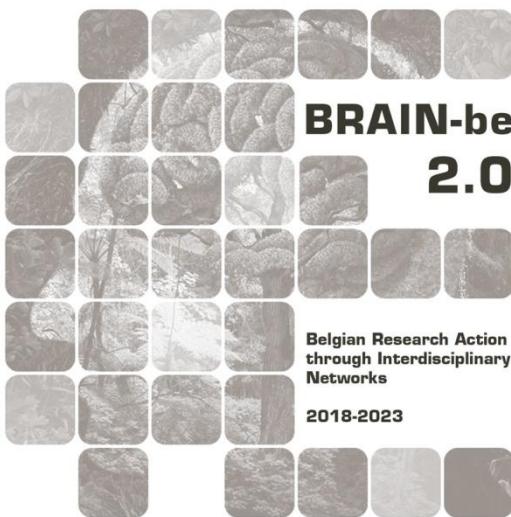


PARDONS

Topographies of Pardon Tales: Contextual Mapping of Pardon Letters in the Southern Low Countries, 15th-17th centuries

Lieve De Mecheleer (ARAB) - Hans Cools (KU Leuven) – Xavier Rousseaux (UC Louvain)

Pillar 2: Heritage science



NETWORK PROJECT

PARDONS

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FINAL REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Context

Although by now, several generations of European and North American historians have based much of their work on the late medieval and early modern criminal, social and political history of pardon letters, they have rarely made use of the large and rich series of pardon letters that are preserved in the various collections of the Belgian State Archives (henceforth ARAB). In fact, as these documents are scattered and poorly catalogued, they were hardly accessible both to scholars and to the larger communities of genealogists and local researchers. The PARDONS-project has uncovered these hidden gems and has stimulated new avenues of historical research based on their analysis.

Objectives

The main objective of the PARDONS-project has been to render publicly accessible various large collections of late medieval and early modern pardon letters once granted by the Burgundian and Habsburg rulers of the Low Countries, and which are now preserved in ARAB.

Moreover, the project has aimed to stimulate new strands of research on the criminal, social and political history of the Burgundian and Habsburg Low Countries, based on the scrutiny of these pardon letters.

Conclusions

The research team has certainly succeeded to draw the attention of scholars, local historians, and genealogists alike to the important series of pardon letters kept in the ARAB. However, it turned out that the number of letters preserved in the archives significantly surpassed the team's original estimates. In particular, despite substantial progress in the intensive training of automatic text recognition software (Transkribus) with early modern Dutch records, this tool still struggles to accurately decipher French texts produced by late-medieval and early modern secretaires belonging to the relevant institutions. The vast majority of the corpus consists of French-language documents.

Therefore, some form of follow-up project would be most welcome to capitalize on the groundbreaking work achieved thus far.

Keywords

Pardon Letters - Legal History – Burgundian/Habsburg Low Countries – Citizen Science - Handwritten text recognition

1. INTRODUCTION

The PARDONS-project has made accessible a large set of previously hardly known late medieval and early modern pardon letters originating from the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries to the scholarly community and a wider public of genealogists and local historians alike. In doing so, it has fostered further advances in legal, social, cultural and political history. As a case in point, at the final conference organized in early June 2025, the team members presented their findings to an international public of multidisciplinary scholars. The proceedings of that conference will be published.

In order to capitalize upon the achievements of PARDONS, some form of follow-up project is essential. In this future phase, emphasis will be given to the preservation of the data and means to make them more shareable and searchable. Looking forward, the team aims to enhance the geographic range and depth of its methodology, incorporating other key archival series found in the Belgian State Archives' Brussels and provincial centres, and looking beyond Belgium's borders to account for related records found in the Archives Départementales du Nord (France) and the Dutch national archives in The Hague, thereby developing a truly comprehensive database for the pardon procedure in the premodern Low Countries.

2. STATE OF THE ART AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project has been to investigate and make publicly accessible a large collection of late medieval and early modern pardon letters. Those letters were granted by the Burgundian and Habsburg rulers of the Low Countries. Nowadays, they are preserved in ARAB.

In adapting a bottom-up approach to examine the pardon procedure, covering local actions through to the decisions made by princely authorities, the research team has examined how the pardon procedure evolved from its medieval origins to function as a multi-level process of reconstructing social peace in a mosaic of territories subject to various authorities.

Not only do pardon letters reveal the administrative practices of premodern governments, they also record the demands from individuals and local communities navigating a complex hierarchy of intermediate powers when addressing rulers for clemency. Therefore, these documents represent crucial, first-hand sources for a comprehensive understanding of the legal and political structures of Ancien Régime society, its economic and social environments, as well as its religious and cultural expressions through the lens of crime management.

The project has analysed the sovereign use of granting pardons to criminal offenders between the early 15th and the late 17th century in the Burgundian and Habsburg Low Countries. By the end of the Middle Ages, in most European juridical systems criminals could try to escape punishment by petitioning rulers for pardon letters that remitted the crime and invited the offender to reconcile himself with the victim's kinsmen. In the Low Countries, the development of the pardon procedure coincided with the decline of traditional means of private mitigation, while the criminal justice system became more repressive and officials resorted more often to corporal punishment. As a result, by the middle of the 16th century, the only way for a criminal offender to avoid the rigours of justice and to settle with the victim's party was to obtain a pardon letter. This procedure enhanced the princely monopoly on the process of negotiation and reconciliation in case of vendetta and feud.

This project has been characterized by a focus on archival work, research, and valorisation regarding documents originating from the Burgundian and Habsburg administration concerning pardon procedures. The team has aimed to uncover untold pardon stories that have been preserved in the archives and to develop a comprehensive analysis of these sources. Therefore, the partners have defined five objectives:

1. To systematically digitize, index, and transcribe a coherent set of pardon letters from three major collections preserved in the depots of ARAB: the charters of the *Audience* of the Burgundian chancery; the files of the 'Spanish' Privy Council during the period of Habsburg rule; and the records of the Council of Brabant. Indexing and transcribing these pardon letters has made it possible to contextualize them within the administrative process of pardoning, by showing how these letters were connected to other documents (e.g. the accounts for the payment of the sealing fees for the pardon letter). This work has provided the necessary framework for the subsequent analysis.

2. By examining the narrative content of pardon letters, the team has aimed to reconstruct the discourses, legal strategies, and concerns of offenders (including at moments of political and religious tensions) and to detect how these offenders dealt with the revendications of the victims, who sometimes opposed the grant of a pardon. As the team considered pardoning as a ‘performative act’, it has also intended to identify the political rhetoric elaborated by the ruler and his representatives when granting pardons, using quantitative and qualitative approaches of historical analysis (see methodology).

3. The team has aimed to map the power structures behind the use of pardons. The grant of a pardon letter stemmed from a bureaucratic procedure that involved a multitude of actors and power levels, generating numerous ancillary documents (draft petitions, criminal inquiries, receipts for the payment of procedure fees, endorsement of pardon letters in a local court). That work was rather painstaking as only a limited amount of such documents have been preserved. Tracking these documents and connecting them to the pardon files, the team has been able to develop a complex archival topography of the pardoning procedure, highlighting how it was shaped by the circulation between different social universes and nodes of power. Thereby, the team has proposed new perspectives on the development of state power.

