

‘Giving in the Golden Age’: presentation of a new research project

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Introduction

During its Golden Age, the Dutch Republic constituted Europe’s most charitable nation in terms of per capita giving, only to be exceeded by England in the late-eighteenth century.¹ Within the Republic, poor relief agencies in every town and city, as well as in many villages, were obliged to appeal to the generosity of the public. Furthermore, in principle each religious community took responsibility for its own destitute, while municipal poor relief existed as a last resort for those whom the Church failed to help. In Amsterdam, for example, almost all the many religious denominations maintained a special agency to provide for the ‘ordinary’ poor, while many also had almshouses for their elderly parishioners, and orphanages for the boys and girls of their particular religious community. On top of this, there were two municipal poor relief agencies, an orphanage for orphans of citizens, and another for orphans of non-citizens. Finally, like many other cities, Amsterdam had a number of almshouses founded and in many cases managed by individuals.

The early modern Dutch poor relief system was thus fragmented across religious and secular authorities, with a further distinction according to social status and religious denomination.² To gather contributions from all layers of society, numerous initiatives existed, ranging from locating alms boxes in strategic public places to the foundation of almshouses by rich individual citizens. Despite this fragmentation, and the fact that charitable giving was organized on a voluntary basis, the system was remarkably efficient, especially when viewed in an international comparative perspective.³

Why did so many people give so much? The NWO-funded research project ‘Giving in the Golden Age’ (GIGA) aims to answer this intriguing question about the charitable behaviour of people from all social strata over a long period of time (1550-1820). It investigates how many and which people gave to charity – and who did not! – what they gave; when they gave it; and, very importantly, what their motivations were for giving to poor relief. These research questions will all be answered in the context of (changing) attitudes of ecclesiastical and secular authorities on charitable giving.

Although there is much historical debate on the reasons why people gave to charity, the focus is usually on one social group, or on one main motivation for giving (such as religious conviction, or the acquisition of social status). This project adopts a more comprehensive approach, by analyzing charitable giving on several levels at the same time. It focuses on the characteristics of the donors, as well as on the characteristics of the objective of their generosity (the good cause) and on the characteristics of the

¹ Lindert, *Growing public*.

² Prak, ‘Armenzorg 1500-1800’; Van Leeuwen, *De Rijke Republiek*.

³ Lindert, ‘Poor relief in Britain and on the continent’, 106-108.

social environment within which charity was given. Three complementary research projects on small gifts, medium-sized gifts and large gifts will contribute to this wide-ranging, long-term approach of charitable giving.

Research design and research questions

The research programme consists of three empirically oriented postdoc projects, an international comparison, and a synthesis. The projects are closely linked to one another and symbiotic, both substantively and practically. The research period is 1550-1820, which includes years prior and subsequent to the Dutch Golden Age, to better interpret charitable giving (and, for instance, the influence of varying economic developments on charity) in the Republic. Furthermore, there were important events at the start of the research period, most notably the Reformation and the Dutch Revolt, and at the end of the period, when poor relief almost collapsed during the Batavian-French era.⁴

The three postdoc projects respectively deal with very big, medium-sized, and small gifts. *GIGA1* constitutes an analysis of the major gifts that led to the founding of 230 almshouses (*hofjes*) and the involvement of the 250 richest Dutchmen in charity. This project will be carried out by Henk Looijesteijn, who will start in the summer of 2009. *GIGA2* will analyze a large number of wills containing information on a range of donors, from the modest to the significant, in five or six locations. Information from these testaments (leading to a large database of wills) will be supplemented with a variety of data collected from other sources. This research is done by Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk. *GIGA3* studies anonymous and semi-anonymous small-scale giving through public collections and church offertories in (approximately) the same six places. Also, material such as sermons will be analyzed to determine how ministers tried to influence the charitable behaviour of their churchgoing members. Machiel Bosman will carry out this particular research project.

