

Trading in Luck: Fortune Tellers in the Dutch Metropoles, Late nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century.

Take a local Dutch newspaper, for instance the HAAGSCHE COURANT. Take any date between 1900 and 1940. The 5th of Juli 1923, for instance. (I apologize for the quality of the picture; it was taken from a print from a film. Funny enough it is not possible to get a whole page as sharp from an online newspaper). Go to the page where the small advertisements are featured (there could be several pages). There you find inbetween the rooms for rent, a bicycle and a pram for sale, several more intriguing adds.

Mrs. DE LANGE, the famous planetary expert [planeetkundige], clairvoyant [Hellsehende], can be consulted daily, also on portrait and writing, works with spiritism for broken love relations, for ladies and gentlemen. Consultation 50 cents. Address: Stille Veerkade 15a.

Mrs. v.d. BRINK, the clairvoyant Medium, to be consulted from 12-9 in the evening, for broken love relations, money affairs, etc. Also on Sundays. Success guaranteed. Adress: Spui 160.

or:

Miss. v.d. LAUW, the famous reader of planets, to consulted daily from 12 to 9 hrs, also with portrait, only for ladies.

and at the bottom:

Miss. FENNA

This unrivalled clairvoyant, of which the equivalent [weerga] has not existed until now, explainer of dreams and visions, chiromancer, according to portrait or letter, sleeper [somnambule] and magnetic clairvoyant, lives Hekkelaan 6, upper floor.

I could have said: take a random Dutch newspaper and that may work, too, but in this case I have been fortunate and probably chosen the one with the highest density of these ladies. Another newspaper I stumbled on (by chance?) mentioned 37 regularly advertising fortune tellers in the Hague in early 1923: "clients have to stand in line to be admitted". This wil only have been equalled by one of the local Rotterdam newspapers, the Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad. Amsterdam newspapers at the time had reached a mutual agreement to ban this kind of announcements. Subsequently fortune tellers there distributed address cards (which I am unable to show you at the moment, although there is a collection of those from around 1900). In the Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad only an occasional fortune teller could be found. Here I show a part of a page from 1 September 1926 with Mrs. Saturnes (not misspelled). A national newspaper, such as the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, did not have a small ad section.

At the very least an important part of the Dutch fortune tellers in the modern era can be found in the newspapers and certainly in The Hague and Rotterdam numbers of advertisements reflect the numbers of the actual persons. It was simply a matter of competition. To draw clients a form of reknown was required and when competitors used the small ads, it would be foolish not to do so, too. One had to be a very upper class fortune teller to be able to solely known by word of mouth. This was only reserved to the high market "psychometrists" and to (some of) those who practiced somnambulism. Moving in spiritist circles surely helped, but even in the spiritist journals advertisements of `clairvoyants' and `mediums' can be found.

1 van Scheveningen.
leven No. 36602, bur. v. d. bl.
amblement / 36.50, 1826
at. 4 St., 6 Stoele leer / 24.
Lagfauteuils / 31.—, eiken
/ 15.—. Ameublementen,
sette, diverse prijzen. Clubfa-
/ 32.50. Stoffeerderij Kemp-
146. Let op 't juiste adres.

Motortiets
Dion Bouton, 1 cyl., / 80.—
na merk The Scout / 100.—
res: Breedstraat 14. 4983

25 AMEUBLEMENTEN
/ 35.— tot / 300.—, eigen fa-
at, onder garantie. Buffet,
Spiegels, Kasten, Schilderijen,
is enz. 4966
7 TENIERSTRAAAT 16.

STEIGERDELEN
op gevraagd. Brieven onder
1871, bureau van dit blad.

Kinderwagens. 4687
op een nieuwe Kinderwagen,
od. z. gesch. v. bovenburen,
een Klapwagen (geh. behd.
deren voetenzak) / 12.—. All-
Meerderv. 326, g. winkel. 4

akelhuus te huur
nader overeen te komen
Te zien en te berragen:
busstraat 219, aan Valken-
aan, van 2-4 uur. 4870

PENSION.
lib. Isr. Meisje vraagt Pen-
sion. Isr. zonder kinderen.
ren No. 4868, bur. v. d. bl.
ief Serre-Amenblem.
stel, hooge gebouwd. Fan-
en Vuurwagen met kap te
aangeboden. 4876
es: Nieuwe Haven 108.