4. The team has demonstrated how the use of pardons served as an instrument of peace management, in response to social and political conflicts. It has contextualized four main categories of pardon letters (abolitions, remissions, repeals of banishment, and political/religious pardons) in relation to the handling of different categories of criminal offenses, from homicide and assault to rebellion or treason. It has also shown that all these various types of pardons required the petitioners to recognize the authority of the Prince, which made the pardon procedure a process of subjectivation of individuals confronting the monarch. Especially in the aftermath of political turmoil, monarchs made intensive use of this tool.

5. The team has developed an open access digital resource to valorise the collections of Burgundian and Habsburg pardon letters held by ARAB. By creating a project website on which some scans, transcriptions, metadata, and contextualized commentaries of pardon letters have been published, the team has provided access to these primary sources to a large audience of both scholars in history and related social sciences, as well to local historians and genealogists.

3. METHODOLOGY

In various collections of the ARAB at least 20.000 pardon letters and ancillary documents are preserved. To describe these series from an archival perspective, to exploit the pardon stories they contain scientifically, and to make them available to a broad audience, the team has developed multi-stage strategies.

The first strategy has consisted in distinguishing the processes of archival description, digitization, and, and transcription, according to the types of sources, from the simplest and more generic sources (the pardon letters that have been granted and recorded), to more complex documentation (the preparatory files of the pardon cases and the follow-up of the granting of the letter). The former mainly concerns the corpus of the Brabant letters (CpB) and the corpus of the Audience letters (CpA). The latter concerns the huge collection of the 200 boxes of pardon files of the 'Spanish' Privy Council (CpC).

The second strategy has concerned the scientific exploitation of these unknown stories. The partners have tackled the corpora as a whole, through two epistemological approaches: the study of the letters as narrative accounts of conflicts and their protagonists, and the study of the processes of granting the letter as practices of negotiation and crisis/conflict management.

1. ARCHIVAL PROCESSING OF THE CORPORA (WP 1-3)

For this project, the partners have chosen three collections of pardon dossiers covering the period 1400-1700. These are collections identified as such in ARAB, produced by different institutions: the Audience of Flanders-Burgundy, the Audience of Brabant, and the 'Spanish' Privy Council. These archival series cover complementary institutional realities – i.e., the existence of two administrative centers for the granting of pardon letters in the name of the Burgundian-Habsburg sovereign: 1) the Chancery of Flanders-Burgundy (covering the provinces of Flanders, Zeeland, Holland, Overijssel, Groningen, Utrecht, Gelderland, Artois, Hainaut, Tournaisis, Namur, Luxemburg, and Franche-Comté – before some of them were lost to the rebels or the invading French), which became subject to the 'Spanish' Privy Council in the sixteenth century, and 2) the Chancery of Brabant (covering the Duchies of Brabant and that of Limburg and Outremeuse).

1. The collection of copies of letters kept in the records of the Chamber of Accounts of the Duchy of Brabant. These letters were granted by the Council of Brabant which was habilitated to pardon offenders in the name of the dukes of Burgundy and their Habsburg successors. This series is composed of 2600 recorded copies of granted pardon letters, which served as documentary evidence for the payments of the fees of the pardon procedure (the writing and the sealing of the pardon letter). These records are remarkable by their coherence and their chronological continuity, which has made them the ideal candidate to test the methodology of this project, comprising a near-continual chronological series of thirty-five registers dating from the late-fifteenth century to 1658.

2. The collection of original pardon letters from the Audience of Flanders-Burgundy (about 300 letters). Unlike most archival series of pardons in late medieval and early modern Europe, this collection preserved at ARAB is composed of original charters (sometimes with their seals intact) that had been granted but that the beneficiaries, for unknown reasons, never received. Some of these letters have been copied in the registers of the Audience preserved in the *Archives départementales du Nord*, which had a similar role to the records of the Accounts Chamber of Brabant. However, most

of these original letters had never previously been analyzed. The work for this project has consisted of identifying these letters, determining their length (generally one to three pages of handwriting), and linking them to related sources (such as the sealing fee accounts of the Audience of Flanders-Burgundy, preserved in ARAB) to allow a quantitative study of the granting practices of the dukes of Burgundy. This study has effectively complemented previous research based on the registers of the Audience of Flanders-Burgundy in Lille.

3. The pardon files contained in the ‘Spanish’ Privy Council’s archives. Approximately 200 boxes contain ‘pardon files’ dating from the reign of Charles V to the end of the reign of Philip IV (1540-1702). These ‘pardon files’ often include a series of different documents ranging from the petition for a pardon submitted to the sovereign, to the final text of pardon letter (which mostly was also recorded in the registers of the Audience in the *Archives départementales du Nord* in Lille), together with various ancillary documents that informed the pardoning procedure, such as preliminary inquiries, medical reports (for instances of violent crime), or legal reviews submitted by local courts.

The size and importance of each pardon file varies and the corpus is estimated to about 143.000 folia for circa 500 letters. Prior to this project, these extremely rich files had been largely unexamined by historians. In comparison to other late medieval and early modern European polities, such extensive and detailed material on the pardoning procedure is extremely rare. However, their material and legal complexity has posed significant obstacles to their assessment, analysis, and dissemination. In fact, an exhaustive inventory of the boxes and the variety of documents (with multiple handwritings) they contain was lacking until the postdoctoral researcher completed the cataloguing and indexation of this series (see below).

In the course of the project other archival series containing pardon letters and other pardon documents have been identified, both in the funds of ARAB and in those of various provincial archival institutions. The most important of these series are the *Audience*, the Fiscal Office of Brabant, the Procureur-General of Brabant, the Privy Council for the Austrian period, and the Council of State. Although these series should ideally also be made accessible via the PARDONS database, we have largely left them aside due to the short time frame of PARDONS. The team has made an exception for the documents from the *Audience*-archive (8 boxes and 3 registers) and those from the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Attorney General of Brabant, as they are closely related to the documents from the Brabant Chamber of Accounts-archive. These series were also inventoried with the help of an intern (see below). Furthermore, a small selection of documents from these series were used to conduct some promising tests with automatic handwriting recognition (see below).

For the collection of letters from the *Audience* (120 letters), an exploratory work involving photographic reproductions, identification, transcription and a series of thematic analyses was undertaken by 11 master students from the medieval history seminar at UCLouvain. This work was carried out in 2021-2022 by Quentin Verreycken, Luke Giraudet under the supervision of Pr. Xavier Rousseaux and was the subject of a summary session on 5 May 2022 in Louvain-la-Neuve.

