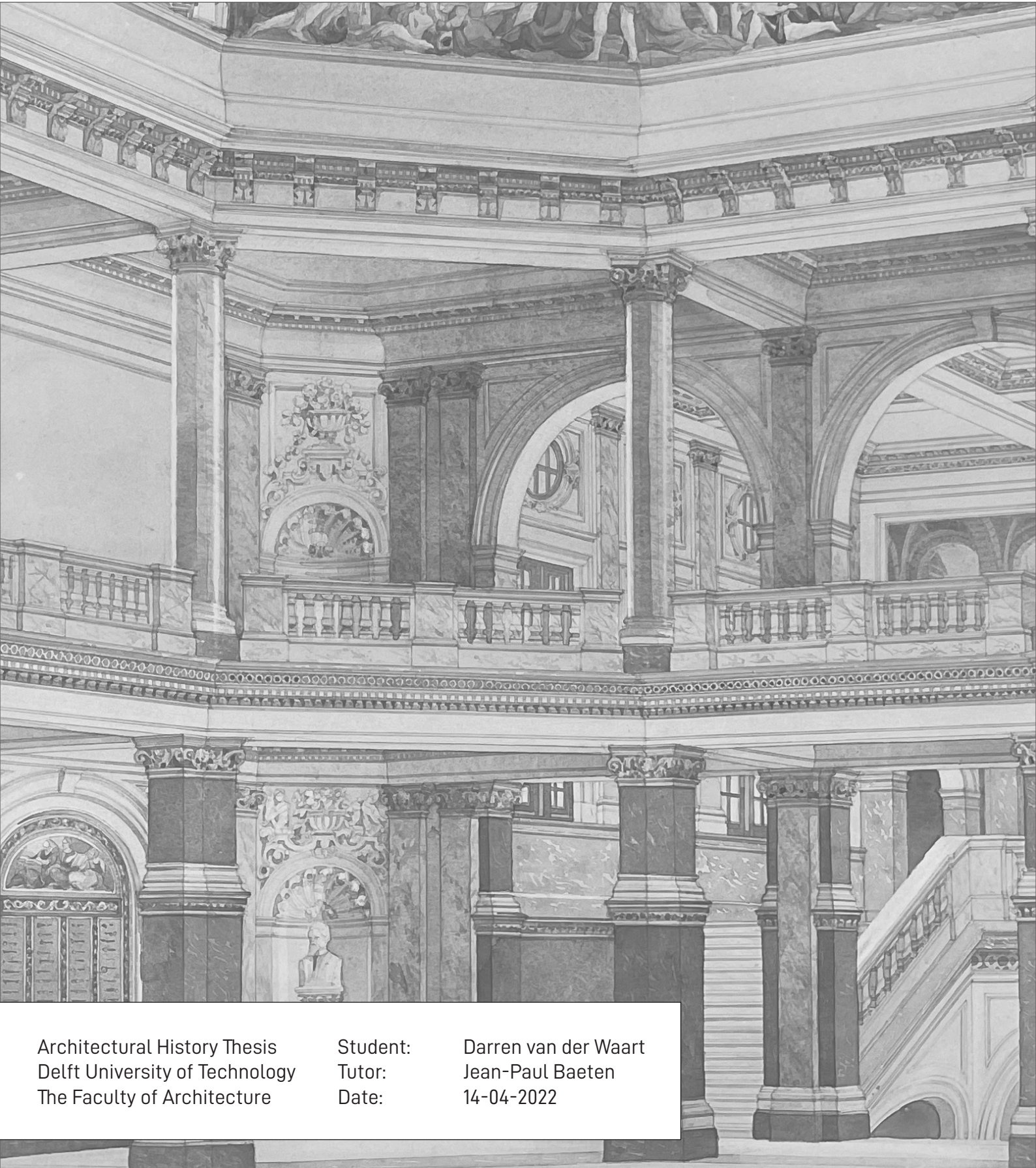


Discovering the Colonial Institute: the Tropenmuseum



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Abstract

In 'Discovering the Colonial Institute: the Tropenmuseum' historical research is conducted on the colonial traces that can be found in the Colonial Institute, which is now known as the Tropenmuseum. Nowadays much attention is paid in Dutch society to how the colonial past is dealt with. But at a point in history, as a Dutch citizen, it was normal to live in a country that had colonies overseas. With the arrival of ethical politics, the view on colonialism started to slowly change. This change, together with the initiative of a hand full of people, eventually resulted in the establishment of the Colonial Institute, which served as a museum and research center. Although museums are often regarded as places dedicated to beautiful things, and therefore as neutral and apolitical spaces, they can also play a role in cultural and political debates. This leads to the main research question of this history thesis: *What was the cultural and political importance of the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam and how did the architecture of the building contribute to this?* This research is focused on the history and motive of establishing and building the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam. This also includes the architecture of the building designed by J.J and M.A. van Nieuwerkerken and what cultural and political importance this had for the Dutch people.

Key-words: Colonial Institute, Tropenmuseum, ethical politics, colonialism, architecture

Introduction

Context of research

The colonial past of the Netherlands has a long history that has left deep traces. For some, the colonies were a source of wealth, imagination, and pride. For others, they were black pages from a distant past. Many wonder if they should feel guilty about what happened in the Dutch colonies at the time. Others believe that there were also good deeds done. Think of for example bringing democracy and modern technologies. Nowadays much attention is paid in Dutch society to how the colonial past is dealt with. From many corners of society, the question of how to deal with the colonial past and how this past translates into the present is being considered (Throsby et al, 2019, p.3).

These deep traces of the Dutch colonial past can be found in the names of certain streets, bridges, and statues but also the architecture of buildings. For example, most visitors that visit Amsterdam will arrive at the Central Station, designed by the 19th-century architect P.J.H. Cuypers in 1889, which is one of the oldest stations in the Netherlands. The facade of this large neo-renaissance building features ornamentation that hints at its colonial past. For example, you can see a sculpture of a Javanese man with a typical Javanese headscarf greeting a bearded western man. Above these sculptures stands the text 'Verbroedering der Volkeren' which in Dutch means 'Brotherhood of Nations' (Lohmann, 2016, p. 3).

The most significant traces can be found in the Tropenmuseum, in the eastern part of Amsterdam. According to Vanvugt (1998, p. 77) this building is rightfully labeled a 'cathedral of modern Dutch colonialism'. The Tropenmuseum is a Dutch ethnographic museum with a large collection of ethnographic artifacts from tropical and subtropical areas, especially from the former Dutch overseas colonies. Besides the large colonial collection that the museum houses, many traces of the Dutch colonial past can be found in the history and architecture of the building. This is especially true for the facades of the building and especially the entrance at the Mauritskade which is richly decorated with colonial propaganda. The Tropenmuseum was originally built as the Colonial Institute in 1926. The architects of this neo-renaissance building were J.J and M.A. van Nieuwerkerken. Although museums are still often regarded as places dedicated exclusively to beautiful things, and therefore as neutral and apolitical spaces, they also play a role in this cultural and political debate (Schoonderwoerd, 2018, p.7). If the Colonial Institute also played a cultural or political role will be discovered in this history thesis.

Research topic

The research question of this history thesis is: *What was the cultural and political importance of the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam and how did the architecture of the building contribute to this?* The purpose of this research will be to investigate what the motive was for establishing and building the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam. This will include finding out how the Dutch people thought about their colonies at that time and what cultural and political importance the Colonial Institute had. It will also be necessary to find out who J.J and M.A. van Nieuwerkerken were and why they got to design the building. Alongside this, there will be research on how the spatial program and the architecture influenced culture and politics in the Netherlands. Finally, the changes in the Colonial Institution over years will be examined.

Methodology

The research for this history thesis will be composed of archival research and literature research. The archival research will function as the primary source of information for the history thesis and the literature research as a secondary source. For the archival research, the archive of 'Het Nieuwe Instituut' in Rotterdam will be used. 'Het Nieuwe Instituut' is a private institution entrusted with managing the collection of archives documenting Dutch architectural history. This archive contains for instance more than 90 meters of documented work of the architectural office Van Nieuwerkerken. This recorded archive contains building drawings, sketches, and other documents. For the literature research, historical and theoretical texts will be investigated.

Limitations

To ensure that the research for the history thesis does not become too broad, the main research frame has been set from the nineteenth century until 1926. This specific period is chosen because the period marked the arrival of ethical politics, the establishment of the Colonial Institute in 1910, and the new building in Amsterdam was realized in 1926. This period also included the First World War. But to not exclude important events after 1926, research on the changes in the Colonial Institution after this period will also be included.

Chapter 1. The 19th century in the Netherlands

1.1 The context of the 19th century in the Netherlands

The nineteenth century in the Netherlands marks the arrival of the Industrial Revolution and the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1813, which led to the coronation of the sovereign monarch William I of the Netherlands as the first king of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Parliament, 2022). In addition, this century is characterized by imperialism, colonialism, and various political movements, each with its view of society, including ethical politics.

The Netherlands had already from the early seventeenth century colonies through the 'Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie' (VOC) and the 'West-Indische Compagnie' (WIC). Colonialism was initially a means to increase the political power and economic prosperity of European countries. However, after some time came to the realization that it was the duty of these European countries to promote civilization in their colonies. This was then agreed upon by the European countries at the Berlin Conference in 1884 (American Society of International Law, 1909, p.12). However, one may question whether this was truly a sense of duty or a sham to excuse their exploiting actions (Van der Eerden, 2016, p. 4).

