



Universiteit
Leiden

Dangerous Cities: Mapping crime in Amsterdam and Leiden, 1850–1913

Applicants

Eligible proposals must have at least two applicants from Humanities, preferably from two different institutes.

Supervisor Name	Institute
Dr Marion Pluskota Assistant Professor m.pluskota@hum.leidenuniv.nl	Institute for History
Dr Roos van Oosten Assistant Professor r.m.r.van.oosten@arch.leidenuniv.nl	Faculty of Archaeology

Project description: Dangerous Cities: Mapping crime in Amsterdam and Leiden, 1850–1913.

To what extent did the street patterns in urban districts influence crime patterns? UCL Architecture's Space Syntax Laboratory, which focuses on crime and urban design, concluded that there was 'no correlation between crime and density, only a poor correlation between affluence and crime, but a very strong correlation between layout type and all kinds of crime, with traditional street patterns [relatively straight streets] the best and the most modern hierarchical layouts the worst'.¹ These results, regularly reprised by criminologists, have, however, never been tested in an historical context, which is what this project aims to do.

Two case studies have been selected: Amsterdam and Leiden, 1850–1913, based on the Arrondissementsrechtbank and Kantongerecht archives, respectively.² Judicial registers in these archives detail c. 50,000 individuals charged for Amsterdam and 10,000 for Leiden from the mid-19th century onwards. Two types of information have been recorded, the personal details of the charged (name, age, civil status and employment) and details of the crime (where, what, when). These registers are an excellent source for a systematic analysis using databases and GIS applications, but they have rarely been studied.³ Using Amsterdam and Leiden as case studies for a GIS analysis is to our advantage because cadastral maps of the 19th century have already been made for these cities.⁴

Our goal is to deliver a database of criminal records for each city of all individuals charged, every five years, starting with 1850, and to plot the data on an historical map in the open source GIS application QGIS (Fig. 1). All datasets will be uploaded to easy.dans.knaw.nl. While this project is firmly grounded in the current academic debate, the project results are also relevant beyond academia (e.g. genealogists). A public symposium will be organised to launch the datasets.

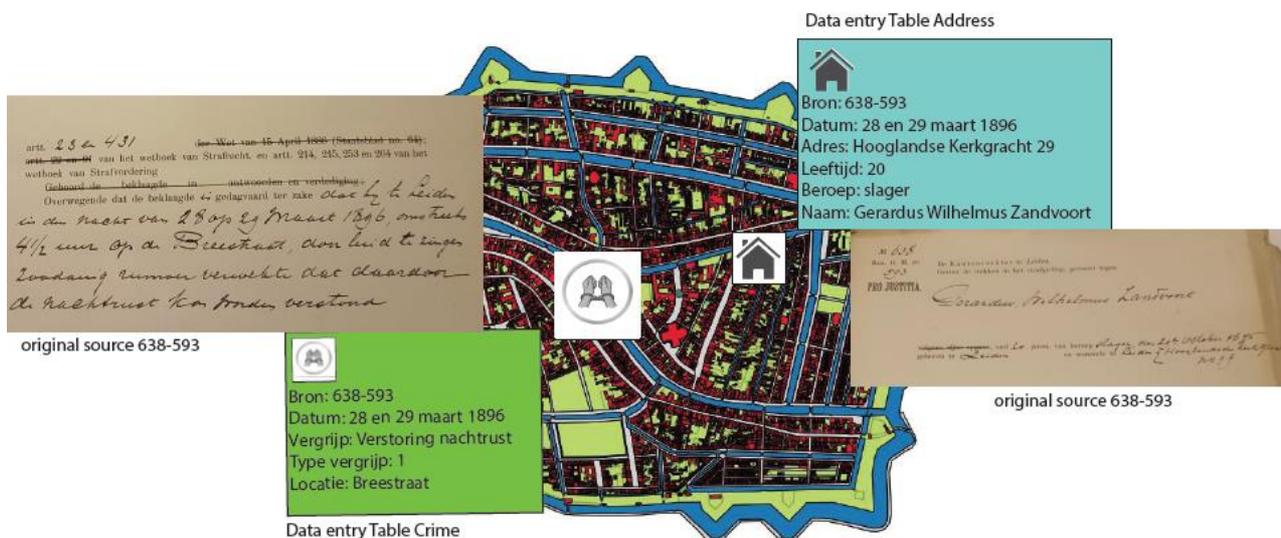


Fig.: 19th-century Leiden. Example of a presentation in a GIS system. Data used from Nationaal archief, Kantongerecht Leiden, 1838–1929, 3.03.29.01, 210.

¹ B. Hillier, 'Can streets be made safe?', *Urban Design International* 9/1 (2004), 31–45.

² Amsterdam judicial archives are located in Haarlem, in the Noords-Holland archief: 198 Arrondissementsrechtbank Amsterdam, Parket van de Officier van Justitie, 842–942 Registers van strafzaken; 1.1.1.3. Vonnissen 1-255 Correctionele Vonnissen, 1838–1886/Strafvonnissen 1887/1913.

Leiden judicial archives are located in Den Haag, Nationaal archief, Kantongerecht Leiden, 1838–1929, 3.03.29.01, inv.nr. 10–274; Rechtbank 's-Gravenhage tot 1939, 3.03.15.01, inv.nr. 212–476 (Leiden correctional tribunal was merged with the tribunal of The Hague in 1877: only the affairs based in Leiden will be included in the database).

