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Chapter II: The Birth of a Musaeum

I The Museum's Pre-History

1. Martinus van Marum & the Beginning of the Age of Museums

In a letter to the Dutch minister of the interior Anton Reinhard Falck posted in July 1819, the ornithologist and collector Coenraad Jacob Temminck left no doubt as to what he thought two of his colleagues really wanted to do to him, if the opportunity ever presented itself: "Both", he wrote, "would stop at nothing to clear me out of the way".[1] He was referring to Sebald Justinus Brugmans, professor of botany and director of the botanical gardens in Leiden, and Martinus van Marum, the director of Teylers Museum and secretary of the Holland Society of Sciences in Haarlem.

This was more than just a letter of complaint. Temminck himself was no angel, and at the time was in fact pursuing his own political agenda. He had dined with Falck just a few days earlier, and the two men had discussed the establishment of a national museum of natural history in the Netherlands – of which Temminck was to be handed the directorship. Just 13 months later, Temminck's highly valuable and widely recognised personal ornithological collection, consisting of more than 4000 stuffed birds, had indeed been merged with both the University of Leiden's natural history collections and the former Royal Cabinet of Natural History in Amsterdam, to form the new National Museum of Natural History (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie*) based in Leiden.

Although Temminck does not explicitly refer to these plans in his letter – but concentrated instead on pointing out how in his opinion the university collections in Leiden were insufficient to form the nucleus of a national collection, which he suspected Brugmans was hoping would be the case – it is highly likely that the plans that were eventually implemented, including Temminck's directorship, were already on the table. Perhaps in order to get ahead of the opposition, and sensing that he currently held the upper hand, Temminck urged Falck to make haste with his plans of establishing the national museum, adding in a thinly veiled threat that "if a national museum comes to nothing, or if the facilities remain inadequate, no one

[1] C.J. Temminck to A.R. Falck, 17.07.1819, NL-HaNa, Familie Falck, 2.21.006.48, inv.-nr. 85. A transcription of the letter has been published in Herman Theodor Colenbrander, ed., *Gedenkschriften van Anton Reinhard Falck*, Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën 13 ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1913), 411–415. I am grateful to Andreas Weber for drawing my attention to this letter.

shall be able to blame me if I continue my eager quest for the extension of my knowledge of nature in another country;"[2]

In an almost cruelly bizarre twist to the story, Brugmans died suddenly just five days after Temminck penned his letter. A short biography later claimed that he had had just enough time to get some of his paper work in order during his short illness.[3] With Brugman's death, Temminck's major opponent was out of the way, a fact which is sure to have helped bring about the speedy establishment of the new museum. As for van Marum, he unexpectedly threw his weight behind the new museum too. An example of his support is how he gave Falck advance warning when members of the Dutch Royal Academy, where the former Royal Cabinet of Natural History was now stored, decided to send a delegation to Falck in order to formally complain about their losing their collection. As a member of the Academy, van Marum was privy to this information.[4] In another letter, sent around the time the final decision to merge the three collections had been taken, van Marum assured Falck that it was his aim to ensure "that the Museum should equal or surpass the foremost Museums in Europe not just as far as birds are concerned but also in all other areas", adding that "if I shall have the opportunity to contribute to that aim, it will be a pleasure to me."[5]

That he was so supportive of what essentially amounted to considerably raising Temminck's rank within academic circles – until about the middle of the 19th century an academic's status was determined as much by the collections that fell under his purview as it was by his other activities – remains a little puzzling, for three reasons. Firstly, because of his apparent antipathy towards Temminck; secondly because as secretary of the Holland Society, van Marum was also in charge of the Society's natural history collection, and its status was in danger of being diminished by the establishment of the new museum; thirdly, because in supporting this new museum van Marum effectually also undermined the future position of a good friend of his, Caspar Georg Carl Reinwardt.

Reinwardt was not only the director of the former Royal Cabinet of Natural History, but was also chosen as Brugman's successor as professor of botany in Leiden, which meant he was also in charge of the university's natural history collections. However, at the time of Brugman's death and the establishment of the National Museum of Natural History, Reinwardt was stationed in the Dutch Colonies, literally on the other side of the world. He had been there since 1815, and for the duration of his stay his duties at the Royal Cabinet were being taken care of jointly by van Marum and Temminck. Perhaps this too made the latter especially eager not to create the impression that he was trying to undermine Reinwardt with his plans for a national museum. Temminck in fact praised Reinwardt's work effusively

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[2] "word er niets, van een nationaal museum, of blijft de inrigting voortdurende gebrekkig, dan zal men mij niet ten kwade kunnen duiden, dat ik mijne begeerte en lust tot uitbreiding mijner natuurkundige kennis, in een ander land voortzette;" Ibid.

[3] Abraham Jacob van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden*, vol. 2 (Haarlem: J.J. van Brederode, 1855), 1471.

[4] M. van Marum to A.R. Falck, 08.09.1820, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 7.

[5] "dat het Museum niet slegts wat de vogelen betreft maar ook in alle de overige vakken, de eerste Musea van Europa evenare of overtreffe"; "Indien mij de gelegenheid moge voorkomen om tot dat oogmerk mede te werken, zal ik mij een genoegen van maken." M. van Marum to A.R. Falck, c. 09.1820, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 7.

in his letter to Falck, stating "that, whatever the plan may be in this respect, it is nonetheless fair that upon his return Reinwardt will not be relegated to the position of a subordinate or of a possible substitute: there is no need to mention this point to Yr. Exc. as Reinwardt has received too many tokens of your interest than that such a capable man, endowed with such noble virtues both as a person and a friend, should need someone else to plead his affairs and interests."[6] Yet despite these assurances, when Reinwardt did return to the Netherlands in 1822 Temminck's initiative had effectually robbed him of both natural history collections that would have fallen under his purview, had the new national museum not been founded. Small wonder that he was bitterly disappointed when he heard about the establishment of the National Museum on Java, and hurt by the fact that he had not even been kept in the loop properly.[7] If one takes into account that mail to the Dutch colonies took months to be delivered, it becomes clear that the speedy establishment of the museum in fact precluded Reinwardt's involvement in the process – which everyone involved must in turn have been aware of. Van Marum however was probably genuinely convinced that merging some of the eclectic collections across the country would indeed help all students of natural history; he might also well have believed that Reinwardt would be involved in organising and running the new collection upon his return from the Colonies; and finally, he appears to have been greatly disappointed by Reinwardt's decision at precisely this time to extend his stay on Java.[8]

Whatever the reasons, it is in itself striking just how pivotal van Marum's position was. The sequence of events as it unfolded around the establishment of Temminck's museum provides an indication of how Temminck's initial worries were certainly not unfounded. Had van Marum for instance judged it to be in Reinwardt's best interest to resist Temminck's plans, the ornithologist would surely have had a harder time. Van Marum, too, clearly had Falck's ear and enjoyed comparatively easy access to the minister. So the entire episode as such can also serve as a good example of just how influential van Marum was, a fact which is all the more remarkable if one takes into account that in 1821 he was already a septuagenarian. But it was not just old age from which he derived his authority, but also from his past contributions to science and the high office he held. As secretary of the Holland Society of Sciences – roughly equivalent in status to other countries' national academies – for more than a quarter century he was one of the highest representatives of Dutch academia, and his membership of a multitude of national and foreign academies (including the Royal Society and the Académie des Sciences) bore witness to his immense networking skills. He had in turn been able to establish that network because his intelligence and skills as a researcher were generally recognised and appreciated. Although he had largely ceased to perform research of his own by the time Temminck's museum saw the light of day, the numerous publications he had penned

[6] "dan, hoe of zulks ook het plan moge zijn, zo is het nogthans billijk dat Reinwardt bij zijne terugkomst niet als ondergeschikt of als eventueele plaatsvervanger worde teruggeschoven: deze snaar is het ook overbodig bij Uwe Exc. aan te roeren, alzo Reinwardt te vele blijken van belangstelling van UHEG. ontvangen heeft, dan dat zo een kundig man, met zulke edele deugden als mensch en vriend begaafd, iemand anders zoude behoeven om zijne zaken en belangen te bepleiten." C.J. Temminck to A.R. Falck, 17.07.1819, NL-HaNa, Familie Falck, 2.21.006.48, inv.-nr. 85. See also: Colenbrander, *Gedenkschriften van Anton Reinhard Falck*, 415.

[7] Andreas Weber, *Hybrid Ambitions: Science, Governance, and Empire in the Career of Caspar G.C. Reinwardt (1773-1854)* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 186–187.

[8] Andreas Weber and Martin Weiss, "Martinus van Marum en Caspar Georg Carl Reinwardt: Vriendschap, planten en musea," *Teylers Magazijn* 110 (2011): 11–13.

over the course of his long career, covering topics such as electricity, chemistry, geology and botany, were widely recognised. Most of the research he had conducted had been performed under the auspices of the Teyler Foundation in Haarlem, either at the museum the Foundation funded and of which van Marum had been the director since 1784, or at the Foundation's laboratory. Van Marum's close association with the Teyler Foundation, his directorship of Teylers Museum, and above all the Foundation's considerable financial clout all boosted his standing within academic circles immensely.

Another point that surely contributed to van Marum's authority was the fact that the decades during which he had enjoyed a reputation as one of the Netherlands' best academics had been turbulent, certainly in political terms. And even though the political disputes that shook all of Europe were played out in a far less violent fashion in the Netherlands than they were in neighbouring countries, divisions ran just as deep as everywhere else.

Even before the French Revolution the so-called Patriots had already fought for a restriction of the stadtholder's powers in what was still the Dutch Republic, consisting of seven largely autonomous provinces. The function of stadtholder was the highest and most influential political office one could hold in the Dutch Republic. Despite a long-standing tradition of de-centralised governance, the House of Orange had succeeded in securing near-monarchical privileges half way through the 18th century, such as the right to hold the position of stadtholder. Although the Patriots briefly made it seem as if the House of Orange was to be toppled after a series of long-standing protests, its power was restored in 1787 with the help of the Prussian army.

In 1795 however, six years after the French had violently disposed of the ancien régime, Dutch and French history became entwined when the French Revolutionary Army conquered the Dutch Republic, welcomed by those who sympathised with the suppressed Patriots. The stadtholder (the future King William I's father) was forced to flee, and the Batavian Republic was founded to replace the Dutch Republic.

But by 1806, Napoleon had crowned himself emperor of a new French Empire, and was no longer satisfied with the Batavian Republic's independence. He therefore opted to turn it into a satellite state run by his brother, Lodewijk Napoleon, who was given the title "King of Holland". Eventually Napoleon Bonaparte felt that his sibling had become too acclimatised to the Netherlands and was no longer acting in France's interest. In 1809 he therefore forced him to abdicate, and declared the Netherlands had been integrated into the French Empire. Soon, however, the self-pronounced Emperor's fortunes were declining, and by 1813 he was forced to surrender the Netherlands, prompting the return of the last in line of the House of Orange who was subsequently officially installed as King William I of the Netherlands in 1815.

Yet despite this succession of governments and repeated political upheaval, van Marum's reputation never seemed to suffer, he always seemed to put academia above politics, was never forced to surrender his position or move anywhere else because of his political views, and his position within the academic community must therefore increasingly have seemed unassailable.

At the same time however, these political changes were strongly reflected in the changes Dutch cultural policy underwent over the course of these decades. And this in turn did affect van Marum and the institutions he was associated with.

What is particularly relevant within the context of this study is that the events which took place in the aftermath of the French Revolution had a huge impact on the status and function of collections. This was not only the case in the Netherlands, but all over Europe, particularly within the French periphery. On a more general level, the methods and aims of the acquisition and production of knowledge were called into question in almost all respects. With regard to collections, these changes had an impact on issues such as the accessibility of collections, but also the status of individual objects within a collection. Not only for instance were many cultural artefacts torn from their original context as a result of the despoliation of churches during the French Revolution and the confiscation of public property and sovereign's collections by the French Army as it gradually conquered Europe, but – crucially – these objects were then also re-contextualised in publicly accessible museums in Paris, which actively encouraged these objects' public scrutiny and scholarly analysis. On the one hand this of course served to humiliate both the defeated sovereigns and their people: it cannot have escaped the communities deprived of their community emblems, or the sovereigns deprived of valuable collections, how this transferral of material objects to Paris symbolically represented the transferral of power to Paris; but on the other hand, the relocation of so many objects on an unprecedented scale also helped bring about a new way of looking at, appreciating, and studying such cultural artefacts, i.e. as distinct objects that needed to be contextualised through scholarship. This in turn helped define the general role of a museum as a place where such cultural artefacts were stored and made accessible for public scrutiny. And by the time Napoleon had been defeated, the proliferation of national, publicly accessible museums – which had sometimes been created in order to accommodate the collections as they were returned to their former owners in the aftermath of Napoleon's downfall – reflected how deeply engrained museums' potential as tools for the reconfiguration of a community's (e.g. a nation's) material culture had become in the fabric of European society. The museum in general has therefore also been referred to as "the cultural institution par excellence of a period of revolution and imperial expansion".[9]

To make this more palpable, Temminck's museum itself can serve as an example of how the Netherlands were not exempted from these developments. At the time of its establishment for instance it was one of only three national museums in the Netherlands, the other two being the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden. The former could trace its origins to the time of the Batavian Republic, the latter had only been established in 1819. In other words, national museums were obviously a fairly new phenomenon in the Netherlands too. What's more, the past peregrinations of the two collections that were merged with Temminck's reflected how turbulent times had been

[9] Jonah Siegel, "Introduction," in *The Emergence of the Modern Museum: An Anthology of Nineteenth-century Sources*, ed. Jonah Siegel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5. On debates surrounding the re-contextualisation of items in museums see for instance: Daniel J. Sherman, "Quatremère/Benjamin/Marx: Art Museums, Aura, and Commodity Fetishism," in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, ed. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1995), 123–143.

politically. The University of Leiden's natural history collection had originally belonged to the stadtholder, but was brought to Paris by the French in 1795.[10] It was only upon its return twenty years later that it was placed in the university's care. The former Royal Cabinet of Natural History had been established by Lodewijk Napoleon. His original idea of combining the collections with a menagerie and botanical gardens in Haarlem never however materialised, one reason being that Lodewijk moved his residence from Haarlem to Amsterdam, and the collections followed him there.[11]

At the same time the new National Museum of Natural History provides an indication of some of the idiosyncrasies of Dutch history too, and how the generalisations have their limits. The *stadtholder*'s natural history collections for instance were publicly accessible in The Hague long before they were confiscated, and could be taken as an early example of – or at least a precursor to – the public museums as they proliferated at the beginning of the 19th century. Their accessibility certainly illustrates how the division between the *stadtholder* and Dutch citizens was less pronounced than the division between monarchs and their subjects in other European countries of the time. This relative lack of a centralised, monarchist tradition is also recognisable in the fact that it was Temminck's own, privately acquired collections, rather than both the (formerly) Royal collections that were merged with it in order to form the new national museum, which formed the nucleus of the new institution.[12]

Both the idiosyncrasies of the Dutch situation as well as general shift in the status of collections described above are key elements to understanding the origins and the early history of Teylers Museum. But while addressing the question of how this specific institution's history fits into the overall history of collections is important, in order to do so it is equally important to realise that the driving force behind its establishment was the ubiquitous Martinus van Marum. Through his lifelong directorship he left an indelible mark on the museum, even if he did reduce his activities at the museum after 1803; and while his far-reaching ambition and personal talents helped put Teylers on the map, as was already mentioned the benefit was mutual in the sense that his association with the Teyler Foundation also helped boost van Marum's own career.

A deeper understanding of this institution's first years can only be gained by familiarising oneself at least a little with the cultural and political debates that raged throughout van Marum's career. They are particularly relevant in as far as they concerned the importance of the acquisition and production of knowledge, because of the implications this had for the character and use of the collections that fell under his purview. How important for instance

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[10] On the history of this collection see Theodor H. Lunsingh Scheurleer et al., *150 jaar Koninklijk kabinet van schilderijen, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Koninklijk Penningkabiet* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1967).

[11] For an account of this enterprise and its effects for Haarlem see: Elsa van der Pool-Stofkooper, "Verwachting en werkelijkheid: parken en tuinen van het domein Welgelegen in de periode 1808-1832," in *Paviljoen Welgelegen 1789-1989: Van buitenplaats van de bankier Hope tot zetel van de provincie Noord-Holland* (Haarlem: Schuyt, 1989), 132–138.

[12] Similar developments are discernible in the art world, where essentially local collections in The Hague and Amsterdam were simply declared "national" museums in the aftermath of the French Revolution: Debora J. Meijers, "The Dutch Method of Developing a National Art Museum: How Crucial Were the French Confiscations of 1795?," in *Napoleon's Legacy: The Rise of National Museums in Europe*, Berliner Schriftenreihe Zur Museumsforschung 27 (Berlin: G+H Verlag, 2009), 41–54.

was public accessibility? How was the public that was to be granted access defined and screened? Was the purpose of the museum the production of knowledge, its diffusion, both, or more? Was the knowledge stored in the museum to serve the purpose of demonstrating the complexity and beauty of God's creation, or was its value to be judged by the amount of practical applications it brought forth? Did van Marum's views differ from those of others who were concerned with the museum, such as the trustees of the Teyler Foundation? What role did the museum itself play in possible disputes? Did they have an impact on the collection itself or its management? These are the questions that will be addressed over the course of the following chapters. Ultimately, the aim is to situate van Marum within these debates, in order to understand how Teylers Museum was managed during the first decades of its existence.

2. Martinus van Marum's Formative Years & The Holland Society of Sciences

Before turning to van Marum's role in the establishment of Teylers Museum however, it is worth learning a little more about his formative years, i.e. his youth and what he did in the years before he became involved with the Teyler Foundation.[13]

Martinus van Marum was born in Groningen in 1750. His father had been trained as a constructional engineer and a surveyor, and later became a master potter in Delft, where van Marum attended the Latin School. He appears to have been an excellent student, as he was allowed to present a Latin poem twice at prize ceremonies, an honour that was reserved for the best student of a class. When van Marum was 14 his family moved back to Groningen. On December 31st 1764, he enrolled at the town's university, from which he was to graduate some nine years later.

His teachers in Groningen included Wouter van Doeveren, Dionysius van de Wijnpersse, Sebald Justinus Brugmans (who was already mentioned above), and Petrus Camper. Of these, Camper undoubtedly had the most profound influence on his young student's life. Camper was recognised as one of his generations' most formidable intellectuals, and his wide range of activities included studies of plant life, the human body, animal life, and finally fossilized remains. He was particularly interested in comparative studies. Camper even ventured into

[13] Unless indicated otherwise, the details of van Marum's biography are taken from: Alida M. Muntendam, "Dr. Martinus van Marum (1750-1837)," ed. E. Lefebvre, J.G. de Bruijn, and R.J. Forbes, vol. 1, Martinus van Marum: Life & Work (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1969), 1–72; Gerda H. Kurtz, "Martinus van Marum, Citizen of Haarlem," ed. E. Lefebvre, J.G. de Bruijn, and R.J. Forbes, vol. 1, Martinus van Marum: Life & Work (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1969), 73–126; Bert Theunissen, "Martinus van Marum, 1750-1837," in *Een Elektriserend geleerde: Martinus van Marum 1750-1837*, ed. Lodewijk. C. Palm and Anton Wiechmann (Haarlem: J. Enschedé, 1987), 11–32; Mart J. Lieburg, "Martinus van Marum en de geneeskunde," in *Een elektriserend geleerde: Martinus van Marum, 1750-1837*, ed. Lodewijk. C. Palm and Anton Wiechmann (Haarlem: J. Enschedé, 1987), 183–222.

politics, becoming the "president" of a small county of Workum in 1782. In politics, he supported the Orangist cause.[14]

Camper's influence is perhaps most obviously reflected in van Marum's choice of topic for the research that formed the basis of the two dissertations with which he graduated from university, in that he chose to investigate the movement of plant juices, adopting a comparative approach in which he juxtaposed this with the circulation of fluids in animals.[15]

The original idea appears to have been to present all of his findings in one publication, but it was then decided that they should be divided into two, so that the defence of the first of these could be presided over by the stadtholder, the young Prince of Orange, because the head of state happened to have scheduled a visit to the university. Van Marum later recalled how deeply honoured he had been by the stadtholder's presence, and this might go some way towards explaining his latent Orangist sympathies later on in life – although here, too, Camper's opinions may well played a role. The second defence ceremony was held about two weeks after the first, on August 21st 1773, and van Marum was now a qualified doctor.

Despite the glamour that accompanied his graduation, a bitter disappointment soon followed: later on in life van Marum recalled how he had had high hopes of succeeding his mentor Camper in his post at the university, and even claimed that as much has been promised to him upon his first graduation ceremony.[16] Instead, the post went to Wynoldus Munniks who – in van Marum's eyes probably adding insult to injury – had enrolled at the university in the same year as van Marum did.

Deeply disappointed and offended, van Marum turned away from his studies in plant physiology and botany, and turned instead to the improvement of electrostatic generators, his curiosity apparently having been piqued through reading Joseph Priestley's book on the history of electricity. Van Marum subsequently succeeded in minimising the problems that arose through the wear of an electrostatic generator's friction pads by building a "machine with gum-lac discs drawn through mercury" together with the instrument maker Gerhard Kuyper, and published their results in 1776.[17]

By this time, he had started practicing medicine in Haarlem. The precise reasons for his moving to Haarlem remain elusive. As far as finances were concerned, other towns appear to have promised to yield more lucrative patients – at least van Marum claimed as much in a letter to a friend some years later.[18] But again, Camper may have had some influence on van Marum's decision to move to this town, in that he recommended him for membership of the

[14] On Camper see: Robert Paul Willem Visser, *The Zoological Work of Petrus Camper (1722-1789)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985); J.K. van der Korst, *Het rusteloze bestaan van dokter Petrus Camper (1722-1789)* (Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum, 2008).
[15] Lieburg, "Martinus van Marum en de geneeskunde," 185.
[16] Martinus van Marum, *Catalogue des plantes, cultivées au printems 1810; dans le Jardin de M. van Marum à Harlem* (Haarlem, 1810), iii–iv.
[17] Muntendam, "Dr. Martinus van Marum (1750-1837)," 13; Martinus van Marum, *Verhandeling over het electrizeeren: in welke de beschryving en afbeelding van ene nieuw uitgevondene electrizeer-machine, benevens enige nieuwe proeven uitgedagt en in 't werk gesteld door den auteur, en Mr. Gerhard Kuyper, physische-instrument-maker te Groningen* (Groningen: Yntema en Tieboel, 1776).
[18] Muntendam, "Dr. Martinus van Marum (1750-1837)," 15.

Holland Society. The town's new citizen was duly elected at the Society's annual meeting on May 21st 1776.

Just a few months later, van Marum was appointed town lecturer in natural philosophy by Haarlem's town council. He later claimed that his appointment had been prompted by a number of requests from other citizens, asking him to give lectures on the newest developments in natural philosophy.[19] According to his own account, he was willing to comply under the condition that he was officially appointed by the town – the post was unsalaried, but came with a number of medieval-sounding privileges, such as a special seat in Church (van Marum was a member of the Reformed Church), and unhindered passage of the town fortifications. On June 2nd 1777, van Marum held his inaugural lecture, claiming it was the first time he had ever spoken in public. Although he was surely trying to flatter his audience – which appears to have consisted of town notables and other curious members of Haarlem's elite – the published version of his inaugural also contains the only known explanation van Marum ever gave as to why he had decided to settle in Haarlem, citing its reputation as one of the bastions of Dutch science. As van Marum put it, it was above all the fact that Haarlem was home to the first Learned Society of a national scope, the Holland Society of Sciences, which had enticed him to settle in this town. Pointing out how, as he saw it, the Society's "main aim is to apply the knowledge of nature for the benefit of our country", he saw its establishment in Haarlem as "clear proof that *Haarlem* is particularly devoted to this science", and added that he was equally impressed how "several other special institutions and societies, established for the exercise of reason, for the advancement of the sciences, and for the advancement of the practical arts, are to be found here in this city more than elsewhere in *the Netherlands*".[20]

Because the history of the Holland Society and that of Teylers Museum soon became entwined and remained so until well into the 20th century, a closer look at the Society's early history is called for. It had been created in 1752 through the merger of three smaller, local, amateur societies, whose focus lay on the emerging experimental sciences.[21] Soon after, the Holland Society received a royal charter from the Prince of Orange, and was evidently taken so seriously throughout the rest of the Dutch Republic that the University of Leiden – which up until then had been the bastion of Dutch intellectual life and just a few decades earlier had played host to such eminent researchers as Herman Boerhaave, Willem Jacob 's Gravesande, and Pieter van Musschenbroek – insisted that the Holland Society was prohibited from engaging in or facilitating any kind of educational activity. The Society accordingly restricted itself to publishing academic treatises – most of which were the result of prize essay competitions organised by the Society – alongside functioning as a platform for intellectual

[19] Ibid., 16.