PAKHUIS
groot 60 M² grondopp.
grote inrijden. Oog in
straat 32. Te berr.: Malak-
st 110. 4877

toetel te koop
0, met Zeiss Icar. 6 chassie
mpackobasis, / 50.—. 4940
es: Valeriusstraat 22.

ode-Island-Red.
ste Ras en Nuthen der we-
lf te geven Fokkanen / 3.50,
Houthorststraat 111. 4866

PIDO RECAMÉ
GOEDKOOPSTE ADRES
VOOR IJEDEREEN
GROENEGEWEG 122. 4868

HUUR GEVRAAGD
nabij den Haag een klein
huus of Villa.
ren onder No. 1948 aan het
van dit blad.

EVRAAGD
Heer alleen ruime gemeub.
Slaapkamer, m. of z. pen-
sionak. Duinoord. 1865
omd. No. 340, Boekh. LUY-
Fred. Hendriklaan 127.

inkelhuus
Woning te huur gevraagd,
falk. Boter op Kaasstraat,
en No. 4885, bur. v. d. bl.

larquisen.
nemen, Jaleziën en een
strand- en Kamperwagenten.
te koop. Adres D. GBOEN
str. 50, Schev. 4826

TE KOOP
ste Strandwag, met open-
steel voor / 75.—. Te zien
uur: Wilhelminastraat 152.
1890

antie Nunspeet
14 dagen of langer te huur
aan een pr. Huis met tuin,
kuchens, door Hoofdbank-
en No. 1869, bur. v. d. bl.

UWELIJK.
Heer, burgerpositie, niet
saking met R.A. Men-
tijd 20-30 jaar. Dierstra is
en en pastoor wordt ge-
steld. 4871, bur. van dit blad.

GEVRAAGD
net Meisje, niet ben-
de 18 jaar, netjes kun-
nende werken, van 9
tot 5 uur. Aanb. na 8
uur. Adres: Keppeler-
straat 285. AYQ

GEVRAAGD
een flinke heldere Dag-
diensthoes.
Adres: Boekhorst-
No. 165. AYU

SLAGERSJONGEN
Gevraagd een flinke
Jongen, eenigzins m.
het vak bekend. AXL
Adres: J. v. Stamen-
burj. Ancubastraat h. L.
v. Meerdervoort.

GEVRAAGD
een net Meisje, P. G.
18 a 20 jaar, zelfst.
kunn. werkend. Duin-
oord, en Zondags vrij-
v. z. g. v. Aanm. des
avonds na 7 uur. BAW
Adres: Amperestraat
120, boek Copernicus-
straat.

YERST. GEVRAAGD
voor huusel. bezichtig-
den Meisje van 10-9
uur, Aanm. van 8 tot
9 's avonds. AWZ
Adres: W. van Out-
hoornstraat 18.

NET DAGMEISJE
gevraagd, van 's morn-
gins 8-5 uur. AZH
Adres: Thomsoolaan
No. 107.

Banketbakkerij.
Aankomend Winkel-
huus gevraagd. Duin-
oord, liefst eenigzins
met het vak bekend.
Brieven lett. AYB
bureau van dit blad.

VRIENDIN
Gevraagd een net,
gezellig Meisje, 16 a
17 jaar, P. G., liefst
met fiets.
Brieven lett. AYQ
bureau van dit blad.

DAGDIENSTBODE
gevraagd, zelfst. kunn.
werken. BCI
Adres: Anna van Bue-
renstraat 279.

GEVRAAGD
voor direct een net
Holl. Meisje voor dag-
en nacht, v. z. g. v.
Aan te melden Am-
sterdamse, 49, Sche-
veningsechestr. 49
Schev. U4

TE HUUR
grote ongem. Achter-
kamer. AYQ
Adres: Goudriaan-
de 34.

TE HUUR GEVR.
Jongelui, die gaan
trouwen vragen le of 2e
Etage, ongem. of eenige
Kamers met Keuken,
liefst centrum. AZG
Brieven lett. AZG
bureau van dit blad.

GEVRAAGD
een net Slaapkamer,
voor Juffrouw, h. b. h.
h. h.
Brieven lett. AYI
bureau van dit blad.

Tarstand te huur
een kl. Slaapk. aan
den voetsak, (boven-
huus), voor netta Juffr.
b. h. h. prijs / 75 per
week. AYI
Te berr. na 2 uur:
Daguerstraat 5.

