

Mobility and Consistorial Discipline in Dutch Formosa: An Examination of *Kerboek*, 1643-1649, Tayouan Consistory

Ann Heylen*

ABSTRACT

This article is part of an ongoing project featuring 17th-century Dutch handwritten manuscripts pertaining to Taiwan, then referred to as Formosa. The manuscript entitled *Kerboek van Formosa* is an ecclesiastical document commenting on the spiritual welfare of the Dutch community and the progress made by the church in evangelizing the natives. The analysis of the text has been inspired by research questions from a “literary turn in historical studies” approach, a contextualist perspective that seeks out points of thematic reference, one of which is the observation of social and economic changes. Social changes are mainly recorded in terms of educational expansion and the development of the Calvinist community, but the minutes also document the scope of mobility by preachers, attendants-to-the-sick, schoolmasters and VOC personnel returning to Batavia or the Dutch Republic. Reading the historical materials from different perspectives sheds light not only on the “conventional practices of time” and their evolution; but also on the unusual and various methods that individuals resorted to in response to policies from above and how the Calvinist spirit played out in the lives of its members. These dynamics will be illustrated through the notion of mobility. What were voyagers’ prospects for mobility in going overseas in the service of the VOC, and how did they work out once the travelers arrived in the distant settlement? My findings suggest that although the voyagers to the East Indies were originally driven by the incentive for upward mobility, for many who landed in Formosa this eventually translated into a sequel of spatial mobility.

Keywords: Dutch Formosa, Mobility, Reformed Church, United East India Company, Literacy

* Associate Professor, Department of Taiwan Culture, Languages and Literature, NTNU
來稿日期：2015年11月4日；通過刊登：2016年11月30日。