[20] "voornaam doelwit is de natuurkennis ten nutte van ons Vaderland toe te paszen"; "sprekend bewys, dat *Haarlem* deze wetenschap byzonderlyk is toegedaan"; "verscheide andere byzondere inrichtingen en gezelschappen, die opzettelyk ter oeffening van 't verstand, tot bevordering van wetenschappen, en ter voortzetting van nuttige konsten, hier ter stede, meer dan elders in *Nederland*, gevonden worden". Martinus van Marum, *Intree-rede over het nut der natuurkunde in 't algemeen, en voor de geneeskonst in 't byzonder* (Haarlem: J. Bosch, 1777), 46.

[21] On the history of the Holland Society see: Johan A. Bierens de Haan, *De Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen, 1752-1952* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1970).

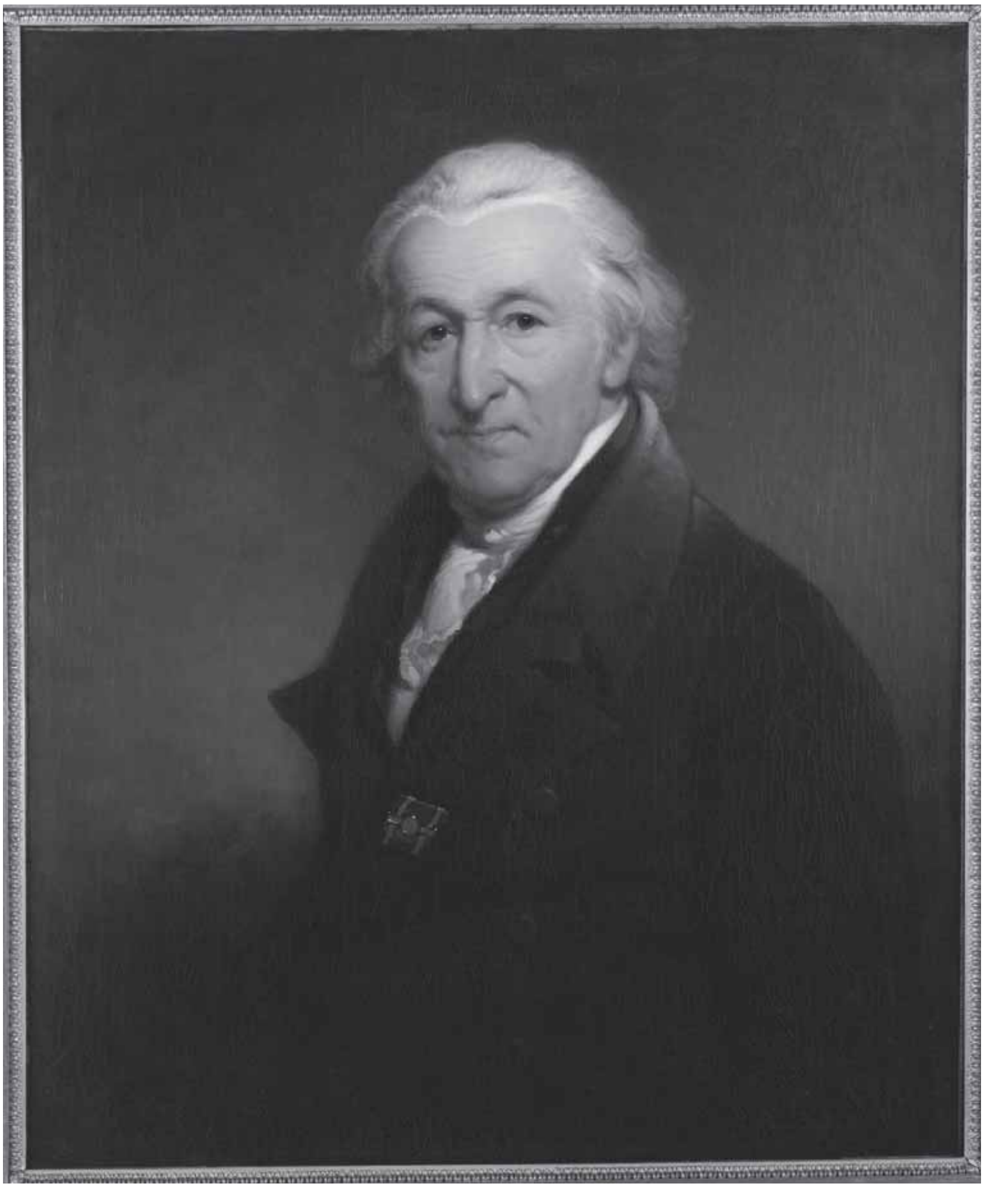

Fig.2. Martinus van Marum (1750-1837), painted by Charles Howard Hodges in 1826 (Teylers Museum, Haarlem, KS1999)

exchanges and debates. The prize essay competitions in particular however enabled the Society to develop considerable clout within Dutch academia, despite the restrictions it was faced with.

The Holland Society was Haarlem's largest learned society and as such became an integral part of the town's identity. But it is worth pointing out that, while the Holland Society came to eclipse other societies in Haarlem because of its sheer size and national scope, a number of smaller societies devoted to the arts and sciences were also founded during and after Pieter Teyler's lifetime.[22] Even if many of these were less about "serious" academic output and more about sociability, many citizens of Haarlem were evidently interested in the newest developments in the academic world.

So the Holland Society was indeed acting as a sort of figurehead of Dutch natural philosophy by the time van Marum settled in Haarlem; but there might also be another reason why he chose to emphasise its importance: about a week before he gave his inaugural as town lecturer, van Marum had succeeded in obtaining another position of some prestige and also importance within academic circles in Haarlem, namely as director of the Holland Society's natural history collection. Although here too he initially had to make do without a salary, this soon changed when the collection's caretaker of some ten years, Nicolaus Linder, resigned from this position and returned to his homeland of Switzerland to take up a job as a beadle in Basle in 1778. Upon Linder's resignation, van Marum received his salary of f300,- annually. A further f100,- per year went to Willem van Aardenburg, who had been appointed as taxidermist alongside van Marum.

Linder had been the first caretaker of the Holland Society's collections, and his full-time appointment in 1768, as yet on an annual salary of f150,-, already provides some indication that the collection was not inconsiderable. By the time van Marum became its director, it had indeed acquired a reputation internationally, as witnessed by the several hundred visitors that came to see it and signed the guest book each year.[23] At the same time however, Linder, a self-taught and self-made man who had started out as a gardener, was never provided with a serious budget with which to finance acquisitions for the Society. The collection was not so much the result of any pre-determined acquisition plan, but more the result of a steady stream of donations by the affluent and often well-connected members of the Society. Even after van Marum's appointment, the situation hardly changed.

The first of these donations of natural history specimens had occurred as early as 1755, just three years after the Society's establishment, and in the same year in which the Society moved to its own premises at the Prinsenhof in Haarlem. Before then, all meetings had been held at the one of the members' homes. This first donation was made by Pieter van den Broek, one of the Directors, and consisted of a number of stuffed animals, such as an iguana, a cayman, and

[22] For an overview see: Alle D. de Jonge, "Gezelschappen in Haarlem rond 1800," in *De verborgen wereld van Democriet*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Schuyt, 1995), 16–25.
[23] Liang de Beer, "Voor iedere vriend van de wetenschap: Het publiek van het naturaliënkabinet van de Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen in de jaren 1772-1830," unpublished manuscript (The Hague, 2012).

two lizards.[24] They were put on display at the new premises. But it was only a far larger donation in 1759, by another one of the Director's, Job Baster, of his own collection, that prompted the Society's Directors to make funds available for the collection's adequate preservation, stating "that from time to time such glass bottles as are needed for the purpose will be bought and the insects preserved in alcohol, so as to produce a respectable collection".[25]

As this "respectable collection" continued to grow, very little urgency appears to have been attached to the construction of storage and display cases, even though an entire room had been reserved for the collections as early as 1756. Detailed plans how to furnish this room appropriately were drawn up in 1763 by an architect from The Hague, Pieter de Swart, but it was only in 1771 that the Haarlem carpenter Jan de Laurier was actually paid f1000,- for the construction of display & storage cupboards for the Society.[26] Some years previously, in 1767, another potential donor, Martinus Slabber, was even asked to hold back the specimens he was willing to give to the Society, because of a lack of appropriate storage cupboards.[27] Although Slabber also left no doubt that he was hoping to be placed in charge of the Society's collections and this may have been a subtle way of declining his offer (Linder was employed one year later), reference to the storage cupboards is unlikely to have been a fabricated excuse.

Another indication that the growing collection's presentation was initially not considered a pressing matter is that the rules concerning the collection's usage were changed in 1772. Before that, access had been restricted to members of the Society, but now Linder's salary was doubled to f300,- per year, on condition that he remain on for another six years, and that he provide access to anyone interested in the collections, regardless of whether they could provide appropriate letters of reference. Visitors were only required to enter their names in a visitor's book – this practice was continued until 1830 – and would have been expected to give Linder a tip if he guided them through the collections.[28]

The collections continued to grow, and it was their "vast extent" that prompted the Directors van Sijpestijn, van Brakel, and Decker to suggest van Marum be appointed as director of what was by now referred to as "the cabinet of natural history specimens".[29] One can only speculate as to whether his appointment had any bearing on Linder's decision to leave before the end of the six-year term he had agreed to serve in 1772. Either way, one of van Marum's first tasks as director was to oversee the collections' transferral to new premises the Society

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[24] For a complete chronological list of all donations and acquisitions see Bert Sliggers and Marijke H. Besselink, eds., *Het verdwenen museum: natuurhistorische verzamelingen 1750-1850* (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2002), 130–142.

[25] "dat men van tijd tot tijd de glazen, zooals die daartoe vereischt worden, zal koopen en de insecten in liquor bewaaren, om er dus een behoorlijke collectie van te maaken". Ibid., 55. That same year, the Cabinet was given the inevitable "unicorn's tusk" by the Director Pieter Sannié.

[26] Ibid., 105–108.

[27] Ibid., 57.

[28] Bierens de Haan, *De Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen, 1752-1952*, 251–252.

[29] "grote uitgestrektheid"; "het kabinet der Naturalia". The earliest recorded example of this name being used is Linder's appointment in 1768 as "oppasser van het kabinet der Naturalia": "Notulen 1767-1781", 07.06.1768, Haarlem, NHA, Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen, vol. 444, nr. 13, fol. 524.

had acquired in the Grote Houtstraat in Haarlem in 1777 – interestingly enough, with the help of a loan from one Pieter Teyler van der Hulst, whose last will and testament was to have a profound and in all likelihood unexpected impact on van Marum's life after the former's death just one year later. Van Marum appears to have performed this logistic operation fairly swiftly, and welcomed the first visitors to the new premises in May 1778.

In comparison with the premises at the Prinsenhof, the new building was huge. It consisted of two sections – one at the front and one at the back, both joined by a courtyard – and comprised three functions: the collections were stored in a total of eight rooms on the second and third floor of the front section of the house, facing the Grote Houtstraat; the Society held its meetings in a large meeting room on the ground floor of the building, facing the courtyard; and finally the cabinet's director van Marum was allowed to live in the rest of the house rent-free. This meant he had the entire back section as well as two rooms on the ground floor of the front section to himself. The only condition was that he kept the premises clean and took care "that the cabinet can, at all appropriate times, be viewed by respectable people who desire to do so."[30] Van Marum soon came to an arrangement with his two lady servants that they were allowed to keep all the tips from visitors if they kept the premises clean – this would probably also have meant they granted visitors access to the collections and showed them around.

So by 1778, the year in which Pieter Teyler van der Hulst passed away and the Teyler Foundation was set up, van Marum was already firmly rooted in Haarlem's intellectual circles. His position as town lecturer meant he could reach a large audience of interested connoisseurs, and that he was recognised as an up and coming talent in his fields of interest, i.e. all branches of natural philosophy. As director of the Holland Society's cabinet, he not only had secured an elevated position within the Society itself, but had also obtained a means to getting in contact with all those collectors and researchers from abroad who came to see the collections. Finally, the pay he received from the Holland Society, albeit modest, meant he did not have to depend entirely on treating patients for a living, and could focus more on the newest developments in natural philosophy.

By 1779, van Marum was a member of one of the Learned Societies that were set up by the Teyler Foundation, and by 1784 he was made the director of the Teyler Foundation's newly built museum. Before learning more about these events though, let us first turn to Pieter Teyler van der Hulst himself, the details of his so far-reaching bequest, and the background against which this bequest itself has to be seen.

[30] "dat het kabinet ten allen behoorlijken tijde door fatsoenlijke Lieden, die zulks begeeren, gezien kan worden." "Notulen 1767-1781", 05.08.1777, Haarlem, NHA, Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen, vol. 444, nr. 13, fol. 900.

3. Pieter Teyler van der Hulst

The citizens of Haarlem appear to have had little good to say about Pieter Teyler van der Hulst after his death in 1778, even though the only evidence about his life that has been preserved is in stark contrast with the rumours that appear to have been spread about him. His bad reputation probably had a lot to do with the fact that to many citizens of Haarlem the most visible result of Teyler's bequest, Teylers Museum, must have come as a complete surprise when it was fist opened in 1784. The name "Teyler" they had been familiar with – the museum's namesake Pieter Teyler van der Hulst was one of the richest inhabitants of Haarlem, a former Mennonite textile dealer and banker; but as visitors to the museum were evidently told, Teyler had "throughout his entire life not expressed any particular inclination towards the sciences"[31], and was "[n]either by nature [n]or education any way allied to the arts"[32]. So a museum devoted to the arts and sciences set up in his name must have been unexpected. The quotes are taken from reports by a German and an English visitor to the museum from 1790 and 1789 respectively.

But while one might expect Haarlem's citizens to be grateful for the establishment of what was soon to become an illustrious institution in their home town – whatever the institution's namesake's interests – their surprise seems to have turned into a sense of disbelief and anger for another reason: the museum was housed in a magnificent building and exquisitely furbished, whereas at the time of its establishment many citizens of Haarlem were struggling to make ends meet. In fact the entire Dutch Republic was deep in recession. A general sense of malaise had spread across the Republic, with Haarlem forming no exception. One can get a sense of how deep this sense of decline went if one realises that just a few decades before Teyler passed away the young Mozart had made a detour to Haarlem on his tour of Europe in order to play the town cathedral's world famous organ, whereas by the time Teylers Museum was built houses were being torn down in Haarlem because of the town's sharp decline in the number of inhabitants, brought about by the decline fortunes of the textile industry on which Haarlem had depended for decades.[33]

More importantly as far as Teylers Museum and Teyler's reputation was concerned, this perceived contrast between the general state of the Dutch Republic's and Haarlem's economy and the magnificence of the new museum was exacerbated by rumours that Teyler had been

[31] „*Peter Teyler van der Hulst*, ein reicher Kaufmann, der in seinem Leben keine besondere Neigung für die Wissenschaften geäußert hatte, vermachte sein ganzes Vermögen den Armen und der Physik." Georg Forster, *Ansichten vom Niederrhein, von Brabant, Flandern, Holland, England und Frankreich im April, Mai und Junius 1790*, vol. 9, Georg Forsters Werke (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), 325.

[32] Samuel Ireland, *A Picturesque Tour through Holland, Brabant, and Part of France; Made in the Autumn of 1789*, vol. 1 (T. Egerton: London, 1796), 124.

[33] On the situation in Haarlem see: W. W. Mijnhardt, *Tot heil van 't menschdom: culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750-1815* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 296–297. This was a time of general economic malaise in the Netherlands, and Haarlem was no exception. One indication of the scale of the general sentiments that the Republic of the Netherlands was on a downhill slope is provided by the establishment of the "Oeconomische Tak" of the Holland Society of Sciences, which had the explicit goal of boosting trade and industry in the Netherlands – even if the question which of the two was more important became quite an issue. For an overview of its history see: Bierens de Haan, *De Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen, 1752-1952*, 160–177.

extremely tight with the purse strings, even to the point of being stingy, during his lifetime. One story related by another visitor to the museum on another occasion for instance was that Teyler had half a litre of milk delivered to his front door and another half litre to his back door by different milk maids, so that he could receive two of the free spoons that were included with each delivery.[34] On the basis of what he had been told, the English visitor already quoted above therefore came to the verdict that Teyler had been "one of the greatest misers in Holland".[35]

This, however, has to be an exaggeration, and a strong one at that. We will never know for sure just how much truth the above statements contained, simply because very few documents that could shed some light on Teyler's life have been preserved, let alone any documents that might reveal some of his personal traits; no letters to or from him for instance are known of, just one single short poem he penned in 1737.[36] But the sporadic evidence that has been preserved points to a man who was by no means frugal where charitable causes were concerned; on the contrary, he devoted both time and money to a number of institutions which we can safely assume were close to his heart. And as if he had wanted to prove any rumours of his frugal lifestyle wrong, the most elaborate document revealing anything about Teyler, his 39-page last will and testament, is in effect one resounding benevolent donation in support of "theology, the arts and sciences and the common good"[37] in his home town, explicitly including the less well-off. It bears some irony that this bequest initially had the opposite effect to what he must have intended, probably going a long way toward cementing his posthumous image of being overly economical, because the charitable causes he supported were eclipsed by the establishment of the museum in his name – about which, ironically, he had said almost nothing throughout his entire will.

So who was this man, and what exactly did he stipulate in his will? Pieter Teyler was born on March 25th 1702, to Maria van der Hulst and Isaac Teyler, an affluent textile trader.[38] Two younger sisters died in childhood. The family came from a line of Scottish textile traders – the name Teyler is most likely derived from the English word "tailor". Pieter's grandfather Thomas had fled his home country to avoid religious persecution, and adopted the Mennonite faith after settling in Haarlem.

When Pieter was 19, his mother passed away, and from that moment on he carried her family name as well, becoming Pieter Teyler van der Hulst. Nothing is known about his early years,

[34] August Hermann Niemeyer, *Beobachtungen auf Reisen in und außer Deutschland*, vol. 3 (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1824), 150. This is a report of travels undertaken in 1806.

[35] Ireland, *A Picturesque Tour through Holland, Brabant, and Part of France; Made in the Autumn of 1789*, 1:24. Sophie LaRoche refers to Teyler as the "roemsüchtige[n] Geizhalse[s] Thoeler" in her report of travels in 1788: Sophie La Roche, *Tagebuch einer Reise durch Holland und England* (Offenbach: Ulrich Weiß & Carl Ludwig Brede, 1788), 108.

[36] Bert Sliggers, "Niets bij zijn leven, alles na zijn dood," in *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2006), 40.

[37] "[B]evorderingen van Godsdienst, aanmoedigingen van kunsten en weetenschappen en het nut van 't algemeen". A transcript of Teyler's will has been published in: Bert Sliggers, ed., *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting* (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2006), 192–206.

[38] For the biographical information on Teyler that follows in this section see, unless otherwise indicated: Sliggers, "Niets bij zijn leven, alles na zijn dood."

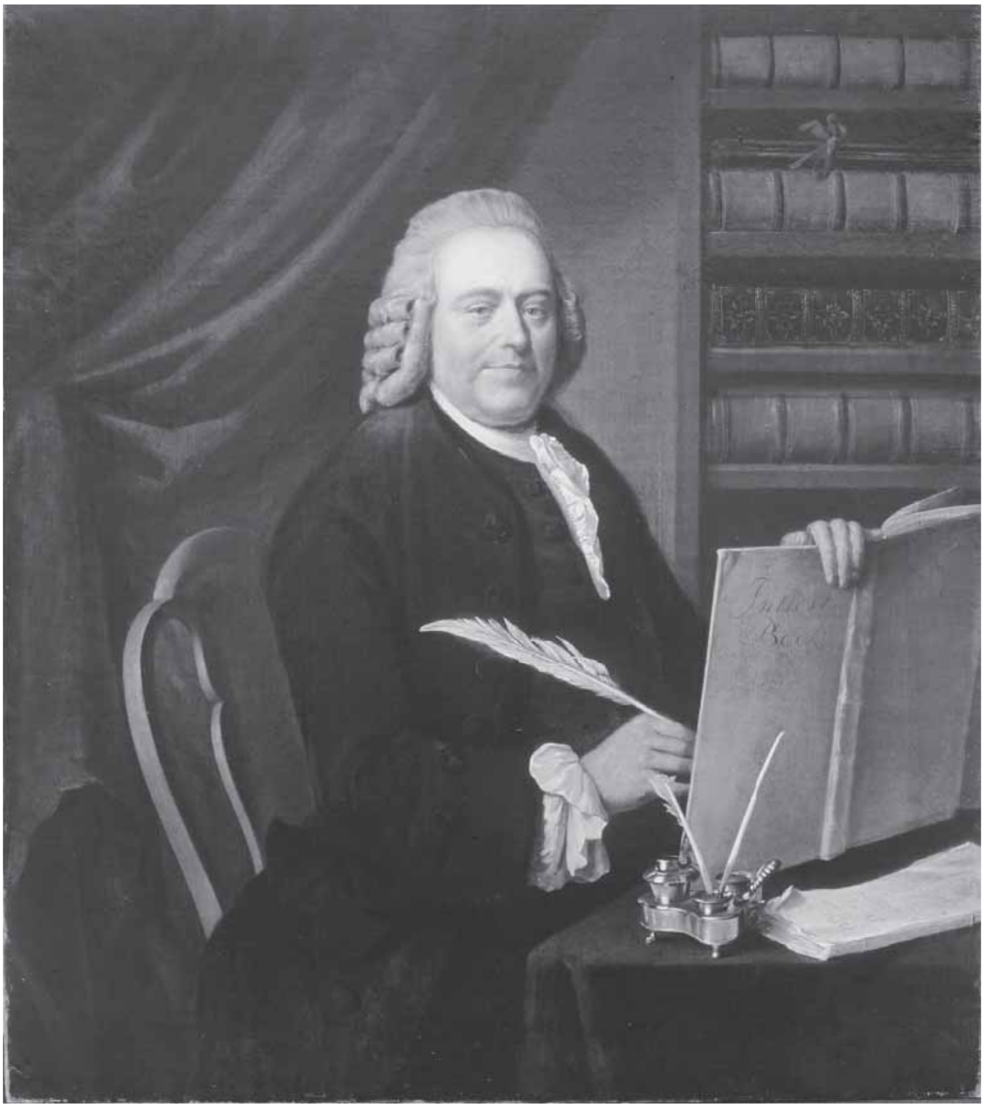

Fig.3. Pieter Teyler van der Hulst (1702-1778)
(Teylers Museum, Haarlem, KS281)

but in 1728 he started helping his father with his business, and married Helena Wijnands Verschaave on his birthday. A collection of poems written on the occasion of the couple's marriage again reveals little apart from confirming that he was a well-connected member of the wealthy elite of Haarlem, and certainly no philistine. In one poem, penned by his life-long friend the poet Pieter Langendijk, Teyler's love of art (*Kunstlief*) is a recurring theme.