All three projects will, to a greater or lesser extent, address the following research questions:

- 1 1. How many, and which people gave, and who did not?
- 2 2. What, where, and when did they give?
- 3 3. Why did they give, and what motivated their beneficence?
- 4 4. What was the attitude of the Church and the State to charitable giving?
- 5 5. How could benefactors be sure that their gifts would be used properly?

Once small, modest, and major gifts have been documented, the combined research results will be compared to literature on charitable giving in a broader early modern European context. In this way, the empirical findings of the project will be analyzed in an international perspective. During the final stage of the project, Marco van Leeuwen will write a synthesis based on the information derived from the three empirical studies and on the international comparison. It will draw together the findings from the various sources and places and set them within a general framework of the social, cultural, and political history of the Dutch Republic. The abovementioned research questions will be answered to a more substantial degree than any of the individual research projects could.

⁴ See about this collapse e.g.: Van Leeuwen, 'Armenzorg in Amsterdam'.

The synthesis will also consider the emergence of a gift culture, the dramatic crises it underwent at the end of the Republic, and its subsequent re-flourishing.

Historiography

Early modern poor relief has received a great deal of attention by historians. Already in the nineteenth century, fierce debates were for instance going on about pre-industrial charity and the role of the Reformation in poor relief organization.⁵ However, whether Catholic or Protestant, religious incentives were usually seen as the most important motivation to give to the poor in pre-industrial societies. The influential Michel Vovelle continued this line of thought, as he viewed charitable giving as a ‘barometer of piety’.⁶ Since the work of Vovelle in France and of Jordan in England the scholarly interest in the individual giver and the rhetoric and culture of giving has increased notably.⁷

With the wave of democratization of the 1960s the idea of ‘history from below’ made headway. This led historians to consider more closely the links between poor relief and broad social ‘systems’ such as capitalism and the nascent police state. The motives of the elites for providing poor relief as a means of social control began to be explored.⁸ The poor themselves began to feature more prominently in histories of poor relief as well. This development took also place in the Netherlands, as various studies point out.⁹ These studies have increased our knowledge of the circumstances in which the poor lived, and also of the objectives of social policy.

With the more recent shift to cultural history, attention increasingly refocused on the benefactors. What are individuals willing to give voluntarily, without the tax authorities having to compel them? Why do they give, and under what conditions? What ‘giving culture’ exists in a given society at a given moment in time, how do giving cultures change, and why? All these shifts in scholarly approaches tend to reflect more general societal developments. With the state receding there has been if not increased respect then at least greater tolerance of the Maecenases of Art and Culture and other good causes. At the same time, there is a realization that the good work of an enormous range of social movements – including Amnesty, Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature, Stichting Overijssels Landschap, Reumafonds – is possible only because of the money and time provided by countless individual citizens. Some scholars, including Putnam, argue that to function adequately societies need such associations of citizens, which lie neither in the domain of the State nor in that of the market.¹⁰

Although this research ventures in a new direction, it continues to build on prior scholarly enquiry into charitable giving. There is, first, a tradition in poverty research which focuses on the financing of poor relief and the ‘structure of giving’, and especially

⁵ E.g. between Ehrle, *Beiträge* and Ratzinger, *Geschichte der kirchlichen Armpflege*.

⁶ A quote by: Cavallo, ‘Motivations of benefactors’, 47.

⁷ Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*; Vovelle, *Piété baroque*.

⁸ Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, 506-511; Lis and Soly, *Poverty and Capitalism*. Van Leeuwen, ‘Logic of charity’, offers a more dynamic model of strategies by both elites and the poor themselves.

⁹ To name only a few recent studies: Van Leeuwen, *Logic of charity*; Van der Vlis, *Leven in armoede*; Van Wijngaarden, *Zorg voor de kost*.