Given the scale of these three corpora, it was clearly impossible to manually transcribe each letter within the timeframe of the project. For this reason, we have developed an approach combining digital humanities and citizen science, relying both on crowdsourcing and on handwritten text recognition (HTR) to automate transcription, by analogy with two recent successful Dutch projects (namely *Alle*

Amsterdamse Akten and *Chronicling Novelty*). In this regard PARDONS was a pioneering project in Belgium. Due to the scarcity of the *Audience* series and the complexity and material condition of the *Privy Council* series, the team decided to focus on the *Brabant* series as a pilot for automatic text recognition. This series consists of bound volumes in good condition that were therefore relatively easy to digitize. The digitization was undertaken by students at DIVA (ARAB). In order to navigate the digitized registers smoothly, a working spreadsheet (the so-called 'dispatch database') was created containing some necessary data: archival references and essential biographical information about the supplicants (petitioners) and the corresponding victims.

The team recruited both Dutch and French speaking volunteers through webinars, presentations, newsletters and social media (Facebook, YouTube), citizen science platforms such as iedereenwetenschapper.be, and the networks of the project's partners, *Histories* vzw and the *Direction du Patrimoine Culturel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*. Volunteers received transcription guidelines and were trained in dedicated webinars. Upon request they received personalized feedback from the team and they were regularly updated on the progress of the project. Via the dispatch database, volunteers were able to choose a letter of a preferred location (often their village, city, or local region). Volunteers were invited to transcribe at their own pace and to the extent that they felt most comfortable. In total, the volunteers transcribed more than 500 Brabant pardon letters (i.e. over 2000 folia) from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Monthly online meetings were organised to support both new and experienced transcribers. These were greatly appreciated (see a documentary clip by our partner *Histories* vzw about engaging volunteers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1lQur9yGJY&t=87s>). As a token of our gratitude, we organised informal events for the volunteers to explain the status of the project and to meet each other. At these occasions the volunteers were also given a behind-the-scenes tour of various depots of the State Archives.

These transcriptions were then used as ground truth to train an HTR model in the program Transkribus (<https://www.transkribus.org/>). Transkribus is by far the best-known platform supporting the automatic transcription of historical documents. Although other, cheaper programs (e.g. Loghi) were developed during the project's lifetime, Transkribus still offered several significant advantages despite its higher costs (user-friendly platform, availability of models, researcher community, technical support from developers, etc.). The platform has evolved considerably since the project's beginning in 2021, with many improvements and new features being developed. For instance, Transkribus shifted from an offline standalone program (Expert Client) to an online application, though not all functionalities were retained, or were only reintroduced later. This meant that work had to be carried out on two fronts. Such adjustments posed a challenge for the team, as they affected the development of the project and raised questions about the methodology to be followed. At times, the research team was overtaken by developments to which it had contributed itself (e.g. the launch of transformer HTR models such as [Dutch Demeter](#) and Dutch Dean, which were also trained with ground truth documents from PARDONS). Today, powerful HTR models with low error rates (CER) are available, including for premodern Dutch and French, but this was not the case when PARDONS began. Because the generic models of Transkribus performed poorly at the start of PARDONS (especially on documents predating 1600), it was decided to train a dedicated HTR model based on the transcriptions produced by volunteers. Although meanwhile "end-to-end" solutions are being perfected, during most of the PARDONS research period this was still a matter for the future. A crucial prerequisite for automatic

transcription is accurate recognition of the document layout. This involves not only the baselines (the text lines), but also the document structure (main text, marginal notes, titles, tables of contents, page numbers, etc.). Layout recognition represents a particular challenge in the transcription of premodern legal records, which turned out to be far more complex than anticipated. First, a P2PaLA model, later called the Field Model, was trained to automatically recognize the text structures of the Brabant registers. This also required manual preparation of dozens of pages to serve as GT for the model. After fine-tuning, the model worked reasonably well, though regular manual checks and corrections were still necessary. A second step in layout recognition concerned the baselines. If these baselines are not correctly identified, the HTR model cannot properly determine where to read the text and/or it produces so many errors that the transcription is of limited accuracy and therefore unintelligible. Since pardon letters follow a narrative structure and contain a central story about the crime, the coherence of any resulting automatic transcription was an essential criterion. For this reason, much attention was given to proper baseline recognition. This, however, also proved very difficult. The generic models provided via Transkribus did not perform adequately (producing many errors), and the training custom baseline was also unsuccessful owing to the complexity and variety of the sources. Well into the project, incorrectly recognized baselines still had to be manually corrected. It was only later in the project (2024), following collaboration with expert developers, that it became apparent that adjusting certain specialist parameters in the advanced settings could offer a solution. This was an extensive process of trial and error, but ultimately it produced reliable results. All automatically recognized baselines were checked and corrected again, with a focus on the most important text elements (full text, titles, marginal notes).

On the basis of this in-depth layout recognition, which sought a high degree of accuracy to significantly improve the final result, the process of HTR model training could begin. The supplied transcriptions were therefore manually copy-pasted into Transkribus and corrected. These corrected transcriptions served as ground truth for training proper HTR models. Although the first test models produced quite good results, often achieving a CER of less than 8% (generally considered sufficient), this did not prove to be the best strategy, as the model in some cases performed very poorly, especially on handwriting not included in the training data. Therefore it was not suitable for the entirety of the project's corpus. To ensure the readability of the automatic transcriptions, it was decided to continue training to reduce the CER as much as possible. At this juncture, the decision was also made to strategically develop smaller models. These models were designed to produce accurate results for documents from concentrated historical periods, rather than applying a single, large model to the entire three-century corpus. A series of micro-models was therefore trained, each of which could be applied to a selection of registers. This produced significantly better results. Some models achieved an outstanding CER of less than 5%.

That this strategy was ultimately the right choice is clear from a sample comparison (conducted by an external expert) with the results of the transformer models provided by Transkribus. In general, the results of the PARDONS models were significantly better. Since the automated transcriptions still contained errors, they were eventually corrected as well. We used these models to automatically transcribe the remaining documents. The transcriptions can be consulted and searched via Transkribus Sites: <https://app.transkribus.org/nld/sites/pardons>.