The newly-weds moved into a house in the Damstraat in Haarlem, the street in which the Teylers essentially lived for the rest of their life, although they did acquire some grounds just outside the town of Haarlem in 1734 and had a house they christened *Lustrust* constructed there, and moved to a different house in the Damstraat – nr. 21 – in 1740. This second town house was the one behind which Teylers Museum was later to be constructed.

Shortly after their marriage Teyler also purchased a *Hofje*, a sort of retirement home for widows who had hit hard straits financially, near what is today known as Klein Heiligland in Haarlem. Financing a *Hofje* was a popular way for the Dutch elite to provide for those less well-off.[39] But in Teyler's case this was not the only charitable institution to which he was to devote time or money: as from 1739 he served on the board of Haarlem's Aalmoezeniershuisje, a kind of Christian charity, as a *regent*; as from 1750 he succeeded his father on the board of Haarlem's Mennonite orphanage. He was also an active member of his parish. As early as 1733 he was appointed deacon, and later repeatedly reappointed.[40] That he cared about Mennonite church policy can also be deduced from the fact that he was present at the opening of the first Mennonite seminary in Amsterdam in 1735, and that four years later he was involved in setting up a fund from which lay preachers could be paid at his parish. He was still a member of the board of this fund at the time of his death over four decades later.[41]

Personal tragedy however struck in Teyler's life in 1754 when Helena died, just four years after his father had passed away too. It is hard to imagine that the fact that he had become a childless widower, as well as the sole owner of a lucrative business, had nothing to do with his drawing up his will in 1756. Either way, on May 17th Teyler, "physically healthy and in possession of his reason and memory"[42], met Nicolaas Gallé, a notary in Haarlem together with two legal witnesses, and half an hour later they all signed the 39-page document constituting Teyler's last will and testament, which eventually laid the grounds for the establishment of Teylers Museum after Teyler had passed away on April 8th 1778. Only minor revisions were subsequently made to the document before Teyler's death, most of them in 1776.

[39] For an overview of some Mennonite examples of this phenomenon in Haarlem see: B. van den Bosch-Vervoort, *De Doopsgezinde Haarlemse Hofjes* (Haarlem: De Vrieseborch, 1999).
[40] Alle D. de Jonge, "'Doopsgezinden, zo die daartoe bequaam zijn'," in *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2006), 117.
[41] Piet Visser, "Onbeperkte verdraagzaamheid en zedelijk gemak," in *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2006), 131; Jonge, "'Doopsgezinden, zo die daartoe bequaam zijn'," 119.
[42] "gezond van lichaam en zijn verstand en memorie wel magtig", Sliggers, *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, 193.

4. The Contents of Pieter Teyler's Last Will and Testament

Teyler's will contained detailed instructions: Firstly, a number of personal friends, distant family members, his remaining staff, and a few institutions such as his parish were to receive financial support.[43] In the grand scheme of things however, these payments were almost insignificant, even though they are sure to have meant a lot to the recipients.

Secondly, Teyler decreed that a foundation was to be set up which was to be run by five trustees – it soon came to be known as the Teyler Foundation. The first five of these trustees Teyler appointed personally through his will. The Foundation's, or rather the trustees', task was then to look after the money Teyler left it, and to see that, as was already quoted above and as Teyler summarised towards the end of his will, these resources were employed to further "theology, the arts and sciences and the common good".[44]

Thirdly, he detailed how these somewhat abstract goals were to be achieved. First of all the *Hofje* he had bought was to be upheld. In addition to this, two learned societies were to be set up: one for theology, and one for the arts and sciences. As with the trustees, Teyler himself appointed the first members of these Learned Societies posthumously through his will – six for each society.

Of course he elaborated on all of these points: the trustees for instance were instructed to meet once a week, and every year they were to receive f1000,- each for their troubles.[45] They were to be assisted by a secretary, who did not have any voting rights but initially received the same salary as the trustees. Teyler also stipulated that, preferably, the trustees' successors were to be Mennonites, but he was not overly particular about this: Mennonites were ultimately only to be selected if they were "capable" of the job – nevertheless, the importance of Teyler's Mennonite roots should not be underestimated, and we will return to their impact in more detail in the following section.[46]

The members of the Learned Societies too were instructed to meet once every week, the society for theology on Monday, and the society for the arts and sciences either on Friday or Saturday. Every year they were both to be given f600,- by the foundation to pay for expenses and share amongst their members. New members had to be chosen by the remaining members of the respective society together with the trustees, who were given the last say in these matters by Teyler. For their weekly meetings the theologians were given the somewhat enigmatic task of "discussing all kinds of topics and matters concerning and respecting liberty in the Christian Religion and in the Civil State;"[47], while the members of the Second Society were to discuss matters pertaining to "physics, poetry, history, the art of drawing, and

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[43] Ibid., 196–198.
[44] Ibid., 203.
[45] Ibid., 194.
[46] "Zo die daartoe bekwaam zijn." Ibid., 195.
[47] "verhandelen allerhande stoffen en materien tot de vrijheid in den Christelijken Godsdienst en Burgerstaat specteerende en behoorende;" Ibid., 200.

numismatics".[48] "Physics" has to be taken here as "the study of nature". The Dutch word Teyler used, *natuurkunde*, only came to be defined in the narrower, modern sense of "physics" some decades after Teyler had passed away. In order to avoid confusion it will therefore be translated as "the study of nature" throughout the following chapter.

Just as importantly, both societies were also tasked with holding competitions concerning the newest developments in the areas they had been instructed to study by Teyler. Every year, each society was to publish a question pertaining to one of the subjects Teyler had mentioned and give members of "the public"[49] two years to write essays in reply to these questions. The authors of the best reply to one of the questions would be rewarded by having their essays published, and were each to be awarded a gold medal worth f400,-. The recipients of this prize were to be chosen in joint meetings of both societies and the trustees. Again, as with the election of new members, the trustees had the last say in these matters. In order to prevent any kind of bias, entries had to be anonymous.

If one takes into account that the average wages of an unskilled worker at the time were a few guilders per week, the amounts of money that were being dispensed by the Teyler Foundation seem vast. However, in comparison with the total value of Pieter Teyler's estate at the time of his death, they almost pale into insignificance. Teyler had obviously not had a bad hand at financing: the last of his father's by then declining business having been sold off in 1763, Teyler subsequently became a financial broker, and at the end of his life possessed bonds in excess of the considerable sum of f1.700.000 guilders[50], alongside all the properties mentioned above, a stable with numerous coaches and three mares in town, and of course personal belongings which included a collection of porcelain, of coins and medals, natural history specimens and a library.[51]

In his will, Teyler explicitly gave the trustees total freedom to do as they pleased with the money now under their purview. They could sell whatever they deemed appropriate, and invest in whatever they considered wise. There was just one exception: Teyler stipulated that the Haarlem town house he had been living in – in the Damstraat 21 – along with his "library and collection of medals, prints and drawings and everything that could be connected with them" was never to be sold.[52] The house could then serve not only as a repository for the collections that were to be placed at the societies' use, but also as a meeting place for the weekly gatherings of the trustees and the members of the societies. To this end, Teyler explicitly allowed the house's interior to be refurbished as the trustees deemed appropriate.

Finally, Teyler stipulated that a custodian be appointed to look after the collections, and that he was allowed to live rent-free in the Damstraat 21. What's more, Teyler left specific

[48] "natuur-, dicht-, historie-, teeken- en penningkunde", Ibid.
[49] "het publicq", Ibid.
[50] Eric Ketelaar, "Teyler, man, je moest eens weten," in *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2006), 149.
[51] Sliggers, "Niets bij zijn leven, alles na zijn dood," 32.
[52] "bibliotheecq en verzameling van medailles, prent en teekenkonsten en alles wat daaronder eenigzints behoorende en daartoe betrekkelijk gemaalt zoude kunnen werden"; Sliggers, *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, 198.

instructions as to who was to be appointed to this position: it was not to be any random caretaker, but preferably an "artist-painter or other connoisseur of the arts and sciences".[53] As with the trustees and the societies, Teyler even suggested specific candidates to whom to offer the job. All three were highly regarded in Haarlem, and even of national standing. His initial first choice was Taco Jelgersma, who had painted one of only two known portraits of Teyler himself, and who had also sat on the board of the Drawing Academy in Haarlem that Teyler had helped establish with a generous loan in 1772, and of which he remained a lifelong board member too. However, Jelgersma appears to have indicated that he was not interested in serving the foundation in this function during Teyler's lifetime already, because Teyler replaced his name with that of another painter, Vincent van der Vinne, during a revision of his testament.[54] Van der Vinne, a well respected member of a long line of Mennonite artists from Haarlem, then indeed accepted the position after Teyler had passed away.

The importance of this section of Teyler's will can hardly be overestimated, at least as far as the history of Teylers Museum is concerned. It is no exaggeration to say that this had profound influence on the character and shape of the museum throughout the 19th century. The reason being of course that Teyler had placed someone – more to the point, a fine artist – in charge of the foundation's collections; in fact he had done so in crystal clear terms too, writing that the

"occupant of the house (in addition to the care of the house and the housekeeping at his expense) shall have to look after and pay attention to the library, the curiosities and the collections of medals, prints and drawings and everything that may be added from time to time, arranging in proper order, conserving and preserving, as well as keeping for this purpose a neat catalogue or register of everything;"[55]

As already transpires from this passage, Teyler left no doubt that the collections could be expanded too. A few lines above the passage just quoted, Teyler was more explicit, stating that:

"the library and collection of medals, prints and drawings [...] shall not be diminished, but instead shall, by the said Trustees, in communication and consultation with the members of the Societies, be enlarged, expanded and be brought to greater perfection."[56]

He even indicated that the custodian was to be involved in the acquisition of new items. Although he left no doubt that the collection was primarily for the use of the societies and therefore of course also the trustees, stating somewhat circuitously that:

[53] "konstschilder of ander liefhebber van kunsten en weetenschappen", Ibid., 199.

[54] The other two painters Teyler suggested were: Hendrik Spilman and Cornelis van Noorde. Ibid.

[55] "bewoonder (booven de zorge van het in ordre houden van het huijs en huijshoudelijke ten zijnen kosten) goede toeverzigt en agt zal moeten geeven op de bibiotheecq en liefhebberijen en verzamelingen van medailles, prent- en teekenkonst, die allen en het gunt van tijd tot tijd daarbij zal komen in behoorlijke ordre, schikkende, conserveerende en bewaarende, mitsgaders ten dien eijnde van alles een nette catalogus of register houdende;" Ibid.

[56] "de bibliotheecq en verzameling van medailles, prent- en teekenkonst [...]geenzints verminderd, maar wel door gemelte Heeren Directeuren [the trustees], met communicatie en overleg van de leeden van die Collegien, vermeerderd, uijtgebreijd en tot meerder volkomenheijd gebragt zal mogen worden;" Ibid.

"[...] all members of these Societies shall at all times have free admittance and access, as well as [the right to] handle and use, be it only within the house, without being allowed to take the least thing outside, to the Testator's library and other collections of medals, prints etc., without any exception, both for their private interest and in order to enable them to debate and assess matters that arise within the Societies as they ought to."[57]

Ironically, Teyler's collections themselves did not constitute much to write home about. He doesn't even mention that he also owned a collection of stuffed birds and other natural history specimens preserved in alcohol, an indication that he did not value them too highly, which might go some way towards explaining why they were in such a dilapidated state by the time of his death. The Foundation soon sold off the entire collection.[58] His books too were not deemed valuable enough to be kept[59], and the paintings and prints and drawings were sold to van der Vinne[60]. The only collection that was preserved was the one closest to Teyler's heart, his numismatic collection. This is the only part of his "gentleman's cabinet" for which he gave additional instructions to the ones quoted above: the coins and medals were only to be taken out of the cabinet they were kept in when at least two trustees or four members of the societies were present, and the key to the cabinet itself was always to be safeguarded by the eldest of the trustees.[61]

5. Contextualising the Will: Mennonite Governors in Haarlem

The fact that his collections were in a poor state however is not as important as the fact that he included them so explicitly in his will. Had he not done so, the foundation might never have established Teylers Museum – which, as can also hardly be stressed enough at this point, Teyler did not mention with so much as a word throughout the entire 39 pages of his will. As will be illustrated in the next section, the whole idea of setting up Teylers Museum was conceived after Teyler had passed away; and one reason that made this possible was a somewhat liberal reinterpretation of his last wishes. This however would not have been possible, or at least a lot harder, without the passages quoted above.

[57] "[...] alle leeden van dezelve Collegien ten allen tijden zullen hebben de vrije toegang en acces mitsgaders de behandelinge en 't gebruijk, dog alleen binnenshuijs, zonder iets het geringste te mogen daarbuijten medeneemen, tot, aan en van zijn Heer Testateurs bibliotheecq en andere verzamelinge van printkonst, medailles etc., zonder eenige uijtzonderinge ende zo voor hunne particuliere liefhebberije, als omme hen in staat te stellen tot het verhandelen en beoordeelen der zaken ieder in zijn Collegie voorkomende als na behooren." Ibid., 201.
[58] "Directienotulen", 12.11.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[59] Martinus van Marum: "Journaal van mijne Verrichtingen ter verkrijging eener Bibliotheek in Teyler's Museum 1783-1790", c. 1790, Haarlem, NHA, vol. 529, nr. 11d, p. 3
[60] "Directienotulen", 11.01.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[61] Sliggers, *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, 201. For more detail on Teyler's numismatic collection see also: Paul Beliën, "Waarom verzamelde Pieter Teyler penningen en munten?," in *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, ed. Bert Sliggers (Haarlem: Teylers Museum, 2006), 93–115.

Perhaps more importantly, though, one has to understand that – as far as the history of the museum is concerned – the significance of Teyler's will lay more in the gist of the whole document, rather than its precise contents. Already for the simple reason that Teyler had not referred to the establishment of a museum, his will could not act as a kind of blueprint of what needed to be done in the future. Yet it did have a significant impact on the daily running of the museum, in the sense that the will set the tone of future debates concerning policy. It was an unchangeable, firm reference point that in itself can be taken as an almost typical product of certain traditions and the values associated with those traditions, which in turn lived on through Teyler's will; more to the point, Teyler was a Mennonite, and the contents of the will reflect Mennonite traditions and their priorities in life, i.e. the Mennonite views on society; by stipulating that kindred spirits were to be appointed as trustees of the Teyler Foundation, Teyler ensured that the core views and values he espoused as a member of the Haarlem Mennonite community continued to be upheld through his Foundation.

In the turbulent decades after his death however, these views and what they entailed were frequently assailed. Most importantly, they were not easily compatible both with the utilitarianism and the Republicanism increasingly associated with the French Republic and Empire, and proved to be the source of some friction between the Foundation's trustees and the director of the Foundation's museum, Martinus van Marum.

This warrants taking a closer look at this Mennonite community in Haarlem. Now, in order to gain some understanding of the Haarlem Mennonites' status within society as a whole, the parish members' self-perception and also they way in turn were perceived by others, it is important to understand two of the major factors that shaped this community – both of which clearly discernible in Teyler's will, but can at the same time also help understand why Teyler's bequest was met with such animosity when the museum was first opened (reflected in the anecdotes about Teyler's life recorded by visitors and mentioned above), and, most importantly, can also help obtain an idea of how those kindred spirits of Teyler's that were going to be entrusted with upholding his legacy, i.e. the Foundation's trustees, perceived themselves, the role of the Foundation, their own position and role in society, and by extension the museum's function.

These two factors are, firstly, some of the core beliefs Mennonites hold, and, secondly, one of the most striking idiosyncrasies of the Dutch Republic, the curiously Dutch tradition of de-centralised governance at all levels, which is frequently subsumed under the heading of "*regentencultuur*". In Haarlem, both merged to form what can be described as "Mennonite *regentendom*".[62]

As far as the first point is concerned, three characteristics of Mennonite theology in particular are important. Firstly, Mennonites are not allowed to participate in any form of violence. This in turn led to their refusing to take any form of public office as this would have meant they might have had to condone a state's use of force through its organs of power. As a result, Mennonites stayed out of the fray as far as state politics were concerned. Their outsider's

[62] Piet Visser, ed., *Wezen en weldoen: 375 jaar doopsgezinde wezenzorg in Haarlem* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), 121–148.

status was further enhanced in the Dutch Republic, where all public office could only be assumed by members of the Reformed Church, to which the majority of citizens belonged. Although religious minorities were tolerated in the Dutch Republic – this did not go without saying in other countries at the time – they were effectively barred from taking public office.

Being barred from politics, both by conviction and by law, members of the Mennonite Church therefore turned to trade and the arts and sciences as an outlet for their talents. Generally speaking they did so successfully, and by the end of the 18th century a handful of Mennonite families in Haarlem had amassed a huge fortune amongst themselves. One area just outside town was even referred to as the "Mennonite Heaven" (*Menniste Hemel*), because many Mennonite families had built small summer residences there – including Pieter Teyler.[63]

While this "Mennonite Heaven" indicated a certain ambivalence towards the second important characteristic of Mennonite faith – the obligation not to indulge in any material riches – the Haarlem Mennonites certainly didn't waste any money either. It is these remnants of a frugal life alongside the Mennonite families' obvious wealth that may very well have caused other citizens in Haarlem to gain the impression that these families were greedy with their money – the establishment of a magnificent museum with Pieter Teyler's money would then only have confirmed this prejudice, and may very well help explain some of the vitriolic remarks visitors recorded about his apparent stinginess as they were quoted above.

But even if they were no longer living a frugal life, all Mennonite families were deeply involved in charitable work, devoting large amounts of money and time to such institutions as orphanages or so-called *Hofjes*. A good example both of how seriously they took this responsibility, but also how Mennonite views on their role within society could clash with the ideals of good citizenship as they began to emerge over the course of the 19th century, is an episode from the 1850s in which the Dutch state wanted to classify the Mennonite orphanages and *Hofjes* as almshouses for the poor. The Mennonite parish and Teylers Foundation (as the organisation funding Teylers Hofje) strongly opposed this move, on the grounds that they considered the definition of the orphans and widows in these houses as "poor" incompatible with their own mission.[64] In their opinion, if members of a Mennonite parish had to live in poverty, that parish had failed to live up to its responsibilities. It was the duty of those in privileged positions to ensure the well-being of those less well off. This left little room for a state enforcing a kind of "Robin Hood"-redistribution of wealth.

The third and final striking feature of 18th Mennonite theology is its relative lack of dogma. Adult baptism is perhaps the best example of the Mennonite concept of their belief as a conscious, emancipated decision every individual has to make for himself before God. Similarly, in matters of sin Mennonites know no intermediary between the individual sinner and God – only God can redeem the sinner, and he only forgives those who genuinely act in faith.

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[63] Ibid., 135–136.

[64] Simon Leendert Verheus, *Naarstig en vroom: Doopsgezinden in Haarlem 1530-1930* (Haarlem: Rombach Boek en Beeld, 1993), 134. On the Teyler Foundation's reaction to the new law on poverty and charity see: "Directienotulen", 17.05.1850 & 21.02.1851 & 18.04.1851 & 12.12.1851 & 26.11.1852 & 02.12.1853 & 15.09.1854 & 18.01.1856, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 9.

This strong emphasis upon the individual and his decisions in turn also meant that Mennonites were in principle far more open to new theological concepts that other Christian communities – oversimplifying just a little, one can say that as long as a Mennonite genuinely held onto his core beliefs and as long as he continued to act altruistically out of genuine conviction, nothing was categorically forbidden. More specifically, this meant that their beliefs did not prevent Mennonites from engaging in the newly emerging experimental sciences. On the contrary, Mennonite theology was easily compatible with a physico-theological approach to the study of nature.

Returning to Teyler's will, one can see how its core elements fit in well with overall Mennonite priorities and views. The fact that his Hofje, the study of theology, and the arts and sciences were obviously close to his heart make him an almost typical member of Haarlem's Mennonite community. The little that is known about his overall lifestyle – such as his house Lustrust in the *Menniste Hemel* – does not make him look eccentric either. His family history, too, would have allowed him to blend in: many of the most prominent Mennonite families in Haarlem could trace their roots back to the 17th century, when their ancestors had arrived from other countries to avoid religious persecution. Since then, these same families had established a densely woven family and business network. Typical areas of business were the textile trade, the printing business, and by the end of the 18th century the financial sector.

As far as the "regentencultuur" is concerned, this is a lot harder to pinpoint. Yet it is at least as important as Teyler's Mennonite background, not only in the sense that its effects can be discerned in the Foundation's organisational structure, but also because it goes a long way towards explaining the way the trustees of the Foundation saw themselves, namely as "regenten" – which is probably best translated as governors. In order to understand this point's full significance, a little more needs to be said about the Dutch Republic's unique traditions of governance.

The system of governance that had emerged in the Dutch Republic – which has also been described as an "uit zijn krachten gegroeide laat-middeleeuwse stadstatenbond" – differed significantly from that in neighbouring countries in the sense that power almost always lay with a type of executive committee, rather than one central, presidential-type leader.[65] These committees were comprised of governors, i.e. regenten. The habit of forming such committees was not just confined to one level of administration, but could be found almost everywhere. Whether a local orphanage needed to be run, or a city, or even the Republic itself, it was always such committees that took the decisions. The stadtholder himself for instance was officially just at the service of the States-General of the Dutch Republic.

What else was special about this organisational principle was that the members of such committees, i.e. the governors, were not necessarily noblemen, as was much more likely to be the case in neighbouring countries. The Dutch Republic was almost meritocratic in the sense that such governors were often successful traders or businessmen, from well-established families. The system was not democratic or even open to all: the governors saw to it that only

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[65] W.W. Mijnhardt, as quoted in: R.A.M. Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren: een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990* (Nijmegen: SUN, 2010), 17.

members of established families could sit on the committees, and would often even pass on a position on such a committee to their own heirs. In this sense they of course emulated nobility's behaviour, but what set them off from traditional forms of nobility was that they claimed their rights as much on the basis of successful trade and business practices as they did on family membership.

This is obviously a very concise and therefore inevitably superficial description of the main facets of what came to be known as the "regentencultuur". Some caution is called for in using that label too broadly anyway, as it has acquired meanings and connotations of its own which have in turn changed over the years. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the term and its usage, but what is important to note is that the general belief in the advantages of a benevolent patriarchy that this "regentencultuur" entailed and which obviously pervaded Dutch society at the time, also had an impact on the Dutch Republic's cultural life. The Holland Society for instance differed from its counterparts in neighbouring countries – the national academies – in that it consisted of two separate classes of members: a group of so-called "Directors", and a group only referred to as "members". The Directors essentially provided all the Society's funding, in exchange for which they basically ran the institution. The members were "savants" or natural philosophers who were welcome to use the Society as a platform through which to discuss, improve, or publish their work – but they had little say in managerial or organisational matters.

Generally speaking, Teyler devised a similar organisational structure for the institutions that were to be set up with his bequest. The Foundation's trustees (who were referred to as *Directeuren*, i.e. "Directors" in Dutch) took care of all organisational and financial matters, with the aim of facilitating the work of the institutions that Teylers had wanted to see established as far as possible. With regard to the Learned Societies, this meant they were granted every freedom and funding necessary for the "encouragement of the arts and sciences".

Considering that the Holland Society was founded only four years before Teyler penned his will, it is conceivable that his own plans were directly inspired by the establishment of the Society. It seems however that Teyler had drawn up plans for a similar Learned Society years earlier already. Documents indicating as much were found amongst his papers after his death, and it is likely that he picked up on these earlier plans when drafting his will.[66]

Be that as it may, the organisational structure as it was set out by Teyler in his will clearly indicated that he saw their role within this structure as equivalent to that of "regenten" in other institutions. That the group of men he appointed indeed saw themselves as members of this elite class of governors too, can be inferred from one of their first acts as newly appointed trustees after Teyler's death, which was to furbish one room in Teyler's old house as a

[66] "Voor-Rede," in *Verhandeling over de Gephlogisteerde en Gedephlogisteerde Luchten*, vol. 1, Verhandelingen uitgegeven door Teyler's Tweede Genootschap (Haarlem: J. Enschedé; J. van Walré jun., 1781), i–ii. The trustees' account of having found these papers after Teyler's death is confirmed by the minutes of the Second Society, in which the members record how they had to rewrite parts of the introduction to the first edition of the Verhandelingen, because the trustees had come across Teyler's earlier draft for the establishment of a Learned Society: "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 06.07.1781, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

meeting room. The design they chose rather tellingly coincided with the style in which so-called "regentenkamers" all over the Netherlands were furbished, i.e. meeting rooms for governors. We will return to this in the next section, in which we take a look at the early history of the Foundation. Before doing so however, it is worth dwelling briefly on Teyler's choice of "arts and sciences".