1.2 The rise of the Dutch ethical politics

The contribution of the colonies to the Dutch cultural or political identity was small in the first half of the nineteenth century (Raben, 2000, p. 360). It was a time when the Dutch population was not yet well informed about what was happening in their colonies. However, this changed in 1860 with the arrival of the book 'Max Havelaar' (see Figure 1.3) by the writer Multatuli, whose real name is Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820-1887). Multatuli's exhortation with the book that the Javanese people should not be mistreated worked in the minds of his readers. This was especially true among his younger readers who read the book in school (Fasseur, 2015, p. 1). Multatuli's main message with 'Max Havelaar' was that the Javanese people could not expect any support from either the government or the liberals. With this, he urged that it was no longer acceptable to have a self-serving Dutch colonial government that exploits the Javanese people (Fasseur, 2015, p. 2). However, much to the author's annoyance, the book 'Max Havelaar' had very little influence outside the literary circuit in the beginning after its publication (Van der Eerden, 2016, p. 4). Nonetheless, the publication of this book can be seen as the sparking of the rise of Dutch ethical politics. After this, there arose a continuity in the idea that the western people have the duty to improve other populations through civilization.

Ideas of this ethical duty also entered Dutch politics in The Hague. The 1879 Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) led by Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) advocated a 'moral obligation' to the colonies. He felt that the Netherlands had the duty to civilize the Indonesian people morally so that they eventually in the future could find their independent position in the world (Touwen, 2000, p. 70). This duty to promote civilization in the colonies also came forward abroad in the famous poem 'The white man's burden' by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) in 1899. Among other things, he wrote the famous story: 'The Jungle Book', which was later adapted for an animated film by Disney. It was in the same year that in the Netherlands the writer Conrad van Deventer (1857-1915) wrote an influential article in De Gids, in which he argued that the Dutch colonial government had a moral duty to invest some of the wealth that the Dutch East Indies had provided back into the development of the native population (Van der Eerden, 2016, p. 4). It was here that the seed was planted for the Dutch ethical politics.

But the real founding factor of Dutch ethical politics was when journalist Piet Brooshooft exposed Sumatra's situation. Brooshooft (1845-1921), the editor of the largest Dutch-Indian newspaper, De locomotive, published pieces where he described how the native populations of the Dutch-Indies could be better understood. Brooshooft sent reporters to several parts of the East Indies in 1900 to describe local situations and they reported great poverty, failed harvests, starvation, and diseases (Van der Eerden, 2016, p. 4). Brooshooft's reports had such an impact in the Netherlands that they even managed to reach Queen Wilhelmina, who soon then after reasoned that the Netherlands owed a debt of honor to the Indian people (Vickers, 2005, p. 17).

One year later on September 17, 1901, Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962) delivered the throne speech containing the historic words that the Netherlands had a 'moral calling' to fulfill towards the people of its overseas territories (Fasseur, 2015, p. 1). In doing so, the queen proclaimed the ethical politics, through which prosperity and progress were to be realized for the native people of the Dutch colonies. Ethical politics consisted of a series of policies that can be grouped under three headings: (1) welfare policy for the native population of the Dutch East Indies, (2) increased education for the native population, and (3) limited participation in government administration by the native population (Touwen, 2000, p. 73). Figure 1.2 shows Queen Wilhelmina reading the 1914 throne speech in the 'Riddershal of the Binnenhof' in the Dutch parliament in The Hague. From the same location, she announced ethical politics in 1901. What is notable about the three policies that the Queen pronounced is that they do improve the lives of the inhabitants of the colonies but still keep the Netherlands in power.



Figure 1.2 (Solemn opening of the joint session of the States-Generals, The Hague 1914)

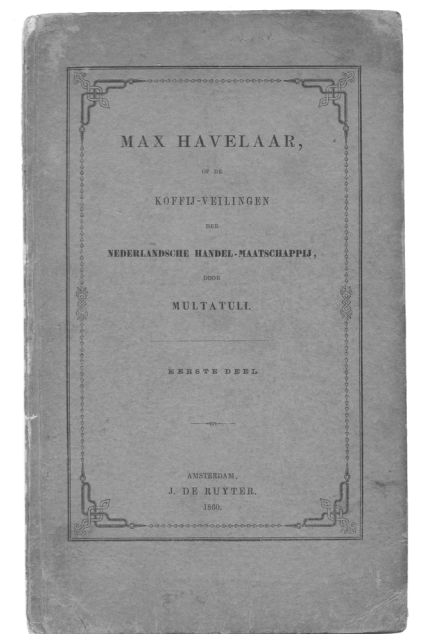


Figure 1.3 (Max Havelaar - Multatuli, 1860)

Chapter 2. The establishment of the Colonial Institute

2.1 The founding of the Colonial Museum in Haarlem

The story of the origins of the Colonial Institute begins with the establishment of the 'Nederlandsche Maatschappij ter bevordering van Nijverheid' in 1777. This organization began publishing statistics on both agriculture and 'nijverheid', which in Dutch means 'industry', in 1836 in the Netherlands. Under the leadership of F.W. van Eden, secretary of the 'Nederlandsche Maatschappij ter bevordering van Nijverheid' these publications began to focus more and more on tropical subjects. Because F.W. van Eden suffered from health problems his son, botanist Frederik Willem van Eden (see Figure 2.1), officially took over his task as a secretary in 1859 (Jans & van de Brink, 1985, p. 12).

According to Frederik Willem van Eden (1829 – 1901) in the book '70 years of the tropics in Amsterdam' by Jans & van de Brink (1985, p. 12) in 1860 there was little interest left in what he describes as 'rarities' from the tropics. At the time everyone had friends or relatives from the colonies who brought back shells, stuffed animals, and exotic objects as a gift. After some time everyone tried to get rid of them as quickly as possible. One of the few people who grieved this idea was F.W. van Eden, who realized that irreplaceable objects were in danger of being lost and came up with an important initiative. Together with a friend professor W.J. Gunning (1827-1900), who was a professor in Utrecht, he discussed a plan to form a collection of objects from tropical areas that could be useful for scientific purposes and exhibitions. Van Eden laid the foundations for a Colonial Museum which eventually expanded into an Institution (Jans & van de Brink, 1985, p. 12).

After sharing this plan with the executive committee of the 'Nederlandsche Maatschappij ter bevordering van Nijverheid' they also clearly saw the importance of this and gave Van Eden in 1864 the assignment to collect all tropical objects and products from the Dutch colonies, mainly through the acquisition of private collections. In the beginning, Van Eden stored all the tropical objects in his own home at Koekamp (later Frederikspark) 10 in Haarlem (see Figure 2.2). Luckily it was recognized that this initiative was too important and needed more space. J.R. Thorbecke (1798-1872), then Minister of the Internal Affairs, provided free accommodation for the collection in the land house 'Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem'. After a necessary renovation, the first Colonial Museum in the world opened its doors in 1871 (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 4).

2.2 Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem

In addition to the arrival of the Colonial Museum in 1871 in the Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem (see Figure 2.4 & 2.6), the 'Nederlandsche Maatschappij ter bevordering van Nijverheid' also settled in the building. This was done with the intention that the scientific research of the tropical collection will stimulate the industry in the Netherlands and the colonies. For example, research was done into tropical fibers and bamboo, from which new applications such as coconut brushes and bamboo furniture originated. Medicines in the tropics were studied, as also tobacco, coffee, and different types of tropical woods. All these different kinds of research made the Colonial Museum provide education to a broad audience (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 4).

Over time, the museum became increasingly full and there was a shortage of space to house the collection. Because of this shortage of space, the first discussions on the board of the Colonial Museum about expanding and moving the museum to Amsterdam took place in 1900. This took place in the same period as the rise of ethical politics. Because of this, there was much more initiative to start educating the Dutch people about the colonies. The talks for the transfer and expansion remained only vague plans throughout the years until finally J.T. Cremer (1847-1923), former Minister of Colonies and honorary chairman of the board of the Colonial Museum, and a member of the Dutch Parliament H.F.R. Hubrecht (1844-1926) took the initiative (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 5). They had conceived the term expanding in the broad sense of the word and not only arranged to move the Colonial Museum to Amsterdam but also to establish the Colonial Institute. They together with other prominent figures on June 10, 1910, established the 'Vereeniging Koloniaal Instituut'. Cremer (see Figure 2.3) became the president of the Board of Directors of the 'Vereeniging Koloniaal Instituut' in 1911 and Hubrecht (see Figure 2.5) became vice president.

