
- Dutch Anthropological Society [Nederlandse Anthropologische Vereeniging] 169
- Dutch Bible Society [Nederlandsch Bijbel Genootschap (NBG)] 61, 196, 203, 208, 219, 258, 323
- Dutch East India Company [Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC)] 8, 20, 31, 42, 52, 60, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 76, 93, 99, 100, 101, 108, 143, 150, 163, 230, 315, 332
- Dutch Missionary Society [Nederlandsch Zending Genootschap (NZG)] 60-62, 203, 283, 317
- E
- Economically exploited region [Wingewest] 8, 99, 100, 300
- Edinburgh 64
- Elementargedanke 261
- Enlightenment / enlightened 14, 15, 16, 82, 92, 99, 101, 105, 183, 185, 214, 216, 219, 232, 282, 288, 292, 293, 305, 311, 316, 328
- Essequibo 211
- Ethical policy 10, 28, 59, 102, 134, 142, 177, 179-183, 198, 230-232, 235, 246, 260, 270, 271, 277, 280, 284, 312, 318, 321, 322
- Eurocentric 25, 283, 297, 324
- Europe / European passim
- Expedition 8, 27, 77, 117, 119, 120, 122, 124-126, 128-132, 146, 152, 153, 170-172, 192, 195, 201, 227, 288, 302, 312, 313, 325, 329, 333, 334
- Experiment 8, 14, 17, 20, 26, 27, 90, 105, 106, 134, 137, 149, 214, 232, 282, 291, 307, 314
- Experimental stations / Research stations 20, 137, 149, 186, 326, 328
- Exploitation 3, 8, 15, 26, 27, 46, 100, 101, 102, 114, 124, 134, 137, 180, 186, 214, 278, 295, 314
- Exploration 3, 15, 17, 20, 21, 26, 27, 65, 67, 82, 103, 115, 122, 124, 131-134, 141, 143, 148, 191, 214, 223, 287
- F
- Faculty (including Oil Faculty) 9, 10, 13, 27, 28, 32, 55, 59, 81, 106, 139, 144, 146, 148, 151, 154, 155, 157, 160-162, 175, 180-183, 199, 205, 214, 221, 223, 225, 229, 231, 233-235, 237-239, 240-247, 249, 251, 253, 255-267, 273, 275, 281, 282, 285, 293, 303, 306-308, 314, 316, 324, 334

- Far East 41, 84, 87, 92, 95  
 Flora 8, 26, 47, 67, 70, 76, 77, 79, 81, 103, 148, 153, 200, 205, 206, 282, 287, 305, 316  
 Formosa 31, 34, 85  
 Friends of Slaves [Slaven vrienden] 9, 214, 216, 217  
 Fund for Indological Studies at Utrecht University [Fonds ten behoeve van Indologische Studiën aan de Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht] 205, 233, 237, 260, 306
- G  
 Geographia Sacra 92  
 Global Intellectual History 24, 25, 285, 291, 298, 317  
 Government's Cinchona Company [Gouvernements Kina-onderneming] 113, 114  
 Governor(-General) 9, 42, 43, 70, 71, 81, 85, 86, 99, 100, 102, 103, 182, 183, 185, 231, 246, 264, 269, 276, 301  
 Greater Netherlands idea [Groot-Nederlandse gedachte] 28, 240, 241  
 Guyana / Guiana, British 8, 81, 153, 211, 282  
 Guyana, Guiana, French 8, 81, 153, 282
- H  
 Harvard College 37, 39  
 Higher Education Act 1876 106, 123, 297  
 Historical school of Law 232-234  
 Honorary Doctorate 9, 27, 62, 63, 139, 161, 162, 164, 168, 174, 190, 193-209, 219, 225, 240, 275, 281, 289, 299, 305  
 Hortus Indicus Malabaricus [Malabaarse Kruidhof] 8, 71-74, 332  
 Humores 82
- I  
 Imperialism (incl. ethical imperialism) 23, 25, 101, 102, 231, 278, 298, 301, 315, 318, 320, 321, 325, 329  
 India / (East) Indian passim  
 Indigenous 9, 20, 26, 32, 39-41, 44, 46, 47, 52, 61, 64, 72-75, 85, 100-103, 107, 115, 119, 120, 128-130, 132, 145, 146, 149, 158, 163-166, 168, 170, 177, 179-182, 188, 190, 191, 192, 194-196, 213, 231, 232, 238, 244, 245, 252, 253, 258, 269-272, 274, 281, 283, 289, 317, 319, 332, 333  
 Indische Bestuursacademie 133  
 Indian Cultivation Companies [Indische Cultuurondernemingen] 154  
 Indische Instelling Delft 199  
 Indology faculty (Oil-faculty) 9, 28, 146, 148, 151, 175, 180-183, 199, 225, 229, 232, 235, 237-240, 242, 244-247, 249, 251, 253, 255-260, 262-264, 266, 275, 279, 315, 334  
 Indonesia 11, 16, 28, 87, 105, 133, 151, 158, 162, 174, 176, 190, 192, 208, 225, 226, 231, 235, 238, 247, 257, 262, 263, 271-281, 284, 289, 290, 301, 303, 305, 308, 312, 313, 315, 316, 318-321, 323-325, 327, 328, 335  
 Institut Pertanian Bogor 272  
 Insulinde 145  
 Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Oecumenical research 283  
 Investigative modalities 23, 115  
 Islam 26, 31, 35, 87, 89-92, 196, 208, 226, 238, 257, 263, 271, 272, 300, 302, 311, 313, 317, 320, 324, 327
- J  
 Jaffna 47  
 Japan 34, 52, 95, 133, 154, 188, 242, 257, 263, 276, 321  
 Java 4, 8, 27, 61, 65, 93, 95, 96, 100-102, 107, 108, 111-113, 115-118, 124, 128, 129, 132, 137-139, 141, 142, 146, 148, 149, 152-154, 156, 158, 162, 166, 175-180, 185, 187, 190, 191, 198, 200, 203, 205-208, 219, 231, 238, 240, 258, 259, 275, 302-305, 312, 314, 319, 321-324, 325, 327-329, 332, 334  
 Java war 100
- K  
 KNIL (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) 133, 157