6. Teyler's Choice of "Arts and Sciences"

Pieter Teyler's instructions detailing that the members of the Learned Society for the arts and sciences were to devote time to the study of nature, poetry, history, the art of drawing, and numismatics, indicates that this is how he defined the "arts and sciences", or at least that these were what he considered the most important branches of the arts and sciences. His choice had an impact on the character of the Society itself, but also on Teylers Museum itself, in the sense that it affected its collections policy. Although the museum gradually began to lead a life of its own and the successive curators' personal interests were eventually just as important as Teyler's selection of areas of study in determining what was to be acquired, one can for instance easily imagine how it would have been a lot more difficult for the Foundation's trustees to defend their decision to let van Marum acquire a geological collection and scientific instruments if Teyler had not included "the study of nature" in his list. One can also say with little exaggeration that Teyler's explicitly stating that both the arts and the sciences was what defined the museum's unique evolution and resulting shape throughout the course of the 19th century, essentially because the definition of what constituted the "arts and sciences" changed fundamentally over the course of the late 18th and the entire 19th century: oversimplifying only a little, the restriction lay in the fact that Teylers Museum could never be simply an "art museum" or a "science museum" – because of what Teyler wrote in his will.

But Teyler's choice is somewhat confusing, and already puzzled the members of the Second Society shortly after Teyler passed away. The minutes of a series of meetings of its members in 1780 record how they were confused by what they considered "the absurdity of the arrangement of the sciences as it occurs in Mr P. Teyler van der Hulst's will", and how they unsuccessfully sought permission from the trustees to change the order in which they were required to hold the prize essay competitions.[67] In their opinion, it would have been better "to deviate to such an extent from the words in the founding document [the will] that the order of

[67]"d'absurditeit van de rang-schikking der weetenschappen in het testament van den Heer P. Teijler vander Hulst voorkomende"; "in zoo verre van de woorden in der Fondatie af te wijken, dat de rang der weetenschappen, in de programmata, en verhandelingen over dezelven, mogte over één komen met den natúúrlijken aard deezer weetenschappen"; "d'extensie van dit artikel in het testament bevindelijk meerder moest worden geadribueerd aan d'onachtzaamheid, of onbedachte willekeurigheid van den Nots. [Notaris] welke het testament schrijft, dan aan den testateur zelven, die op zijne fundatie wel bedacht is." The entire discussion was sparked by the sequence in which the goddesses representing the branches of the arts and sciences should be placed on the medal that was to be awarded to the winners of prize essay competitions. "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 03.11.1780 & 17.11.1780, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

the sciences, in the Society's publications on the same, may coincide with the natural order of these sciences". At the same time however, they went out of their way not to suggest they were criticising Teyler's choice, stating that "the formal text of this paragraph in the will should be attributed to the carelessness or the thoughtless caprice of the Notary who writes the will rather than to the testator himself, who is intent on his foundation."

Teyler's puzzling choice is perhaps best understood if one bears two points in mind. Firstly, as was also pointed out above, the definition of what counted as "arts and sciences" was about to undergo a complete transformation, as medieval systems of knowledge struggled to accommodate for the increasing importance and popularity of the empirical, and particularly the experimental, sciences. Any selection of "arts and sciences" from before 1800 is therefore bound to sound unfamiliar to post-19th century ears. Secondly, like the rest of his will, Teyler's choice of subjects must be taken to reflect his own interests and preferences.

Consider numismatics for instance. In all likelihood this only made the list because it was a personal hobby of Teyler's, as his detailed and protective instructions concerning his collection of coins and medals suggests. Whatever definition of the "arts and sciences" one chooses to use, numismatics is unlikely to be included. The art of drawing, too, must have been close to Teyler's heart. One need only recall that he was a board member of the local Drawing Academy. Poetry, too, might well have been something Teyler enjoyed, which would help explain why the only document written by Teyler himself (besides his will) which was preserved for posterity is a poem. As for the study of nature, there is little evidence of any profound or longstanding interest of Teyler's in this area. Yet it would not have made him stand out amongst his contemporaries if he had been interested in natural philosophy. The foundation of the *Hollandsche Maatschappij* shows there was no shortage of Haarlem citizens prepared to devote time to the experimental sciences, and at least four of Teyler's friends are known to have done so outside the *Maatschappij*.[68] Still, why he put it at the top of the list remains an intriguing puzzle. Finally, as far as history is concerned, one can assume that Teyler had some sense of history, simply because numismatic collections frequently consisted of coins and medals commemorating historic events. Yet the specific reasons why Teyler included this in his list remain elusive. Although again, in general, it can be said that historical awareness was on the rise. One of the friends Teyler appointed member of the society for arts and sciences for instance had been made the official town chronicler (Gerrit Willem van Oosten de Bruijn). And, in a much larger frame of reference, the year in which Teyler penned his will was the same year in which Johann Winckelmann published his groundbreaking monograph on the history of art.

To conclude, it is interesting to note that Teyler did not include music in his will in any form at all. What's more, whilst other contemporaries usually kept sheets of music or some

[68] Jacobus Barnaart, Bernardus Vriends, Jan Bosch, Cornelis Elout. All of them were named in Teyler's will and given positions either at the Foundation or one of the societies. See: Bert Sliggers, "Honderd jaar natuurkundige amateurs te Haarlem," in *Een elektriserend geleerde: Martinus van Marum, 1750-1837*, ed. Lodewijk. C. Palm and Anton Wiechmann (Haarlem: J. Enschedé, 1987), 87–91.

instruments in their house, the only musical device Teyler possessed at the time of his death was a small barrel organ.[69] Music, clearly, was not one of his passions.

But before venturing even further into the realm of pure speculation, let us turn to the sequence of events in the aftermath of Teyler's death which led up to the establishment of Teylers Museum.

II The Establishment of Teylers Museum

1. Avoidance of Boredom

On September 17th 1784 the newly furbished main meeting room in Teyler's old town house in the Damstraat in Haarlem provided the backdrop to an unpleasant scene and vociferous disagreement about money. The events that had led up to this day, and those which took place in its aftermath, were soon eradicated from the Foundation's memory, even though – or more likely: because – they brought about a painful financial loss.

Six years earlier, shortly after Teyler's death, one Pieter Klaarenbeek had contacted the newly appointed trustees of the Teyler Foundation and asked to be provided with more detail concerning Teyler's testament. He was an heir to Catharina Olthoff, who in turn was a grand-niece of Maria van der Hulst's, Pieter Teyler's mother.[70] The trustees were not of the opinion that he was entitled to any part of Teyler's fortune, but he continued to beg to differ, arguing that Teyler's aunt and uncle on his mother's side of the family had stipulated that the money they left him after their death should be paid out to any heirs of the van der Hulst family, should Pieter Teyler not leave any heirs of his own.

The two parties were unable to resolve their differences, and Klaarenbeek subsequently declared that he was going to sue the Foundation before the Dutch high court in The Hague. As he put it, this was "for the avoidance of boredom" – a not so subtle sense of humour the trustees will hardly have appreciated.[71] After years of legal procedure, the high court eventually passed judgment in Klaarenbeek's favour in 1784.

It was soon after the verdict had been pronounced that Klaarenbeek joined the trustees at one of their meetings in Teyler's old town house. He was hoping either to collect the money he was entitled to, or was perhaps just seeking assurances that it would be paid out soon. What he did not know, however, was that the trustees had decided to lodge an appeal against the

[69] Sliggers, "Niets bij zijn leven, alles na zijn dood," 33.
[70] Ketelaar, "Teyler, man, je moest eens weten," 156–158.
[71] "ter vermijdinge van langwijligheid"; "Directienotulen", 30.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS , vol. 5.

court's verdict. Upon hearing this Klaarenbeek "changed his tone considerably" and "expressed himself in rather strong terms" – as the formal minutes of the meeting read.[72]

Despite obviously being irate, he appears to have been able to contain his anger during the next hearing, because the sentence was subsequently upheld and the Teyler Foundation saw itself forced to pay out a total of f163.000,- – a huge sum of money.[73]

If one remembers that the Teyler Foundation's total assets amounted to about f2.000.000,-, one easily realises that the court's verdict did not mean the Foundation had to stop functioning; but it also makes clear that their loss was not inconsiderable. More importantly, this financial setback came at a crucial point in the Foundation's history, at which they had taken on many financial responsibilities in addition to those delineated by Teyler in his will. By the end of 1784 the new building behind Teyler's town house – Teylers Museum – had essentially been completed; so had what was to become the new museum's pièce de résistance, the costly electrostatic generator, which at the time was the largest of its kind in the world; furthermore, van Marum had only just been taken on as director of the new museum, and had been promised an annual salary of f1400,-; finally, the Foundation had just acquired the grounds on which to construct a new almshouse, bigger than the one Teyler himself had supported. Van Marum later complained that it was the financial burden of this almshouse that had led to his budget for the acquisition of new items for the museum to be restricted – but it is highly likely that Klaarenbeek had something to do with this as well, if it wasn't even the real reason the trustees cut back on expenditures.

But as was already said, Klaarenbeek successfully contesting Teyler's will did not mean that the Foundation had to stop functioning. On the contrary, 1784 has since been remembered not as the year in which Klaarenbeek won his case, but the year in which Teylers Museum was opened. This section is about the sequence of events surrounding the "birth" of Teylers Museum.

2. The Famous Five

The precise date of the first meeting of the five friends Teyler had tasked with setting up the Teyler Foundation is not known: even though they did start keeping minutes of the meetings from their very first assembly on, they only recorded the date after the second meeting on May 26th 1778. As for the venue, it is most likely to have been Teyler's old town house on the Damstraat 21, which soon came to be known as the "Foundation House".

Although two of the original trustees didn't actually see the construction of Teylers Museum or the appointment of van Marum as the museum's director because they passed away within

[72] "veranderde zeer van toon"; "laat zich uit in vrij scherpe bewoordingen"; "Directienotulen", 17.09.1784, Haarlem, ATS , vol. 5.
[73] Ketelaar, "Teyler, man, je moest eens weten," 158.

the short period of just a few years, it is still worth taking a closer look at all five of these first trustees' biographies – albeit that very little is actually known about them – both in order to get a general idea of the composition of the Foundation's board, and also because these five individuals sat on the board during the constitutive and therefore particularly formative period of the Foundation's history.

In alphabetical order, the five trustees appointed by Teyler through his will were: Jacobus Barnaart, a broker and a resident of Haarlem – he was soon to play an important part in the inception of Teylers Museum; Isaac Brand, a nephew of Pieter Teyler's who lived in Haarlem, and became the president of the board of trustees because of his seniority; Gerard Hugaart, like Teyler the former proprietor of a textile factory and together with his wife Femina Heems an ardent supporter of Haarlem's Mennonite orphanage – Femina Heems had also helped sponsor a new, grander entrance to one of Haarlem's Mennonite churches in 1757 together with Pieter Teyler and four other senior members of their parish; Antoni Kuits, as mayor of Haarlem a long-standing member of the town's political elite and also the only of the first five trustees who was not a Mennonite; finally, Willem van der Vlugt, another nephew of Teyler's, who also lived in Haarlem and was a broker.[74]

Also present at the first and all subsequent meetings was Koenraad Hovens, whom Teyler had appointed as secretary to the Foundation, i.e. the trustees. Incidentally, in 1807 Hovens changed his position when he was elected to a trusteeship as successor to Willem van der Vlugt. Until then however he took on the crucial task of coordinating and implementing most of the decisions taken by the trustees, and acting as chief liaison with the Learned Societies. Hovens was an affluent silk manufacturer, also an active supporter of Haarlem's Mennonite orphanage, and after Teyler's death increasingly known for his involvement in politics.[75]

On the one hand the composition of the board of trustees shows how strongly the Teyler Foundation was rooted in Haarlem's Mennonite community, but on the other hand it also clearly shows how this did not have a constrictive effect. Kuits' non-membership of the Mennonite church was obviously less important than his other merits. One could say that the Foundation's Mennonite roots had a greater impact on style than on substance.

Another important point is that it would be mistaken to assume that the five trustees were the only ones involved in setting up the Foundation, or that they took their decisions in isolation, even though they had been granted privileged status by Pieter Teyler. Certainly during the early years of the Foundation's existence they drew upon outside expertise and were just five individuals amongst the many involved in the larger enterprise of implementing Pieter Teyler's last will and testament. The members of the Learned Societies for instance had known Pieter Teyler just as well as the trustees. Similarly, Koenraad Hovens was seemingly denied the privilege of a trusteeship by Teyler, yet closer inspection of his position as secretary to the trustees reveals that Teyler himself was obviously well aware just how pivotal

[74] On the trustees see: Mijnhardt, *Tot heil van 't menschdom: culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750-1815*, 298–299. On Hugaart see also: Visser, *Wezen en weldoen: 375 jaar doopsgezinde wezenzorg in Haarlem*, 136. On van der Vlugt see also: Verheus, *Naarstig en vroom: Doopsgezinden in Haarlem 1530-1930*, 207.
[75] Visser, *Wezen en weldoen: 375 jaar doopsgezinde wezenzorg in Haarlem*, 133; Verheus, *Naarstig en vroom: Doopsgezinden in Haarlem 1530-1930*, 207.

Hovens' job was for the success of the entire project, certainly during the Foundation's constitutive period. There is hardly any other way of explaining why Teyler stipulated that Hovens was to receive the same salary as the trustees, yet his successors only half that amount. Another example of the intimate involvement of non-trustees is that of Adriaan van Zeebergh. A young pensionary of the council of Haarlem (*pensionaris van Haarlem*) and a lawyer by training, he was called upon repeatedly in legal matters during the first months of the Foundation's existence.[76] Then, when the first opening on the board of trustees came up in 1780, Zeebergh was elected a new trustee. Over the following decades, it was Zeebergh who initially proved to be van Marum's strongest ally, but later also opponent on the board of trustees. As such, his impact on the history of Teylers Museum should not be underestimated.

3. Administrative Affairs

As yet, however, all that was in the future. First, the five first trustees had to officially accept the positions Pieter Teyler had had in mind for them. Then, a host of administrative, financial and legal matters awaited them, and needed to be tackled over the course of the ensuing months. One of the first things they did was to sell off some of Teyler's assets, such as his horses, stables, coach, and his property outside Haarlem, *Lustrust*.

Far more importantly, though, they also lost no time in appointing a caretaker for Teyler's former house and collections, as required by Teyler's will. There seems to have been little discussion about Teyler's recommendation of nominating the painter Vincent van der Vinne for this position. The first time his name is mentioned in the minutes of the trustees' meetings (aside from a preceding summary of Teyler's will) is on June 5th 1778, when he joined the trustees for their meeting in Teyler's old town house in the Damstraat 21. At this point van der Vinne had evidently already accepted the post of *kastelein*, because what was discussed was the partition of Teyler's old house.[77] It was agreed that all except four rooms could be used by van der Vinne. One room on the ground floor towards the back of the house, opening out onto the central courtyard, should serve as the main meeting room. This room became known as the *Grote Herenkamer*. On the first floor, parts of the room above the meeting room were to house all documents required by the Foundation, acting as a sort of archive. A third room facing the street on the first floor was to serve as storage space for the Foundation's collections. Finally, a small room on the ground floor, opposite the main meeting room from the central court yard, was to serve as a second meeting room, should it ever occur that one of the Learned Societies and the Foundation held meetings simultaneously. This room later became known as the *Kleine Herenkamer*.

Although the term caretaker, or *kastelein* in Dutch, might give the impression that this was a lowly position, it was in fact quite prestigious. Van der Vinne for one was not just any

[76] His name is first mentioned in writing in June 1778: "Directienotulen", 26.06.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[77] "Directienotulen", 05.06.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

unemployed painter, but had built a reputation of his own and came from a long line of accomplished artists. His Mennonite family's association with Haarlem can be traced back to the second half of the 16th century, when forebears of his settled there.[78] Vincent had been trained by his father Jan, who in turn had been apprenticed to his father, Laurens.[79] The post Teyler had created also came with the handsome annual salary of f800,- . The only condition was that the caretaker had to look after and keep an inventory of the Foundation's collections, and that he had to ensure that the premises were equipped and available for meetings. In practice, the last point would not have constituted much of a burden for the caretaker himself: although he was ultimately responsible for the smooth running of the meetings, he soon took on two housemaids and was provided with another servant by the Foundation. These three – the servant in particular – would have seen to it that there was enough paper, ink, tobacco and drink available in the house and, if necessary, that the premises had been heated ahead of any meeting.

4. Room for Improvement

The only initial drawback would have been the condition of the Foundation House. The trustees soon found that it was not shipshape. As the minutes of the trustees' meetings of September 1778 read,

"[...] it was found that [the house] was very dilapidated, and everywhere in need of large and extensive repairs if it was to be made into a good dwelling, a suitable repository of documents and curiosities and a meeting place of the trustees and the societies as is implied in the will of the deceased."[80]

One specific problem that is subsequently mentioned is that the cellar was damp. Dampness was an issue that was to recur some years later when it inhibited van Marum's electrical experiments, so it was obviously not solved by the major refurbishment of the Foundation House that the trustees decided on in 1778. This included replacing the windows towards the street, laying out the entrance hall with a marble floor, and re-furbishing the two rooms on the ground floor that had been designated meeting rooms. It was already mentioned in the previous section how the design of these rooms – and the main meeting room in particular – was strikingly similar to that of "Regentenkamers" in almshouses, and how this can be taken to reflect the trustees' self-perception and how they were rooted in the traditions of Haarlem's

[78] Bert Sliggers and D.F. Goudriaan, "De Haarlemse kunstenaarsfamilie Van der Vinne," in *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, 41 ('s Gravenhage: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 1987), 150.
[79] Pieter A. Scheen, *Lexicon Nederlandse Beeldende Kunstenaars 1750-1950*, vol. 2 ('s-Gravenhage: Pieter A. Scheen, 1994), 515.
[80] "[...] heeft men bevonden [het huis] zeer vervallen te zijn, en alomme groote en zware Reparatien nodig te hebben, zoude het tot eene goede woning, geschikte bewaarplaats der Effecten en Liefhebberijen en vergaderplaats van HH. Directeuren en der Collegien strekken kunnen [unreadable: komen?] zo als de wil des Overledenen medebrengt." "Directienotulen", 04.09.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

Mennonite community. Just how far this similarity went becomes clear if one compares the main meeting room in the Foundation House with a recent description of "regentenkamers" in Mennonite orphanages in Haarlem. In these rooms, the description reads,

"the trustees [...] assembled for their meetings, in which unanimously decisions were made about financial policy, personnel policy, the admission and custody of the orphans, and daily matters in the house. This is also where the accountants or administrators, financial brokers and agents were received for consultation."[81]

According to the description, each of these rooms also contained a cabinet in which to store important legal and financial documents as well as the minutes of the meetings that were held. These minutes would usually only contain the final decisions taken, and very little information on any discussion preceding that decision.

With the exception of the admittance of new orphans and the fact that all paper work was stored on the first floor, this description could easily be taken to describe the *Grote Herenkamer* in the Foundation House. The minutes of the trustees of the Teyler Foundation's meetings for instance contain very few traces of discussion – their primary function was to regard the decisions taken. And even the passage on the admittance of new orphans is not too far off the mark if one remembers that Pieter Teyler had also tasked the Foundation with running the *Hofje*, or almshouse, which bore his name. Little discussion concerning new occupants of this almshouse would have been necessary, because the trustees soon agreed on a system according to which they would take turns selecting the next widow who was allowed to move into the almshouse whenever a room became available – but the final decision would still have been taken in the trustees' meeting room.[82]

Significantly, when a new almshouse was constructed by the Teyler Foundation in 1787, this included a large meeting room for the trustees. This clearly underscores the point made previously of how they saw themselves as governors, i.e. regenten. Incidentally, the trustees are also sure to have used the new venue after its completion. Unfortunately, the minutes of their meetings do not record which of the available rooms was used on what occasion.

The fact that they constructed a new almshouse so shortly after Teyler´s death in turn provides an indication just how strong a priority this particular part of their overall task formed for the trustees. In fact, had it not been for practical problems and their inability to obtain the equivalent of modern planning permission, they would have constructed a new almshouse that could accommodate more widows than Teyler´s original *Hofje* even earlier. In December 1779 they had already asked the caretaker at the *Hofje* to vacate one of the rooms of his living quarters in order to make room for another widow. They then seem to have developed plans for refurbishing or perhaps even rebuilding the almshouse, even having the architect Leendert

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[81] „kwamen de bestuurders [...] bijeen voor hun vergaderingen, waarin bij algemeene stemmen besluiten over het financieel beleid, het personeelsbeleid, de opnamen van en de voogdij over wezen, en de dagelijkse gang van zaken in het huis werden genomen. Daar werden ook de boekhouders of administrateurs, de makelaars in financiën en de rentmeesters voor overleg ontvangen." Visser, *Wezen en weldoen: 375 jaar doopsgezinde wezenzorg in Haarlem*, 123.
[82] "Directienotulen", 27.11.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

Viervant draw up plans this effect which they were shown in September 1780. Viervant, incidentally, was the same architect who designed Teylers Museum, which was already being constructed at this point. Why the trustees didn't go through with these plans is not quite clear, "great difficulties" are only referred to later, which probably concerned the occupants of neighbouring houses.[83] Whatever the reasons, in order to avoid these "great difficulties" the trustees decided to acquire an old brewery which first came up for sale in April 1782. Negotiations over the price ran for over two years and at one point were even broken off completely, until in August 1784 the trustees finally agreed to buy the grounds of the brewery if the former owner agreed to break down all the buildings on the property. Viervant was then commissioned with constructing a new almshouse. The property and the construction of the new building of course came at a price – which van Marum later quoted as the reason why, to his annoyance, the funds for the acquisition of new instruments for "his" museum had been slashed. As was already pointed out in the introduction to this section, it was however not unlikely that the court case brought by Klaarenbeek had something to do with the change in financial policy as well.

5. The Haarlem Drawing Academy

The almshouse was not the only institution the Foundation devoted time and money to because Pieter Teyler himself already had – another was the Haarlem Drawing Academy (*Teekenacademie*). Interestingly enough, Teyler had not mentioned the Academy with as much as a word throughout his will, even though it was clearly important to him during the last years of his life. As was mentioned in the previous section, he was one of the founder members of the Academy, which was chartered in 1772.[84] Given that he had penned his will some 15 years earlier, this could help explain why it did not include the Drawing Academy. Teyler remained one of the three "main directors" (*hoofddirecteuren*) of the academy until his death, thereby actively supporting its aim of enabling individuals deprived of the financial means to pay for a full education to be able to attend classes and be trained in the art of drawing. As from 1775 he also provided one of his houses in the Damstraat, which was referred to as the House Hulst, as a venue for the Academy's meetings and drawing lessons.

After Teyler passed away the academy asked the Teyler Foundation as the heirs to Teyler's fortune if its members could continue to use the House Hulst and if the Foundation might continue to provide the Academy with the financial support Teyler had provided. Initially the Foundation wanted to sell the House Hulst to the academy for the comparatively small sum of f1000,-, but the Academy declined the offer. One of the main reasons is likely to have been the dilapidated state of the building itself. Even before Teyler's death, complaints were recorded about the draught and cold in the room in which classes on nude drawing were held.

[83] "Directienotulen", 05.04.1780, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[84] On the history of the academy see: Bert Sliggers, *Augustijn Claterbos, 1750-1828: Opleiding en werk van een Haarlems kunstenaar* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1990), 16–20.