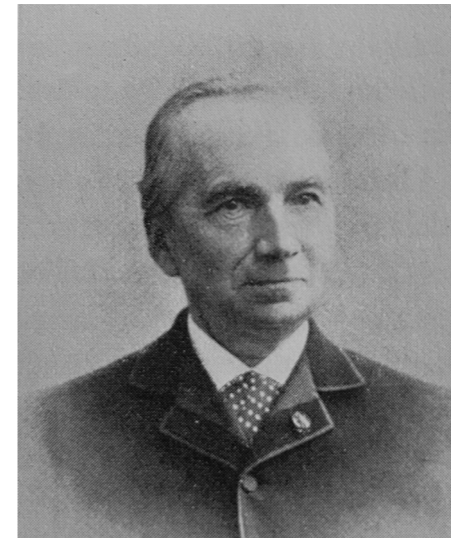


Figure 2.1 (botanist Frederik Willem van Eden)



Figure 2.2 (Koekamp (later Frederikspark) 10 in Haarlem)

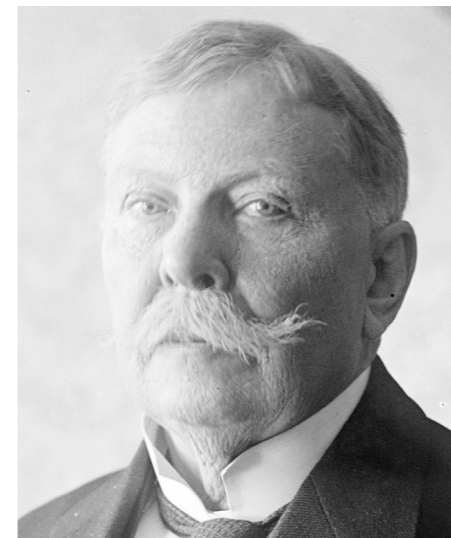


Figure 2.3 (Jacob Theodoor Cremer)



Figure 2.4 (Exterior of Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem, 1913)

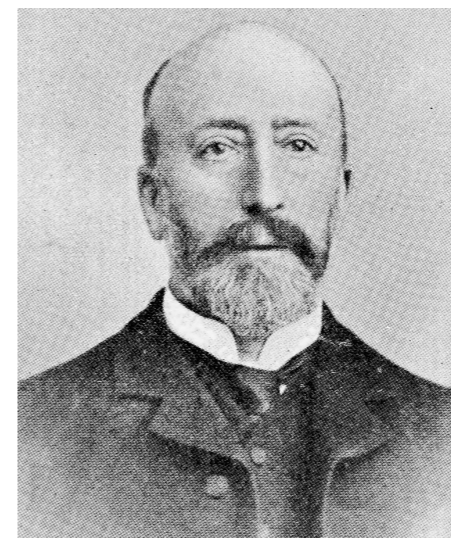


Figure 2.5 (Henri François Rudolf Hubrecht)

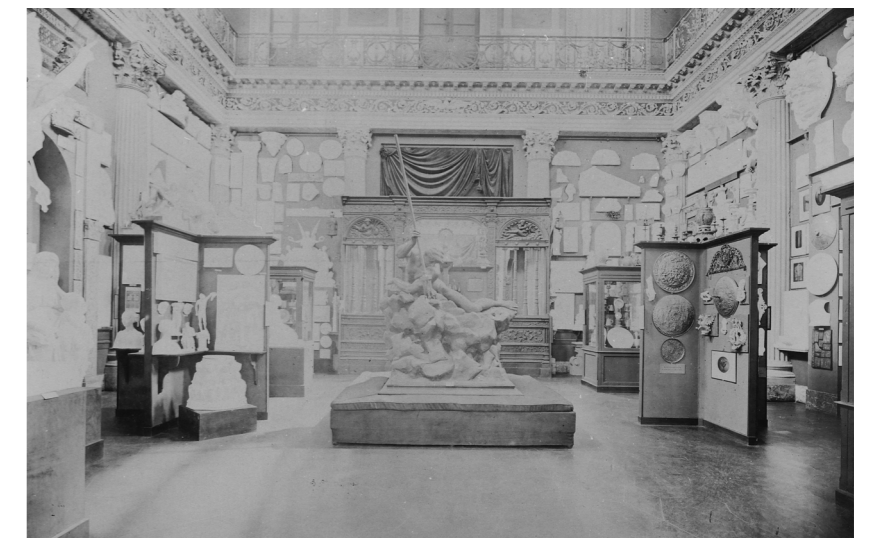


Figure 2.6 (Interior of Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem, 1913)

2.3 Congomuseum in Tervuren, Belgium

More than a quarter of a century after the initiative of F.W. van Eden and W.J. Gunning, a kind of somewhat equivalent museum and institute called the Congomuseum came into being in Belgium in 1897. This museum came into being at the initiative of the Belgian King Leopold II (1835-1909). Leopold II (see Figure 2.7) is a much talked about a person when it comes to the colonial past. He was allegedly guilty of forced labor, mutilation, rape, and murder in Congo, which was a colony of Belgium at the time. Congolese with amputated hands (see Figure 2.8) have become an important visual symbol for these narratives (De Wever, 2019, p 24).

The story of the Congo Museum begins with the 1897 World's Fair in Brussels. At the order of King Leopold II, this exhibition was held at the Colonial Palace in Tervuren (see Figure 2.9). This exhibition included stuffed animals, soil samples, food products, and ethnographic objects from Congo. However, an additional exhibition took place in the gardens of the Colonial Palace. In the gardens 'authentic' Congolese villages were recreated, populated by 267 Congolese who were brought to Belgium for the occasion (see Figure 2.10). Several did not survive this boat trip and those who survived would have to pay with their lives for their forced stay in this human zoo (De Wever, 2019, p 24). Leopold II saw the mu-seum as an excellent promotional tool to convince investors and the Belgian people of his colonial plans. In 1898 the temporary exhibition was transformed into the first permanent museum dedi-cated to the Belgian colony Congo. In addition to being a museum, it also became a scientific insti-tute. The museum changed its name several times. Congo became Belgian Congo in 1908, and the museum changed its name to the Museum of Belgian Congo. In 1952, the museum was renamed the Royal Museum of Belgian Congo. After Congolese independence, it was named the Royal Muse-um of Central Africa, and since its renovation, the museum is better known as the AfricaMuseum (Royal Museum for Central Africa, 2022, p. 1).

In comparison to the Dutch Colonial Institute, both institutes wanted to share the knowledge of their colonies with the people in the form of a museum and a department that did scientific research. However, the way the Congomuseum under the leadership of Belgian King Leopold II did this is very different from the one in the Netherlands. Aside from the absurd human zoo, it is notable that the Colonial Museum in the Netherlands arose from the initiative of actual scientists and scholars. In contrast, the Belgian Congomuseum feels like a pat on the back for the king himself.



Figure 2.7 (Belgian King Leopold II)

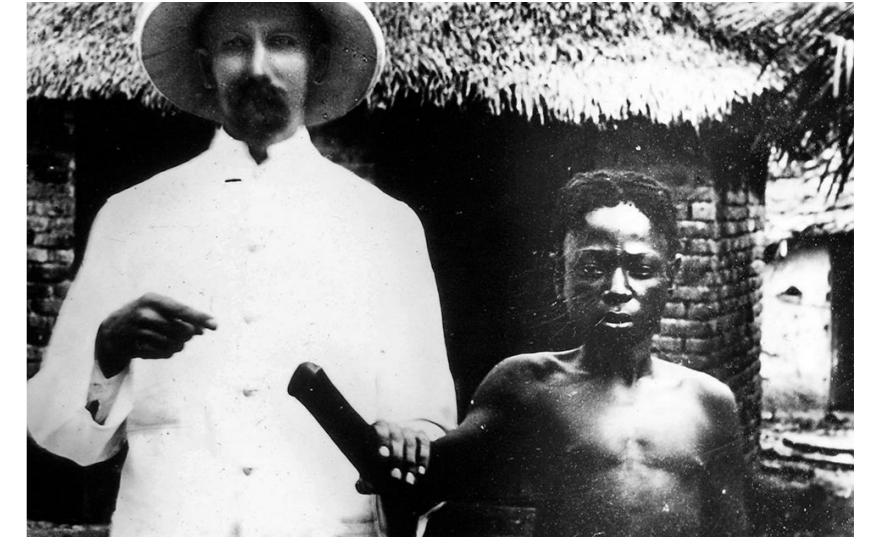


Figure 2.8 (Amputated Congolese child, as punishment)



Figure 2.9 (Congomuseum, in the Colonial Palace in Tervuren)



Figure 2.10 (Congolese people were forced to be human exhibits at the Congomuseum in Belgium in 1897)

Chapter 3. The new Colonial Institute in Amsterdam

3.1 Finding the funds and location for the new Colonial Institute

The first task of the newly formed Colonial Institute was to raise the necessary funds for the construction of the new accommodation in Amsterdam together with finding a building site (Belinfante, 1929, p. 45). Cremer had a meeting with the Secretary-General of 'Colonies', who showed great sympathy for the plans. Based on this meeting, the Colonial Institute received the royal approval on October 7, 1910, and was promised f 1.240.000,-. However, this amount was not enough, and it was decided to request financial support from selected institutions and individuals in Amsterdam (Jans & van de Brink, 1985, p. 41). In the same period, Hubrecht had applied for support from the Minister of Colonies and the Mayor of Amsterdam to assign a special site for the new Institute. This resulted in the 'Oosterbegraafplaats', which in Dutch means the Eastern Cemetery, as the location.

However, this location posed some problems because of the large number of property graves it possessed. Hubrecht went to great lengths to gain complete ownership of the site by buying off the burial rights, but this was not always successful. That is why, in the first plans for the Colonial Institute, the cemetery fence was placed right up against the walls of the Institute. However, this was later no longer necessary due to the complete relocation of the 'Oosterbegraafplaats' to 'De Nieuwe Ooster', a new cemetery plot further to the east of Amsterdam (Jans & van de Brink, 1985, p. 45). Besides the problem with burial rights, there were also protests against the arrival of the Colonial Institute at the former cemetery (see Figure 3.1). This place would, according to the protesters, be unworthy of a monumental building (Hellinga & Galesloot, 2010, p. 8). These protests, however, did not affect the decision-making process.