¹⁰ Putnam, *Bowling alone*.

the role of collections.¹¹ These scholars have looked at the financial records of poor relief institutions and at the regulations determining how collections were organized. Then there is a second approach which focuses on the social background of benefactors. Although the historical studies just mentioned do to some extent consider this aspect as well, there are other significant studies in this area.¹² Third, insights from the history of mentality can be used to focus primarily on the motives for giving.¹³ Wills are useful source material for studies rooted in the second and third traditions.¹⁴ They provide data on the social background of benefactors, on modest as well as major gifts, and motives behind charitable giving are often apparent from them. Almshouse foundations offer even more to go on here. 'Begging letters' and appeals made during sermons also offer a useful source of information, though they, like all historical sources, should be used with care.

Hypotheses as to who gives to what good cause and in what circumstances

Of course, a lot has been written about the reasons why people may or may not give to charity. This study will not only take the historical literature as a starting point, but it will also make use of the overwhelming number of recent sociological studies on giving behaviour. The historical and sociological literature on philanthropy suggests a range of determinants of giving behaviour, but these determinants are seldom systemically compared.¹⁵ They can be subdivided into three groups: the characteristics of donors, the characteristics of the good cause, and the characteristics of the social environment within which giving takes place.

As regards the donors, relevant characteristics mentioned in the literature are:

- 1) Wealth, or at least a *degree of wealth*, is a precondition. There were extremely large fortunes in the Netherlands during the Golden Age, and some of the 'robber baron capitalists' gave considerable sums to charity. However, in modern research the lowest income groups give most as a proportion of their income. The efforts made by the welfare institutions of the Golden Age to collect among the less wealthy suggest that things may not have been much different then.
- 2) In the past, there was much speculation about the *role of religious belief*, and not without reason. Salvation through good works and the possibility that the living

¹¹ Fairchild, *Poverty and charity*; Jones, *Charity and bienfaisance*; Kappelhof, 'Het Bossche Geefhuis'; Kappelhof, 'De hoeven van het Bossche Geefhuis'; De Kruijf, 'De prijs van de armenzorg'; Marais, *Histoire du don en France*; Prak, 'Goede burenen en verre vrienden'; Van Leeuwen, 'Armenzorg in Amsterdam'; Van Leeuwen, 'Liefdadige giften in Amsterdam'; Kocka and Lingelberg, *Schenken, Stiften und Spenden*.

¹² Schuyt, *Geven in Nederland*.

¹³ See for example Davis, *The Gift in sixteenth century France*.

¹⁴ Vovelle, *Piété baroque*; Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*; Jordan, *The charities of rural England*; De Boer, 'Naar een geschiedenis van de dood'; Spaans, 'Testamenten als bron'; Spaans, *Armenzorg in Friesland*; Mol, 'Friezen en het hiernamaals'; Green, 'To do the right thing'; Kaiser, 'Testamentary charity'.

¹⁵ Van Leeuwen, 'Liefdadige giften in Amsterdam'; Van Leeuwen, 'Inleiding tot de moderne filantropie'; Cunningham and Innes, *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform*; Cohen, *Poverty and charity*; Cavallo, *Charity and power*.

- might be able to earn salvation for the dead are Catholic doctrines, not Calvinist nor Lutheran. Nonetheless, recent research suggests that, in practice, there was actually little difference in the giving behaviour of Catholics and Protestants.
- 3) *Gender* was important. During the Republic, women had few opportunities to play a public role. But it was acceptable for them to administer orphanages and old women's houses, and it is possible that they played a key role in financially supporting such institutions.
 - 4) The *acquisition of social status* either for themselves or for those dear to them might play a role. These kinds of motivations are still very much of relevance toaday. The Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds for example refers in a fundraising brochure to the named fund as a way of "offering a kind of immortality".
 - 5) The *absence of any dearly beloved relatives* may have played a role. Certainly, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the childless, the partnerless, and those estranged from their children or partner gave generously when almshouses were being founded. They also appear to have been slightly more generous in their last wills.