The Academy's board of directors and the Teyler Foundation then agreed that the academy could continue to use the premises provided by Teyler for another three years at the comparatively low rent of f60,- per year. When those three years had passed, the Academy found new premises in the Warmoesgracht in a building referred to as the Hof van Holland. The Foundation sold off the House Hulst, and also agreed to provide the academy with an annual subsidy of f140,- for the duration of ten years so that it would be able to shoulder the higher rent obligations brought about by the change of venue. The Foundation's annual subsidy was raised by another f60,- in 1786.

However, the agreement in 1781 had been that the subsidy would not be automatically extended once the ten years had passed – something the Academy's board of directors appears to have overlooked, or perhaps not taken seriously. When a representative of the Academy was sent to the Foundation to collect f200,- for 1792 without re-applying for financial support, this seriously offended the Teyler Foundation's trustees. They pointed out what a "gross and inexcusable omission" this was, and subsequently refused to pay the academy any more money, despite repeated pleas on their behalf.[85] Although the academy managed to sustain is activities for another four years solely through membership fees, by 1795 it had clocked up such a high amount of debt that it had to be dissolved. In almost bittersweet irony, it was the *kastelein* of the Teyler Foundation, Wybrand Hendriks, who repaid the Academy's debts of about f250,- and was allowed to keep all its material possessions – such as clay models – in return. Before concluding that this was a case of adding insult to injury however, it needs to be pointed out that Hendriks' association with the academy went back further than his association with the Teyler Foundation. He had in fact become a director of the academy when Pieter Teyler was still alive.

6. The Learned Societies

Finally, what has not been mentioned yet but what in fact constituted one of the trustees' most important tasks in the immediate aftermath of Teyler's death, was the establishment of the two learned societies for theology and the arts and sciences. This was not too difficult, given Teyler's precise instructions. Essentially, the members only needed to be assembled. The trustees decided to call a meeting of all those to be appointed to the society for theology on June 4th 1778, and of all those to be appointed to the society for the arts and sciences on June 6th 1778. They only ran up against some minor difficulties. One was that Teyler had only named five members for the society for theology. This problem was easily tackled by electing a new member to fill the vacant position. For the society for the arts and sciences on the other hand, Teyler had suggested a total of eight members – two of these, however, had already passed away.[86] It was subsequently decided to leave the number of members at six.

[85] "grove en inexcusabele omissie"; Ibid., 20.
[86] Mijnhardt, *Tot heil van 't menschdom: culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750-1815*, 353.

Three of the members of the society for theology were prominent Mennonite preachers from Haarlem: Age Wijnalda, Klaas van der Horst, und Cornelis Adriaansz. Loosjes. The other two that had been nominated by Teyler were Jan Verbeek und Barend Hartmann from Groningen, both of them Remonstrant preachers. These five then agreed that Frederik Scheltinga, another Mennonite, should join them as a sixth member.[87]

Only one member of the society for the arts and sciences was a Mennonite: Jan Bosch.[88] Bosch was a publisher and bookseller. As publisher, he was responsible for the Holland Society's proceedings. He was not the only publisher in the new society: Johannes Enschedé was of the same profession. Enschedé gradually expanded his father's printing business, eventually making his sons associates, renaming the business "Joh. Enschedé en Zon." (This firm later became a household name in the Netherlands because they printed all Dutch banknotes.) A third member was Gerrit Willem van Oosten de Bruijn, who had spent many years researching and writing up the history of Haarlem upon the town council's request.[89] As most senior member of the society he became the presiding member. He is also noteworthy because he sympathised politically with the Orangists – both in Haarlem and especially amongst Mennonites at the time, those sympathising with the Dutch Republic's equivalent of a Royal Family were in the minority. As the political conflicts along these lines were played out over the course of the ensuing years, it became increasingly clear that amongst those associated with the Teyler Foundation too, a strong majority favoured the Orangists' opponents, the Patriots. As yet however, all that was in the future, and the most important point here is again Pieter Teyler's, and by extension the Teyler Foundation's, accommodating spirit: neither religious nor political divisions were evidently supposed to stand in the way of personal merit. As for the remaining three members – Cornelis Elout, Bernardus Vriends, und Jean le Clé – what is particularly striking about them is their wide range of interests. Elout was a passionate collector, whose obituary included the sentence: "He was a man of study and taste, as is also apparent from the collections of books, paintings and natural products he left".[90] Vriends and La Clé too were engaged in a wide range of activities. La Clé had been a secretary to the board of directors of the Haarlem drawing academy during Teyler's lifetime, and remained in this position until 1782.[91] Vriends on the other hand appears to have been interested in physical phenomena, as it was recorded that he helped other members of the society conduct experimental research.[92]

After having met in June, the societies only reconvened some months later, while the Foundation House was being renovated. The minutes of the society for the arts and sciences

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[87] Ibid., 343–344. On Wijnalda and van der Horst see also: Verheus, *Naarstig en vroom: Doopsgezinden in Haarlem 1530-1930*, 114–116.

[88] On Bosch see: Mijnhardt, *Tot heil van 't menschdom: culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750-1815*, 353.

[89] On Oosten de Bruijn see: Cornelis van de Haar, "G.W. van Oosten de Bruyn, stadshistorieschrijver van Haarlem," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 67 (1954): 209–223.

[90] "Hij was een man van studie en smaak, ook blijkens zijne nagelaten verzamelingen van boeken, schilderijen en natuurvoortbrengselen"; Abraham Jacob van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden*, vol. 5 (Haarlem: J.J. van Brederode, 1859), 96.

[91] Sliggers, *Augustijn Claterbos, 1750-1828: Opleiding en werk van een Haarlems kunstenaar*, 18.

[92] Trevor H. Levere, "Teyler's Museum," vol. 4, Martinus van Marum: Life & Work (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1973), 49.

refer to the "extensive repairs that were needed and which had been begun at the Foundation House".[93] But once October had come they wasted little time in taking on the tasks they had agreed to shoulder. One of the first tasks was to agree on names by which the two societies could refer to themselves when announcing the first prize essay competitions. The theologians informed the Foundation that they wished to be known as as "Teylers Theological Society" (*Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap*) on October 9th 1778.[94] The members of the society for the arts and sciences were initially unsure what to call their new group, and seriously considered referring to themselves by five different names, each incorporating one of the five "arts and sciences" Teyler had stipulated they were to hold the competitions on, and one of which was to be used whenever a competition on that particular branch of knowledge was to be held. Because Teyler had stipulated that the first competition was to concern the study of nature (*natuurkunde*), they initially referred to themselves as *Teylers Natuurkundig Genootschap*, until settling on the more universal "Teylers Second Society" (*Teylers Tweede Genootschap*), to be used on all occasions, in December 1778.[95]

Other formalities needed to be attended to as well. The members of the Theological Society for instance were not entirely sure how to interpret Pieter Teyler's somewhat ambiguous definition of their main purpose, and sought assurances from the trustees that they agreed with the Society's interpretation of the testator's words. Teyler's instructions that the Theological Society should "discuss all kinds of topics and matters concerning and respecting freedom in the Christian Religion and in the Civil State" was rephrased to say that the Society's publications (the *Verhandelingen*) "should concern various topics relating to Natural and Revealed Religion, amongst them such essays as are suited to defend the Freedom of Religion and the Civil State against all oppression, i.e. to oppose the inclination to persecute and to advance the rational freedom of thought."[96] The members of the Second Society, too, had some questions about Teyler's precise intentions, and asked "whether all sciences expressed in the Will shall be retained, and in the same order as the Testator has arranged them". They were informed that "they were undoubtedly bound to this formulation."[97]

Further formalities concerned the meetings themselves. Apparently not enamoured with the idea of meeting every single week, as Teyler had requested, the Second Society was soon granted permission by the Foundation to meet just once a month. Another issue was the service to be provided by the caretaker. Although he was explicitly exempted from having to cater to the members of the Societies by the trustees, he agreed to help them with any

[93] "zwaare reparatien welken aan 't Fondatie-Huis noodig en begonnen waren"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 19.06.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[94] "Directienotulen", 09.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[95] "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 23.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[96] "verhandelen allerhande stoffen en materien tot de vrijheid in den Christelijken Godsdienst en Burgerstaat specteerende en behoorende"; "zullen gaan over allerhande Onderwerpen, die tot den Natuurlijken en Geopenbaarden Godsdienst betrekkelijk zijn waaronder dan ook behoren zulke Verhandelingen die geschikt zijn om de Vrijheid van den Godsdienst en den Burgerstaat tegen alle Overheerschinge te verdedigen, dus de Vervolgzugt tegen te gaan en de redenmatige Vrijheid van denken te bevorderen." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 09.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[97] "[o]f men alle de weetenschappen, in het Testament geëxpresseerd zal behouden, en in denzelven rang, zoo als de Testateur die heeft gerangeerd"; "men, buiten twijfel daar toe is gehouden." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 23.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

activities requiring his support outside the hours of the monthly meetings, and was also provided with an extra f100,- on top of his regular salary by the trustees "for which amount he should supply both the Trustees and the two Societies with Fire and Light, Pipes, Coffee and Tea".[98] In a clear indication of what was considered necessary for a fruitful meeting in those days, upon hearing this news the members of the Second Society noted that this meant that "only tobacco and wine remain excepted, and at the expense of the Members of this Society."[99] In addition to the caretaker's help, the members of the Societies could also rely on the Foundation's servant, and van der Vinne agreed to his two housemaids catering to the Societies during meetings as well, provided they received some kind of payment at the end of each year. At the end of 1778 it was decided to pay the housemaids f4,- each for their troubles, and to pay the servant f3,- for his. This money was taken out of the f600,- that the Society was provided with according to Teyler's will and which in turn was always paid out in April. There was some discussion as to whether the servant should receive any pay at all, because

"on Mondays, when the First Society [Teylers Theological Society] met, the said beadle [servant] was not in the Foundation House, and equally on Fridays, when the Second Society meets, remained no longer present than the Trustees [of the Teyler Foundation] remained together, and that he therefore evidently provided no other service to these Societies than announcing the meetings and going on further errands out of doors that he was instructed to undertake by the presiding member."[100]

This, in turn, provides a fairly clear description of what was required of the servants during meetings.

7. Prize Essay Competitions

Having attended to the necessary administrative and formal problems, the members of the Societies could now focus on what Teyler had identified as their most important task, i.e. to organise the annual prize essay competitions. In November 1779 the Theological Society's draft for the topic of a first essay was approved by the trustees. Just a few weeks later the Second Society's first question was approved as well. It was on "phlogisticated and dephlogisticated air". Both questions were published in Dutch, French and Latin in a number

[98] "voor welke hij zo aan HH. Directeuren als aan de beide Collegien moet bezorgen Vuur en Licht, Pijpen, Coffij en Thee"; "Directienotulen", 06.11.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[99] "alleen tabak en wijn blijven uitgezonderd, en ten kosten der Leden van dit Collegie." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 06.11.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[100] "gemelde pedel zich des maandags, als 't Eerste Collegie zit, niet bevond in 't Fondatie-huis, en ook des vrijdags, wanneer dit Twééde Collegie vergadert, niet langer bleef, dan zoo lang de Heeren Directeuren en Exsecuteuren bij één bleven, en dat hij midsdien evidentelijk aan deeze Collegien geenen anderen dienst praesteerde, dan het aanzeggen der Vergaderingen, en het doen der verdere boodschappen buiten 's huis, welken hem bij 't voorzittend lid wierden belast." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 08.01.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

of national and foreign newspapers. All entries had to be submitted within the next one and a half years.

As for the competition on theology, entries poured in. By the closing date for submissions in 1780, a total of 11 essays had been submitted.[101] As for the Second Society's competition, however, only one single essay was submitted, just one day before the deadline – this particular example will be discussed in more detail later on, because the author turned out to be Martinus van Marum. This only transpired a lot later though, because in compliance with the rules set up by Teyler himself van Marum had submitted his essay anonymously.

The fact that the theological competition garnered so much more attention is remarkable because once Teylers Museum had been built, it was the Foundation's support of the arts and sciences that was to eclipse the theological work it sponsored, even if the Theological Society's prize essay competitions continued to be popular. In fact it seems that the Foundation initially expected the theologians' work to shape their public image. As much at least can be inferred from a discussion the trustees had with the members of the Second Society in November 1780 concerning the format of the Society's proceedings, the first edition of which was to contain van Marum's essay. The Second Society was hoping to publish the proceedings as a booklet of quarto size, just as the Theological Society already had. The trustees however resisted this idea and insisted on a booklet of octavo size, arguing that

"[...] all sciences, to which this society is devoted, are less common, and therefore usually pursued by fewer people than Theology: that therefore the choice of a <u>quarto size</u> seemed too risky, because it is more difficult to fill with small entries than <u>Octavo</u>"[102]

Although, as the years progressed, both Societies focused more and more on their core task of holding prize essay competitions, and by the middle of the 19th century meetings were only ever called either to elect a new member or to discuss issues concerning the competitions, the Societies had initially adhered to Pieter Teyler's suggestion that they "should meet, also with an eye to mutual consultation about matters and topics belonging and relating to these faculties and arts", i.e. that they should meet to discuss matters currently of interest in academia.[103] As early as October 1778 the members of the Theological Society for instance asked the Foundation to acquire all past editions of the *Stolpiaans Legaat* – a series of treatises that had been awarded first prize in essay competitions on the subject of theology, which were financed through a bequest of Jan Stolp; and the Second Society's minutes reveal that its members spent a series of meetings in early 1779 discussing a treatise that had been

[101] "Directienotulen", 25.02.1780, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[102] "[...] alle de weetenschappen, aan welken dit collegie is toegewijd, minder algemeen zijn, en dus ook doorgaans van een minder getal menschen dan de Godgeleerheid worden beoefend: dat derhalven de keuze van 't <u>quarto-formaat</u> te gevaarlijk scheen, als moeilijker, om , met kleinen voorraad te vullen, dan in <u>Octavo</u>;" "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 17.11.1780, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[103] "zullen moeten vergaderen, mede ter onderlinge verhandelinge van zaken en stoffen, tot die faculteiten en kundigheeden specteerende en behoorende"; Sliggers, *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, 200.

published by the Society of Dutch Literature (*Maatschappij voor Nederlandse Letterkunde*) – and that they were underwhelmed.[104]

8. Pieter Teyler's Prints and Drawings

It was at one of these meetings that the members decided they should take a closer look at the collections Pieter Teyler had left them. The minutes reveal how they decided

"[...] in some subsequent session to inventory what exactly, in the way both of books and of art, has been bequeathed to this Foundation by the late Mr Teyler van der Hulst, and to direct matters to the best of the abilities of the members, to the effect that a proper Catalogue be made of everything by the Custodian [the *kastelein* or caretaker]."[105]

Indeed, it appears they had to take matters into their own hands because van der Vinne was shirking his duties. Some months earlier, in October 1778, the trustees had already agreed with their caretaker that he

"shall be obliged to keep precise records of the Books and Curiosities and to hand these over to the Societies with a clear indication of the locations where everything is stored, so that Members are able to find and retrieve themselves whatever they want to use."[106]

Not much seems to have happened by February of the following year though, because the minutes of the trustees meetings record that they had

"requested V. van der Vinne that he should make progress with drawing up the Catalogue and that he should either take Jan van Walré Jr., who had been offered by Jan Bosch for the purpose, as his assistant, or give him [Jan van Walré] the opportunity to work on the Catalogue alone."[107]

Van der Vinne doesn't seem to have had any problem with letting the members of the Second Society start drawing up an inventory, because in April they recorded that

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[104] "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 22.01.1779 & 05.02.1779 & 19.02.1779 & 05.03.1779 & 12.03.1779 & 26.03.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[105] "[...] in eenige volgende session na te zien wat eigenlijk, zoo van boeken, als konst, in deeze Fundatie door wijlen den Heere Teyler van der Hulst waare nagelaaten, en de zaak, zoo veel in 't vermogen der Leden zijn zal, daar heenen te dirigeeren, dat van alles door den Custos een behoorlijke Catalogus worde gemaakt." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", c. 26.03.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[106] "zal verpligt zijn een nauwkeurig Register te maken van de Boeken en Liefhebberijen en het zelve aan de Collegien te geven, met eene zoo duidelijk daarin vervatte aanwijzinge van de plaatse waar alles geborgen is, dat Leden in staat zijn, om 't geen zij begeeren te gebruiken, te vinden en zelve voor de hand te halen." "Directienotulen", 30.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

[107] "Aan V. van der Vinne verzogt dat hij voortgang make met het opmaaken van de Catalogus en hij Jan van Walré Jun., door Jan Bosch daartoe aangeboden tot hulp neeme, ofwel dien alleen gelegenheid geeve om aan de Catalogus te werken." "Directienotulen", 19.02.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

“a beginning had been made with going through [...] the prints in the art cabinet, which is located in the room of this meeting [the *Grote Herenkamer*], and that it had been approved that the Members gradually record what seems to be of the greatest importance, in particular that which in future should be completed.”[108]

Note that they were not just taking notes as to what was in the collection, but also taking notes on “that which in future should be completed”. In other words, they were also recording what they wanted to acquire for the collection of prints and drawings in the future. That Teyler’s cabinet contained not only prints but also drawings, can be inferred from the minutes of the next meeting on April 23rd, in which one finds that the members had continued “the already initiated examination of the drawings and prints, left by the deceased and located in the room of this Society”.[109] Teyler had owned some paintings as well, but these were judged to be “of little value” and don’t appear to have met with much appreciation, because van der Vinne had already been asked to sell them off as early as August 1778.

As far as the catalogue of prints and drawings was concerned, in November 1779 the Society suddenly stopped working on the inventory of Teyler’s prints and drawings. In a somewhat cryptic entry in the minutes, one reads that “for certain reasons the examination of the prints […] has also been superseded.”[110] No further detail is provided as to what these “certain reasons” were. However, this sudden cessation of work on the catalogue is a little less surprising if one takes into account that by November 1779 the trustees had already spent some months planning a far greater project concerning the Foundation’s collections: Teylers Museum. Although the Second Society was not officially informed about these plans until December, they are sure to have caught a whiff of them before.

In fact it is worth pausing briefly here and reflecting on the lines of communication within the Teyler Foundation, or rather between the many institutions it funded. On the one hand the current trustees – and pretty much all future trustees – were sticklers for formality. At one point for instance Jacobus Barnaart, who had joined the members of the Second Society during one of their meetings, refused to reveal whom the trustees had decided to award a gold medal for his entry to the Theological Society’s essay competition, because that person was himself only going to be told the following day.[111] On the other hand, the fact that Barnaart joined the Society – unannounced, too – shows that there was a strong spirit of cooperation amongst all those associated with the Foundation. What’s more, his refusal to reveal the name of the winner for fear it might be spread around is illustrative of another point one should bear in mind constantly when evaluating the available sources on the museum’s and the Foundation’s history: Haarlem was a fairly small town – albeit of great importance to Dutch

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[108] “een begin gemaakt, om [...] na te zien de prenten in de konst-kas, staande in ’t vertrek deezer vergadering [de *Grote Herenkamer*], en verder goed gevonden dat door de leden successivelijk zal worden genoteerd alles wat van de meest importantie schijnt te zijn, vooral dat geen, ’t welk vervolgd wordende alhier zouwde dienen gecompleteerd te worden.” “Notulen Tweede Genootschap”, 02.04.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[109] “ ‘t begonne onderzoek van de Teken- en Prent-konst, door den overleeden na-gelaaten, en in de vertrek-kamer van dit Collegie bevindelijk”; “Notulen Tweede Genootschap”, 23.04.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[110] “men ook met ‘t onderzoek der prent-konst […] om redenen, heeft gesupersedeerd.” “Notulen Tweede Genootschap”, 12.11.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[111] “Notulen Tweede Genootschap”, 07.04.1780, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

cultural life – and the Teyler Foundation, together with all its associated institutions, was essentially a local organisation. News could therefore travel fast, and on at least one occasion the trustees' secretary Hovens went to every member of the Second Society's home in order to relay a message from the trustees. As much at least can be inferred from reading between the lines.[112] It has also already been pointed out how closely knit the Mennonite community in Haarlem was, and that only underscores how likely it was that people associated with the Teyler Foundation would have met outside formal meetings as well. At the same time however, all this did also not guarantee that news travelled fast. On one occasion in 1781 for instance the members of the Second Society were extremely annoyed that they only heard that a paper had been submitted for their essay competition on poetry when Oosten de Bruijn, "accidentally passing by the house of the Trustee, Hugaert, had happened upon that Gentleman on his doorstep and accosted him".[113] On another occasion, about a year later, Oosten de Bruijn again reported

"that he, on the Sunday eight days before, being in the company of the Burgomaster, Mr Kuits, had incidentally been informed by this Gentleman that two essays, one written in French, the other in Dutch, in response to the Historical question of this Society for the year 1781, had been received by the Trustees of this Foundation".[114]

At any rate it is likely that the "certain reasons" for ending work on the inventory had something to do with the plans for Teylers Museum. Before taking a closer look at these, some last words on the catalogue of Teyler's prints and drawings are called for: it is only mentioned again six years later, when van der Vinne resigns as caretaker in 1785, and hands over "the Catalogue of the Prints and Drawings" alongside the keys to the Foundation House and a list of the furniture it contained.[115] It is doubtful whether the catalogue referred to at that point was comprehensive, or in fact that it had much to do with the one being prepared six years earlier. By 1785, all – or at least most – of Teyler's prints and drawings had been sold to van der Vinne, while he himself had acquired many new works of art for the Foundation on the trustees' behalf.[116] Either way, neither the catalogue nor any draft version of it has been preserved in the museum's archives.

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[112] As much can be inferred from phrasings such as "Dat ook, den volgenden dag, dezelve Heer Hovens aan 't huis van [...] Van Oosten de Bruijn tot bescheid hadde gebragt, dat […]"."Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 12.01.1781, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[113] "toevallig het huis van den Directeur Hugaert passeerende, dien Heer op zijn stoep en aan zijne deur gevonden, [en] aangesproken had"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 20.04.1781, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[114] "dat hij, op voorleeden zondag voor agt dagen, in gezelschap zijnde met den Heer Burgemeester Kuits, van deezen Heer, bij toeval hadde verstaan, dat er twéé verhandelingen, d'eene in de Franse taal, d'andere in 't Nederduits geschreeven, in andwoord op de Historische vraag van dit Collegie voor den jaare 1781, bij de Directeuren deezer Fondatien waren ontvangen"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 05.04.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[115] "de Catalogus van de Prenten en Tekeningen"; "Directienotulen", 21.10.1785, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5. The trustees confirmed the receipt of all these items in writing a little later: "Directienotulen", 25.11.1785, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

[116] Van der Vinne was, for example, asked to acquire items at an auction in October 1780: "Directienotulen", 06.10.1780, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5. The sale of items from Pieter Teyler's collection to van der Vinne was discussed in January 1782: "Directienotulen", 04.01.1782 & 11.01.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

9. Birth of a Musaeum

Having now learned more about the Teyler Foundation's origins, its tasks and how the Foundation's trustees saw their institution's role within Haarlem, we can turn to Teylers Museum itself.

The first time any mention was made – in writing – of what was to become Teylers Museum was on April 23rd 1779. Under the heading "Bookhall" (*Boekzaal*) the trustees recorded in the minutes of the meeting they held on this day that they had instructed the carpenter J. van Ee to measure up some of the properties behind the Foundation House, "so that headway could be made towards taking a decision about the Construction of a Hall as Library"[117] Two points are striking about this. Firstly, this matter had obviously been discussed before, and the trustees were now hoping to make some "headway"; secondly, the primary aim at this stage of the planning appears to have been to construct some sort of library. No further details, however, are provided.

These plans matured over the course of the following months. Within two weeks, the trustees had bought a house behind Teyler's town house with the aim of demolishing their new acquisition, because that would allow them "to make the yard situated behind this house square and thus make the building much more regular, more spacious and better".[118] The issue was obviously no longer whether a "Bookhall" was to be built, but rather what shape it should take. It was Barnaart who had negotiated with the owner of the house on the Foundation's behalf.