TE HUUR
een groote ongemeb.
Achterkamer met aere,
2 kamers, electr. licht,
met gebruik van keu-
ken, prijs / 6 p. week.
Brieven lett. BBB
bureau v. d. blad.

ZIT-SLAAPKAMER
met pension, centrum
der stad.
Brieven met prijsop-
gave, lett. AXZ, bu-
reau van dit blad.

TE HUUR GEVR.
kleine Etage of twee
denkjes, voor net ge-
zin, z. k. huus ongev.
/ 25 a / 30 p. m. tegen
erant. vergoeding of
opknapper.
Brieven lett. ACN
bureau van dit blad.

ARCHIPEL
H. Rijwiel, als nieu-
woog model te koop v.
/ 72.50. Adr. Kemp-
straat 53. BAK

DAMESFIETS
Te koop een le klas
Burgers E. N. R. in
nust. staat pr. / 80.—
Adres: v. Bleiswijk-
straat 142. BAN

STILLE STRAND.
Een zeer sterke Lekt-
loopende 4-wielige Trek-
wagen te koop tegen
elk aanneemelijk bod.
Adres van Brakelstr.
No. 41. BAO

GEVRAAGD
Tegen 1 October te
koop of te huur ge-
bruikt een flink Be-
denhuis, omtrek Spiu-
of centrum, wijk 7.
Brieven lett. BAS
bureau v. d. blad.

TE KOOP GEVR.
Schrifttafel of Bureau
Minister. BAX
Brieven met prijsop-
gave Hobbemastr. 290,
Telef. M. 23.

TE KOOP
wegens plaatsgebrek
Ameublement, 2 fau-
teuils n. 4 stoelen, geh.
moquette, spootprij-
/ 42.50. Moot weg.
Adres: Valsrivierstr.
157, bij de Kempstraat.
BBC

Rijwielstalletje
ter overname aangebo-
den, wegens omstandig-
heden, tegen elk aan-
neemelijk bod, centrum
stad.
Brieven lett. BBP
bureau v. d. blad.

TE KOOP
mooi Colibat Oostum,
kleine maat, een
H. Rijwiel, in goeden
staat.
Adres: Nieuwe Uitlee-
No. 8. AYS

TE KOOP
2 Transport Honden-
manden en 2 Honden-
hokken. Gramofoon m.
150 nummers, prijs
billijk. AXV
Adres: Vinkenste-
straat 70.

TE KOOP
een Kinderledikant,
hoog model, een Vouw-
wagentje merk Bren-
nabor, zonder kap, en
4 Keukenstoelen, ook
afzonderlijk.
Adres: Noordpolder-
kade 240. AYZ

TE KOOP
op dorp nabij Leiden,
Alleenstaand Huus (e-
dig) zeer geschikt v.
klein rentenier, koop-
prijis / 3000, belasting
lase.

TE KOOP
Ezelen W. v. x d.
Gelesen. Rinsburg.
Adres: Kockstraat
226, 2e etage. AXI

TE KOOP
gebruikte Kinderva-
gen / 17.50, en onbekl.
Wiegis / 10.
Adres: J. v. d. Doer-
straat 77. AUS

Geheel nieuwe
KOSTE MAATEL.
prima lakken voor / 12
te koop, row. maat.
Adres: de Pergon-
chepr. 46. v. AXR

TREKWIJEN
te koop, zoo goed als
nieuw, gemeuberd m.
trekbanden, prijs bil-
lijk, tovans een Gra-
mofoon, schied nieuw,
met 12 nummers voor
/ 25. Adr.: de Gheve-
straat 53. AXQ

TE KOOP
aangeboden, wegens
verrek naar Indië, 2
Mantel-Costuams en 2
Vossen. AXV
Adres: Hugo de Groot-
straat 42. Te zien & k.
op 12 uur 9 uur 48

TE KOOP
een Kinderwagen te-
gen lage prijs. Te be-
vragen Vrijdagavond
tusschen 7-8 uur.
Adres: L. v. N. Oost-
Indië 39. BBS

PADVINDERSI
Leiders-Uniform met
Jekker te koop; prijs
/ 25.—
Adres: bureau van d.
blad. AXV

Net persoon vraagt
KOST en INWONING
liefst bij Wed. of in
klein gezin, als alleen
inwonend.
Brieven lett. AYQ,
bureau van dit blad.

