Making ‘more’ sense out of books of ordinances!

*Introducing the ‘entangled histories’-project*

Dr. C.A. [Annemieke] Romein – Liège, 15 June 2019
Early modern European states struggled for survival, making it impossible to ‘reinvent the wheel’ each time a problem arose. Hence, it was of tremendous importance to copy, adapt and implement normative rules that were already proven successful elsewhere.
Sources

- Books of ordinances (plakkaatboeken)
Sources:

- Number of sources: 100 (current digitised corpus)
- Font: 75 Roman, 20 Gothic
- Language: 60 NL, 20 FR (some mixed)
- Nbr of pages: ±70,000
- Nbr of characters: 450 mln
- Years of publication: mainly 17th and 18th c.
- Regions: nearly all 17 provinces (thus excl. Liège, Staverlot)
Steps (aims) within the project

1. Quality enhancement of OCR through HTR
2. Segmentation based upon lay-out (‘articles’)
3. Categorisation through pre-trained Topic Modeling
4. Visualisations and connected data
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT ‘OCR’ THROUGH ‘HTR’
Ee dt op 't stuck van de Generalen Middelen.

Ghy belooven/ Zweeren/ ende
nemen aen boudt Godt Almachtich dat ghy boudt u selvest/ u Huyg-
gelinde/ ende alle de genen/ de-
welcke ghy in uwen dienste gebruic-
ken/ stillen holden/ achterhogen.
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SEGMENTATION
‘Good police was also often used as a synonym for ‘good order’ (Swedish ordning, Germ. Ordnung, Fr. ordre); order being understood in the widest possible sense, i.e., societal order including the social, economic, moral and religious spheres. Police as a state of affairs thus signified good societal order. Secondly, the term police was frequently used to signify governmental action through which maintenance of this societal order was to be achieved.’

- 1800 categories, hierarchical

- 1. Gesellschafts- und Sozialordnung. Religion (7)
- 2. Öffentliche Sicherheit und Ordnung (4)
- 4. Wirtschaftsordnung. Arbeits- und Berufsordnung (7)
- 5. Bodenordnung; Bauwesen; Grundstücksweisen. Öffentliche Einrichtungen (4)
Region specific?

– Books of ordinances: treaties (≠ policey).
– Polders; admirality; colonies.
VISUALISATION - GPS
Palladio (Stanford DH tool)
Timeline

N=47
Holland = Red
Estates General = purple
Flanders = Green
Zeeland = Black
Gelders = Yellow
BENEFIT FOR LEGAL HISTORY
Benefits

– Overview of which publications of books of ordinances there actually where.
– DOI’s for all of the 100 books
– Tool to add metadata to legal texts (policey-gesetzgebung)
Steps

OCR/HTR + segmentation

Categorisations (MPIeR based)

Visualisations
PROJECT TEAM

– Annemieke Romein – PI
– Sara Veldhoen – Programmeur
– Michel de Gruyter – Project-advisor