## L

- Laboratory 19, 103, 106-108, 110, 113-115, 134, 136, 137, 139, 147, 149, 152, 154, 156, 158, 161, 166-168, 185, 191, 197, 201, 206, 207, 291, 328, 329, 333
- Lake Toba 133, 196
- Latin America 18, 22, 23, 37, 112, 226, 297, 315, 324
- Leiden 27, 52, 54, 72, 79, 81, 82, 90, 92, 103, 105, 115, 123, 140, 150, 154, 156, 160, 179, 181, 194, 196, 197, 199, 207, 208, 219, 221, 223, 226, 230-233, 235, 237, 240, 244, 245, 258-260, 262-264, 271, 273, 274, 283, 298, 300, 302, 304-307, 312-328, 330, 334, 335
- Leprosy [Lepra] 163, 304, 322, 326, 327
- Lombok 31, 263, 264
- London Missionary Society 60

## M

- Majapahit 176
- Malabar 8, 47, 53, 54, 71-75, 191, 299, 300, 317, 318, 320, 332
- Malay 41, 42, 52, 61, 85-87, 93, 95, 117, 174, 176, 177, 187, 188, 194, 219, 238, 240, 257, 258, 270, 300, 316, 320, 325
- Manumission 228
- Mardijker 46
- Maroon / Marronage 226, 259
- Military Hospital Paramaribo 206
- Military Hospital te Weltevreden 110, 166, 195
- Minahassa 193, 273
- Mining Bureau [Dienst van het Mijnwezen] 103, 124, 325
- Modernity 14, 15, 23, 82, 211, 288, 293, 297, 322, 324
- Moluccas 42, 93, 191, 193
- Muhammadiyah 208

## N

- National Botanical Gardens Bogor [Plantentuin Buitenzorg (Kebun Raya Bogor)] 27, 81, 103, 105, 130, 136, 137, 142, 147, 152, 156, 188, 191, 205, 232, 301, 328, 329, 332, 333, 335

- National Committee for Maintaining National Unity [Nationaal Comité Handhaving Rijkseenheid] 151, 244, 255, 327, 328
- National Herbarium [Rijksherbarium] 79, 154
- National Union 240, 242
- Natural Science Commission [Naturkundige commissie] 103
- Natural Science Society in the Netherlands East Indies [Natuurkundige Vereniging in Nederlandsch-Indië] 103
- Naturalis 81, 154, 334
- Netherlands Trading Society [Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM)] 98, 100, 108, 183, 332
- New Imperial Histories 24, 298, 318
- New Guinea 124, 129-131, 145, 153, 171, 191, 192, 201, 264, 265, 277, 279, 302, 305, 312, 322, 333, 335
- Nias (island) 173, 304, 313, 327
- NUFFIC 28, 280