As regards the good causes, relevant characteristics are:

- 6) The *scope for identifying* with those affected, based on a sense of empathy or shared fate. Even physical distance may have played a role here: nowadays, people tend to give more to co-religionists in their own towns and villages than to co-religionists elsewhere, and even less to others (co-religionists outside the Netherlands, non-co-religionists within the Netherlands).
- 7) The degree to which the *victims can be thought of as 'innocent'*. The elderly and children are regarded almost by definition as innocent, while the situation is somewhat more complicated for the sick and unemployed: they had to be 'really' ill or unemployed, and to lack any hint of culpability for their fate.
- 8) *Information about destitution*. Since people lived in close proximity to one another and information was intensively disseminated, gathering this information was quite feasible in the Republic.

As regards the social environment, the following characteristics are relevant:

- 9) The *giving structure*, by which we mean the scope for giving (for example during collections) and for applying moral pressure to encourage giving. Modern sociological research shows that religion is important not so much because of its intrinsic motivation to philanthropic giving as because during and after the service churchgoers were pressured to give. Believers not attending church tend to give much less.
- 10) *Dangers of the consequences (externalities)* when not giving to charity, for example the problems experienced due to beggars or social unrest; people gave more where there were many beggars and at times of greater unrest. This relates to the theories on social control strategies of elites, for instance developed by Lis and Soly.
- 11) *Trust* that the money would be used wisely (trust in the collectors; it was also relevant then whether the collectors were known and whether they had a good reputation, which they would be reluctant to lose).

The table below presents a global overview of the characteristics mentioned and indicates which of them will be studied in the respective GIGA projects.

determinant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GIGA1 small gifts / collections		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GIGA2 medium-sized gifts / wills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		±		±
GIGA3 major gifts / almshouses	✓	✓	✓	✓	±	✓	✓		±		✓
GIGA4 comparison and GIGA5 synthesis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

± = to some extent

The three postdoc projects in a nutshell

The three empirical studies into major, medium-sized and smaller gifts are an extension of the work Marco van Leeuwen has done some ten years ago on Amsterdam. Van Leeuwen studied door-to-door and church collections in the Republic's capital city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and he also looked at the last wills of Catholic and Calvinist donors to charities, the foundation of almshouses, and laudatory prose praising the good donors.¹⁶ This 1996 article in fact serves as a pilot project for the current research project, as it used the same sources to be used here, identified problems in interpreting these sources, and demonstrated that these can be solved and that the research – including its long period - is quite feasible.

In fact, the design of the research project as a whole, enables a much more thorough analysis of the giving behaviour of different social groups in different settings. Each researcher will focus on one or two types of archival sources as a starting point, in a number of localities throughout the Dutch Republic, which for a large part will overlap. This approach enables the researchers to elaborate the results of Van Leeuwen's earlier study and compare other regions of the Dutch Republic to the city of Amsterdam. In this section, we will elaborate a bit on the intended individual projects. We will shortly describe the main focus and the sources of the three postdoc projects.

GIGA1 Major gifts

The research project on major gifts, performed by Henk Looijesteijn, will focus on courts-of-almshouses (*hofjes*). Almshouses were the jewels in the crown of charitable giving. From far and wide, foreigners came to visit and marvelled at the number of such buildings for elderly men and women and widows, and the comfortable life they provided compared with the situation in England, France, and Germany. Almshouses invested the benefactor with more than a hint of immortality, and they gave rise to notarial transactions, regulations, naming issues, as well as inspiring works of art, paintings, laudatory poems, and plays. Generous benefactors imposed conditions, for instance on where the building was to be located, for whom it was intended, what the residents were and were not permitted to do. They also determined the name of the almshouse.

¹⁶ Van Leeuwen, 'Armenzorg in Amsterdam'; Van Leeuwen, 'Liefdadige giften in Amsterdam'.

We know quite a lot about almshouses. Moreover, many of them still exist today, together with their archives, and much has already been published about them. Van Leeuwen studied charity in the Dutch Republic as a whole,¹⁷ and in doing so constructed a database with information on some 230 almshouses across the country. This database will be used in this project. The table below gives an indication of the geographical spread of these 230 almshouses throughout the Dutch Republic.