Dogelijk Pension
aangeboden, met vrije,
frissche Slaapkamer, el-
k. kast, / 14 p. v.
en 7 p. s. AXZ
Adres: Obrechtstraat
No. 385.

KOST en INWONING
met bewassing aan-
geboden, v. net werk-
mak. / 13 per week.
Adres: Newtonstraat
No. 195. BBK

PENSION
gevraagd te Scher. v.
1-15 Augustus.
Brieven met prijsop-
gave lett. AXD bur.
van dit blad.

KOSTHUIS
Er kan een net Com-
mendaat geplaatst wor-
den met vrije slaapk-
kamer of gem. Zit-Slaap-
kamer te huur. BAP
Adres: Hamerstraat
49, hoek Beestenmarkt,
benedenhuus.

MEYR. DE LANGE
de beroemde plaatst-
kundige, helderzende,
is dazet. te consult.
ook op portret en schr.
werk met spiritisme
voor afzehr. liefdes-
betrekk., voor dames
en heeren. Consult 50
cent.
Adres: Stille Veerka-
de 15a. BBY

MEYR. V. D. BRINK,
t helderz. Medium, in
dazet. te spreken van
12-9 uur 's avonds,
voor afzehr. liefdesbe-
trekkingen, zeldzaken
enz. Ook Zondags.
Snoods verzekerd. Adr.
Spui 160. BBU

De helderzende Mei.
Schuurman; planeet-
en handlenkundig.
werkt met en zonder
kaarten. Op vele ten-
tonstellingen en ont-
d. Holl. marktpleinen
werkt geweest. Dazet.
te spreken Ged. Bur-
v. 13. BBV

MEY. V. D. LAUW
der planeetleerens,
is dazetlijks te spreken
van 12 tot 9 uur, ook
met portret, alleen v.
dames.
Adr.: Achterom 84,
electr. bel. AZZ

De heroemde
HELDERZENDE
van Scheveningen geeft
raad en hulp in alle za-
ken, hoe gebuik ook
Spekulant van 2-5 en
7-9 uur: Assendil-
straat 32. BAQ

Het bekende Medium
Moyroue Rigina is in
haar magnet. slaap
voor alle serietze za-
ken te consulteeren,
ook voor ziekte, onder
leiding van helmagne-
tische Toewijdingen
op spiritist. grondslag.
Consult. van 10-10 u.
Adres: Obrechtstraat
444 (horden). AEZ

MEJ. PENNA
Dese onoveraarde
sienster, waarvan de
weegte tot nu met heft
bestaan, droom en vis-
ionen, hand- en land-
link, 3 volens portret
of brief, slaapeter en
magnetische sienster,
wondt Hebbelahn G. to-
wants. AWV

TE HUUR ULVRAAGD
per 1 Aug. door jongelui die gaan
trouwen (Rijksambtenaar) **Bon-
drou of Bovenwoning.** Huurprijs
/ 450.—
Br. No. 4861, bur. van dit blad.

Gevraagd
Officiersgezin vraagt nu of later
te betrek. een **HUURHUIS**, liefst
Statenkwartier, bevattende min-
stens 6 kamers, dienstb.k. badk.,
zolder, kelder. Huurprijs max.
/ 1200.—. Brieven onder No. 1801,
bureau van dit blad.

TE KOOP
2 Fauteuils, 4 Stoele, mass. eiken,
moq., / 90.—; verstell. Divan,
landhuisstof / 20.—. Adres: Gon-
denregeenstraat 187, lijn 3, 12, 4782

TE KOOP
1 Salon-Ameubl., r. moq., / 59.50;
6 Stoele, geb. moq., / 41.—; 1 Di-
van met kleed / 25.—; 1 Theevitri-
ne met serries / 17.50; 1 Linnen-
kast, glas in koper / 42.50; 1 2-pers.
Wasschafel / 11.50; 1 sw. eiken
Boekenkast / 32.50; 1 vierlags Ka-
merscherm / 16.50. 54797
Adres: Regentesselaan 190.

En vrije gemeubelde
Voorkamer
te huur voor Dame. 4841
Adres: v. Hogendorpstraat 7.

TE HUUR
tegen 1 Sept. bij Valkenboschplein
2e ETAGE met eigen keuken en
eigen meters voor el. licht en gas,
huurprijs / 30.— p. maand.
Br. No. 4829, bur. van dit blad.