Rather than provide the trustees with enough space to build their "Bookhall", this first acquisition appears only to have whet their appetite. At their next meeting one week later, the decision was taken to make "attempts" (*poogingen*) to buy two more neighbouring houses. Within another week Barnaart could report that he had managed to buy both houses for a total of f100,-. But the trustees did not stop there. At the same meeting, Barnaart had evidently already set his sights on a fourth neighbouring house, and had already started negotiating a sale with its owner. As the owner was reluctant to sell, Barnaart was forced to pay f250,- to acquire it "although this price very much exceeds the value".[119] Perhaps the owner was not only reluctant to sell – it wasn't he who had to move out but his tenant – but had also realised how eager Barnaart and the Foundation had become to acquire the neighbouring properties. As much at least can be inferred from their subsequent purchase of another four adjacent houses for a total of f2025,-. Aware that this was no small amount of money, they recorded that they were making this investment "so that in future there won't be complaints that this opportunity was allowed to slip past", and in order to be able to "acquire the yard behind this

[117] "op dat men zoude kunnen vorderen om een Besluit te neemen wegens het Timmeren eener Zaal tot de Boekerij"; "Directienotulen", 23.04.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[118] "het Erf welk agter deezen Huize ligt, vierkant te maken en dus de betimmeringen ongelijk regelmatiger, ruimer en betere konde worden"; "Directienotulen", 30.04.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5. The deal to buy the house had been struck by May 7th: "Directienotulen", 07.05.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[119] "schoon deeze prijs de waarde verre te boven gaat"; "Directienotulen", 04.06.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

house in the regular way, and to make the planned building as spacious as the situation allows".[120]

By July 1779 all purchases had been finalised, with assurances that all buildings would be cleared by August 1st. On July 9th the trustees contacted an architect from Amsterdam, Leendert Viervant, and asked him to draw up plans "for the proposed building" (*het voorgenomen Gebouw*). He delivered them about a month later, and the plans were discussed and revised throughout October, and a final version accepted in January 1780. In the meantime, the buildings had been razed. Then, on April 28th 1780, the cornerstone of this new "Bookhall" was laid by the president of the board of trustees, Willem van der Vlugt. Building work only commenced slowly though, and what came to be known as the "Oval Room" was completed in 1784.

What, though, induced the trustees to build such a "Bookhall" at all? Nothing to this effect was mentioned in Teyler's will, and even though he had left the Societies his collection of books, it was not a vast one. What's more, as with all his other collections save the coins and medals, it did not take the Foundation long to sell off Teyler's personal library, even if they did do so after having constructed the new building.[121] Their decision to build this huge extension to Pieter Teyler's house is all the more puzzling because no documents providing any clues as to their underlying motivation have been preserved.

The only document that does contain any significant information on the debates surrounding this milestone in the Foundation's history are van Marum's autobiographical recollections from the 1820s. These recollections are best taken with a pinch of salt – not only were they penned some three decades after the event, but van Marum had by this time had a huge row with the trustees and his text is almost vitriolic in tone – but nevertheless, in many respects his account is plausible, and all the facts he gives can be corroborated.

The most important claim van Marum makes is that both he and Barnaart were in fact the driving force behind the establishment of the new building. After describing how their mutual interest in the study of nature [*natuurkunde*] had led to their becoming not only acquainted but also good friends soon after van Marum's arrival in Haarlem, van Marum remembers how this in turn meant that he soon learnt of the contents of Teyler's will after the Mennonite's death, and this in turn "occasioned many consultations" between Barnaart and van Marum.[122] More specifically, van Marum remembered how Barnaart had spoken "with me many times, before the plan for the construction of this Museum was decided upon, about how it was to be

[120] "opdat men zich in volgende tijden niet beklage dat deeze gelegenheid voorbij geslipt is"; "dus het Erf agter deezen Huize regelmatig te bekomen, en het voorgenomen Gebouw zo ruim te kunnen maken als de Situatie eenigzins toelaat"; "Directienotulen", 18.06.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[121] Martinus van Marum: "Journaal van mijne verrichtingen ter verkrijging eener Bibliotheek i Teyler's Museum", 1783-1790, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 11d, fol. 3.
[122] "aanleiding tot menigvuldige gesprekken"; Martinus van Marum: "De Geschiedenis van de oprigting van Teyler's Museum", 1823-1833, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 9, fol. 7.

furnished."[123] Note also how the new institution had become known as a "Museum" by the time van Marum wrote his account of the events.

There is no reason to doubt that van Marum and Barnaart were close, or that Barnaart would have sought van Marum's advice on all matters concerning the study of nature, including Pieter Teyler's legacy. Firstly, there is no reason why van Marum should have made this up, and secondly another, unrelated sequence of events underscores the idea that these two men were in contact over matters concerning the Foundation. This sequence of events is the one surrounding the Second Society's first prize essay competition. More specifically, two occurrences make more sense if one takes into account that van Marum's opinion on issues of natural philosophy mattered to Barnaart. Firstly, Barnaart was the only one of the trustees who did not immediately approve the Second Society's draft of a question for the competition, but asked to be allowed to run it by an external "expert" before publication. Only one word was subsequently inserted by that expert (the German word for "phlogiston"), but in all likelihood this "expert" was van Marum – who, as was mentioned above, not only entered but also won the contest. The fact that van Marum entered the contest in turn helps explain the second occurrence: when van Marum was elected a member of the Second Society in December 1779 – some months before the closing date for entries into the competition – he was probably already working on the treatise he was planning to submit to his future co-members anonymously some months later. Van Marum was not present at his election and might even have been unaware that he was a candidate, but when the Second Society informed the trustees that they wished to add van Marum to their number, the minutes record how it

"is a point of reflection both about the present case and about future elections of new Members of the Society, that it might happen that such a new Member had written an essay or had the intention of writing one in order to compete for the prize on the topic proposed for that current year, and this might be the reason why such an elected person might not accept his Election, in order not to be barred from competing for the prize."[124]

Taking into account that eventually only one essay was submitted – that by van Marum – the fact that this issue became "a point of reflection" makes it highly likely that somebody was well aware that van Marum was planning to enter the competition. This could easily have been members of the Second Society – but if so, they subsequently disguised this well in the minutes of the meetings at which van Marum's essay was evaluated. It is far more likely that Barnaart was the one who brought up this issue, without referring explicitly to van Marum.

So, even though all this is largely speculative, one can clearly say that there is no evidence whatsoever in outright contradiction with van Marum's later claim that Barnaart and he were

[123] "[v]eelmalen [...], vóór dat het plan tot den aanbouw van dit Museum werd vastgesteld, met mij over de inrigting van hetzelve." Ibid., fol. 10.

[124] "komt ter bedenkinge zo omtrent het tegenwoordig geval als bij volgende verkiezingen van nieuwe Leden tot de Genootschappen, dat het veellicht zou kunnen gebeuren, dat zodanig nieuw Lid eene Verhandeling had geschreven of voorneemens was te schrijven om te dingen naar den prijs op het onderwerp voor dat loopende Jaar voorgesteld, en zulks aanleidinge mogt geeven, dat zulk een verkoozen persoon de Verkiezinge niet aanname, om niet versteeken te worden van te dingen naar den prijs." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 17.12.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

friends and that Barnaart sought the younger man's advice where Pieter Teyler's legacy was concerned.

But even if one accepts that van Marum and Barnaart were the driving force behind the establishment of the "Bookhall", that still leaves the question of why they came up with this idea. It is worth quoting van Marum at some length here. Having heard of Teyler's will and the large sum of money reserved for the "arts and sciences", expectations were high "amongst those who were interested in the advancement of useful sciences". He continues:

"The ardour of Mr Barnaart for the Physical Sciences was well known, as was also apparent from the collections he had brought together, to the best of his ability, for his own use. His intelligence and liberal views were recognized by many in this City, and it was therefore to be expected of his influence with the appointed co-directors of Teyler's estate who had not so much advertised themselves as advocates or patrons of the said sciences, that he would leave nothing untried to make sure that the opportunity would be created to produce such collections and facilities at Teylers Foundation as would be judged the most suitable to function there for the extension and propagation of the Physical sciences. To this end he procured the approval of his fellow-directors for the construction of a spacious hall designed for setting up Physical Instruments, natural objects, placing of drawings and prints, and of a library specially selected for the Physical Sciences. In accordance with this plan the building has been proposed under the name of Teylers Museum."[125]

So, to summarise, according to van Marum the Oval Room was built in order to provide facilities for the "expansion and cultivation of the natural sciences" [*natuurkundige weetenschappen*]. Again, this is not implausible. On the contrary, there is no denying that both Barnaart and van Marum had a keen interest in this area of knowledge. Barnaart's collection consisted of scientific instruments, and he was a member of the Natuurkundig Gezelschap.[126] According to van Marum's account, it was also Barnaart who insisted a small "observatory" be installed on the roof of the new "Bookhall".[127]

The only point one should bear in mind here is that this is still van Marum's account written some 30 years after the discussions with Barnaart took place. As will be shown in the

[125] "bij diegenen, die in de bevordering van nuttige wetenschappen belang stelden"; "Men kende den ijver van den Heer Barnaart voor Natuurkundige Wetenschappen, blijkbaar ook uit de verzamelingen ter eigene beoefening, naar zijn vermogen aangelegd. Zijne schranderheid en liberale denkwijze werden, althans bij velen hier ter Stede erkend, en men konde dus van zijnen invloed bij de medebenoemde Directeuren van Teijlers nalatenschap, die zich niet zo zeer als voorstanders of begunstigers van gemelde wetenschappen hadden bekend gemaakt, verwachten, dat hij niets onbeproefd zoude laten, om het daar heen te besturen, dat er gelegenheid zoude worden daargesteld, om zoodanige verzamelingen en inrigtingen, bij Teijlers Stichting te maken als meest geschikt zouden geoordeeld worden om aldaar, ter uitbreiding en voortplanting van Natuurkundige wetenschappen, werkzaam te zijn. Ten dien einde bewerkte hij de toestemming der medebestuurderen tot het bouwen van eene ruime zaal, bestemd voor het aanleggen van Physische Werktuigen, van Natuurlijke voorwerpen, plaatsing van Teekeningen en Prenten, en van eene, voor Natuurkundige Wetenschappen, inzonderheid uitgezochte Bibliotheek. Ingevolge dit plan is het gebouw daargesteld, onder den naam van Teijlers Museum bekend." Martinus van Marum: "De Geschiedenis van de oprigting van Teyler's Museum", 1823-1833, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 9, fol. 9-10.

[126] Sliggers, "Honderd jaar natuurkundige amateurs te Haarlem," 87–88.

[127] Martinus van Marum: "De Geschiedenis van de oprigting van Teyler's Museum", 1823-1833, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 9, fol. 10-11.

following section, van Marum's subsequent actions leave no doubt that to his mind the scientific instruments ranked above all other collections the Foundation acquired. In his recollections, he makes it sound as if this had been the case with all those involved in the acquisition, i.e. the trustees as well. However, as will be discussed in the following section, contemporary records indicate that in the trustees' view, the geological collections were at least of equal, if not even of far greater, importance. The last thing this means is that van Marum's recollections should be discarded as unreliable – on the contrary, the reasons for this biased view are easily identifiable – but it does suggest the possibility that Barnaart might have been if not less enthusiastic, then perhaps less single-mindedly focused on the natural sciences than van Marum was.

But whatever motivated Barnaart, the "Bookhall" was being built, and Barnaart had evidently played a large part in bringing this about.

Tragically, however, Barnaart did not live to see the building completed. On November 2nd 1779, he passed away, suddenly and unexpectedly after a short bout of illness. Van Marum describes this as a devastating experience, both on a personal and a professional level. Not only did van Marum lose a good friend, but the pain must have been exacerbated by the fact that Barnaart had turned to van Marum for medical assistance, and the young doctor had found himself unable to stop the illness – described as "fibris continua nervosa" – from progressing. What's more, with Barnaart's death he also lost

"[...] any prospect of being active in an agreeable way at Teyler's Foundation in bringing together the collections mentioned before, and extending the Physical Sciences."

As he put it, the remaining trustees had "little inclination [...] to execute the plan devised by Mr Barnaart."[128]

Indeed, no mention is subsequently made of the new building in the minutes of the trustees' meetings for almost two years, and it took two years before van Marum became involved with the new building again. He even claimed that one of the trustees had told him privately that if building work had not progressed so far at the time of Barnaart's death already, the remaining trustees would have abandoned the plans.[129]

10. Was it a Library?

But whether the threat was real or not, this obviously never happened. In fact, by late 1782, Viervant had delivered what was to be his masterpiece: the huge, oval shaped, two-storey

[128] "[...] alle uitzigt om bij Teijlers Stichting op eene aangenaame wijze, ter aanlegging van de hiervoor bedoelde verzamelingen, en ter uitbreiding van Natuurkundige Wetenschappen, werkzaam te worden"; "weinig neiging [...] om het plan, door den Heer Barnaart beraamd, te volgen." Ibid., fol. 12.
[129] Ibid., fol. 12-13.

high "Bookhall", which included a gallery and was topped by a magnificently stuccoed arched roof incorporating glass panes to let in the daylight, was held in the neo-classical style, and was accessible through Teyler's former house, from a door that went off from the *Grote Herenkamer*.

Unfortunately, very little is known about the process through which he arrived at the final design of the building he had been commissioned to construct.[130] Reconstructing the stages of this creative process is further complicated by the fact that those architectural drawings that have been preserved don't carry any dates. In fact, the entire building's most striking feature is also its most puzzling: the oval shape of its interior. Judging by Viervant's drawings, he initially appears to have proposed a rectangular building separated into two large rooms of equal size. It has been suggested that one room was intended as a library, the other as a cabinet to store all other items from the Foundation's collections.[131] But there is nothing besides the soon-to-come but nevertheless later – and presumably unconnected – decision to reserve the upper half of the Oval Room for books to support this assumption.

By the time the final plans for the building were approved in October 1779, Viervant had obviously come up with the idea of giving the interior its oval shape, thereby inevitably also creating four smaller chambers in the building's corners. It is conceivable that he might have taken his inspiration from the frontispiece of the catalogue of Levinus Vincent's collections – Vincent had put these collections on display in Haarlem at the beginning of the 18th century, and made them accessible to all members of the public, provided they paid an entrance fee.[132] But although Vincent's cabinet had been world-famous in its day, attracting visitors such as the Russian Tsar and Cosimo de Medici, and the similarities between the – presumably slightly exaggerated – depiction of its premises and the Oval Room are quite striking, there is no evidence whatsoever that Viervant based his designs on Vincent's frontispieces, or, for that matter, that he was even aware of them.

The general assumption is that the reason Viervant came up with the oval shape is that he was designing a hall intended to store books, i.e. a library. This is a little less speculative than other explanations because there had indeed been famous precedents of libraries built in a rounded shape. Of these, the ducal library in Wolfenbüttel, built between 1705 and 1710, bears the most resemblance to Teylers. And indeed, over the course of the two centuries preceding the establishment of Teylers Museum, as the humanist ideals of the Renaissance were ever more widely adopted and books had become more readily available thanks to the invention of the printing press, libraries had proliferated all over Europe. Over the course of the 18th century in particular they gradually come to be separated from other associated institutions, such as monasteries, cabinets of curiosities, or schools, and were increasingly made publicly accessible too. It has even been suggested that the arrangement of libraries in

[130] The little information that is available has been scrutinised in: Peggy Bouman and Paul Broers, *Teylers "Boek- en Konstzael": de bouwgeschiedenis van het oudste museum van Nederland* ('s-Gravenhage: SDU, 1988).
[131] Ibid., 19.
[132] On Vincent's collections see: Eric Jorink, *Het "Boeck der Natuere": Nederlandse geleerden en de wonderen van Gods schepping 1575-1715* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2006), 351–355.

central, oval structures that allowed for better access to a larger number of books, rather than in rectangular, elongated rooms, can be seen as the pinnacle of this development:

"With the central-plan building the idea of the autonomy of the library building is perhaps confirmed most impressively. This is already implied by the choice of a circular form, ensuring visibility from all angles, which ensures the structure remains distinct, even if it forms part of an architectural ensemble. Because of its association with the archetype of the circular ground-plan, the Roman Pantheon, a rotunda also guarantees a universal quality, which in the case of the library metaphorically refers to a place that in utopian fashion contains the knowledge of the entire world. [...] This tendency towards functional and architectural autonomy is an indication of the increasing use [of libraries] by independent scholars, who are not associated with the institution responsible for the library, but use the collection of books for limited research periods."[133]

Again however, it cannot be proven that Viervant was in any way aware of such implications when he chose his design, or that he based it on one of the existing examples. And it also needs to be said that, despite the proliferation of libraries in the 17th and 18th centuries, very few actually sported a rounded interior. Wolfenbüttel, Radcliffe's Camera in Oxford, and the ducal library in Weimar are some of the very few examples – there certainly was no precedent in the Netherlands. What's more, a number of libraries were built in the more traditional rectangular shape even though their architects suggested a rounded, central hall. Examples include the library of Trinity College in Dublin, and the library of Trinity College in Cambridge, built by Christopher Wren.

So, whatever the reasons, Viervant's plans constituted a bold move. One can easily imagine one of the trustees having come up with the idea of an oval interior too, but it would actually befit what little we know about Viervant himself. For one, he was strikingly young, and actually inexperienced. Any artistic brashness would not have been inhibited by the need to protect a reputation. All that is known about his training is that he had been an apprentice to his considerably more famous and accomplished uncle, Jacob Otten Husly. Husly himself was involved in the work for the Teyler Foundation, he is known to have decorated the ceiling of the Oval Room. So it is fathomable that his uncle provided some guidance, but there is also little reason why he should have let all the credit go to his nephew if he had not really been the main architect. Viervant's early success, however, seems to have gone to his head. The only other major building he ever designed was the Foundation's new almshouse. Caught up in the political turmoil of the late 18th century and displaying a brazenness not befitting of his

133 "Im Zentralbau erlangt die Idee der Autonomie des Bibliotheksbaus vielleicht ihre eindrucksvollste Beglaubigung. Denn dies wird bereits durch die Wahl der allansichtigen Rundform, die sich einem architektonischen Ensemble zuordnen, aber nicht einfügen lässt, signalisiert. Durch den Bezug zum Urmodell des Rundbaus, dem römischen Pantheon, verbürgt die Rotunde zudem einen universellen Gehalt, der bei den Bibliotheken auf die Metaphorik eines Ortes, der in utopischer Weise das Wissen der Welt beherbergt, übertragen wurde. [...] Die Tendenz zur funktionalen und baulichen Autonomie ist ein Indiz für die zunehmende Benutzung durch externe Gelehrte, die nicht der für die Bibliothek verantwortlichen Institution angehörten, sondern die Buchbestände während befristeter Forschungsaufenthalte nutzten." Dietrich Erben, "Die Pluralisierung des Wissens: Bibliotheksbau zwischen Renaissance und Aufklärung," in *Die Weisheit baut sich ein Haus: Architektur und Geschichte von Bibliotheken*, ed. Winfried Nerdinger (München: Prestel, 2011), 185.

age, the last of the few traces he subsequently left in any archives show that, by the beginning of the 19th century, he was earning his living as a sewage worker.[134]

But in late 1782, there was still no trace of Viervant's subsequent decline. On the contrary, as the Oval Room neared completion and Viervant turned to the task of decorating its interior, professionally he had reached about everything an architect could hope for.

11. How to Fill an Empty Vessel

So now that the building had been completed the trustees – rather interestingly – turned to the two learned societies and wanted to know both what the Societies wanted to include in any collections the Foundation would acquire, and how these collections were then to be arranged in the Oval Room. This – crucially – provided van Marum with an opportunity to pick up where he and Barnaart had left off two years before. As was recorded during a joint meeting of the trustees and the members of the Societies on November 1st 1782:

"The Trustees subsequently announce to the two Societies that, as the New Arthall is now nearly finished, they would be pleased to be acquainted with the ideas of the Members concerning the special kinds of curiosities that could be placed in this Arthall to the greatest general benefit, in reference to which the arrangement of the cabinets could be adapted and attention could be paid to the Collection of such Curiosities when the occasion arises."[135]

The entire phrasing of this enquiry suggests some sort of vacuum had emerged, with no-one within the Foundation feeling entirely sure what the exact purpose of their new – and highly costly – construction was to be. Note their reference to the new building as a "Arthall" (*Konstzael*), rather than a "Bookhall" (*Boekenzael*), for instance. All this in turn implies that van Marum might not have been too far off the mark with his assessment that Barnaart's fellow trustees had been at best lukewarm about his plans for the "Bookhall". The minutes of the trustees' meetings certainly don't create the impression that they were in any way eager to uphold a legacy Barnaart had left them, but rather that they had passed a "point of no return" as far as this building was concerned, which to them obviously presented something of an enigma.

This is where van Marum stepped in. Recognising the opportunity, he not only saved Barnaart's legacy by convincing the trustees to spend considerable amounts of money on

[134] Geert-Jan Janse, *Heel de wereld in één zaal: de Ovale Zaal van Teylers Museum* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2011), 51.

[135] "Heeren Directeuren berigten vervolgens aan de beide Genootschappen dat de Nieuwe Konstzaal thans nabij voltooid zijnde, hun Ed aangenaam zijn zoude, de gedagten van de Leden te mogen weeten nopens de bizondere takken van Liefhebberij welke men tot het meeste nut van het algemeen in dezelve Konstzaal zoude kunnen plaatsen, waar [naar] welk begrip dan ook nog in de inrigtinge der kassen eenige schikkinge zoude kunnen gemaakt worden en men zich bij voorkomende gelegenheden op Verzameling van zodanige Liefhebberij zoude kunnen toeleggen." "Directienotulen", 01.11.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

exquisite collections that put their new institution on the map, but in what almost amounted to a political campaign he also managed to secure for himself an exquisite position as director of this new institution – i.e. Teylers Museum, as is it was being called by then. Just one and a half years after the trustees had first turned to the Societies for advice, van Marum had become the undisputed head of the Teyler Foundation's collections, essentially sidelining not only the caretaker as he had been appointed according to Teyler's will (van der Vinne in fact resigned from his post a few months after van Marum was appointed director), but all fellow members of both Learned Societies as well.

Van Marum's first suggestion, in reply to the trustees' first query, was to start building a geological collection, i.e. a collection of fossils and minerals. At this point, he was careful to gain the full backing of all other members of the Second Society. It was even decided to contact Bernardus Vriends and elicit his opinion on this matter too, despite his being so sick that had been unable to attend meetings for some weeks previously. But Vriends' opinion was considered necessary for the Second Society to be able to make its recommendations to the trustees "unanimously".[136]

Vriends doesn't appear to have voiced any objections, and the trustees eagerly adopted van Marum's proposal to acquire a large geological collection that was about to come on sale at auction in Amsterdam, courtesy of Willem van der Meulen. They were obviously convinced by the Society's reasoning that a geological collection would be of great value to the Society and Haarlem. Firstly, because it would complement the Holland Society's cabinet, of which was said that it "excels in everything belonging to the animal kingdom, but isn't nearly in the same situation with respect to fossils". And secondly,

"because at the present time the study of the interior constitution of our earth comprises a considerable part of the efforts of those who devote their efforts to the Study of Nature [*Natuurkunde*], and therefore in organizing essay contests about this science such a collection would be a great service and benefit to us."[137]

In a showcase example of van Marum's persuasive skills – it was he who presented the trustees with the Society's "unanimous" suggestion – they agreed to provide him with up to f6000,- that he could spend at this auction, even though they also pointed out that it was actually a little "too early" to acquire such a collection for the "as yet unfinished new building".[138]

[136] "eenpariglijk"; "Directienotulen", 01.11.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5. The minutes of a corresponding meeting of the Second Society state that the decision was to be taken "met volle eenpaarigheid": "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 25.10.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[137] "zeer uitmunt in alles wat tot 't regnum animale behoort, maar op gene stukken na, zoo gesteld is ten aanzien van de fossilia"; "omdat 't onderzoek der inwendige gesteldheid van onze aarde in den tegenwoordigen tijd een merklijk gedeelte maakt der oefeningen van hen, die hunnen arbeid aan de Natuurkunde toewijen, en dat, derhalven, in het uitschrijven der vraagen over die weetenschap zulk eene verzameling ons van gewichtigen dienst en voordeel zouwde kunnen weezen." "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 25.10.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

[138] "hoewel wat vroegtijdig voor de nog niet voltooide Zaal": "Directienotulen", 01.11.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

Intriguingly, at that very same meeting a suggestion by Oosten de Bruijn to expand Teyler's numismatic collection was rejected by the trustees, despite Oosten de Bruijn's protestations. The reason given is interesting: the trustees did not consider it worthwhile spending much money or effort on the collection, because public access to it was so restricted through Teyler's instructions as to how they were to be handled. What might also have brought about Oosten de Bruijn being snubbed were his Orangist allegiances. By 1782, political tension in the Dutch Republic was increasing.