DATE OF FOUNDATION

PROVINCE	DATE OF FOUNDATION					Total
	Pre 1600	1600s	1700s	Undated but early modern	1800-	
Limburg	0	0	1	0	1	2
Brabant	1	1	1	1	0	4
Overijssel	3	2	1	0	1	7
Friesland	1	3	2	2	0	8
Zeeland	0	3	2	3	1	9
Gelderland	3	0	0	6	1	10
Groningen	3	5	0	3	0	11
Utrecht	4	3	1	3	0	11
Zuid Holland	14	28	15	6	10	73
Noord Holland	6	34	25	4	26	95
Total	35	79	48	28	40	230

Source: van Leeuwen, almshouses database.

This database lists per locality every known almshouse, the date of its foundation, its capacity, entry rules (some were restricted to retired Protestant sailors or Catholic widows older than 50 for example), the name(s) of the benefactor(s), their social position, and the size of their gift. In very many cases there is also abundant additional historical information on the benefactors, including their social background and intentions, and the laudatory prose and verse read on the occasion of the almshouse's foundation – not to mention paintings and sculptures.¹⁸ In addition, this project analyses the wills of the 250 wealthiest Dutch citizens (based on the publication of *Zandvliet*) in order to place these almshouses in the context of gifts made by wealthy citizens.¹⁹

GIGA2 Medium-sized gifts

The second research project looks at wills containing information on a range of donors, from the modest to the significant. This research, carried out by Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, focuses on medium-sized gifts. Wills were drawn up as early as the Middle Ages and they have survived relatively intact because of their legal importance. Using a

¹⁷ Van Leeuwen, 'Logic of charity'; Van Leeuwen, 'Armenzorg in Amsterdam'; Van Leeuwen, *Rijke Republiek*.

¹⁸ See *inter alia* Van Leeuwen, 'Liefdadige giften in Amsterdam', and Van Leeuwen, *Rijke Republiek*, p. 90, for Amsterdam, and Türck, *Die Leidener Wohnstiftungen*, and also the literature section at <http://www.hofjesberaad.nl>.

¹⁹ *Zandvliet, De 250 rijksten*.

sample of wills from archives of notaries (*het notarieel*) or judicial records (*schepenenbank*), one can identify which groups of testators made charitable bequests, and to whom, and which did not, and under what conditions. The archives of the poor relief institutions also will be consulted; that will yield more benefactors' wills in less time, but no information on non-benefactors.

Of the benefactors, we know more than just where they lived and when they died, for we know their religion, their gender, their marital status, and often whether they had any relatives. We often know about their wealth, their health, their occupation, or, in the cases of married women, that of their husband. Also, testators expatiate on the reasons for their decision to make, or not to make, bequests to particular individuals or good causes. There was every reason to do so: "the will is the written proof in which the pious dispositions through which one could insure against the risks of the afterlife were set down".²⁰ Drawing up a will was therefore a matter of the utmost importance.

Research into testators in general (including both non-benefactors and benefactors) will show what percentage of the population gave, and whether that figure changed over time; it also reveals regional differences and urban-rural variations. Because our research will make comparisons between many regions and years, it will be possible also to identify the effect of economically troubled periods – years of high prices for example – or of political crises and social or religious unrest. We are also able to compare regions supporting many poor citizens with those having few, regions with many poor relief institutions with those with fewer, regions with no religious divisions with highly diverse ones, and Protestant with Catholic regions.

A preliminary inventory has shown that there are enough locations in the Netherlands with wills sufficiently accessible to serve as a source. Of these, five or six localities will be selected, ensuring different parts of the Republic are represented, the prosperous West as well as other regions, and closely related areas with a different dominant religion. The final selection will be made during the first months of the research, since selection will depend on such time-consuming source-related issues as geographical and temporal gaps; accessibility; quality of the information; the scope for using additional sources relating to the wealth of benefactors (as has been done in the case of Amsterdam); and the availability of sources suitable for GIGA3, which, as far as possible, will deal with the same places.