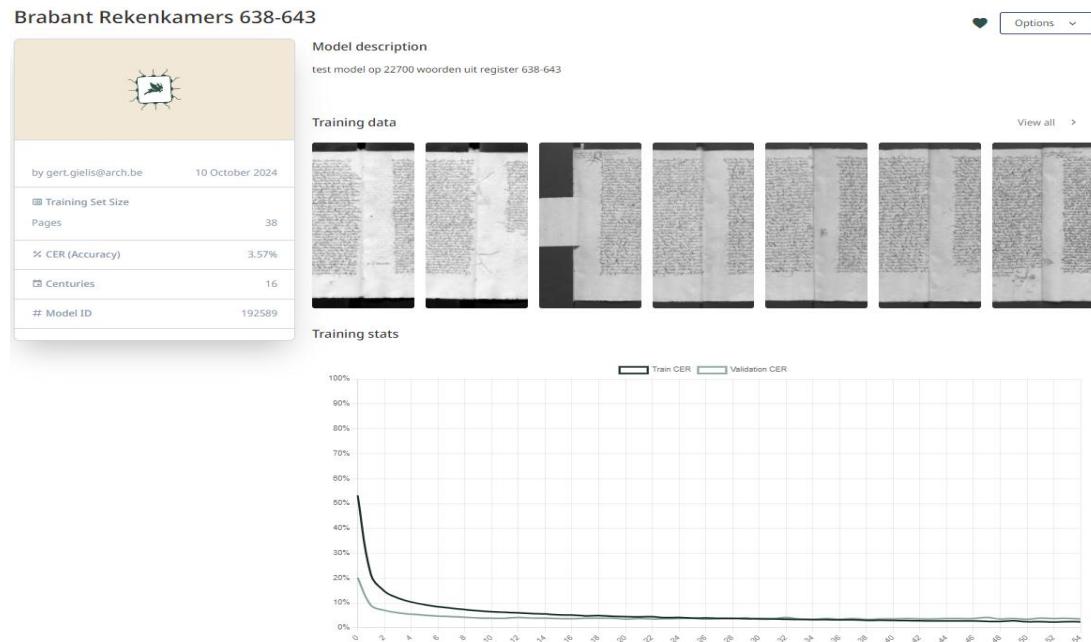


Figure 1: Training chart of a micro-model

Finally, based on the micro-models, a large PARDONS model was also trained. This model will be made publicly available via Transkribus. Contacts have also been established with colleagues from comparable projects at the City Archives of Leuven (*Itinera Nova*) and the City Archives of Mechelen to train a large “Brabant model.” Such a bilingual model would be of high value for the research community in Belgium (and the Netherlands), especially as regards the archives from institutions in the former Duchy of Brabant.

In parallel, about 150 pardon letters and pardon files from the Audience and Privy Council series were manually transcribed by research team members. During the academic year 2024-2025, Quentin Verreycken also supervised a master’s student from UCLouvain, Maurice Boutte, who contributed in indexing and transcribing the Audience series, completing the transcription of 70 pardon letters from the fifteenth century.

Cataloguing and Indexation (WP3)

During the transcribing process, the metadata of each document have been selected and encoded in the description application of ARAB. Subsequently, they have been systematically verified, by period and by corpus.

Throughout the project about 20.000 pardon cases have been indexed and databased, and more than 2.700 letters (from series 1 and 2) have been fully transcribed. As mentioned above, the extreme complexity of the third series (the Archives of the Privy Council) made it not possible to achieve a complete digitization of this series, due to the variety in size, length, and format of the pardon files. Similarly, the large diversity of handwritings, as well as the draft form of the documents (featuring annotations, marginal notes, corrections) made it too complex for automatic handwritten text recognition (Transkribus). Nonetheless, a selection of files has been transcribed by the team and volunteers.

The initial inventory of the archival series was carried out using provisional spreadsheets, which primarily served as navigation tools. These allowed team members and volunteers to easily locate the relevant scans, both within the archive itself and on the ARAB website. Building on these spreadsheets (working databases) and taking into account the diverse typologies of sources across the different series, the team designed a relational SQL database. This database consists of four tables: archival reference, pardon case, actor, and crime. This structure makes it possible to capture the complexity of the pardon procedure, for which substantial case files are sometimes preserved and whose documents can be dispersed across different archival collections. At the core of each record is the case, to which various documents and their archival references, actors (petitioners and victims), and even crimes can be linked. Each table contains additional, more detailed information, but due to time constraints we chose to limit the scope of data entry. The database can serve both as a navigation tool and as a research instrument.

The data from the spreadsheets were verified and cleaned with OpenRefine before being imported into this database. (Due to the complexity of the data and the limited timeframe of the project, this work could not be fully completed.) Unfortunately, it has not been feasible to publish our database online with a user-friendly search interface. The spreadsheets and the provisional database are made accessible via the SODHA platform.

2. SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT OF THE CORPORA: TELLING UNTOLD STORIES, SETTLING INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE CONFLICT (WP 4-5)

Building on the digitization, transcription, and contextualization of the pardon letters from the ARAB (WP1-3), the ‘research component’ of the project has studied the discourses produced in the process granting pardons (WP4). It has also examined the crises, conflicts and modalities of conflict resolution revealed by these untold stories (WP5). These two WPs dedicated to the scientific exploitation of the corpora are conceived as two sides of a comprehensive research aiming to uncover untold pardon stories. As forgiveness is a performative act, the study of the discursive strategies used in pardon letters is logically articulated with the study of the pardon strategies for the regulation of crises and conflicts.

In a second stage, the postdoctoral researchers have selected about 1.000 files. Following the pragmatic criteria of the size of the documents, a distinction has been made between what we could call ‘loquacious files’ (exceptional and extensive pardon stories involving extraordinary crimes, multiple actors, or even famous historical figures) and routine cases (pardons for homicide committed in self-defense, repeals of banishment for assault, etc.). The former have been analyzed by the project researchers, whereas the latter have been analyzed by the above mentioned volunteers.

In the academic year 2024–2025, Gert Gielis supervised two master's students, one from the VUB and one from KU Leuven. Both students contributed to the inventory of several series (the archives of the Attorney General of Brabant, the Fiscal Office of Brabant, the Council of Flanders, and the consultations of the Privy Council). They also processed a number of pardon letters into narrative case studies.

Arne Vinck (VUB) focused specifically on communication and valorization. He developed an educational package for secondary school teachers (both in Catholic and community education), aimed at fourth-year students. Using four pardon cases, the practice of granting pardons was explained, supported by sources (including a scan of the original, a transcription, and a modernized version).

Dries de Buck (KU Leuven) worked on making several registers of the Brabant Chamber of Accounts from the 17th and 18th centuries accessible. He was trained to work with Transkribus and applied automated handwriting recognition to these registers. Based on the PARDONS corpus, he also completed his master's thesis, including a visualization on a map.

4. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our project shows that the pardon letters and pardon files preserved in the ARAB are an invaluable resource for both quantitative and qualitative research. Individually, each case opens a window onto a wide range of forms of violence and conflict, shedding light on the political, social, and religious tensions experienced by the inhabitants of the early modern Southern Low Countries. From a quantitative perspective, the study not only of the pardon letters themselves, but also of the ancillary documentation contained within the pardon files, reveals the complexity of the pardon procedure across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whereas previous research has focused primarily on the granted pardon letters only, the analysis of original petitions for mercy, accompanying witness testimonies, as well as rejected cases enables a much more nuanced understanding of how pardon functioned.

In this respect, several key findings deserve particular emphasis. First, the fluctuations in pardoning practices during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demonstrate that pardons were socially and politically contextual. Rather than being determined by personal proximity to the prince, these fluctuations show how Burgundian and Habsburg rulers employed the power to pardon as means of responding to specific political and religious crises. Princely pardons served to consolidate loyalty, secure declarations of Catholic faith, and reintegrate fragmented communities.

In this sense, regional variations in the granting of pardons constitute less a reliable indicator of crime rates than the result of the malleable deployment of pardons as a tool to govern disparate provinces with distinct political needs and differing relationships with Brussels. Variations in rejected cases confirm the value of this comparative approach, revealing both the diverse levels of scrutiny applied by the Privy Council and the Council of Brabant to the work of local officers and the differing modes of cooperation between provincial councilors and the political center. Although the sovereign's authority and the members of his councils underpinned the power to pardon, it was far from a purely top-down practice. On the contrary, in the early modern period, it functioned as a mechanism for actively cementing hierarchical bonds, linking local officers, the Privy and Brabant Councils, and ultimately the sovereigns of the Low Countries. Finally, the analysis of the witness testimonies produced during the pardon procedure demonstrates their crucial role in corroborating or contesting the petitioner's declarations. Through the pardon procedure, these testimonies contributed to the construction of a community's truth, thereby participating in the regulation of violence.