3.2 Finding the architect for the new Colonial Institute

Once the location for the new Colonial Institute had been determined, consideration could be given to the design of the building and who the suitable architect might be. For this purpose, the then constituted Building Committee for the Colonial Institute had prepared a comprehensive program of requirements. The committee then called together various experts to draw up a building plan. For this, the first idea was to hold a competition, but this was rejected. Finally, in 1911 the Building Committee approached three architects to come up with a design. The chosen architects were Jos.TH.J. Cuypers, the son of architect P.J.H. Cuypers, J.J. van Nieuwerkerken and B.J. Ouendag. These three architects received a fee of f 7.000,- as a prospect to each come to a design (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 11).

Since only a small number of museum buildings had been built in the last quarter of the century and because the Colonial Institute asked for a complex program, the architects were faced with a difficult design issue. The Colonial Institute required a museum building with different departments, laboratories, auditoriums, libraries and offices. This was an unknown and unique multifunctional program for that time. Because of this unusual composition of functions, the Building Committee thought it would be a good idea for the architects to go abroad and learn about the most recent developments. As a result, the three architects traveled to Germany, England, and Belgium, where they visited several buildings (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 12). Based on the various sketchbooks supplemented with travel documentation of J.J. van Nieuwerkerken stored in the 'Het Nieuwe Instituut' archives, it has been determined that the architects traveled to Berlin, Hamburg, London, Oxford, Gent, Brugge, and Brussels (see Figure 3.3) to gain knowledge on behalf of the Colonial Institute. Figure 3.2 shows a sketch of J.J. van Nieuwerkerken's plan for the Colonial Institute that he sketched during his trip. In April 1913 the three architects had to submit their designs. The architect who managed to deliver the best design would receive a fee of f 50.000,-. To determine which design was most suitable for the new Colonial Institute, the Building Committee again called in various experts to help assess the three building plans (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 12). After the plans had been examined by the Building Committee together with experts, J.J. van Nieuwerkerken's plan was finally chosen. The reaction of the members of the Building Committee to the plan was according to Belinfante (1929, p. 45): 'The buildings are the most plastic expression of the view that the society cherishes of its task', 'The plan meets the requirements of beauty on one hand, and on the other hand it meets the requirements of our complex working environment'. According to the Building Committee, Van Nieuwerkerken had taken most consideration of the program of requirements and the various needs the building had to meet. However, Van Nieuwerkerken was instructed to revise his plans so that they would be feasible within the maximum construction budget of f 1.200.000,- (Belinfante, 1929, p. 45).

3.3 Architectural office Van Nieuwerkerken

In the same year that the design for the Colonial Institute by J.J. van Nieuwerkerken (1854-1913) was chosen, he found out that he was seriously ill. Because of his illness, it was decided by the Building Committee to have the building plan revised by his 34-year-old son M.A. van Nieuwerkerken, who had previously received favorable reviews. In the same year J.J. van Nieuwerkerken (see Figure 3.4) died at the age of 59 (Belinfante, 1929, p. 45).

Because of J.J. Van Nieuwerkerken's death, two of his sons M.A. van Nieuwerkerken (1879-1963) and J. van Nieuwerkerken (1885-1962) were in charge of the Van Nieuwerkerken architectural office (see Figure 3.5). This office was founded in 1887 by J.J. Van Nieuwerkerken who was schooled in the architectural style of architect P.J.H. Cuypers (1827-1921). It is therefore no coincidence that the Colonial Institute was designed in a neo-renaissance style. In both Cuypers' and Van Nieuwerkerken's architecture, the elaborate neo-renaissance style was used extensively. Van Nieuwerkerken, who was the father of four sons and three daughters, was a strong advocate of his children receiving a practical education. As a result, two of his sons Marie and Johan followed in their father's footsteps. Marie and Johan were progressively involved in the work at the Van Nieuwerkerken's architectural office where they learned much from their father about architecture (Belinfante, 1929, p. 10).



Figure 3.1 (Newspaper article about the 'Oosterbegraafplaats', 1911)

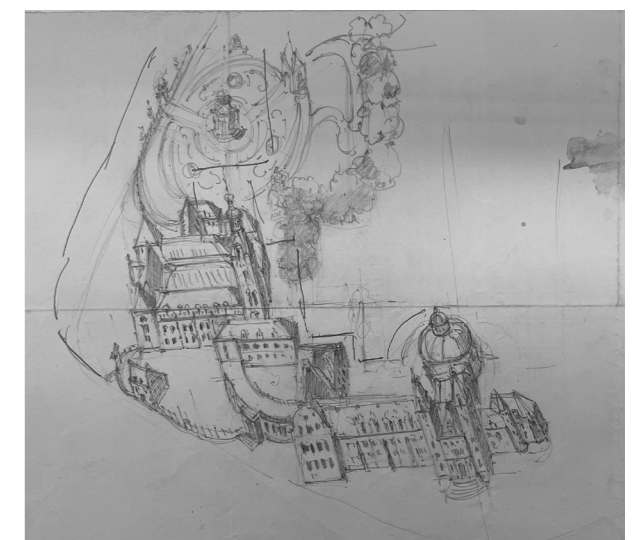


Figure 3.2 (Bird's eye view sketch of J.J. van Nieuwerkerken)

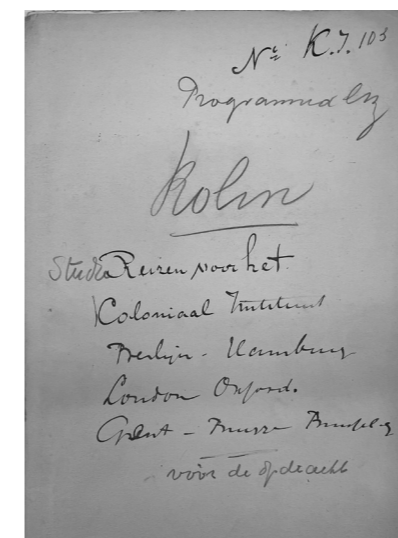


Figure 3.3 (J.J. van Nieuwerkerken)

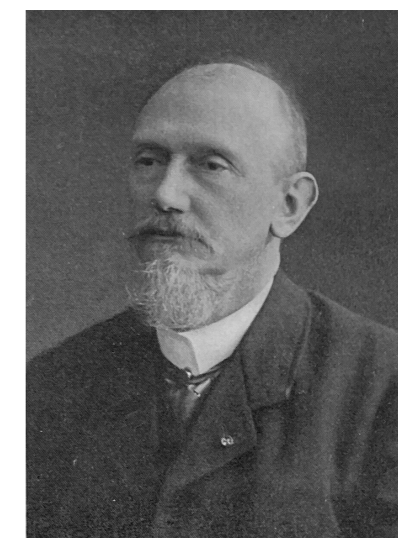


Figure 3.4 (J.J. van Nieuwerkerken)

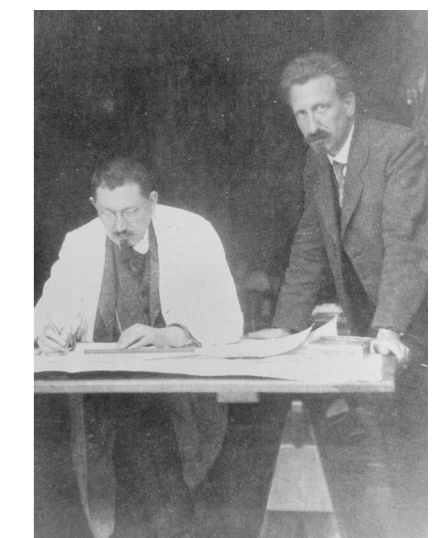


Figure 3.5 (M.A. & J. van Nieuwerkerken)

3.4 The building process of the new Colonial Institute

After the revised design by M.A. van Nieuwerkerken (see Figure 3.6) was submitted to the municipality of Amsterdam, the municipal Beauty Committee issued its advice in December 1913 to the 'College van burgemeester en wethouders' which in Dutch means the Board of Mayors and Aldermen. In their advice, strong disapproval of the design was expressed. The committee believed that the building complex did not form a unity and that it was not fitting in its surroundings. The Building Committee of the Colonial Institute was very displeased, and Cremer decided to ask V. de Stuers, the then head of the Arts and Sciences division of the Department of Internal Affairs and founder of the monument conservation in the Netherlands for advice. After reviewing the submitted building plans, De Stuers (1843-1916) responded that he thought the building plans were 'good and well-considered'. With that, he found the advice of the municipal Beauty Committee well below standard (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 13).