The preliminary selection, based on the first archival inventory done in the first two months of the research, is: Leiden, Utrecht, 's-Hertogenbosch, Zwolle, and Amsterdam (which has been studied by van Leeuwen 1996), and possibly also Voorne-Putten (which deals with a more rural area and has the benefit of an extensive digital index and excerpts from the archives of notaries for the period 1600-1800). For all these localities, a set of 100 wills will be collected in five different years: 1550, 1600, 1670, 1750 and 1810. This will result in a database of 2,500 to 3,000 wills, including both donators *and* non-givers to poor relief institutions, diaconates, orphanages, etc. A quantitative analysis of this database will result in an overview of general patterns of who left what to charity, and who did not according to several characteristics: through time, by locality, by social status, by gender, family composition and religion.

Consequently, in order to find out more about the motivations of donators, a number of representative benefactors will be selected from the will samples, with varying

²⁰ Mol, 'Friezen en het hiernamaals', 29 (our translation).

social status/wealth, gender and religious denomination. These carefully chosen benefactors will undergo a more in-depth qualitative analysis, based on a large variety of sources: ego-documents, census data, population records (baptisms, marital and death records), notary archives, orphanage and poor relief institutions records, church records, etc. This qualitative research will give us more information about the lives and motivations of these people: how did they live, whom did they marry, what work did they do, what were their mottos, beliefs and goals in life, to what extent were they active in charity or, more in general, in their communities, during their lifetimes?

GIGA3 Giving in churches and giving in public

This study, performed by Machiel Bosman, deals with anonymous and semi-anonymous, small-scale giving through public collections and church offertories. Data will be gathered from a representative sample of places, with a considerable overlap with those in GIGA2. In every town and in many villages, money was collected for the poor. These collections will be studied from various perspectives.

One initial question concerns the frequency and method of collections other than those made during church services. Door-to-door, visiting the houses of churchgoers? With closed collection boxes, open boxes, or lists of subscribers stating names and amounts given by benefactors? Or were boxes strategically placed in the hope people would give anonymously? How were the collections scheduled? Another question concerns the importance of fundraising for charities. There were, after all, other sources of income apart from collections and testamentary dispositions, such as rents from the leasing of land or houses and income from the levy of certain duties. In 's-Hertogenbosch, for instance, poor relief institutions were not generally dependent on public generosity. They survived on income from their assets.

Elsewhere, the situation was often quite different, and charity boards had to do their best to persuade the public to give generously. And the charity administrators, civic administrators, and church administrators certainly did their best. During church services the clergy exhorted the congregation to give. Civic administrators did so too, at least in more difficult times. Charity administrators wrote pamphlets outlining the needs of the time, and held out the prospect of a kind of immortality in the future. Insofar as written sermons related to charitable giving, an analysis of those that have survived, and especially of the pamphlets written by charity administrators, illuminates in two respects the rich tradition of charitable giving during the Republic. It shows first how charity administrators tried to present their own good cause – what arguments they believed legitimate in exhorting potential benefactors: and then it says something about the benefactors themselves, certainly when combined with data on the proceeds of collections.

The penny in the offertory bag represents a pretty anonymous act of generosity. We can, however, study exhortations to give. The 'begging letters' sent out by charities had to echo the views of potential donors to be effective.²¹ Religion played a prominent part in charitable giving, and sermons were important in transmitting religious teachings. A systematic analysis of sermons will reveal much about the role of the Church in encouraging charitable giving, but none yet exists for Amsterdam in the eighteenth

²¹ Andrew, 'On reading charity sermons'.

century. Furthermore, what little we know seems contradictory. There are indications that Reformed Church clergymen were successful in exhorting people to give to the poor. In 1778, for instance, the Reformed Charity objected to experienced ministers arranging to be substituted by inexperienced ones on Sundays because of the deleterious effect that had on the offertory. On the other hand, apparently successful sermons had a reputation for being very long and dull, and often for being incomprehensible to the congregation because of the long passages they contained in Hebrew and Greek. Moreover, the sermons were not intended to be time-bound, with “no single encouraging or consoling word for people [...] down on their luck” and with “nothing, not even an allusion to [...] to an important event of the time”.²² Evenhuis claims this was especially true for the first half of the eighteenth century.