³ M. Pluskota, "'Criminal families' and the court: co-offending in Amsterdam, 1897–1902." *The History of the Family* 20, no. 2 (2015): 270–290.

⁴ HISGIS.nl and [DANS deposit, Fedora 67446](http://DANS.deposit,Fedora67446).

Research Trainee Profile

The research trainee role would be particularly suitable for first-year RESMaster students (or outstanding BA students) interested in digital humanities and crime history. Students will not need to have preliminary knowledge of the topic but interest, dedication and an ability to read 19th-century Dutch material are essential. The traineeship will provide RESMaster students with research skills and access to rich primary sources for their theses. Publishing two articles as proposed will also give them a head-start on their PhD proposals.

The supervisors will be on hand to assist with building the databases, plotting the data on GIS maps and using the research tool. During the traineeship, the students will learn how to create and work with large datasets and will acquire firsthand experience of how GIS works, gaining invaluable methodological and practical knowledge in digital humanities. These transferable skills will greatly enhance the students' CVs.

Collaboration

This project is a joint endeavour between the Institute for History and the Faculty of Archaeology and will allow researchers and students from both disciplines to share methodology and sources. New directions in history have turned to the material and the spatialisation of historical data. With this project, Van Oosten and Pluskota aim to strengthen the links between the disciplines by developing a combined methodology. Dr Van Oosten, an urban archaeologist, has coordinated and successfully completed two historical GIS projects in collaboration with Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken (ELO) and HISGIS ([DANS-KleineData Projecten2014](#), [DANS-KleineData Projecten2016](#)). In her current Veni research, she is further developing this historical GIS approach by mapping the spread of disease in 19th-century Leiden. Her Veni research also means that the ongoing private–public collaboration between ELO and HISGIS will be strengthened. Dr Pluskota is a crime historian researching crime patterns in 19th-century Western European cities. She is the co-director of the project [Crime and Gender, 1600–1900](#) and an assistant professor in socio-economic history. She has published extensively on crime and has been involved in making her work accessible to the public in the Netherlands and France (a [public lecture on Goeie Mie](#), exhibition [on crime and sentencing in Normandie](#)). She is currently developing a 2nd-year history course combining GIS and 19th-century socio-economic development in Leiden, funded by ECOLE.

Three public outreach activities are planned: two professional or popular articles to be published in a local journal, and a public symposium organised for September 2018 in Leiden (similar to the one organised about [Goeie Mie](#) in April 2017). As not all 60,000+ records can be processed in the course of this project, the symposium will be used to encourage heritage agencies (Nationaal Archief, Noord-Hollands Archief, ELO) to continue the project by setting up '[Vele Handen](#)' projects.

Deliverables

	Deliverables	Where
A. Leiden		
A1	Database of crime in Leiden, 1850–1913	Databases submitted to easy.dans.knaw.nl
A2	GIS maps of Leiden	Shapefiles submitted to easy.dans.knaw.nl
A3	Professional or popular article on crime in Leiden	By student 1 and supervisors, submitted to local journal or newsletter <i>Oud Leiden</i>
A4	Presentation 1	By student 1 at crime conference at Leiden University
A5	A1 + A2	Datasets A1 and A2 delivered to heritage agencies to build a public viewer
B. Amsterdam		
B1	Database for Amsterdam	Databases submitted to easy.dans.knaw.nl
B2	GIS maps of Amsterdam	Shapefiles submitted to easy.dans.knaw.nl
B3	Professional or popular article on crime in Amsterdam	By student 2 and supervisors in local journal or newsletter.
B4	Presentation 2	By student 2 at crime conference at Leiden University
B5	B1 + B2	Datasets B1 and B2 delivered to HISGIS and Noords-Holland Archief to build a public viewer.
C. Leiden & Amsterdam		
C1	Public symposium	Organised by supervisors and students
C2	Scholarly article	Submission of co-authored paper to Research Data Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences (open access)
C3	Scholarly article	Article on crime patterns in NL cities to be submitted to <i>Crime, History and Society</i> .

Planning

Both research trainees will follow the same time schedule: 1. Data entry; 2. coding and plotting on cadastral maps; 3. publications and public outreach activities.

Week	Project stage	Task	Description	By whom
1	0	Kick-off meeting	Visit Noord-Hollands Archief in Haarlem and Nationaal Archief in Den Haag	Supervisors + students
2–24	1	A1 + B1	Data entry of years 1850, 1855, 1910, 1913	Students
2–24	1	A1 + B1	Check data	Supervisors
25–31	2	A2 + B2	Link databases with GIS	Supervisors + students
27	3	A3 + B3	Submit articles to local newsletter/journal/newspaper	Students
25–31	3	C2	Write article for <i>Research Data Journal</i>	Supervisors + students
32	3	A4 + B4 + C1	Public symposium ‘Dangerous Cities’	Supervisors + students
32	3	A5 + B5	Submit datasets	Supervisors + students
January 2019	3	C3	Submit article to <i>Crime, History and Society</i>	Supervisors

Student Application

Provide information on how to apply e.g. required documents for application (resume, motivation letter etc.) and an email address where student applications should be sent to.

Applications should be sent to both m.pluskota@hum.leidenuniv.nl and r.m.r.van.oosten@arch.leidenuniv.nl and should include a CV and a cover letter (max. 1,000 words) describing the student's interest in working in digital humanities. Applicants should state their preference for Project 1 (Amsterdam/Noord-Hollands Archief) or 2 (Leiden/Den Haag Nationaal Archief).