TE HUUR
HEERENHUIS, bevatt. 12 kamers,
grote keuken en tuin, gas, electr.
licht. Ruim uitzicht. Gelegen on-
midd. nabijheid Schev. Boesches.
Lijn 13, 9, 8. Ook uitg. geschikt
voor bewoning in tweeën. Huurprijs
per jaar / 850.—. 4832
Adres: Kanaalweg 92.

Te huur
een vrij **Bovenhuis** te Rijswijk, op
den besten stand, lage huurprijs,
/ 450.— per jaar. Uitsluitend wordt
verhuurd aan klein gezin uit den
netten stand. Brieven zonder inlich-
tingen worden terzijde gezet.
Br. No. 4847, bur. van dit blad.

TE HUUR
ZEER GOED GEM. APP. voor 2 of
meer pers., m. of z. bediening;
bedk., tel en stalling v. motor of
auto. Archipel b. d. Boesches.
Br. No. 4945, bur. van dit blad.

En H. RUWIEL
te koop, in prima staat, met electr.
lantaarn, Eng. merk, bij M. J. v.
d. BOOM, d'Ammerstraat 10, h.
Stevinstraat, Scheveningen 4937

Gem. te huur
tegen Aug. 2e Etage, vrije keuken
in Heerenh. L. v. Moerderv. 355
bij Valkenboschplein 50 a 55 p. m.
z. gesch. voor 1 of 2 nette Dames.

MINERVA
AUTOMOBIEL TE KOOP, 6-pers.,
torpedo, voor sportrijen van / 600.—
Te zien en proef te rijden morgen
van 16-6 uur, v. d. WESTEN,
Paulus Buysstraat 63-69. 4930

Zit- en
Wachtkamer.
Br. No. 4849, bur. van dit blad.

Te huur (dir. of later)
koning gem. Bovenhuis, gr. kram-
m. bedk. en tel.; garage aan hu-
ong. Boesches en Vredespaleis.
Br. No. 4946, bur. van dit blad.

DIVANS / 15.—
Alleen deze week verkoopt
Divans voor / 15.—, tekkeld met
landhuisstof, verfoelbaar en op-
gehandeld werk. Bestellingen worden
altijd uitgevoerd. 4941
POOL & ZONEN, stoffeerdors,
Kockstraat 61, Tel. M. 4878

MOTORRIJ.
Wie ruit 5 P.K. Electrica, Motor
A. E. G., nieuw, tegen goed Mo-
torrijprij. 4943
Adres: Kockstraat 46

Paulus Potterstraat. Kooprij
/ 7100.—, hypotheek / 4000.—
Br. No. 4824, bur. van dit blad

BALEIGH
D.- en H.-Rijwiel, 2 remm., nikk
velgen, e. nieuw t. overn. 481
Adres: Jac. v. d. Doesestraat 73

Groentenbrik
te koop zoo goed a. nieuw, of
patentassen, bij **JAC. THOEN**
Emmastraat 9, Loosduinen. 5
SCH EVENINGEN.
Aanbieding gevraagd voor

Kamers met Pension
of met gebruik van Keuken, voor
fam., best. uit 5 volw. en 2 kin-
deren, 2 en 7 j., van 1 tot en met
20 Aug. Brieven lett. K. S. Bur
J. D. v. d. KAAG, R'dam. 181

LIMONADEFABRIKANTEN OF
BANKETBAKKERS.
60 kilo Essence te koop, Sinaas,
Citroen en Ananas, zeer goede
kwal., voor een derde der waarde.
Meester aanvragen onder No.
4893, aan het bureau van dit blad.

Equipage.
Te koop een **TONNEAU** Her-
man, en daarbij passende lied
bruin **PAARDE** en plated Tuig
met Rijzadel en Hoofdstel. Alles
zoo goed als nieuw. 1808
Adres: Bezuidenhout 5.

Dame vraagt tegen Aug. a. s.
vrije gemeub. **ZIT-SLAAPKAMER**
MET PENSION, Maximum / 60.—
Brieven onder No. 1807, aan het
bureau van dit blad.

SIGARENZAAK
TER OVERNAME AANGEBODEN
welke reeds 60 jaar heeft bestaan,
als bijverdienste, prijs billijk, lage
huur, ruime, mooie woning.
Brieven No. 4868, bur. v. d. bl.