In terms of research methodology, combining a digital and a citizen science approach proved to be extremely valuable. Collaborating with a community of volunteers to produce transcriptions that were later used to train Transkribus models considerably accelerated our research process, while allowing these volunteers audience to directly engage with the past by working on pardon stories from their region. This has been supported by the project's development of a number of digital resources designed to disseminate findings and prompt engagement from the wider public. Pardon letters transcribed by volunteers have been made publicly available via a dedicated website (<https://pardons.eu/>), where users can read pardon letters alongside images of the original records sourced from ARAB. More significantly, one of the project's key outputs has been the incorporation of the geographical data for pardon cases produced as part of the inventory of the Privy Council into

an interactive map showcasing the localities in which crimes were committed, accompanied by a timeline that enables users to focus on specific periods (<https://pardons.eu/cluster-map-with-slider/>). Showcasing over 7,600 cases for the period 1540-1630, this map supports local and academic historical research alike, allowing studies on the micro-local and macro-international scales, with records found throughout present-day Belgium, the Netherlands, northern and eastern France, and Luxembourg.

Finally, the team's work on the files of the Council of Brabant has demonstrated the potential of HTR-technology, but it has also highlighted the challenges inherent in dealing with heterogeneous premodern source corpora and the level of investment (manhours and finance) required to achieve accurate results. Perhaps more specifically, it has become clear that not the HTR technology itself at issue. However, the ability to segment document pages has proven to be difficult. As this area has been less well-addressed by previous projects that have worked on sources with more 'standard' formats (letters, chronicles, published works), these challenges had not been foreseen in the original project application. Therefore, PARDONS has been pioneering, especially with respect to the application of HTR technology to complex and diverse legal records.

An eventual follow-up project that will have as main goals to enhance the preservation of the data and to make them more shareable and searchable will take into account these challenges. Moreover, in such a follow-project the geographic range and depth of the methodology will be enlarged by incorporating other key archival series found in ARAB and VARIOUS provincial archives, and by looking beyond Belgium's borders to account for related records found in the *Archives Départementales du Nord* (France) and the Dutch national archives in The Hague, thereby developing a truly comprehensive database for the pardon procedure in the entire premodern Low Countries.

5. DISSEMINATION AND VALORISATION

1. Lectures/Presentations

2021

Verreycken, Quentin (2021), *Forgiving at the Crossroads of Norms: The Power to Pardon in Late Medieval England and France*, Käte Hamburger Kolleg Digital Fellow Lectures, University of Münster, 14 October 2021.

Verreycken, Quentin (2021), *Gens de guerre et gestion des conflits dans les lettres de rémission au XV^e siècle, S'accorder et résoudre les conflits au Moyen Âge et à l'époque moderne*, Louvain-la-Neuve: UCLouvain, 30 September-1 October 2021.

Verreycken, Quentin (2021), *Military Violence and the Politics of Royal Pardon in Late Medieval France*, International Medieval Congress 2021, Leeds (online), University of Leeds, 5-9 July 2021.

2022

Cools, Hans & Gielis, Gert (2022), *Verhalen van geweld en genade. Gratiebrieven als bron voor Antwerpse geschiedenis*, Genootschap voor Antwerpse Geschiedenis, 8 February 2022.

Cools, Hans & Gielis, Gert (2022), *Pressure, punishment and reintegration: royal pardons letters for printers in the wake of the Antwerp indexes, 1568-1590* - Symposium 'Banning Books. The Antwerp Indexes of Plantin, 1569-1571', Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, 13-14 June 2022.

Gielis, Gert (2022), *Bruggen bouwen, beentjes tellen, bergen verzetten* - Symposium 'Social hotspots', Brussels, ARAB, 16 September 2022.

Gielis, Gert (2022), *Verhalen van geweld en genade. Gratiebrieven als bron voor familiegeschiedenis*. Familiekunde Vlaanderen afdeling Leuven, Leuven, 28 September 2022.

Gielis, Gert (2022), *Verhalen van geweld en genade. Gratiebrieven als bron voor lokale geschiedenis*. Heemkundige Kring Hertog Jan Vilvoorde, Vilvoorde, 12 December 2022.

Giraudet, Luke (2022), *Crafting a Remission Letter: Witness Testimony and Remissibility in the Records of the Spanish Privy Council, 1540-1633* - Jaarcongres Vlaams-Nederlandse Vereniging voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis 2022 – Getuigen en getuigenissen: Vroegmoderne rechtshistorische bronnen in het onderzoek, Antwerp, 28 October 2022. [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken, Quentin (2022), *At the Crossroads of Norms and Exceptions: The Regulation of the Power to Pardon in Late Medieval England and France*, Narrating Europe's Pluralities: Unity, Diversity and Exceptionality, Münster, Universität Münster, 1-2 September 2022.

Verreycken, Quentin (2022), *The Legal Heritage of the Power to Pardon in Europe: Not One but Many*, 1st Annual Conference of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg "Legal Unity and Pluralism", Münster, Universität Münster, 15-17 September 2022.

Verreycken, Quentin (2022), 'As moost Cristen prynce whos clemens is to be noted : tempérer la grâce du roi en Angleterre et en France à la fin du Moyen-Âge (XIII^e-XV^e siècles)', Les discours adressés au(x) pouvoir(s), Orléans, Université d'Orléans, 13-15 June 2022.

Verreycken, Quentin (2022), *Forgiving Monsters? Military Criminality and the Politics of Royal Pardon in 15th- Century France*, War Makes Monsters: Crime and Criminality in Times of Conflict, Dublin, University College Dublin, 2-3 June 2022.

Verreycken, Quentin (2022), *Negotiating the King's Grace: Parliament, Estates General, and the Pardon Legislation in Late Medieval England and France*, Negotiating power: Political Interactions in Late Medieval Communities (1200-1600), Leuven, KU Leuven, 19-20 May 2022.

2023

Bertrand, Gabrielle (2023), *An anxious and uncertain itinerary: The remission of Jehan de Roye in 1562*, Baltimore, Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, 28 October 2023.

Gielis, Gert (2023), *Verhalen van geweld en genade. Gratiebrieven als bron voor lokale geschiedenis*. Familielkunde Vlaanderen regio Dilbeek, St.-Ulriks-Kapelle, 8 February 2023.

Gielis, Gert (2023), *Vroegmoderne pardonbrieven als bron voor rechtsgeschiedenis* - Rechtshistorische dagen, Leuven, 30 March 2023.

Gielis, Gert (2023), *The challenges of a multilingual crowdsourcing project on early modern 'true' crimes* - DHBenelux 2023, Brussels, 2 June 2023.