The then alderman of Amsterdam, Th.F.A. Delprat (1812-1888), was also approached by the Colonial Institute as well as by the municipal Beauty Commission. But he did not want to quarrel with either party and pointed out that today's architecture is divided into two camps: 'those who believe that beautiful buildings can still be created by using old motifs and those who only see salvation in following new paths' (Hellinga & Galesloot, 2010, p. 9). He also stated that the Building Commission of the Colonial Institute was all old school. This was also true of Van Nieuwerkerken and in addition, he was not from Amsterdam. Could these factors have subconsciously influenced the municipal Beauty Commission? (Hellinga & Galesloot, 2010, p. 9). However, just a few weeks after receiving the negative advice of the municipal Beauty Commission, the Board of Mayors and Aldermen shared that they approved the design for the new Colonial Institute by Van Nieuwerkerken. After the design of the new Colonial Institute was approved, construction could finally begin. M.A. van Nieuwerkerken estimated the construction time at two years with an extra year for the interior of the building. After the necessary preparations, the building activities started in 1915. However, all did not go according to plan, and construction was soon delayed. This was mainly due to the start of the First World War in 1914 which caused a scarcity of building materials and a significant increase in prices. As a result, construction costs became higher and higher. Also because of the time conditions, the fee of Van Nieuwerkerken was increased from f 50.000,- to f 80.000,- (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 18).

After carrying out the necessary groundwork (see Figure 3.7), the foundation work of 6111 piles was started in January 1916 (see Figure 3.8). However, due to the heavy frost and snow in the winter months, this too was not without its problems. Eventually, the substructure was fully completed by the end of 1918. This was in the same period as the end of the First World War. The aftermath of the war made for a difficult period with much poverty. Based on an annual report from 1920 in Woudsma & Galesloot (2004, p. 21) it can be concluded that the necessary materials for the upper structure were purchased and a large part was already delivered to the building site (see Figure 3.9). Yet again in 1921, a problem arose, and this time in the form of a severe storm. The storm caused a lot of damage and mainly to the scaffolding at the building site (see Figure 3.10). In 1922 the entire building came under its roof and in 1923 the Institute was completed both externally and internally to the point that an exhibition could be held there during Queen Wilhelmina's twenty-fifth-anniversary celebrations. This exhibition was partly devoted to the development of Amsterdam's shipping industry and partly consisted of the three departments of the Colonial Institute: the Trade Museum, the Department of Ethnology, and the Department of Tropical Hygiene. It was on this occasion that the 'Vereeniging Koloniaal Instituut' was granted the license to use the title 'Royal' by Queen Wilhelmina (Hasselmann, 1926, p. 12). However, the year 1923 also had a dark shadow cast over it by the death of one of the founders of the now named 'Royal Colonial Institute Association'. J.T. Cremer had unfortunately died due to illness before the entire museum was completed. In Haarlem where until now the Colonial Museum and the museum collection were stored could now be transferred to Amsterdam. This marked the closing of the Paviljoen Welgelegen (Jans & van de Brink, 1985, p. 71).

Although large parts of the building had already been in use for a shorter or longer period, the official opening by Queen Wilhelmina on October 9, 1926, finally came eight years later than expected. The large light courtyard of the museum was set up for her reception and more than a thousand guests (see Figure 3.11). The construction of the Colonial Institute, due to all the delays, eventually cost about f 6.000.000,- instead of the first calculated f 1.240.000,- (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 23).



Figure 3.6 (Aquarelle of the design by M.A. Van Nieuwerkerken)



Figure 3.7 (The necessary groundwork, 1915)



Figure 3.8 (The foundation work of 6111 piles, 1916)

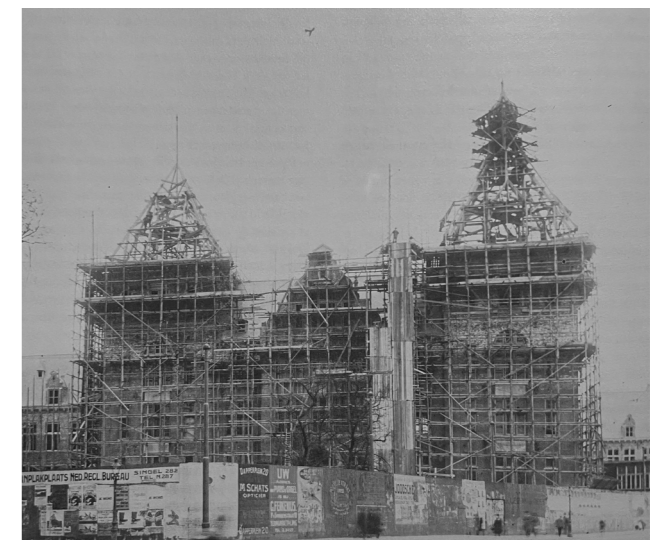


Figure 3.9 (Start upperstructure, 1920)



Figure 3.10 (Severe storm that damaged the scaffolding, 1921)



Figure 3.11 (The official opening by Queen Wilhelmina, 1926)

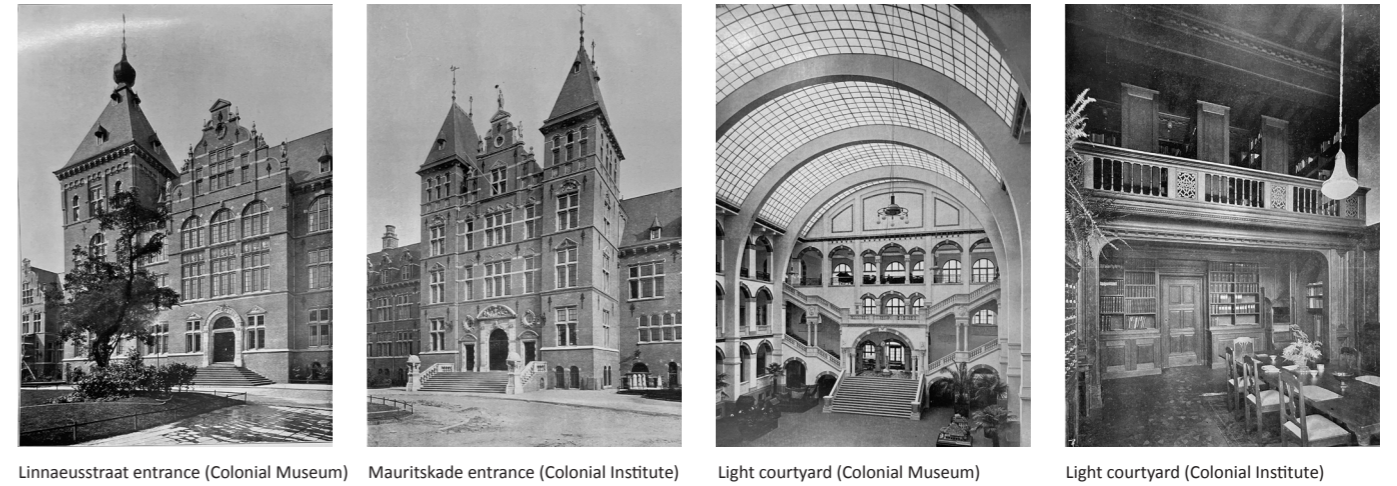
3.5 The design of the new Colonial Institute

As previously mentioned, J.J. and M.A. van Nieuwerkerken designed the building with a total area of 44,000 m² in the neo-Renaissance style. The building consists of an ensemble of several contiguous building parts, each characteristic with its volume, and functions (see Figure 12). Despite the different building parts, the inside of the building forms a strong unity. These different parts can be distinguished by the Royal Colonial Institute, the Colonial Museum, and the Quadrant. Of these, the so-called Quadrant with a flat roof forms the link between the Royal Colonial Institute and the Colonial Museum. The structure of the building parts is made of reinforced concrete. The facades are constructed of bricks in a half-stone pattern for which a total of 7.5 million bricks were used (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 21). The facade incorporates horizontal facade moldings made of French limestone. The facades have a symmetrical structure and rhythmic distribution of the window frames. The window frames have natural stone sills and frames with a center post with barred glass.

Relative to the ensemble, the Royal Colonial Institute building is located to the west on the Mauritskade side. The building part consists of a square floorplan and has three floors. Upon arrival, visitors enter over a high staircase with stone corner posts carrying world globes. The three entrances of the building part are framed with ornamented sandstone frames with sculptures. The central keystone above the main entrance is a sculpture of Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629), the first governor-general of the former Dutch East Indies. Upon entering the Institute building, one enters the central hall which is executed in twelve rare types of Italian marble. The large marble floor slabs are cut to form a carpet pattern. The central hall then branches off into three different wings. The wing to the east houses the course rooms, study rooms, manual library, and laboratory over three floors. To the north of the central hall is the administration wing. On the ground floor of this wing are the board rooms, staff rooms, the council chamber, and the committee room. Above this on the first floor is the large auditorium. To the west of the central hall is the small auditorium with an attached book house with a library and reading room. The entrance facade on Mauritskade has four floors. The entrance facade is divided into a central bay crowned with an eclectic 'clock facade' and with two flanking bays that ends in towers with hipped roofs. The set-back side wings have two stories and have gable roofs (Belinfante, 1929, p. 47).

The Colonial Museum building is located to the east on the side of the Linnaeusstraat. Like the Royal Colonial Institute, this building part has a rectangular floorplan with three floors. On the south facade of the building part, a part is attached where the management offices are located along with the buffet room. Upon entering the museum via the entrance on the Linnaeusstraat, one enters the centrally located covered light courtyard, where Queen Wilhelmina officially opened the building in 1926. Surrounding the light courtyard on the south side is the Department of Ethnology and on the north side the Trade Museum. Both functions continue over the two floors with the atrium of the light courtyard in the middle. The arcades along the atrium are executed in white plastered concrete columns, natural stone balustrades, and masonry arches with natural stone corners and keystones. The slightly projecting entrance to the Colonial Museum building part is crowned with an eclectic top facade. At the corners of the building volume are four-story-high towers with copper tent roofs.