As for the trustees' question regarding the arrangement of the Oval Room itself, the members of the Second Society agreed to inspect the Oval Room in its unfinished state. On November 8th they convened at the building site, where they happened to run into the architect, Viervant. In a subsequent discussion with Viervant they came up with two major ideas concerning the way the Oval Room was to be furbished.

The first concerned the cupboards lining the walls of the building's interior. This, in fact, was what the trustees were most concerned about and what they had asked the Society to voice an opinion on. Together with Viervant the members of the Second Society agreed that the cupboards lining the gallery in the upper section of the Oval Room were to be furbished as bookcases and "provided with curtains", whereas the cupboards below were to be fitted with glass panes. Crucially, they were of the opinion that the cupboards on the ground floor level "could best be used for the storage of Physical Instruments, and other related objects".[139] This is the first time any mention is made of an instrument collection to be acquired by the Foundation.

The second suggestion concerned some furniture the members wished to see added. They were hoping the Foundation would buy "two of the best and latest globes" which in turn could be placed "on either side of the large table which will be indispensible in the Museum".[140] The minutes of later meetings reveal that what they had in mind were two globes built by the exquisite instrument maker John Adams of London – they were indeed acquired, but only some years later, when van Marum travelled to London. As for the "large table", over the course of subsequent meetings this gradually evolved into a flat-top cabinet of table-height, which should also serve "for the storage of art books and portfolios with drawings and prints", and which was soon installed in the Oval Room.[141]

But let us return to the idea of reserving the cupboards on the ground floor level for a collection of scientific instruments. Taking into account that these were neither small cupboards nor few in number, it is clear that somebody – surely van Marum – had far-reaching plans of which no previous record exists. Was van Marum perhaps reviving plans he and Barnaart had drawn up earlier? This is what he implies in his recollections. Or was he pursuing his own agenda? If so, he did so cleverly, because he evidently secured the other

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[139] "voorzien van gordijnen"; "'t beste konden dienen tot berging van Phÿsische Instrumenten, en andere zaaken, daaraan verknocht"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 08.11.1782, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[140] "twee van de beste en nieuwste globens"; "te weder-zijde van de groote tafel, die in 't Museum onontbeerlijk zijn zal". Ibid.
[141] "tevens […] tot berging van kunst-boeken en portefeuilles met tekeningen, en prenten"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 17.01.1783, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

members' backing for his acquisition plans. They were put to the trustees at the following joint meeting on January 17th 1783, the same meeting at which van Marum presented and explained all the specimens from van der Meulen's collection he had acquired in Amsterdam for a total of f3667,8,-.

The only extant account of van Marum's initial plans for the instrument collection stems from van Marum's recollections from the 1820s. Here, he summarises how he wanted three types of device acquired: firstly, instruments "which may serve for making discoveries in the Knowledge of Nature [*Natuurkennis*]", by which he meant ones that were too expensive to be acquired by private individuals; secondly, models of technological or mechanical devices and machines that had some bearing on everyday life (such as windmills); and thirdly, "to furthermore make a more generally useful entity of this collection", instruments that were necessary for experimental research (such as optical devices).[142]

Whatever the details of the plans van Marum presented to the trustees, they were not immediately enamoured with his ideas. On the contrary, both accounts of the meeting that have been preserved – one recorded by the trustees, the other by the members of the Second Society – show that the trustees initially resisted van Marum's proposals, on the grounds that both the acquisition of and the maintenance required by these instruments was too costly, especially as the trustees doubted they would be used much by the members of the Second Society. Although he was still presenting these plans in the name of the Second Society, the trustees were perhaps beginning to sense that van Marum had plans that went far beyond both the Foundation's and those of his fellow members of the Second Society. Again, it is probably down to van Marum's negotiating skills that they eventually did accept a watered down version of his ideas. The trustees' account reads as follows:

"The second Society proposes that in the Museum will be brought together a Collection of Physical Instruments and Models of Machines; which proposal, although not entirely endorsed by the Directors, has yet been adopted in this sense that the Cabinets in the basement of the Museum, except two that are suitable for fossils, will be fitted so that such a Collection of Phys. Instr: & Models can be placed there."[143]

The Second Society's account implies that it was mainly van Zeebergh who had been sceptical of the plans, even suggesting that only models and no instruments should be acquired, but that he too had eventually agreed to their proposal, albeit on condition that "not too much should be acquired at the same time".[144]

[142] "die tot het doen van ontdekkingen in de Natuurkennis kunnen dienen"; "om wijders van deze verzameling een meer algemeen nuttig geheel te maken"; Martinus van Marum: "De Geschiedenis van de oprigting van Teyler's Museum", 1823-1833, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 9, fol. 15-16.
[143] "Het tweede Collegie proponeert dat in het Musaeum mogt werden aangelegd Eene Collectie Physische Instrumenten en Modellen van Werktuigen; welk voorstel schoon door Directeuren niet ten vollen toegestemd, nogtans in zoverre is aangenomen, dat de Kassen beneden in het Musaeum behalve twee voor fossilia geschikt, zodanig ingerigt worden dat er zodanige Collectie Phis. Instr: & Modellen zoude konnen geplaatst worden. –" "Directienotulen", 17.01.1783, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[144] "men maar niet al te veel t'eener tijd wilde hebben"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 17.01.1783, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

Not a man of moderation however, van Marum did not wait long before he presented the trustees with a suggestion as to what they could acquire for "their" instrument collection: an electrostatic generator. More to the point, he was not just suggesting they buy any electrostatic generator, but that they pay for the construction of "an Electrostatic Generator of exceptional size". Amazingly, after having cleared up "some difficulties" – details as to what these were are not provided – the trustees agreed to pay a total of f2500,- for the construction of such a generator on April 11th 1784.[145] Within a month, van Marum presented his superiors with detailed specifications of the machine that the instrument maker John Cuthbertson and he had drawn up together. Although its completion was originally scheduled for February 1784, it was only installed in the Oval Room in December. In the months after that, van Marum built both the Foundation's as well as his own reputation around this device, and for decades to come it constituted Teylers Museum's pièce de résistance.

Meanwhile, the Foundation had also started building a library. Again, van Marum spearheaded these efforts. It is obvious from the Society's early suggestion that the cupboards on the Oval Room's gallery be used as bookshelves that there was never any doubt that books were to constitute one of the focal points of the Foundation's collecting activities. The initial idea of the Oval Room functioning as a "bookhall" had obviously not been discarded in the two years between Barnaart's death and the near-completion of the Oval Room. Yet even though it was evidently implicitly clear to all involved that the Oval Room was to function in large part as a library, it took over a year for some sort of acquisition policy to be formulated. It seems the trustees waited until an end to the interior furbishing of the Oval Room was in sight. The minutes of the Second Society's meetings states how in November 1783 they felt that "the erection of the Museum behind this Foundation House had now progressed so far, that there was reason to be sure that, next year, it would be entirely completed and finished".[146] With van Marum acting as intermediary, the trustees then once again turned to the Societies, asking

"that the Societies will each reflect and then, communicating with each other, will conceive a plan to be handed over to the Directors for the creation of a Library and a specification of those Books that the Members of the Societies would deem to be of the greatest use for this Foundation".[147]

Minutes detailing the Theological Society's response to this have not been preserved, but the Second Society recorded that

[145] "eene Electriseer Machine van buitengemene Grootte"; "eenige zwarigheden"; "Directienotulen", 11.04.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5. The corresponding minutes of the Second Society's meetings were either never drawn up or have not been preserved.
[146] "de bouw van 't Museum achter dit Fundatie-Huis thans zoo verre was gevorderd, dat men rede hadde voor zeker te stellen, dat 't zelve in 't naast volgende Jaar geheel volbouwd en afgemaakt zouwde zijn"; "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 07.11.1783, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[147] "dat de Collegien eerst elk in den haaren hunne gedachten wilden laaten gaan, en, vervolgens met onderlinge communicatie, een plan beraamen, om aan Hun Heeren Directeuren over te geeven tot het formeeren van eene Bibliotheek, en eene opgave van die Boeken, welken de Leden der Collegien zouwden oordeelen van de grootste nuttigheid voor deeze Stichting te weezen"; Ibid.

"it [was] understood unanimously that the place for the storage of books should not be overloaded, and that it was therefore impossible to think of a very extensive collection of everything belonging to each of the sciences dealt with here, but that only the most select books and works, which are of a great value and therefore rarely to be encountered in private collections, would be most suitable to be listed and recommended for the use of this Foundation."

It was probably van Oosten de Bruijn who voiced the opinion "that for the Library of this Foundation most useful and most requisite is a fine collection of the editions of the Greek and Roman authors".[148] This motion was accepted, but not before it had also been decided that the collection's focal point with regard to the study of nature was to be geology, and books on fossils in particular.

It is worth noting that the idea was to acquire books that were too expensive to be purchased by private individuals, much in the same way that van Marum had suggested this for scientific instruments. No further explanation is provided as to why this point was emphasized. In both cases it might well have constituted a noble attempt at providing some sort of altruistic service to the scholarly community at large, but with the books as with the instruments it is equally likely that this suggestion was van Marum's alone, and that he did not have private individuals as much as one single individual in mind, i.e. himself. Be that as it may, the statement on the acquisition of books in particular – because it was made in 1783, rather than at a later point in time like the statement on the instruments – can be seen as heralding the significant role the Teyler Foundation's private collections were to play in the public realm. So, as was summarized in the minutes, it was decided

"that, as far as the <u>Study of Nature</u> [*Physica*] was concerned, the very wide field of <u>Natural History</u> would not be entered, as this could not be treated in its entirety in this foundation, and that only the subdivisional branch of <u>fossils</u> would be taken into consideration, to which purpose a respectable collection of minerals had already been acquired by this foundation."[149]

Indeed, talk of a "respectable collection" was not unjustified, as van Marum had not only been busy designing the electrostatic generator and buying books, but in the meantime was constantly busy expanding the Foundation's geological collections.

The trustees had not only been pleased with his acquisitions at the auction of van der Meulen's collection, but also agreed to focus exclusively on geological specimens in their efforts to build a collection, leaving all other branches of natural history to the Holland

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[148] "[was] eenpariglijk begrepen, dat de plaats tot berging van de boeken geschikt, zooveel mooglijk diende gemenageerd te worden, en dat er dus niet te denken was aan eene zeer uitgebreide verzameling van alles, wat tot elke weetenschap, hier getracteerd wordende, behoorde, maar dat d'uitgezochtste boeken, en werken, die van hoogen prijs zijn, en, daarom, selden in particuliere verzamelingen worden aangetroffen, alleen en meest geschikt waren om ten gebruike van deeze Stichting te worden opgegeeven en aangepreezen."; "dat voor de Bibliotheek van deeze Stichting allernuttigst en noodigst is eene schoone verzameling van de beste uitgaaven der Griekse en Romeinse Schrijveren"; Ibid.

[149] "dat, zoo veel betreft de <u>Physica</u>, niet zouwde worden getreeden in 't zeer ruime veld der <u>Historia Naturalis</u>, alzoo die, in haare uitgebreidheid [fol. 92 begins] bij deeze fondatie niet stond te worden getracteerd maar dat daaruit alleen de tak der <u>fossilia</u> in aanmerking zouwde dienen genomen te worden, waartoe reeds een aanzienlijke verzameling van mein-stoffen bij deeze fondatie was geacquireerd." Ibid.

Society. As keeper of the Holland Society's cabinet and representative of the Directors of the Society, van Marum had suggested that the Teyler Foundation buy the Holland Society's geological specimens off them at cost price, thereby preventing any future overlap of the two collections which, after all, were housed in the same town. Again, the trustees agreed, paying the Society a total of f400,-. In addition to this, the trustees also agreed to buy some geological specimens off van Marum, which he had brought back from a journey to Germany and the Southern Netherlands in the summer of 1782, hoping to sell them on to the Holland Society.

It was during this trip that van Marum had first laid his eyes on a collection for sale in Maastricht. This had originally been acquired by the Major Drouin. Van Marum first proposed incorporating this collection in the Foundation's in July 1783, but it took until April 1784 before he could pick it up, after having paid Drouin the handsome price of f2400,-. This collection included the petrified head of what van Marum still described as "a large fish", which was the source of much debate over the course of the following years, particularly regarding the question of whether it represented an extinct species or not. Initially the idea was that these were the fossilised remains of a crocodile or whale. By the early 19th century, the consensus was that van Marum had bought some kind of extinct lizard. By the 1820s, it was classified as a "mosasaur".

By the time of the acquisition of Drouin's collection, van Marum was clearly calling the shots as far as the Teyler Foundation's collections were concerned. And when the trustees once again came around to van Marum's home to inspect the fossils they had acquired, he took the opportunity to consolidate his informal position as head of the collections by seeking permission to buy specimens for the collection without prior permission from the trustees, within certain budgetary limits.[150] The reason he gave was that many traders of geological specimens passing through Haarlem only remained in town for a short period, which in turn meant van Marum did not have the time to check with the trustees whether they agreed with his recommendations for acquisitions. In addition to this, van Marum also suggested that he keep all those specimens in the collection that were present in duplicate at his own home, rather than at the Oval Room. These could then be used as barter.

Both proposals were formally approved by the trustees the following day, and van Marum was granted a budget of 20-30 ducats.[151] These new rules constituted a major step in van Marum's gradual monopolisation of the Foundation's collections. Their significance becomes clear if one takes into account that just a few months earlier, in February 1784, he had still been compelled to solicit the opinion of the Second Society's other members regarding the possible purchase of a geological collection assembled by le Francq van Berkheij which had come up for sale.[152] Although van Marum proposed to acquire it, his suggestion met with strong opposition from his fellow members, who were concerned that many of the specimens

[150] Martinus van Marum: "Journaal van mijne verrichtingen ter verkrijging eener verzameling van Fossilia in Teyler's Museum", 1782-1790, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 11d, 17.06.1784.
[151] "Directienotulen", 18.06.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5 & Martinus van Marum: "Journaal van mijne verrichtingen ter verkrijging eener verzameling van Fossilia in Teyler's Museum", 1782-1790, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 11d, 19.06.1784.
[152] "Notulen Tweede Genootschap", 06.02.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

in van Berkheij's collection were already represented in the Foundation's own collection. They subsequently decided to acquire only those specimens from van Berkheij's collection which would complement the Foundation's. This, however, proved not to be feasible, and the plan fell through. Because the amount of money that would have been required for the purchase of van Berkheij's collection was higher than the budget van Marum was granted for negotiations on the Foundation's behalf some months later, he would not have been able to push this deal through according to the new guidelines either – but nevertheless, it is clear that with the introduction of the new rules he was gradually shedding the restrictions of having to answer not only to the trustees, but the Second Society too.

Van Marum's real coup and final step in gaining recognition as the head of the Foundation's collections, however, was still to come. Whether it was first mentioned at the same meeting at which van Marum suggested the new guidelines was not recorded; but it is not unlikely, because just one week later, van Zeebergh pointed out to the other trustees how

"the Cabinet of Fossils that has been bought, is already so important that it deserves to be examined by interested persons; that the Museum will be completed soon, and that af.[orementioned] Fossils can be placed in it; that in the meantime this collection could not be exhibited except under supervision of a capable man, as the risk is run otherwise that they will repeatedly be brought into disorder, and in some parts in an irreparable manner;"[153]

The obvious choice for such a "capable man" was of course van Marum. It soon transpired that van Zeebergh had in fact already tested the waters and spoken to the young doctor in what was referred to as an "informal conversation". Unsurprisingly, van Marum had declared he would be happy to take on the task. According to the minutes the mayor Kuits, who was not present at this particular meeting of the trustees, had previously declared his support for van Zeebergh's proposal, who subsequently had little difficulty in persuading the other two trustees that had shown up for the meeting, van der Vlugt and Hugaart, to ask van Marum "to take on both the Supervision of the Cabinet of Fossils and the general administration of the Museum".[154] The exact details of his appointment as "Director of Teylers Musaeum" – the post was referred to as such in the heading summarizing the points discussed during the meeting – as well as van Marum's salary were still to be determined.

Intriguingly, there was also talk of a library that was to be placed at the director's disposal. In a way that defies coincidence, the description as to what this library was to contain is an almost verbatim copy of the Second Society's recommended acquisition policy from a few months earlier – save the idea that Greek and Roman Classics needed to be included. As the minutes read:

[153] "het Cabinet van Fossilia, thans aangekogt, reeds van dat aanbelang geworden is, dat hetzelve verdiene van Liefhebbers beschouwd te worden; dat ook het Musaeum eerlang zal voltooijd zijn, en gen.[oemde] Fossilia daarin zullen kunnen geplaatst worden; dat ondertusschen deeze verzameling niet kon ten toon opengelegd worden, dan onder opzigt van een kundig man, wijl men anderzins gevaar loopt, dezelve meermalen in verwarring gebragt te zien, en wel in zommige gedeeltens op eene onherstelbare wijze;" "Directienotulen", 25.06.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

[154] "het Toezigt op het Cabinet Fossilia en het algemeen Bestuur van het Musaeum op zig te willen neemen"; Ibid.

“Following the proposal of Mr van Zeeberg it [is] decided to bring together a Collection of Books concerning Natural History, in the first place the Branch of Fossils, at the expense of this Foundation, which will remain the owner, but which collection will in due course be handed over to the Director for the use and study of these matters”.[155]

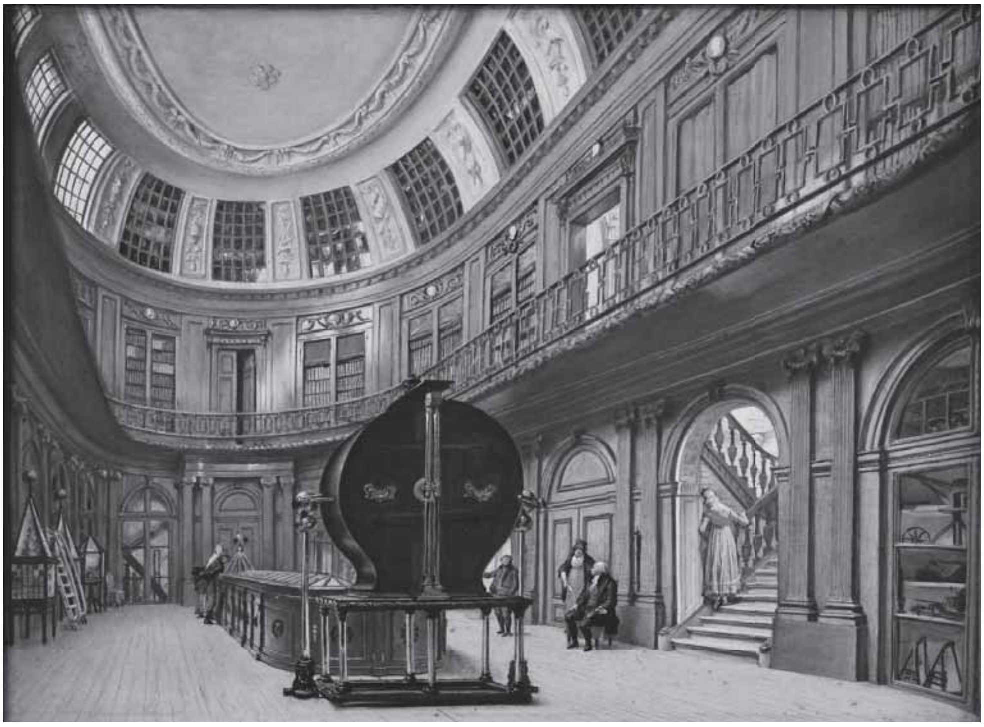

Fig.4. A painting of the Oval Room by Wybrand Hendriks, c. 1810 (Teylers Museum, Haarlem, KS009)

The minutes then specify that van Marum could even keep the books at his own house, provided he keep an inventory and return them in case he ever decided to resign from his position.

In other words, van Marum was now not only the undisputed head of the Foundation’s scientific collections, but had also ensured that the Foundation’s library fell under his purview. It is obvious that at this point not only van Zeebergh, but the entire board of trustees were so enamoured with van Marum that they trusted him enough to give him what essentially amounted to a carte blanche as far as their new “musaeum” was concerned. It is worth noting that there was little indication of the disputes and disagreements that were to lead to the nigh-on vitriolic accusations van Marum came forward with in his recollections

[155] “[Wordt] op voorstel van de Hr van Zeeberg beslooten eene Collectie van Boeken betreklijk op de Historia Naturalis en weleerst op den Tak der Fossilia, bijeentebrengen op kosten deezer Fundatie, aan welke dezelve ook in Eigendom zal blijven behooren, maar aan den Directeur in der tijd ten gebruike en ter beoeffeninge deezer Stoffe zal overgegeven worden”; Ibid.

some four decades later. On the contrary, in 1784 the trustees were evidently proud that they were able to provide the resources that enabled van Marum to develop his considerable talents to the full. What's more, the fact that he stayed on as director of Teylers Museum until his death some fifty years later and rejected a number of alternative job offers that came his way, indicates that he too realised that his work on behalf of the trustees was to their mutual benefit, and even suggests a certain sense of appreciation.

12. An Offer They Couldn't Refuse

General satisfaction with van Marum's past efforts for the Foundation's collections and a profound sense of trust at least are pretty much the only way to explain the exact terms and conditions under which van Marum was officially appointed "Director of the Physical and Natural History Cabinets and Librarian of Teylers Museum" (*Directeur van de Physische en Naturalien- Cabinetten en Bibliothecaris van Teylers Musaeum*) on September 25th 1784. Some three months after van Zeebergh's suggestion to take him on as head of collections, van Marum presented the trustees with a draft of his contract – or rather his "instruction", as contracts were always referred to at Teylers. They were accepted almost verbatim, and are worth reproducing here in full. They provide a clear summary of how van Marum saw his role at the new institution in 1784; they illustrate just how much freedom van Marum was given to mould the Foundation's collections according to his own ideal; and finally, they constitute probably the earliest example in history of a museum director's contract.

It is therefore worth quoting in full:

"Instruction for the Director of Teylers Musaeum

Art. 1
The Director shall have to keep in order and to have cleaned by servants, the Fossils, the Physical Instruments and the Models of useful Machines: as well as the Books that belong to the Foundation.

2.
Of all these collections he shall have to draw up the Catalogue, namely a Systematic Catalogue of Fossils, a second one of Physical Instruments and Models, and a third of the Books, and in each of them he shall have to record whatever is placed in the Musaeum from time to time.
These Catalogues always need to be at hand in the Musaeum, so that everybody can see from them what is to be found in the Musaeum and can read a description in them of what he notices in the Musaeum.

3.
The Fossils that can be stored in the drawers, he shall have to arrange in the best Systematical order, and in order to be able to do this so much the better, he shall have to make every effort

to acquaint himself with, and classify as to genus and species, the unnamed Fossils that the Foundation acquires by purchase or that are donated to it. He shall also have to place legends next to the Fossils in the drawers, from which can be read what species they are and where they are found; everything in the same way as he has done with the Fossils that are present in the Musaeum.