Gielis, Gert (2023), *Modellenwerk, monnikenwerk. De lange weg naar een HTR-model* - Wetenschappelijke lente State Archives, Brussels, 5 June 2023.

Gielis, Gert, Giraudet, Luke and Verreycken, Quentin (2023), *Workshop 4: Digital humanities. Sources, tools and techniques for doing political history from below* - Summer school 'Writing Political History from Below: Theory and Practice', Nijmegen, 6 July 2023.

Gielis, Gert (2023), *True-ish crimes. Stories of violence and reconciliation from the PARDONS project*, Baltimore, Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, 28 October 2023.

Gielis, Gert (2023), *Transkribus: opportunities and challenges. Kick-off ARKEY project*, Brussels, 24 November 2023.

Gielis, Gert, Giraudet, Luke & Verreycken, Quentin (2023), *Crime and the Application of Knowledges: The Pardon Letters to the Students and Members of the University of Louvain in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Leuven, Lectio XII Annual Conference: *Innovationes Lovanienses. Crossroads of Knowledge Transfer between Antiquity, Middle Ages and Renaissance*. December 2023.

Giraudet, Luke (2023), *Fiction and the Archive: Witnesses and the (Pre)Construction of Pardon Tales in the Archives of the Spanish Netherlands (1540-1633)*, Baltimore, Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, 28 October 2023.

Giraudet, Luke (2023), *The Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christianity: Exceptions and Diversities. Invited talk. Governing through Pardoning: The Case of the Spanish Low Countries, 1540-1633*, Universität Münster, Käte Hamburger Kolleg, November 2023.

Giraudet, Luke (2023), *The Belgian PARDONS Project and the Use of Transkribus in Studying Premodern Legal Records*. Introductory Workshop. University of Saint-Andrews, *Late Medieval France and Burgundy Seminar: Explorations*, Saint-Andrews, December 2023.

Verreycken, Quentin (2023), *Pardonner et punir les crimes du soldat au sortir de la guerre de Cent Ans*, Conférences du Mardi, Chaumont, Archives départementales de la Haute-Marne and Musée d'Art and d'Histoire de Chaumont, 12 December 2023.

Verreycken, Quentin (2023), *Impotent Soldiers? Military Service and War Disabilities in Late Medieval Pardon Letters*, Disability and Warfare in the Middle Ages – Monthly Webinar, Liège, Université de Liège, 7 September 2023.

2024

Gielis, Gert (2024), *Unlocking Early Modern Pardon Letters with Transkribus: Some Takeaways*, Innsbruck, Transkribus User Conference, February 2024.

Gielis, Gert (2024), *Gastcollege: Werkcollege vroegmoderne criminaliteitsgeschiedenis*, VUB, Brussels, 26 March 2024.

Gielis, Gert (2024), *Crowdsourcing Stories of Violence. Citizen Scientists and Innovation in the Archive* (Uccle, BELSPO Citizen Science Inspiration Day, May 2024).

Gielis, Gert (2024), *Gastcollege: Erfgoedstudies*, Leuven, KULeuven, 16 October 2024.

Gielis, Gert (2024), *Gastcollege: Historisch onderzoek van de Nieuwe Tijd*, Leuven, KULeuven, 21 October 2024.

Giraudet, Luke & Verreycken, Quentin (2024), *Topographies of Pardon Tales: Contextual Mapping of Pardon Letters in the Southern Low Countries, 15th-17th centuries*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Workshop Histoire du droit, de la justice et des pouvoirs, March 2024.

2025

Cools, Hans (2025), *Een greep uit laatmiddeleeuwse en vroegmoderne Antwerpse genadebrieven. – Heling in de nasleep van de Spaanse Furie (1576-'77)*, Antwerp, Genootschap voor Antwerpse Geschiedenis, 11 February 2025.

Cools, Hans (2025), *A Tale of Unrest and Uncertainty. The Pardon for Jehan Le Roy in 1562*, Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

Gielis, Gert (2025), *Automatic text recognition at the Belgian State Archives*. Talk at Nerdland Academy, Wachtebeke, Nerdland Festival, June 2025.

Gielis, Gert & Rimac, Anica (2025), *The PARDONS project*, Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

Gielis, Gert, Giraudet, Luke & Verreycken, Quentin (2025), *Round Table – Book Launch: V. Soen & Y. Junot eds, Pardons and Peacemaking in the Spanish Habsburg World*, Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

Gielis, Gert, Giraudet, Luke & Verreycken, Quentin (2025), *Pardon files from the Belgian State Archives. A show and tell*, Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

Giraudet, Luke (2025), *Pardons, Legal Pluralism, and Judicial Decision-Making in the Early Modern Low Countries*, Münster, Käte Hamburger Kolleg Legal Unity and Pluralism Workshop, April 2025.

Giraudet, Luke (2025), *Pardon and Pardon Letters in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (15th-17th centuries). ‘Witnessing Violence: Collective Storytelling and the Crafting of Pardon Tales in the Habsburg Low Countries’*, Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

Rousseaux, Xavier & Douley, Julie (2025), *‘S'est avanchié ledict bailly de laisser la voye de faict... en les gectant en prison très estroicte et rude, au fon de fosse et ceppe de fer ...’ Imprisonment stories in pardon letters from the Southern Netherlands (15th-18th c.)*, Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

Verreycken, Quentin (2025), *Conflicting Loyalties: Pardon Letters and Borderland Military Violence during the French-Burgundian Wars, 1465–1482*, Pardon and Pardon Letters in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (15th-17th centuries), Brussels, Pardons Conference, June 2025.

2. PARDONS Conference, 5-6 June 2025



Programme of the Pardons Conference

Day 1

5 June 2025 (Saint-Louis)

UCLouvain Saint-Louis Bruxelles

Salle P02 (Ground Floor)

Rue du Marais, 119 – 1000 Brussels

8.30-9.00 – Coffee & Opening Remarks: Xavier Rousseaux

9.00-10.30 – Session 1: Pardons between theory and practice

- **Krista Kesselring** (Dalhousie University): A Crowning Mercy? The Coronation Pardon in English History
- **Dylan Beccaria** (Université d'Aix-Marseille): ‘Une stupide bonté et une simplicité sans prudence’ – Raison d’État, dangers et limites de la grâce dans le *Conseiller d’État* de Philippe de Béthune (1633)
- **Nicolas Ruys** (UCLouvain): Lettres d’état et affaires criminelles, un mariage impossible ? Etude du *tractatus de literis dilatoriis, annalibus, quinquennalibus, status, & aliis, in iudiciis frequens* de Pierre Rebuffe (1487-1557)

10.30-10.45 – Coffee Break

10.45-12.15 – Session 2: Gendered Stories and Violence

- **Elias Feys** (KU Leuven & Université de Lille): A Hot-tempered, Capricious, Jealous and Compassionless wife’. Marital Conflicts and Homicide in Pardon Letters from Burgundy and the Low Countries (1450–1535)
- **Sara McDougall** (John Jay College of Criminal Justice – CUNY): Pardonable Women: What’s gender got to do with it? – 15th century France