The Quadrant building is located to the north on the Mauritskade side between the Royal Colonial Institute and the Colonial Museum. This building part has the shape of a quarter circle and serves as an office for the trade of tropical products. Upon entering this building part that only has one floor, visitors enter by the means of a staircase with masonry posts on which mounted iron ornamental lanterns stand. The interior of the quadrant exists out of a simple hall with office spaces on either side with a curved corridor overlooking the outside courtyard.



Linnaeusstraat entrance (Colonial Museum) Mauritskade entrance (Colonial Institute) Light courtyard (Colonial Museum) Light courtyard (Colonial Institute)



Mauritskade entrance (The Quadrant) Laboratorium of Trade Museum (The Quadrant) Central hall from marble (Colonial Institute)



The large auditorium (Colonial Institute) Council Chamber (Colonial Institute) Museum room Ethnology (Colonial Museum)



Reading room (Colonial Institute) Chamber General Secretary (Colonial Institute) Museum room Ethnology (Colonial Museum)

Figure 3.12 (Collection of rooms of the Royal Colonial Institute)

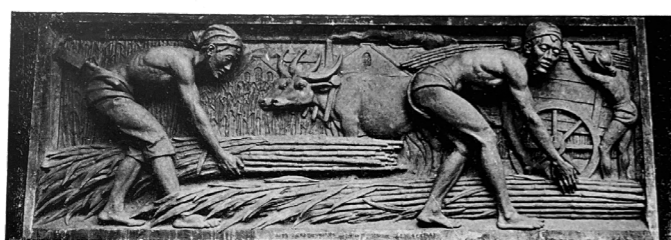
Both the exterior and the interior made extensive use of figurative ornamentation referring to the Dutch colonial past (see Figures 3.13 and 3.14). For the sculptures, the Building Commission had hired more than ten sculptors. Also, for the ornamentation, a Committee on Symbolism was specially established and from 1916 to 1927 was engaged to determine the appropriate sculptures for the Colonial Institute. This committee consisted of several members including B.W.F. van Riemsdijk (1850-1942), the then director of the Rijksmuseum, and J.C. Eerde (1871-1936), the then director of the Ethnology Department of the Colonial Institute. In choosing figurative ornamentation, the Committee on Symbolism focused on persons and events in Dutch history that were primarily related to maritime shipping. In addition, the committee chose subjects related to the tropics, the various religions, and symbols referring to trade and the sciences (Woudsma & Galesloot, 2004, p. 48)



Fronton Ingangpoort
Afd. Volkenkunde



Dajak. Topgevel
Afd. Volkenkunde



Hautrelief aan Linker Voortoren Museum. Suikerbouw



Hautrelief aan Linker Voortoren. Museum Boeddhisme



Javaan. Topgevel
Afd. Volkenkunde



Figuur Leeszaal.
Onderwijs



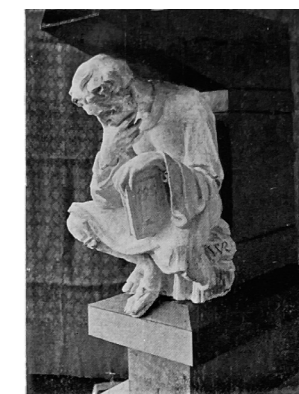
Basrelief Museumtrap.
Willem III.
Koning Stadhouder



Consoles. Pottenbakker,
Koperwerker



Figuur aan de Aulakap.
„Didaktiek”



Figuur aan de Aulakap.
„Overpeinzing”



Figuur topgevel Hoofdingang
„Europa”



Gevel Hoofdingang. „Devies van Oldenbarnevelt”



Gevel Hoofdingang. „Karakterkop”



Figuur topgevel
Hoofdingang
„Azië”



Gevel Hoofdingang. „Karakterkoppen”

Figure 3.13 (Collection 1 of ornamentation/sculptures of the Royal Colonial Institute)

Figure 3.14 (Collection 2 of ornamentation/sculptures of the Royal Colonial Institute)

Chapter 4. The Colonial Institute through the years

4.1 The Royal Colonial Institute

After the official opening in 1926, everything went according to plan. The museum was very popular with the Dutch population and this also stimulated awareness of the activities in the Dutch colonies. Unfortunately in 1929, a serious economic crisis broke out all over the world. This caused a setback for the Royal Colonial Institute in 1930, which had to lay off many staff members. In the years to come, the Institute actively sought more subsidies, but these were impossible to obtain due to the crisis. In 1933 the government and the municipality announced the reduction of existing subsidies. As a result, the Institute could only barely survive, and cuts were made in several areas. In 1938, Prince Bernhard (1911-2004) was named honorary president of the Royal Colonial Institute, and some increase in subsidies came (Jans & van de Brink, 1985, p. 79).

In 1939, World War II breaks out. The war reaches the Netherlands in May 1940, where the country is attacked and conquered by Nazi Germany. The Dutch colony of the Dutch East Indies was occupied by Japan by military force in 1942. The other colonies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Suriname and the Caribbean Islands remained outside the war. In 1940, part of the Royal Colonial Institute was confiscated to house two battalions of the 'Grüne Polizei', which in German means the Green Police. Employees of the Royal Colonial Institute were only allowed to enter on presentation of an 'Ausweis', which in German means a legation certificate. Later Nazi Germany demanded more and more space from the Museum and in 1944 the building was closed (Muskens et al, 2010, p. 65). On May 5, 1945, the allies liberated the Netherlands from Nazi Germany.

4.2 The Indisch Institute

After Japan surrendered in the Dutch East Indies on August 12, 1945, this was followed by the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945, by Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno (1901-1970) and Mohammed Hatta (1902-1980) (Lohmann, 2016, p. 5). The population longed for independence after all the years of suffering. The Netherlands did not accept this and made preparations for soldiers to fight against Indonesian independence. The Netherlands was afraid of losing its colony so on 19 November 1945 it was decided to change the name of the Royal Colonial Institute to the Indisch Institute. However, this had little effect and on December 9, 1949, Indonesia was given sovereignty by the Netherlands (see Figure 4.1) and became independent (Oostindie, 2011, p. 76). Because of the independence of Indonesia, the name the Indisch Institute was no longer appropriate, it was changed to Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in 1950.

4.3 The Tropenmuseum

After Indonesia became independent, there was a shift in the view of the Dutch people towards possessing colonies. This soon reached Dutch politics which then chose to change the name of the former Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) to what it is today: the Tropenmuseum. The Museum underwent multiple transformations in the '60s, 80s, and 90s and the museum is still constantly trying to evolve and represent accurate representations of different cultures and ideas (Throsby et al, 2019, p. 16). In 2014 the Tropenmuseum merges with the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden and the Africa Museum in Berg en Dal to form the National Museum of World Cultures. From then on it falls under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and its collection is now part of the National Collection.



Figure 4.1 (The Netherlands accepts the independence from Indonesia, 1949)

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Based on the deep colonial traces present in the Netherlands, which are increasingly under scrutiny these days, this history thesis was written to discover what these colonial traces were for the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam, which now goes by the name of the Tropenmuseum. Museums are often still seen as places dedicated exclusively to beautiful things, and therefore as neutral and apolitical spaces, but they can also play a role in cultural and political debates (Schoonderwoerd, 2018, p.7). This leads to the main question examined in this research: *What was the cultural and political importance of the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam and how did the architecture of the building contribute to this?*

The emergence of ethical politics and the initiatives of F.W. van Eden, J.T. Cremer, and H.F.R. Hubrecht, resulted in the existence of the Colonial Institute. The arrival of ethical politics finally recognized, after decades, that the Netherlands was exploiting the inhabitants of its colonies and that this had to be changed. This created a greater cultural interest and concern among the Dutch people about what was happening in the Dutch colonies. This cultural interest therefore also created the need for a place where objects and knowledge from the colonies could be viewed from the Netherlands. The first place where objects and knowledge from the Dutch colonies could be viewed was in Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem which, due to lack of space, eventually moved to the former Tropenmuseum building. In this new building in the east of Amsterdam, there were three departments: The Trade Museum, the Department of Ethnology, and the Department of Tropical Hygiene. These various departments together provided a broad educational collection that reinforced cultural knowledge about the colonies. So it's fair to say that there was strong cultural importance in the establishment of the Colonial Institute. The same can be said about political importance. This became all too apparent after the proclamation of the Dutch East Indies in 1945. The Netherlands did not accept this and feared losing its colony, so they changed the name of the Royal Colonial Institute to the Indian Institute. With this, they tried in every way possible to regain political power over the now so-called Republic of Indonesia, but this was in vain. The idea of colonies had changed significantly by this time and marked a period of decolonization. Leaving behind the formerly overseas colonies independently was the right thing to do.

The cultural contribution of the architecture of the Colonial Institute lies in how J.J and M.A. van Nieuwerkerken implemented the program of requirements in their design. Even though the building consists of an ensemble of several contiguous building parts, each with a set of different functions, the building within forms a unity. As a result, the building brought together people from different backgrounds and specializations. This cultural contribution is also reflected in the rich ornamentation in the form of sculptures in the facades and interior of the building. The sculptures represent important Dutch persons and events in Dutch history. Besides the colonial past and the tropics, also sculptures of maritime shipping, various religions, and symbols referring to trade and the sciences are included. Because of the many stories the ornamentation displays, it can be questioned whether they, therefore, also have political importance.