4.
Next to the Fossils as well as with the Physical Instruments and the Models that may be presented to the Musaeum, he shall, if they are pieces of considerable value, have to place the names of the benefactors, so that others who visit the Musaeum are tacitly encouraged to donate something as well.

Art. 5
As the compiler of these Collections, the First Director shall have to make special efforts to enrich them and add lustre to them as much as he can.
With that end in view he shall, a) have to find out what Fossils, Physical Instruments, Models and Books that would fit into the Collection can be acquired, and how they can be acquired at the lowest cost.
B) At Public Sales of Fossils, Physical Instruments and Models or Books as well as from what is offered privately, to buy that, in so far as the trustees are willing to authorise him, which according to the plans that have been made should be placed in the Musaeum and which is not excessively expensive.

6.
When it is decided to have Physical Instruments and Models manufactured for the Musaeum, he shall order them from the best instrument makers and in this keep the benefit of the Foundation as much as possible in mind.
And concerning the Instruments ordered he shall have to make sure that the instrument makers manufacture them with the greatest precision. He shall also have to test them before they are accepted and paid for by the Foundation.

7.
The Fossils of which duplicates are acquired at some purchase, he shall attempt to exchange, to the greatest benefit of the Musaeum, for such Objects as are absent in it: and in this matter he shall, in particular, have to keep in mind that he receives such Objects from the Owners or Directors of Cabinets whom he meets in return as cannot be easily acquired in another way.

Art. 8
The first Director in particular shall have to correspond with foreign Physicists, who may be able to assist him in extending the said Collection, in order to obtain in this way rare fossils from all countries, which are otherwise very difficult to acquire.

9.
The Director shall have to make efforts to carry out such experiments with the Physical Instruments as will serve most to the advancement of the Knowledge of Nature and therefore at the same time will add most Distinction to this Foundation.
In particular he shall attempt in this way to advise the Members of the Second Society if, in order to judge the Responses submitted to one of the Physical Questions proposed by them, certain experiments may be needed.

He shall also, as far as possible, make the Collection of Fossils useful in judging such essays as are submitted in response to contests concerning the natural History of the Earth, which have been set by the Second Society.

Art. 10
He shall have to describe the discoveries which he may be able to make with the Physical Instruments of the Musaeum, and, if the Trustees approve of it, he shall have the Instruments with which he has made such Discoveries or Experiments, illustrated and published under his supervision at the expense of the Foundation. The Electrostatic Generator which is being manufactured at the moment at the expense of the Foundation, and its effects will in the first place deserve to be illustrated and described.

11.
The Director shall be required to have illustrated and to describe such Fossils as will from time to time be judged worthy to be made publicly known. The Maastricht Fish Head [mosasaur] for example would be eminently worthy to have an illustration and description made of it, which could suitably be placed after the Prize Essays which the Second Society can expect in response to a question set by them concerning the Natural History of the Earth, the more so as this rare and little known object is most relevant to this topic."[156]

One point that transpires clearly from this document is that van Marum knew what he wanted. Not only had he been placed in charge of the Foundation's collections, but with this contract the trustees essentially sanctioned his pursuit of his own personal interests. This in itself, as well as the actual phrasing of the document, indicates that van Marum knew which buttons to push with the trustees. It is striking for instance how the entire contract revolves mainly around the geological collection. Although this in itself did not run contrary to van Marum's interests, what is noteworthy is how the contract gives a scientific reason which even echoes Teyler's will for the systematic arrangement and expansion of the geological collection – i.e. supporting the Second Society in assessing entries to the prize essay competition – whereas the main reason provided as to why van Marum should perform scientific experiments with instruments from the Foundation's collection was nothing more than the increase of the Foundation's "Distinction" (*Celebriteit*).

That van Marum chose to emphasise this reason can in turn be seen as one of many indications that the trustees and van Marum did not necessarily see eye to eye where the purpose of the instrument collection and the research performed with it were concerned. Fundamentally different ideas on the value and purpose of the pursuit of knowledge were at the bottom of this, and these differences were still to lead to some serious disputes over the following years.[157] A common interest in geological specimens and all the physico-theological implications of recent fossil finds as yet eclipsed this lingering conflict, but it is remarkable that as early as September 1784 van Marum evidently considered it wise not to provide too much detail concerning his plans for the instrument collection, elaborating instead on the collection closer to the trustees' heart, thereby perhaps letting sleeping dogs lie.

[156] "Directienotulen", 25.09.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5. For the Dutch original see Appendix 1.
[157] Mijnhardt, *Tot heil van 't menschdom: culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750-1815*, 366–369.

The document also clearly betrays just how ambitious van Marum was. It is worth noting how his contract already refers to the "the best instrumentmakers", and geological specimens that "cannot be easily acquired in another way". The best was just about good enough for van Marum.

Finally, the contract also reveals a little about how van Marum intended to use the museum space he had been entrusted with, i.e. the Oval Room. On the one hand, it was obviously supposed to function as a place where experiments could be performed, for example with the electrostatic generator. On the other hand however, van Marum was clearly equally aware of its aesthetic qualities, and the possibility of showcasing, if not items from the collections themselves, then at least the names of those who had donated the most precious of these items. The only way of explaining paragraph four of the contract is that the general aura of the new institution, i.e. the prestige associated with the disinterested pursuit of knowledge in the name of Teyler, which in turn was bolstered by the Foundation's considerable financial muscle, was to incite further donations. For van Marum, this was another card he could play not only in his campaign to expand the collections, but simultaneously on his way towards consolidating his position as the head of a prestigious, well endowed research institute. Whatever his motives, he was capitalising on the Oval Room's splendour.

There are more indications than this one paragraph in his contract that van Marum was well aware of how both the Oval Room and the collection it housed could hardly fail to impress visitors. Recall for instance that he kept geological specimens present in the collection in duplicate at his own house, where he seems also to have conducted all his business with travelling traders. Although he is likely to have done so for pragmatic reasons as well, one can imagine how it would hardly have helped his bargaining position if he had immediately initiated the traders into the magnificent splendour of the Oval Room. And almost ironically, at the same time, and whether he did it consciously or not, van Marum was also dissociating the Oval Room from the "unpleasant" or "filthy business" of day-to-day trading and bartering. Items that had entered and left van Marum's home as tradable commodities with a (negotiable) price tag in the market for minerals, became something else once they entered the Oval Room: they were now part of a collection serving the purpose of disinterested research, which meant their value lay in their research value, and in the way they complemented other items in the collection. Crucially, this "commodity situation" was not temporary, but permanent.[158] Teylers Museum was here to stay, as van Marum made clear. Ironically, this in turn was precisely the prestige and aura he could then capitalise on in the market. A good example of this occurred in December 1784, when van Marum managed to persuade Pieter Alexander Hasselaer to donate the collection of minerals he had previously promised the Holland Society to Teylers Museum instead. Initially reluctant, Hasselaer was persuaded to

[158] "Commodity situation" is taken here in Arjun Appadurai's sense of the term: Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 13–16. In Appadurai's terms, the objects in Teylers Museum are best described as "ex-commodities".

support the new institution when van Marum assured him that he "could be assured of the long-term existence of the Museum of the Foundation".[159]

A further example illustrates how van Marum was well aware at least of the mineral collection's potential to impress visitors: at the same meeting during which his contract was discussed, van Marum suggested to the trustees that two special foldaway showcases should be incorporated into the flat-top cabinet that Viervant was busy constructing for the centre of the Oval Room. As van Marum envisioned them – and as they were soon built – these showcases, situated on both sides of the cabinet, would fold away underneath its table-high surface. Their single purpose was to display "the most beautiful gold- and silver- Gemstones or other Fossils, which display themselves most beautifully to the eye, and as a result draw the greatest attention from the visitors".[160]

13. Open All Hours

The fact that van Marum was taking "visitors" (*bezichtigers*) into account already implies that visitors were a regular phenomenon at Teylers Museum, even during this early stage. Indeed, it is one of the most remarkable aspects of the history of Teylers Museum that, in principle, it was accessible without restriction from the very beginning on, and a little more needs be said at this point about the museum's early public accessibility.

In his will, Teyler had stipulated that the collections stored in his former house in the Damstraat 21 were to be accessible to the members of both learned societies "at all times".[161] In what probably amounted to a gesture of goodwill towards van der Vinne and an attempt to guarantee that he could enjoy some privacy in the Foundation House, the trustees soon decreed that the members were only allowed to consult the collections "in the daytime, although the will states at all times".[162] What was more significant in the long term though, was that the way they phrased this apparent restriction on access to the collections, they now explicitly allowed the members to show the collection to interested third parties as well. The minutes record "that the Members have no Liberty to introduce a person or persons who are not Members of the Societies in any way <u>at night</u> to this House; which admission of Strangers the Trustees do not wish to contest <u>in the Daytime</u>."[163]

[159] "zijn Ed. op de durzaamheid van het Museum der Fundatie konde staat maken"; Martinus van Marum: "Journaal van mijne verrichtingen ter verkrijging eener verzameling van Fossilia in Teyler's Museum", 1782-1790, Haarlem, NHA, Archief van Marum, vol. 529, nr. 11d, 04.12.1784.
[160] "de fraaiste goud- en zilver- Edele Steenen of andere fossilia, die zich het schoonst voor het oog vertoonen, en hier door de meeste attentive [sic] van de bezichtigers tot zich trekken"; Ibid., 25.09.1784.
[161] "ten allen tijde"; Sliggers, *De idealen van Pieter Teyler: een erfenis uit de Verlichting*, 201.
[162] "overdag, hoewel in het testament staat ten allen tijde"; "Directienotulen", 30.10.1778, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
[163] "dat de Leden geen Vrijheid hebben, om persoon of persoonen geen Lid of Leden van de Collegien zijnde, <u>bij avond</u> ten dezen Huize op eenigerleije wijze toete laten; welke admissie van Vreemdelingen Directeuren onder ondertusschen den Leden niet willen betwisten <u>bij Dag</u>." Ibid.

Interestingly enough, the collections soon appear to have attracted some unexpected additional attention – certainly after the Oval Room was constructed. In May 1783 van der Vinne complained about the "many requests" he was receiving to view the museum and the collections.[164] The impression arises that he was talking of strangers not in any way involved in the Foundation's work. This prompted the trustees to decide on a "provisional Rule" to regulate access to what they referred to as "the Musaeum": all those in some way affiliated with the Teyler Foundation and anybody accompanying them were to be allowed to enter "at all times" (except at night, presumably); the same rule applied, in principle, for "well-known inhabitants of this City, or other well-known Groups", although the trustees granted van der Vinne the right to ask them to return at some other time which happened to suit him better; finally, van der Vinne was allowed to send away "strangers or unknown Groups", and point out to them that "the Musaeum" had not been completed yet.[165]

This distinction between three visitor categories – beneficiaries of Teyler's will, citizens of Haarlem, and "strangers" – was upheld over the course of the following decades, and provides a glimpse of the terms in which the trustees defined "the public". That interested third parties, i.e. members of the public, were granted access was to gain huge significance as the decades progressed, because even though the basic rule that interested members of the public were to be granted access to the museum essentially never changed, the definition of what constituted that "public" did change profoundly, as did the expectations of members of "the public" as to what a museum was to provide them with. This inevitably had an effect on the entire character of Teylers Museum. As yet however, visitors from outside Haarlem were evidently still turned away.

Once van Marum had been appointed director of the new museum and the electrostatic generator installed in the Oval Room, however, he lost little time in requesting that the trustees decide on fixed opening hours for the new museum.[166] What they came up with in December 1784 was that residents of Haarlem could enter the premises on one day of the week – van der Vinne was allowed to decide which day – between the hours of 10am and 1pm. Visitors from outside Haarlem were to be granted access every day between noon and 1pm, and could obtain special dispensation to enter the building at a different time of day if their sojourn in Haarlem was only brief. No entry fee was required, but tickets had to be picked up at van Marum's, who could therefore screen the visitors.

On December 24th the trustees convened again. Van der Vinne had let them know that Tuesdays would suit him best as the day on which residents of Haarlem could visit the museum. At the same time, however, he protested strongly about the "burden, difficulty and lack of freedom" the new regulations would cause him, pointing out that he had not expected anything like this when he accepted the position the Foundation had offered him.[167] He therefore requested that the museum remain closed on Sundays, which the trustees complied

164 "veelvuldige aanzoeken"; "Directienotulen", 23.05.1783, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
165 "provisioneelen Regel"; "het Musaeum"; "bekende bewooners van deeze Stad, of andere wel bekende Gezelschapen"; "vreemden of onbekende Gezelschappen"; Ibid.
166 "Directienotulen", 17.12.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.
167 "last, moeijlijkheid en onvrijheid"; "Directienotulen", 24.12.1784, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 5.

with. But his frustration was exacerbated by the fact that van Marum had eagerly started experimenting with the new electrostatic generator – “even at night” (*ook al des avonds*), as van der Vinne lamented. If one takes into account that this electrostatic generator could generate sparks of up to 300.000 volts, one can imagine the noise the discharge must have made, not to speak of the electric field this induced. Van der Vinne must, quite literally, have been bristling, and his complaints were a harbinger of his imminent departure, in May 1785.

14. You Say Musaeum, I Say Museum…

Van der Vinne’s complaints not only reveal his own frustration with van Marum, but of course also prove that van Marum had been serious when he included the passage on conducting experiments as director of Teylers Museum in his contract. Although van Marum was soon forced to postpone his work with the electrostatic generator because of the “humid weather”[168], he eagerly set to work on a series of experiments on electricity whenever he could, wasted no time in getting the results published, and went to great lengths to distribute copies of the resulting treatise amongst even the most famous of his fellow researchers. (He managed to present Benjamin Franklin with a copy of his work, for instance.[169])

This is interesting on two levels. Firstly, van Marum’s work and the electrostatic generator’s sheer size did a lot in putting Teylers Museum on the map. But what is more important here is that, secondly, the museum became known because of the experiments performed there even though it had not originally been conceived as a place where such experiments were to be performed – or at least weren’t supposed to take centre stage. Recall how the building was initially referred to as a “bookhall”, how there was never any question that books were to be included in the collections, how the entire design of the building resembles a library from the late Renaissance more than anything else, and how the trustees were at first reluctant to accept van Marum’s proposal of buying instruments and models for the collection – albeit that they did give their full support to his efforts once they had been approved, and had not hesitated to provide considerable funds for the geological collection.

It has repeatedly been pointed out how there is very little concrete evidence as to what the trustees had in mind when they commissioned the Oval Room. But aside from the snippets of information that have been provided so far, there is one last major point that warrants closer scrutiny. That is the issue of what names were used to refer to the institution that eventually became Teylers Museum.

[168] “vochtige weder”; “Notulen Tweede Genootschap”, 04.02.1785, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.
[169] Martinus van Marum, “Journal Concerning Physics and Natural History, and My Communications with Scholars During My Stay in Paris in July 1785 (Journal Physique de Mon Sejour à Paris 1785),” ed. E. Lefebvre, J.G. de Bruijn, and R.J. Forbes, vol. 2, Martinus van Marum: Life & Work (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1970), 221.

The results of such an analysis are interesting in two respects. Even though a confusing variety of names was used to refer to the new institution, within a short period of time the terms “museum” and “musaeum” emerged as the ones that were most frequently used to denote the unit of the collections and the building together, i.e. the institution as a whole. On the one hand that underscores the idea that Teylers Museum had been conceived as a kind of late-Renaissance “temple to the muses”; on the other hand however – and realising this is crucial to an understanding of the museum´s subsequent development – Teylers Museum was actually one of the last of its kind. Just a few years later the political and cultural sea changes that swept Europe were set in motion. One tangible result of these changes was that the word “museum” began to carry completely new connotations, and was increasingly equated with publicly accessible, specialised collections. At the same time the growing specialisation within academia led to a stronger emphasis of the differences between the fine arts and the (empirical) natural sciences. Interestingly, “museums” in the new sense of the word were largely associated with the fine arts. This in turn is important to keep in mind when studying the history of Teylers Museum, because it of course housed both scientific collections and a collection of fine art. As the 19th century progressed, ever more importance was attributed to the collection of fine art at Teylers Museum too – and as the scientific collections’ role diminished and that of the art collections increased, Teylers Museum began to take on a role as a public art “museum” in the modern sense, and lose its role as a “temple to the muses”.

So let us take a look at how the new institution was initially labelled. Many of the terms used to refer to it have in fact already been mentioned above. The new building evidently started life as a “Bookhall”. Then, it was increasingly called a “musaeum”. The first time it is referred to by this name in writing is in the minutes of the Second Society’s meeting on December 10th 1779: this is the meeting at which the trustees officially informed the members of the Society about their new project.[170] However, “musaeum” was by no means the only term used to refer to the building. Very often, in fact, it was simply referred to as the “new building”, or something to that extent (such as *voorgenomen gebouw*, or just “building”). Then, in 1782, the term “Arthall” (*Konstzael*) is used alongside “Bookhall” for the first time, and the separate collections are referred to as pertaining to different “branches of connoisseurship” (*takken van Liefhebberij*).

Then, on January 17th 1783, the term “Musaeum Teylerianum” was first used in the minutes of the trustees’ meetings. One can’t go as far as to say that this constituted the christening of the new institution, because for many years all the other terms continued to be used almost interchangeably. What’s more, seemingly adding to the confusion, by this time the new institution is persistently referred to not as a “musaeum”, but as a “museum” in the Second Society’s minutes. So whereas van Marum referred to himself as the director of “Teylers Museum” in the draft version of his contract as it was drawn up in 1784, the version that was copied out in the minutes of the trustees’ meeting referred to “Teylers Musaeum”. Nevertheless, the usage of the words “musaeum” or “museum” to denote the unit of the collections and the building at this point is highly revealing.

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[170] “Notulen Tweede Genootschap”, 10.12.1779, Haarlem, ATS, vol. 1382.

In order to be able to appreciate just how significant this is, one needs to learn a little more about the word "musaeum" itself, i.e. its etymological roots and the connotations it carried before and during the 18th century. Its origins can be traced back to Greek antiquity, and more specifically the *museion* in Alexandria.[171] According to the few historical records that remain, this was a meeting place for scholars with a legendary library, all of which was devoted to the muses – hence *museion*. This, at least, was the general consensus at the end of the 18th century, as recorded in dictionaries all over Europe. However, this seemingly ignored the fact that a hill on which poetry was recited in Athens had also been named after the muses and might very well have formed the real origin of the word "museum" in all its varieties.

To the same degree to which Renaissance scholars now returned to the works and values of antiquity, the Alexandrian museion was rediscovered as one of the nodal points of the learned world of antiquity and began to gain almost mythical proportions. Soon, the Latin derivative of the Greek word, "musaeum", was used ever more liberally and no longer just in referring to the Alexandrian institution itself, thereby acquiring broader connotations. In Renaissance Italy, for instance, "*musaeum* was an epistemological structure which encompassed a variety of ideas, images and institutions that were central to late Renaissance culture", as Paula Findlen has eloquently shown.[172] "Musaeum", she elaborates, increasingly became "an apt metaphor for the encyclopaedic tendencies of the period"[173] and was ultimately associated more and more with the collection of knowledge, until "*musaeum* was a locating principle, circumscribing the space in which learned activities could occur".

At this point it is important to emphasise that any definition of the word "musaeum" was not in any way reduced to – or even necessarily associated with – material collections. Scholarly journals or the collected works of one author for example were denoted as "musaeums" too.[174] In late 18th century France "muséum" could essentially be equated with "academy", i.e. in some sense with a collection of scholars and all the material prerequisites for them to develop their intellect.[175]

It is in this sense – i.e. in the sense of a collection of knowledge, rather than a collection of material objects – that one needs to understand the choice of the label "musaeum" for the new institution of which van Marum was appointed the director (i.e. the future Teylers Museum). What is particularly striking in this respect is that the trustees persistently used the Latin spelling when referring to their new project – whether they did so consciously or not is hardly important, because the spelling of this word only highlights how firmly the trustees were rooted in the humanist thought of the late Renaissance. Alongside the examples already mentioned above, this is further underscored by the fact that they had the Oval Room

[171] Unless otherwise indicated, the following summary is based on information provided in the articles: Paula Findlen, "The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy," *Journal of the History of Collections* 1, no. 1 (1989): 59–78; Paula Young Lee, "The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-century France," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (1997): 385–412.
[172] Findlen, "The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy," 59.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid., 64.
[175] Lee, "The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-century France," 386.

decorated with busts of important Greek philosophers, and that they acquired the entire *Encyclopédie* by Diderot and d'Alembert as early as 1780.

If one keeps this in mind, it becomes a little clearer why van Marum's desire to perform scientific experiments was not necessarily perfectly compatible with the trustees' ideals. Although adherents to the various strands of humanist thought were not necessarily opposed to experiments as way of gaining more knowledge, they would surely not have allotted them the same pivotal importance as van Marum did. Before this background it becomes significant that van Marum always referred to the institution of which he had been made the head as a "museum", rather than a "musaeum". It provides a further indication that he might not have felt constrained by the tenets of antique philosophy in the way the trustees did.

Nevertheless it should also be emphasised that with regard to the museum van Marum and the trustees were in agreement more than they were in discord. Significantly, they soon found themselves on the same side of a kind of demarcation line that began to form within the world of collecting as a result of the political and cultural changes that are often described as the advent of "modernity". As was already said above, "museums" were increasingly drawn into the public spotlight and began to be defined as public institutions, sometimes even accessible free of charge. That is not to say that late Renaissance collections didn't have a "public" function too – on the contrary. Findlen for instance summarises: "The museums of the late Renaissance mediated between public and private space, straddling the social world of collecting and the humanistic vocabulary which formed its philosophical base".[176] But with the advent of modernity, "museums" increasingly catered to ever larger audiences and came to be defined primarily through the display of the collections they housed, i.e through their exhibitionary role. In this sense, they became – and were expected to be – ever less "exclusive", a development both van Marum and the trustees will have seen with some scepticism.

These changes were gradual, they were slow, they were subtle, they are therefore difficult to pinpoint and they are further obfuscated by the fact that in almost all languages the term "museum" was used to refer to both elitist, scholarly centres of the Renaissance, and institutions whose primary function was to provide access to valuable collections to as many people as possible, i.e. to exhibit. Yet there is no denying that fundamental changes were taking place, and one language in which they are reflected in contemporary semantics, is French. As Paula Young Lee has shown, as from the early 19th century the word "musée" was used to describe a new type of institution, and it was clearly distinguished from the word "muséum". As she puts it: "whereas *muséum* was fixed, conservative, "ancient" in meaning, *musée* was fluid, progressive, "modern" in implication."[177] She invokes the work of the classicist Étienne Michon to show how "*musée* designated a general exhibitonary practice, while *muséum* was a particular intellectual project, and that project was first begun in ancient Alexandria".[178]

[176] Findlen, "The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy," 73.
[177] Lee, "The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-century France," 411.
[178] Ibid.

Interestingly, the emergence of this new type of "museum" – the "musée" in French – coincided with an increasing specialisation of all areas of knowledge. Art and science for instance were increasingly viewed as distinct and mutually exclusive. More importantly, the new type of "museum" was associated first and foremost with the fine arts – far more, at any rate, than with the empirical sciences. Young Lee for instance drew attention to the fact that it was no coincidence that the *Musée du Louvre*, as it was called after 1797, was labelled a "musée", whereas its counterpart for natural history, the *Muséum d'Histoire Naturelles*, continued to be referred to as a "muséum", harking back to the Latin origins of the word.[179] For many decades, the latter institution did indeed define itself far more through the experimental research conducted in its name, than through any form of exhibition on natural history.

Before assessing the impact these global developments had on Teylers Museum however, it is important to learn more about van Marum's activities there. Contextualising his activities, establishing in how far they were rooted in his ideas on the production and consumption of knowledge and assessing what sort of impact he had on the collection and the Oval Room is the topic of the next chapter.

[179] Ibid., 410–411.