- **Elma Brenner** (Wellcome Collection): Gender and mental illness in a pardon letter from fifteenth-century Normandy

12.15-13.00 – Lunch

13.00-14.00- Session 3: Peacemaking and Pardons

- **Stuart Carroll** (University of York): The Politics of Peace-Making in a Seventeenth-Century French Village
- **Diane Roussel** (Université Gustave Eiffel): Faire la paix: pratiques et échecs de la composition privée dans les lettres de rémission françaises du XVI^e siècle

14.00-14.45 – Keynote lecture

- **Walter Prevenier** (Universiteit Gent): Fascination with Pardon Letters before and since Natalie Zemon Davis: the endless archival searching, the unveiling of petitioners' and princes' motivations

14.45-15.00 – Coffee break

15.00-16.30 – Session 4: War and Justice

- **Quentin Verreycken** (FNRS – UCLouvain): Conflicting Loyalties: Pardon Letters and Borderland Military Violence during the French-Burgundian Wars, 1465–1482
- **David Fiasson** (CY Cergy Paris Université): 'Une coquinaille qui ne sont bons que a destruire le peuple.' Pages et valets de guerre d'après le témoignage des lettres de rémission (France, première moitié du XV^e s.)
- **Pierre Pretou** (La Rochelle Université): Les temporalités du pardon de la désobéissance dans le Sud-ouest du Royaume de France au XV^e s., entre traitement de l'ennemi, du rebelle ou du criminel.

16.30-16.45 – Coffee break

16.45-18.15 – Session 5: Pardons and Fictionalization

- **Luke Giraudet** (KU Leuven): Witnessing Violence: Collective Storytelling and the Crafting of Pardon Tales in the Habsburg Low Countries
- **Xavier Rousseaux** (UCLouvain) & Julie Douley (UCLouvain): 'S'est avanchié ledict bailly de laisser la voye de faict... en les gectant en prison très estroicte et rude, au fon de fosse et ceppe de fer ...' Imprisonment stories in pardon letters from the Southern Netherlands (15th-18th c.)
- **Antoine Fersing** (Université de Strasbourg): L'exercice de la grâce, un facteur de la construction des problèmes publics durant la première modernité ? Le cas de la

régulation de la consommation d'alcool en Lorraine ducal au début du XVI^e siècle:
la consommation d'alcool en Lorraine

18.15-18.45 – Round Table – Book Launch: V. Soen & Y. Junot eds, *Pardons and Peacemaking in the Spanish Habsburg World* (Habsburg Worlds 7) (Brepols, 2025)

- Respondents: Gert Gielis (Belgian State Archives), Luke Giraudet (KU Leuven), Quentin Verreycken (Université Saint-Louis)

18.45-19.15 – Reception

20.00 – Conference dinner

Day 2

6 June (KU Leuven – Warmoesberg)

KU Leuven – Brussels Campus

Salle 6306 (6th floor)

Rue du Mont aux Herbes Potagères 43 – 1000 Brussels

9.00-10.00 – Visit to the Belgian State Archives (Ruisbroekstraat)

- **Gert Gielis** (Belgian State Archives) & Lieve de Mecheleer (Belgian State Archives): Presentation of the project & showpieces
- **Anica Rimac** (UCLouvain): Showcase of PARDONS resources

10.00-11.00- Transfer to the Warmoesberg & Coffee Break

11.00-12.30 – Session 6: Pardons and Religion

- **Hans Cools** (KU Leuven): A tale of unrest and uncertainty. The pardon for Jehan le Roy in 1562
- **Violet Soen** (KU Leuven): Pardon Letters and the Storytelling of Refugees Returning to the Habsburg Low Countries during the Revolt.
- **Eduardo Benítez-Inglott y Ballesteros** (Oxford University): *Sub sigillo officii penitentiarie*: The Apostolic Penitentiary, Its Pardon Letters, and the Spanish Inquisition – A Case Study

12.30-13.15 – Lunch

13.15-14.45– Session 7: The imperfect monopolization of violence over time and space I

- **Rudi Beaulant** (Université Marie et Louis Pasteur – Besançon): Les premières lettres de rémission de Philippe le Hardi. Réflexion sur la mise en place de l'administration du droit de grâce sous le premier duc Valois

- **Maurena Benteboula** (Université de Lille): *Il ne demandoit que paix et amour :* l'utilisation des réseaux de pouvoir princiers dans l'obtention du pardon à travers l'exemple d'Antoine Grand Bâtard de Bourgogne
- **Emanuel Gerardin** (Université de Strasbourg): La grâce des ducs de Lorraine, un instrument au service de la construction d'une justice souveraine (fin XV^e-début XVII^e siècle)

14.45-15.00 Coffee break

15.00-16.30 Session 8: The imperfect monopolization of violence over time and space II

- **Mark Spindlow** (University of York): Pardons and dispute settlement in England after the civil war, 1660-1700
- **Antoine Follain** (Université de Strasbourg): La grâce, une prérogative souveraine dégradée en Lorraine après 1630
- **Bernard Dauven** (UCLouvain): La grâce est morte? Vive la grâce! Les évolutions de la grâce à l'époque moderne dans les Pays-Bas (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles). Typologie et formulaires

16.30 –17.00 – Closing remarks/Conclusions

Poster session: Arthur Watillon, Jeremy Sidgwick, Dries De Buck

3. Organization of other conferences, panels and workshops

2022

Gielis, Gert and Van Gelder, Klaas (2022), *Transkribus workshop*, Brussels, ARAB, November 2022.

2023

Cools, Hans & Giraudet, Luke (2023), *Pardons and the Crafting of Pardon Tales in the Early Modern Low Countries (16th-17th Centuries)*, Baltimore, Sixteenth Century Society Conference, 2023.

Ludwig, Ulrike, Verreycken, Quentin (2023), *The Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christianity: Exceptions and Diversities*, Münster, Universität Münster, 2-3 November 2023.

2024

Giraudet, Luke, Verreycken, Quentin (2024), *Performing Justice in Times of Crisis in the Late Middle Ages*, a series of 3 panels at the *International Medieval Congress 2024*, Leeds, University of Leeds, 1-4 July 2024.

4. Online valorisation and media

www.pardons.eu: project website

<https://www.facebook.com/rijksarchief>: social media stories

<https://app.transkribus.org/nld/sites/pardons>: publication of the transcriptions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLE_OrgsNH4 : teaser clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1lQur9yGJY&t=87s>: testimonies of two volunteers on their collaboration with the project

<https://sites.google.com/view/pardon-gratie/homepage>: class preparations for teachers

<https://www.gva.be/regio/antwerpen/regio-antwerpen/antwerpen/true-crime-in-het-ancien-regime-misdadigers-vroegen-vergiffenis-via-gratiebrieven/37395158.html>: article in *Gazet van Antwerpen* (also published in print on 5 August 2024).

Indexes of the Privy Council and Chamber of Accounts collection will be available as open data on the SODHA-platform.

Transcriptions of the pardon letters in the Chamber of Accounts collection (Brabant), AI generated and partly corrected, will be available in the near future on the website of the State Archives. A limited extra funding is necessary to continue the contract with Readcoop (Transkribus).