How it was that dull, incomprehensible, long-drawn-out and timeless sermons could encourage charity represents a conundrum. We presume that these sermons were less timeless than has been claimed. For example, sermons were given to support collections for the needy outside Amsterdam, and it is difficult to imagine that they made no reference to the needy. An analysis of these sermons, most of which have never been published, will be highly informative on this point. In any case, religion played an important part in giving, and sermons were prominent in transmitting religious tenets. Such an analysis will therefore reveal much about the role of the Church more generally in encouraging charitable giving.

Geographical scope of the three research projects

The selection of localities for the three research projects is based on several choices. In order to reach a satisfactory geographical spread, localities from different provinces in the Dutch Republic will be chosen. Furthermore, it is important to attain an overlap between the case studies performed in the three projects (see scheme below; the dark grey rows indicating a total overlap, the light grey rows indicating an overlap of at least two towns). Obviously, the availability of source material is another important criterion for the selection of case studies. Currently, the researchers are investigating the possibilities the different local archives have to offer in this respect. This explains some of the question marks in the scheme below.

The city of Amsterdam, with its many religious denominations, and courts-of-almshouses, can of course not be absent in this research. Although the notary archives in this city are rather poorly accessible, this is compensated for by the work already done on Amsterdam by Van Leeuwen. Leiden has a very extensive archive of many religious institutions, as well as notary archives. In contrast to Amsterdam, constitutes a highly industrial town, with a large share of the population living in poverty, which makes it an interesting comparison. Furthermore, Leiden was (and still is) famous for its many courts-of-almshouses. The Utrecht archives contain more than 15,000 wills from the period 1560-1811, and the archive is busy digitizing and electronically indexing the archives of the notaries as a whole. At present excerpts are available from 167,500 notarial deeds covering the period 1663-1783, with digitized images. Wills can also be found in the archives of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Remonstrant, Walloon, and Mennonite relief agencies. The archives of 's-Hertogenbosch, a town in the

²² Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam*, 78 and 83.

Generality of the Republic, with many Catholic inhabitants, are equally rich and relatively accessible. For the city of Zwolle a continuous series of wills for the period 1541-1811 can be found in the archives of the *schepenenbank*. Another series covers later years. There are also archives from Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, Mennonite, and municipal relief agencies from the start of the seventeenth century onwards. Other archives have yet to be inventoried.

	Province	GIGA1	GIGA2	GIGA3
Amsterdam	Holland	x	x	x
Leiden	Holland	x	x	x
Utrecht	Utrecht	x	x	x
Den Bosch	Generality		x	x
Zwolle	Overijssel	?	x	x
Delft	Holland	x		?
Dordrecht	Holland	x		?
Maastricht	Generality		?	?
Den Haag	Holland	x		
Voorne-Putten	Holland		?	
Leeuwarden	Frisia	x		
Groningen	Groningen			?
Arnhem	Gelre			?

Intended geographical scope and overlap of the three research projects

Final note

Obviously, this is very much work in progress. As the research project has only started in December 2008, much of the validity of the research approach and the boundaries and choices of the project will have to be proven in due time. At the time this paper was produced, no outcomes of our research were at hand yet, but we hope to give a first impression during our presentation at the Flemish-Dutch Conference. Furthermore, since the project *Giving in the Golden Age* is still in its initial state, we see this upcoming conference as an excellent stage on which to present our ideas and intended approach. Any critical comment and suggestions for adjustments, as well as recommendations for further reading are very welcome.

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