CHAPTER TWO

THE KITLV UNDER CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL ADMINISTRATION
(1851–1870)

THE NETHERLANDS AND ITS COLONIES

Baud's Conservative Colonial Policy

On 5 October 1849, the conservative former Minister of the Colonies, J.C. Baud, had a lengthy discussion with J.R. Thorbecke, the liberal politician appointed by the king to form a new government, regarding his possible return to that Ministry. Baud refused the position, favouring membership of parliament. He successfully proposed assigning the position to his confidant, C.F. Pahud. Baud could not resist, however, from seriously warning Thorbecke about Pahud’s plans for reforming the colonies. ‘In Europe, with its homogeneity between rulers and people, political tests can be performed’, Baud told Thorbecke.

In Java, such struggles would be lethal to the Netherlands. Everything there is heterogeneous. We have nothing in common with the people of Java. Language, colour, religion, morals, roots, historical memories – everything differs between the Dutch and the Javanese. We are the oppressors, they are the oppressed. That heterogeneity inherently plants a seed of disintegration or separation. It will run its course; with wisdom and due caution the point in time can be delayed, but systemization and recklessness will hasten it. (Alberts 1939: 172.)

This orientalist viewpoint tells us much about Baud’s motives for establishing the KITLV a few years later. Scientific knowledge of the language, geography and anthropology of Java could contribute to the well-informed, professional colonial administration of an eastern people so different as the Javanese, in order to ensure that Dutch control could be maintained as long as possible. Baud had already contacted Gerrit Simons and Taco Roorda in the 1840s regarding the establishment of an institution of this kind. Simons was the Director of the new Koninklijke Academie (Royal Academy) in Delft, where not only civil engineers but also colonial administrators had studied since 1842; Roorda was Javanese Studies professor in Delft (KITLV: H 380). From a political perspective, these two were Baud’s conservative kindred spirits. However, political developments in the year
of revolution, 1848, caused postponement. It was not until 1851 that the KITLV was actually established. Before discussing the establishment of the Institute in more detail, it is useful to review Baud’s conservative colonial policy between 1830 and 1848, the colonial reforms and compromises that followed between 1848 and 1870, and the modernization process in the Netherlands and the colonies, which was reflected in the colonial