## O

- Oil (see also Oil faculty or Indology faculty) 8, 27, 28, 124, 131-133, 195, 229-256, 259, 312, 323, 324
- Opium 108
- Organisation Decree [Organiek Besluit] 105, 106
- Ottoman Empire (Turkish Empire) 89, 90
- Outlying regions [Buitengewesten] 20, 131

## P

- PakPak 133
- Paleacatte 46, 47
- Palestine 22, 92
- Papua 131, 172, 173, 185, 188, 265, 313, 321, 328, 333, 335
- Perhimpoenan Indonesia 238, 274, 275, 335
- Point Four Program 277
- Postcolonialism 20, 23, 291, 301, 312, 317

- Preanger 100, 113, 312, 332  
 Provincial Utrecht Society of Arts and Sciences [Provinciaal Utrechtsch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen] 142, 148, 302, 303, 311, 319, 329
- R
- Race/ Racism / racial 14, 15, 55, 82, 102, 169, 171, 174, 176, 252, 263, 264, 288, 298, 300, 301, 305, 312, 322, 326-328  
 Revival movement [Reveil] 59, 214, 216, 217  
 Rotterdam 79, 85, 93, 108, 113, 120, 203, 299, 301, 307, 314, 317, 322, 323  
 Royal Academy of Sciences [Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen] 144, 186, 320  
 Royal Dutch Geographical Society [Koninklijk Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap] 103, 124, 133, 304, 312  
 Royal Dutch Meteorological Institute [Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (KNMI)] 120, 123, 133  
 Royal Magnetic and Meteorological Observatory [Koninklijk Magnetisch en Meteorologisch Observatorium (KMMO)] 120, 121, 332  
 Royal Tropical Institute [Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen] (KIT), former Colonial Institute and Indian Institute 152, 282
- S
- Sarekat Islam 272  
 School for Dutch East Indian doctors [Nederlandsch Indische Artsen School (NIAS) Surabaja] 272  
 School for the Training of Indigenous Dentists [School tot Opleiding Van Indische Tandartsen (STOVIT)] 272  
 School for the Training of Indigenous Doctors [School Tot Opleiding Van Inlandsche Artsen (STOVIA)] 164-166, 168, 195, 204, 208, 270, 273, 289, 333
- Science development 11, 18, 20, 21, 24-27, 65, 106, 107, 189, 190, 221, 276, 282, 287  
 Sealand [Zeeland] 5, 42-44, 212, 331  
 Senate 37, 39, 154, 160, 162, 182, 202, 206, 229, 230, 237, 255, 319  
 Siboga expedition 124-126, 128, 196, 201, 202, 333  
 Sinhalese 42, 47, 53, 54  
 Sint-Michielsgestel 150, 189  
 Slavery 9, 11, 17, 27, 59, 61, 112, 163, 211-219, 221, 223-228, 259, 300, 305, 306, 319, 323-325, 327, 329  
 Smyrna 108  
 Societies 7, 17, 60, 187, 198, 225, 288, 293  
 Surabaya 150, 158, 176, 196, 200, 201, 272  
 Sol Iustitiae illustra nos 11, 26, 44, 235, 293, 295, 299, 307, 324, 331  
 Sonneborgh Observatory 115  
 South Africa 4, 8, 11, 28, 55, 59, 60, 63, 76, 77, 154-156, 160-162, 252-254, 262-264, 281, 282, 285, 303, 307, 308, 312, 313, 316, 318, 324  
 South African Missionary Society 59  
 Stellenbosch 4, 161, 244, 263, 285, 324  
 Sugar Act [Suikerwet] 101, 124  
 Sumatra 124, 133, 145, 188, 196, 231, 250, 263, 302, 303, 311, 312, 333  
 Superiority 10, 11, 15, 16, 26, 29, 82, 101, 102, 138, 211, 213, 218, 284, 285, 287-291, 293  
 Suriname 9, 11, 34, 43-45, 79, 81, 110-112, 144, 145, 152, 153, 163, 183, 186, 189, 211, 226-228, 259, 272, 275, 277, 282, 299, 301, 316, 321, 322, 327, 332-334
- T
- Tamil 42, 46, 47, 53  
 Technical Institute Bandung (Institut Teknologi Bandung) 271, 272  
 Tengger 176, 304, 319  
 Ternate 41, 42, 130, 214  
 The Cape [De Kaap] 7, 11, 24, 34, 42, 55, 57, 59, 60, 72, 76, 77, 79, 183, 252, 308, 324  
 Timor 124