6. PUBLICATIONS

Papers/book chapters

2022

Beaulant, Rudi & Verreycken, Quentin (2022), *Pardonner des traîtres ou des rebelles ? La trahison dans les lettres de rémission des ducs de Bourgogne (XIV^e-XV^e siècles)*, in Alain Marchandisse & Gilles Docquier eds., *Loyauté et trahison dans les pays bourguignons et voisins (XIV^e-XVI^e siècles)*, Neuchâtel (Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes), 2022, 5-20. [Peer reviewed]

Ludwig, Ulrike & Verreycken, Quentin (2022), *Begnadigung im Kontext des Strafrechts (Frühe Neuzeit/Mittelalter, Christliches Europa)*, EViR Working Papers 1. Münsteraner Glossar zu Einheit und Vielfalt im Recht, 2022, 8-11. <https://miami.uni-muenster.de/Record/d6e29c47-6063-4b0c-9fc6-7b940f4e326e> [Peer reviewed]

2023

Gielis, Gert (2023), *Het PARDONS-project en de ontsluiting van Brabantse gratiebrieven*, in Eigen Schoon en de Brabander, 106 (2023), p. 95-114.

2024

Gielis, Gert (2024), *Historische misdaadverhalen ontsloten met AI*, in Science Connection, 72 (2024), 44-50. Also published in French: 'Des récits criminels du passé accessibles grâce à l'IA'.

Giraudet, Luke (2024), *Witnesses, Witnessing and the Crafting of Pardon Letters: The Case of the Habsburg Privy Council of the Spanish Netherlands (1540-1633)*, in Dries Raeymaekers and Gerrit Verhoeven eds., *Nieuwe Tijdingen. 'Voor ons sijn verscheenen'. (Oog)getuigen en hun verklaringen in de vroegmoderne periode*, Leuven, 2024, 41-66. [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken, Quentin (2024), *Mercy at War: Military Violence and the Politics of Royal Pardon in Fifteenth-Century France*, French Historical Studies, 47.2 (2024), 187-218. [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken Quentin (2024), *As moost Cristen prynce whos clemens is to be noted: tempérer la grâce du roi en Angleterre et en France à la fin du Moyen-Âge (XIII^e-XV^e siècles)*, in Noëlline Castagné, Laure Depretto & Julien Véronèse eds., *Les discours adressés au(x) pouvoir(s)*, Paris, 2024, 249-265. [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken Quentin (2024), *La paix du guerrier. Gens de guerre et gestion des conflits dans les lettres de rémission au XV^e siècle*, Criminocorpus, vol. 26, online. <http://journals.openedition.org/criminocorpus/15492> [Peer reviewed]

2025

Deruelle, Benjamin & Verreycken, Quentin (2025), *A Father of the People or Warrior King? Arbitrariness and Arbitration in the Pardon of Soldiers in the Kingdom of France (1460–1559)*, International Review of Penal Law, 8 (2025), 15-33. [Peer reviewed]

Gielis, Gert (2025), *PARDONS, unlocking early modern pardon letters from the Low Countries*, in Annemieke Romeyn e.a. eds., *Praeteritum transcriptum. A Transkribus Tribute: Celebrating our First Five Years as a Cooperative (2019-2024)*, 2025. (open access: <https://zenodo.org/records/15308678>)

Graudet, Luke & Verreycken, Quentin (2025), *Studentenleven op de grens. Franse gratie-brieven voor studentengeweld in Leuven (1455)* in Ralph Dekoninck & Violet Soen eds., *Lessen uit het verleden. Vier eeuwen studentennotities aan de Leuvense Universiteit*, Leuven, 2025, 154-155. [Peer reviewed]

Graudet, Luke & Verreycken, Quentin (2025), *Une lettre de grâce pour Jacques Colars. La France pardonne les violences estudiantines à Louvain (1455)* in ed. Ralph Dekoninck, Violet Soen e.a. eds., *Leçons du passé. Quatre siècles de notes d'étudiants à l'Université de Louvain (1425-1797)*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2025, 154-155. [Peer reviewed]

Graudet, Luke, *The Power to Pardon as a Tool of Governance: The Privy Council of the Spanish Netherlands, 1540-1633* in Ulrike Ludwig and Quentin Verreycken eds., *The Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Europe*, Weimar (in press). [Peer reviewed]

Graudet, Luke, Gielis, Gert & Verreycken, Quentin, *Crime and the Application of Legal Knowledge: Pardon Letters Granted to the Students of the University of Louvain in the Early Modern Period* in Wouter Druwé, Wim François & Violet Soen eds., *Innovationes Lovanienses. Crossroads of Knowledge Transfer between Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Renaissance around the premodern University of Leuven*, Turnhout (accepted for publication). [Peer reviewed]

Romein, C.A., Kırımlıaltın, S., Reshef, R., Gielis, G. e.a. (2025), *From Research Proposal to Project Management. A Guide from the Transkribus Community on Planning and Executing Workflows for Researchers and GLAM-Professionals*, in International Journal of Digital Humanities, 2025 (published in open access: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42803-025-00107-7>).

Rousseaux Xavier (2025), *Louvain. Halles Universitaires, 9 juillet 1621 10 h.*, in F. Hiraux, M. Lits eds., UCLouvain, 1425-2205. *Six cents ans de présence au monde*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2025, 60. [Peer reviewed]

Rousseaux Xavier (2025), *Louvain. Pédagogie du Lys, 15 mai 1763 12 h.*, ibidem, 61. [Peer reviewed]

Rousseaux Xavier & Verreycken Quentin, *Conclusion* in *The Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Europe*, ed. Ulrike Ludwig and Quentin Verreycken, Weimar, Böhlau Verlag (in press). [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken Quentin, *A Vulnerable Military Masculinity: Soldiers and Disability in Late Medieval Pardon Letters (France, England, and the Low Countries)*, in Ninon Dubourg & Christophe Masson eds., *Disability and War in the Late Middle Ages Becoming, Surviving, Managing*, Leeds, (in press). [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken, Quentin & Ludwig, Ulrike, *Towards a Comparative History of the Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Europe: An Introduction*, in: *The Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Europe*, ed. Ulrike Ludwig and Quentin Verreycken, Weimar, Böhlau Verlag (in press). [Peer reviewed]

Books

Ludwig, Ulrike & Verreycken, Quentin, (ed.), *The Power to Pardon in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Europe*, Weimar, Böhlau Verlag (in press). [Peer reviewed]

Verreycken, Quentin (2023), *Crimes et gens de guerre au Moyen Âge. Angleterre, France et principautés bourguignonnes au xv^e siècle*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France (Le nœud gordien), 2023, 288 p. [Peer reviewed]

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Eddy Put (ARAB/KU Leuven) initiated the project and served as its PI until his retirement in early 2024. From then onward, he continued to inspire the project team with his suggestions and ideas. The team is immensely grateful to him.

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The research team is also most grateful to Bram Jacobs and Annemieke Romeyn for their indispensable support with Transkribus.

ANNEXES

Members of the Research Team:

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