

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 Spaan², Triply³, Webmapper⁴). 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 Machine⁵, Historical Leiden in maps⁶, and Adamlink⁷. Furthermore, existing spatial humanities projects, such as the Historical Atlas of the Low Countries (1350-1800)⁸, OpenGazAm⁹, and Golden Agents¹⁰ 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 Akademy¹¹, International Institute of Social History¹², Huygens ING¹³, and Meertens Instituut¹⁴ (the latter three part of the newly formed Humanities Cluster¹⁵ 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 Pelagios¹⁶ and the World-Historical Gazetteer¹⁷ for the exchange of infrastructural knowledge, data models and vocabularies, benefitting researchers worldwide.

¹ <http://www.hisgis.nl>

² <https://bertspaan.nl>

³ <https://triplify.cc>

⁴ <https://www.webmapper.net/>

⁵ <http://www.create.humanities.uva.nl/amsterdam-time-machine/>

⁶ <http://hlk.erfgoedleiden.nl>

⁷ <http://www.adamlink.nl>

⁸ <http://rombertstapel.com/2017/01/historical-atlas-of-the-low-countries/>

⁹ <https://www.clariah.nl/projecten/research-pilots/opengazam/>

¹⁰ <https://www.goldenagents.org>

¹¹ <http://www.fryske-akademy.nl>

¹² <http://www.socialhistory.org>

¹³ <http://www.huygens.knaw.nl>

¹⁴ <http://www.meertens.knaw.nl>

¹⁵ <http://huc.knaw.nl>

¹⁶ <http://commons.pelagios.org>

¹⁷ <http://whgazetteer.org>