The combination of archival and literature research has provided this thesis with a clear picture of what preceded the founding of the Colonial Institute in the nineteenth century and why it was established, along with how, by what means, and what the course of events after its founding were. This thesis can be found interesting and informative for anyone interested in the story of the Colonial Institute or ethical politics.



Figure 5.1 (Watercolor drawing of the central hall by M.A. van Nieuwerkerken)

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[Image]. Wikimedia Commons.

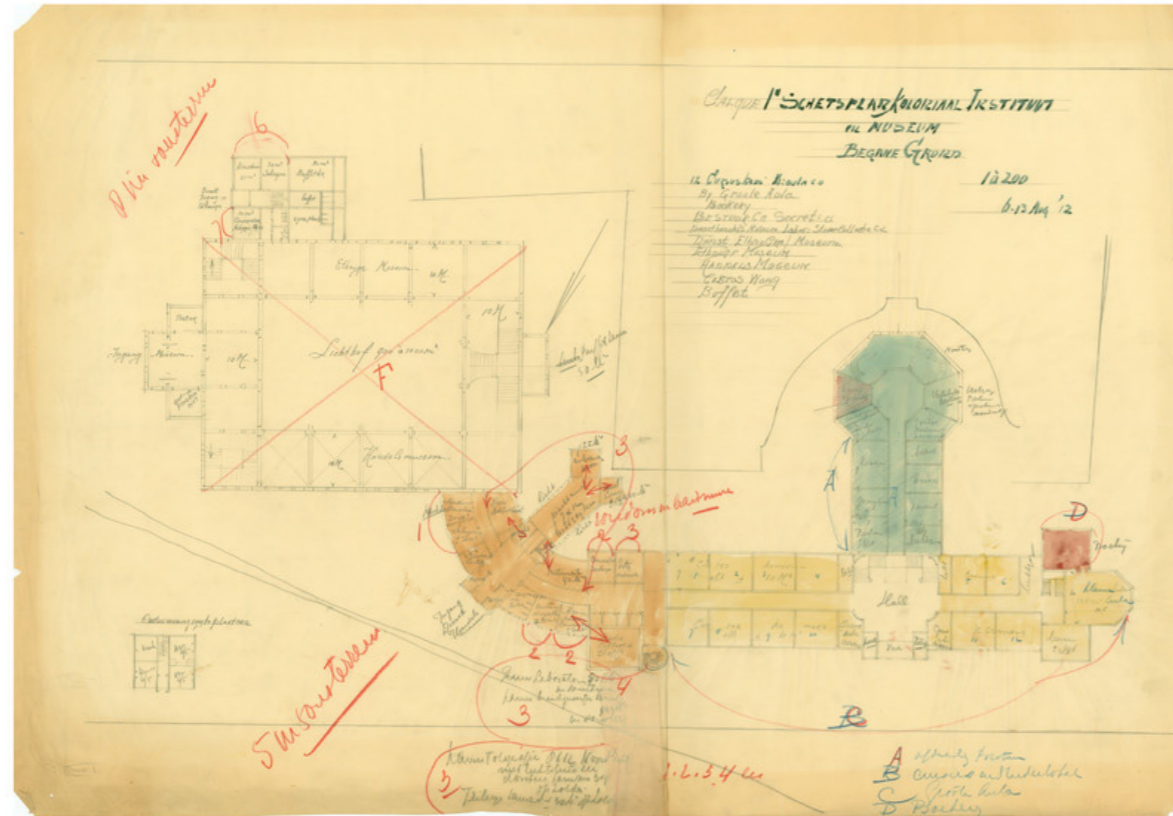
Figure 3.12 Belinfante, J. (1929).
Het werk van de architecten J.J., M.A. en J. van Nieuwerkerken. [Image] (p. 45-60)
N.V. Boekhandel en Uitgevers Maatschappij Ontwikkeling.

Figure 3.13 - 3.14 Belinfante, J. (1929).
Het werk van de architecten J.J., M.A. en J. van Nieuwerkerken. [Image] (p. 63 – p. 64)
N.V. Boekhandel en Uitgevers Maatschappij Ontwikkeling.

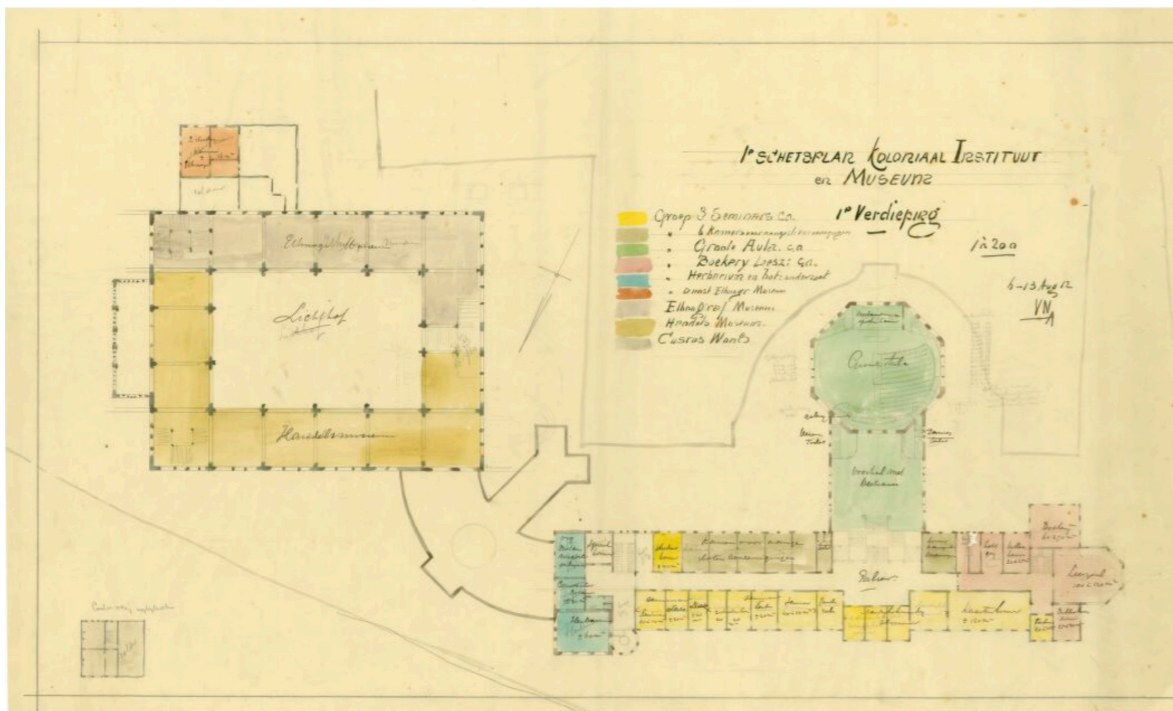
Figure 4.1 Nederland accepteert de onafhankelijkheid van Indonesië. (1949).
[Image]. Canon van Nederland.
<https://www.canonvannederland.nl/nl/kalender/12/1949-12-27>

Appendix

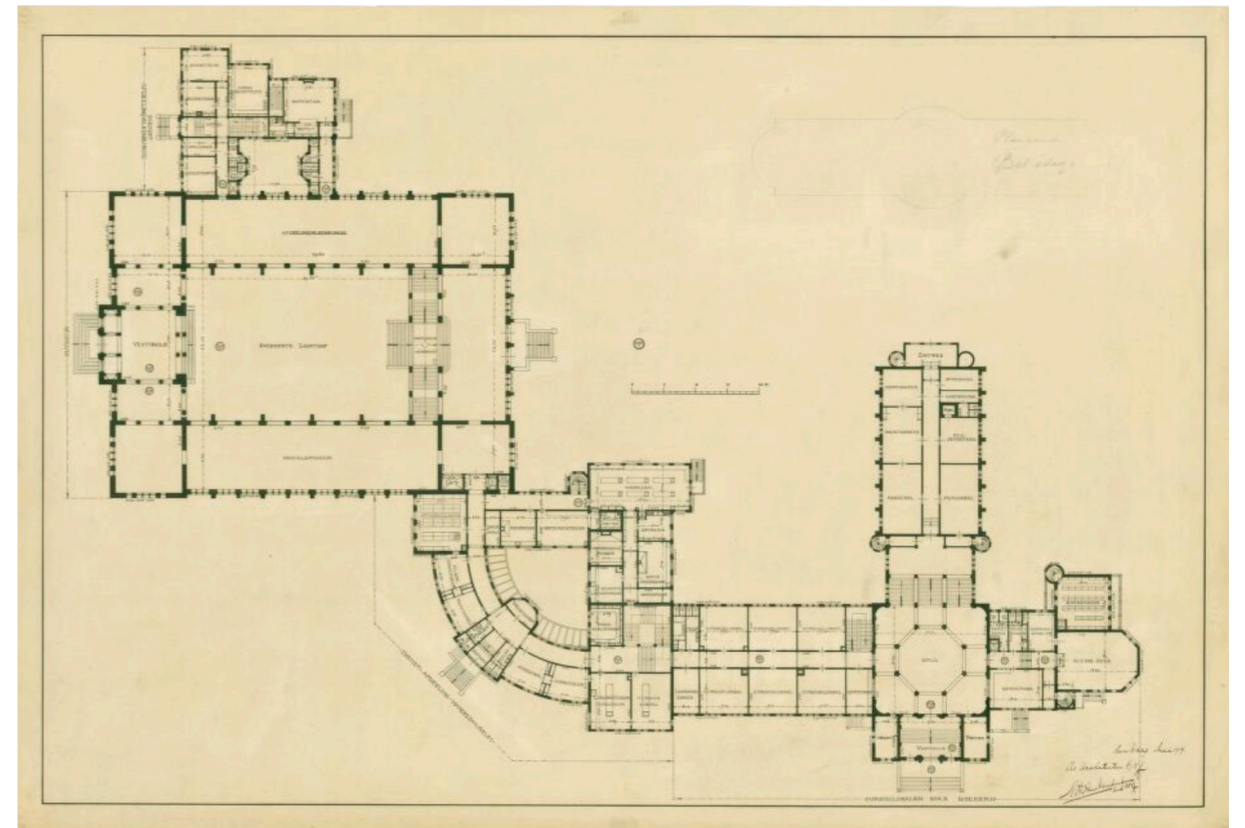
Appendix 1: First sketch plan, ground floor of the Colonial Institute | Het Nieuwe Instituut. (2000).
Nieuwerkerken, J.J. (Johannes Jacobus) van (sr), M.A. (Maria Adrianus) & J. (Johan) | Archive NIEU46 tekeningen.



