Towards a national collaborative network: Spatial Humanities Netherlands

Over the past decades The Netherlands has fostered a rich variety of projects in a field we would today refer to as ‘spatial humanities’. Such projects include long-running infrastructural undertakings, e.g. the municipality boundaries of NLGIS (Nijmegen University/IISG) and cadastral maps of HISGIS Netherlands (Fryske Akademy).\(^1\) With the rise of Linked Data in recent years, the field of spatial humanities has gained a strong momentum in the Netherlands by cultural heritage orientated tech-companies creating smart geo-tools (Bert Spaan\(^2\), Triply\(^3\), Webmapper\(^4\)). Yet, the field is fragmented and there is little coordination regarding best-practices, tools, and vocabularies.

A key accelerator towards a spatial humanities network is the national infrastructural project CLARIAH (2014-2024), creating a critical mass of researchers and computer science engineers working with Linked Data. Examples are Amsterdam Time Machine\(^5\), Historical Leiden in maps\(^6\), and Adamlink\(^7\). Furthermore, existing spatial humanities projects, such as the Historical Atlas of the Low Countries (1350-1800)\(^8\), OpenGazAm\(^9\), and Golden Agents\(^10\) will also be integrated in the network.

The backbone of the network is formed by four research institutes of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Fryske Akademy\(^11\), International Institute of Social History\(^12\), Huygens ING\(^13\), and Meertens Instituut\(^14\) (the latter three part of the newly formed Humanities Cluster\(^15\) in Amsterdam). With the input of afore mentioned tech-companies, and other cultural heritage partners, the aim is to move towards a national spatial humanities platform, for exchange and collaboration, within and outside the Netherlands. To ensure the latter, the network communicates with Pelagios\(^16\) and the World-Historical Gazetteer\(^17\) for the exchange of infrastructural knowledge, data models and vocabularies, benefitting researchers worldwide.

---

1. [http://www.hisgis.nl](http://www.hisgis.nl)
2. [https://bertspaan.nl](https://bertspaan.nl)
3. [https://triply.cc](https://triply.cc)
4. [https://www.webmapper.net/](https://www.webmapper.net/)
6. [http://hlk.erfgoedleiden.nl](http://hlk.erfgoedleiden.nl)
7. [http://www.adamlink.nl](http://www.adamlink.nl)
9. [https://www.clariah.nl/projecten/research-pilots/opengazam/](https://www.clariah.nl/projecten/research-pilots/opengazam/)
10. [https://www.goldenagents.org](https://www.goldenagents.org)
12. [http://www.socialhistory.org](http://www.socialhistory.org)
13. [http://www.huygens.knaw.nl](http://www.huygens.knaw.nl)
14. [http://www.meertens.knaw.nl](http://www.meertens.knaw.nl)
15. [http://huc.knaw.nl](http://huc.knaw.nl)
16. [http://commons.pelagios.org](http://commons.pelagios.org)
17. [http://whgazetteer.org](http://whgazetteer.org)