Tosari 176  
 Treub Society 124  
 Triangulation 8, 115-117, 119, 322, 323, 332

## U

UNITWIN Program 282  
 Unity of the Empire [Rijkseenheid] 28,  
 151, 226, 244, 249, 250, 308, 327, 328  
 Universitas Airlangga Surabaya 272  
 Universitas Gadjah Mada 16, 28, 174, 272,  
 280  
 Utrecht colonial school 9, 249, 251, 252,  
 307  
 Utrecht passim  
 Utrechtse Missionary Society 62, 208,  
 328, 331

## V

Vening Meinesz belts 122  
 Veterinary Institute Onderstepoort 160-  
 162, 285  
 Via Sacra 162, 252, 255, 262, 324

## W

Wageningen 106, 154, 198, 299, 307, 315,  
 321  
 West Indian Company [West-Indische  
 Compagnie (WIC)] 31, 99, 212, 323  
 World Council of Churches [Wereldraad  
 van Kerken] 209

## Z

Zoological Station Naples 137, 176





## CURRICULUM VITAE

Henk van Rinsum (1953) read theology, history (MA) and anthropology (PhD) at Utrecht University. Until 2001, he worked in the University administration department, initially in the International Office, where he was responsible for the University's development cooperation. Throughout his time in the International Office and during his many trips to Africa in particular, he has always been fascinated by the University's 'colonial' past. His academic work is focused on knowledge & colonialism, university history and European assumptions of missionaries and academics of their superiority. In 2001, he defended his PhD thesis entitled *Slaves of Definition: In Quest of the Unbeliever and the Ignoramus*. It was prompted by Van Rinsum's critical reflection on the practice of University's development cooperation. In it, he reminded the reader of what the Belgian missionary Placide Tempels wrote in his *Bantu philosophy*:

'We do not claim, of course, that the Bantu are capable of formulating a philosophical treatise, complete with an adequate vocabulary. It is our job to proceed to such systematic development. It is we who will be able to tell them, in precise terms, what their inmost concept of being is. They will recognize themselves in our words [...].'

The Ugandan poet and academic Okot p'Bitek wrote in 1963 about these missionaries working in Africa: 'They became slaves of their definitions.'

In 2006, he published *Sol Iustitiae en de Kaap* [Sol Iustitiae and the Cape] on the history of the Utrecht University's relations with South Africa. In collaboration with a Stellenbosch colleague, he is currently finishing a book about the institutional history of the University of Stellenbosch since 1918, based on a critical discourse analysis of the honorary degrees from this university in the period 1918-2018.

In 2021, together with other scholars, he published a comprehensive study of the work and influence of professor of Oriental languages Adrianus Relandus (1676–1718) entitled *The Orient in Utrecht*. In 1705, this Utrecht professor published *De Religione Mohammedica*, a book on Islam still regarded as a turning point in Western understanding of Islam.

In his book, Henk van Rinsum provides an in-depth description of the colonial past of Utrecht University in the Netherlands since its foundation in 1636. He describes the development of (scientific) knowledge and knowledge transfer about and in the Dutch colonies, especially in the Dutch East Indies. The central theme of his book is the idea of Western superiority – the assumption that we are ‘developed’ and therefore modern, while those in the colonies are ‘not (yet) developed’ and therefore primitive or traditional. This colonial past is also the framework in which Utrecht University became involved in slavery and its abolition.

Henk van Rinsum shows how the knowledge acquired in the colony also contributed significantly to the scientific development of the university, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century. *Utrecht University and Colonial Knowledge* is therefore an important contribution to both colonial and intellectual history.

Henk van Rinsum, a historian and anthropologist, worked for many years in the field of university development cooperation at Utrecht University. He has also published works on the history of Utrecht University’s relations with South Africa.



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