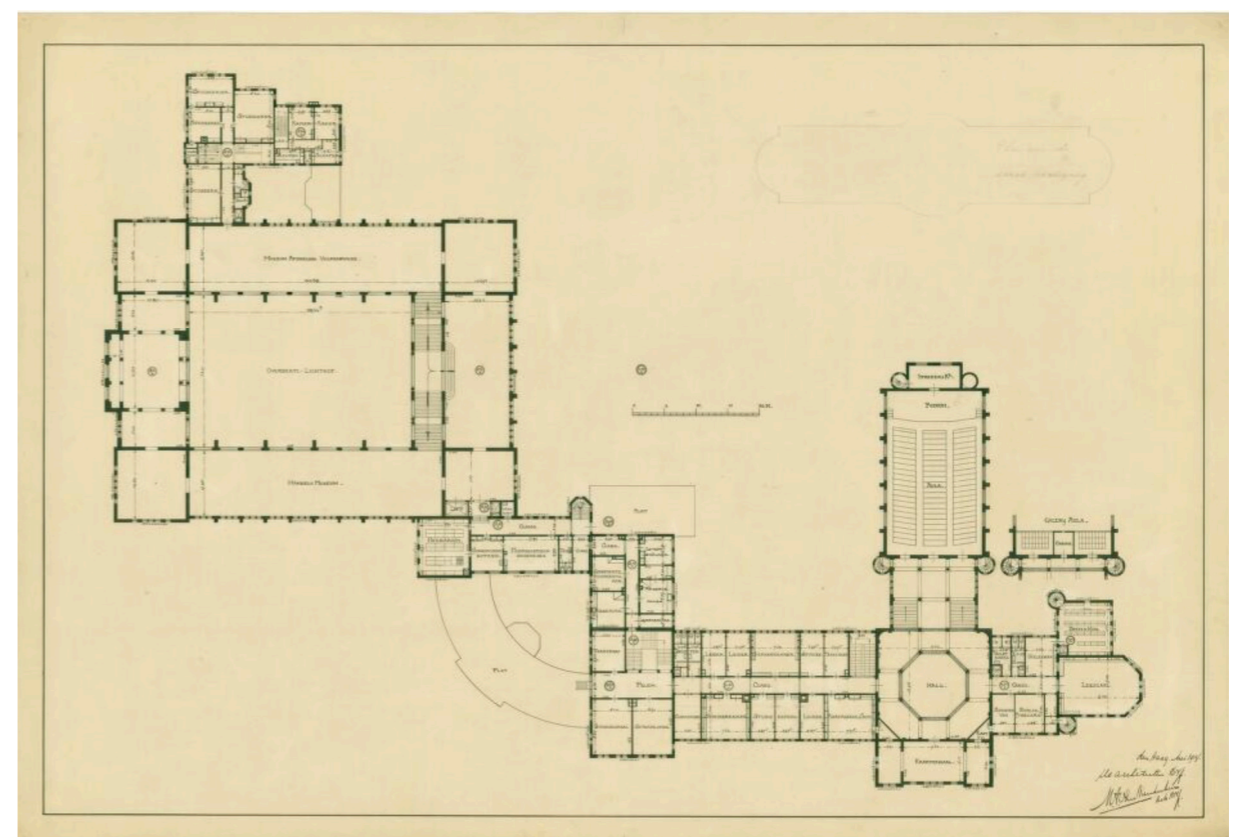
Appendix 2: First sketch plan, first floor of the Colonial Institute | Het Nieuwe Instituut. (2000).
Nieuwerkerken, J.J. (Johannes Jacobus) van (sr), M.A. (Maria Adrianus) & J. (Johan) | Archive NIEU46 tekeningen.



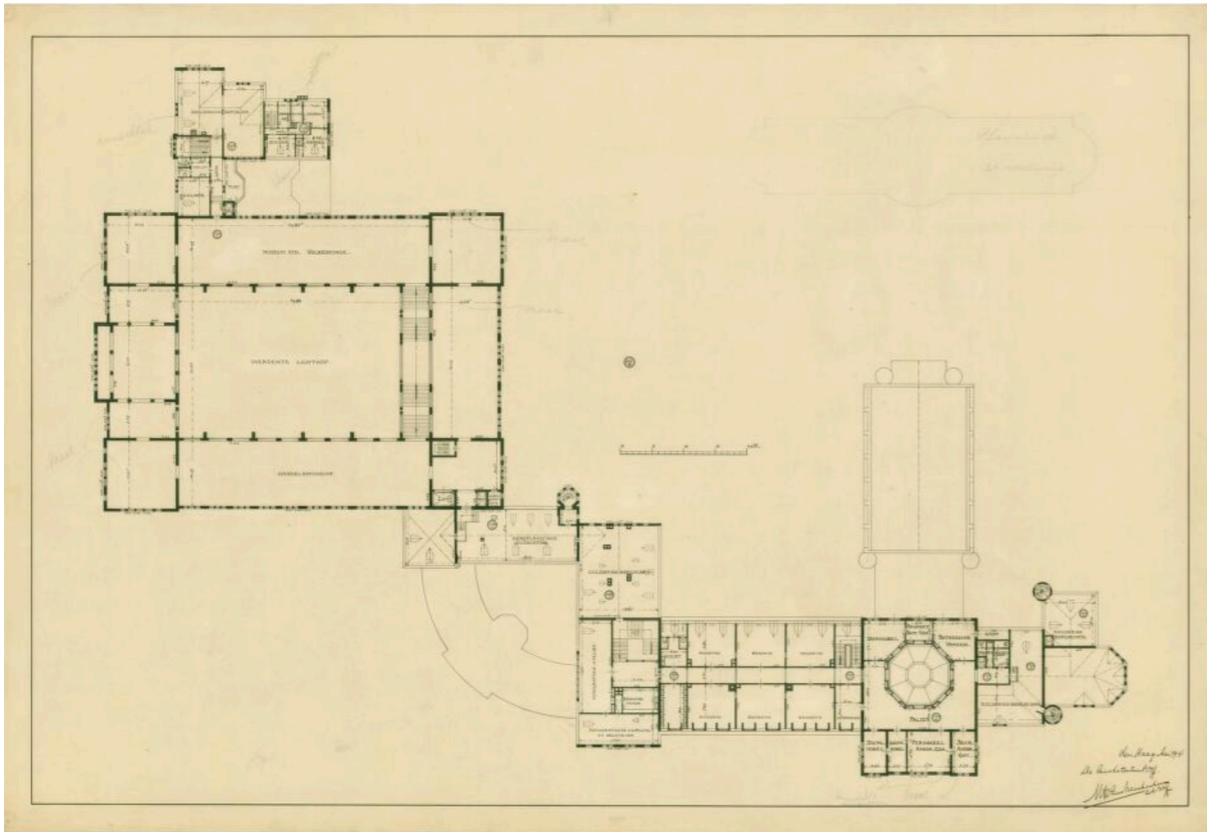
Appendix 3: Floorplan, ground floor of the Colonial Institute | Het Nieuwe Instituut. (2000).
Nieuwerkerken, J.J. (Johannes Jacobus) van (sr), M.A. (Maria Adrianus) & J. (Johan) | Archive NIEU46 tekeningen.



Appendix 4: Floorplan, first floor of the Colonial Institute | Het Nieuwe Instituut. (2000).
Nieuwerkerken, J.J. (Johannes Jacobus) van (sr), M.A. (Maria Adrianus) & J. (Johan) | Archive NIEU46 tekeningen.



Appendix 5: Floorplan, second floor of the Colonial Institute | Het Nieuwe Instituut. (2000).
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Appendix 6: Floorplan, souterrain floor of the Colonial Institute | Het Nieuwe Instituut. (2000).
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