Ben groote partij
Oude Straatklinders
en **Klinkerpuin**
te koop aan groot vaarwater.
Werk Hoornbrug, Rijswijk. 1818
Fa. A. SCHOORL. HAARLEM.

Gem. Zit- en Slaapkamer
op netten stand (Duinoord) te
huur, met pension, voor één of 2
Heeren, b. b. h. h.
Direct te betrekken.
Brieven No. 4896 bur. v. d. bl.

Steigerhout.
Te koop gevraagd een partij Stei-
gerhout. Brieven onder No. 4896,
bureau van dit blad.

En verzameling Boeken
hoofdzakelijk romans; te koop, te-
gen billijken prijs. 4900
Adres: Obrechtstraat 103.

Zeer voordelig
kunt U huish. art. tens op gem.
betalingsoord. bekomen. Strikt ge-
m. Br. No. 4903, bur. v. d. bl.

H. D. en EXCELSIOR
7-9 P.K. te koop, in prima cond.
of te huur, voor licht Motorrijen
met verzamelingen. Te zien: Fal-
sestraat 6, Schev. 4904

PIANO.
Te koop een zwarte **PIANO** met
toppen, plaat, practisch, voor
den sportrijen van / 250.—.
Adres: Vaillantaan 569.

2 Ongem. Kamers
met gebr. K. gov. of Blage, gez.
z. kind, 1 Aug. liefst Scher.
Brieven met prijs lett. V. Boeth.
DE GODEFR., Hartenboecklaan
Scheveningen. 4906

Before I say something about what you can do with the advertisements and how to proceed from them, I need to mention two other things by way of background: about method and about occurrence.

The common image of the fortune teller features a woman (not necessarily old) with a crystal ball. In newspapers these are displayed in cartoons, in jokes. As in the *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* of 1905 where a male visitor is told: "You will inherit a vast sum of money" and replies: "Are you sure?". "Absolutely". "In that case: Can you lend me 25 guilders". Or this one: "A tall dark stranger is watching you". "That is right: the tax man". These images are, of course, historical as images. (Like humour is historical). As a depiction of an extra-imaginary reality they are less reliable. Although most of the fortune tellers were indeed women, their clients were also mostly women, and to a much lesser extent men. This can easily be seen from the advertisements (as one of the above from The Hague) which state: only for women. And there is corroborative evidence, too. What I will attempt here, is to present you with a historically more accurate image. Secondly (but still related to method), the crystal ball was only very rarely used.



Initially I concluded that a similar uniqueness extended to palmistry, also known as chiromantie. That has to be qualified. The reading of someone's hand is arguably historical and already depicted for several centuries (for instance by Caravaggio). There is no doubt also a pictorial tradition with all kinds of moral messages, but hand reading could be done on the spot and did not require any extra tools. (Here an early nineteenth-century gypsy fortune teller by Ludwig Grimm). As the manuals show, it also required a thorough knowledge of the lines of the hand and it is doubtful whether most fortune tellers would take the trouble to learn it.



In the 1920s in The Hague, the fortune tellers who were able to read a palm could be counted on the fingers of one hand. However, this was slightly different in the first decade of the century in Rotterdam, where a number of fortune tellers advertised as "handlijnkundige" (expert in palmistry). Since an electronically accessible newspaper allows you to put in a search term, it allows for more precise findings than is the case with the taking of samples I applied on the film reels. (Do not try "fortune teller" to find adds; you will not). But things are always less simple than they appear. To mention just one complication: at the moment there is not yet a complete run of the *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* for the first three decades of the twentieth century. Another one concerns the actual practice. As appears from a consultation report of 1893, an Amsterdam fortune teller briefly looked at the lines of her clients hand, looked at them intensively, then shook her head and returned the the cards she had already put on the table.



In passing I have mentioned (and shown) two settings which fall outside the scope of this paper: fortune telling by gypsies, or travellers in general, and fortune telling in the country side. Around 1900, in the peat areas of the north-eastern Netherlands (parts of the provinces of Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe), fortune tellers, all women, could be found at the country side. The most famous one was Hinke Spoelstra (1835-1912), better known as Hinke Kaart in the Frisian hamlet Nieuwebrug - here on the only existing, rather vague picture. Outside the peat areas, fortune tellers were primarily to be found in the cities, where they were of course also visited by clients from outside. The late nineteenth-century print from a painting by Bernhard Winter shows this rather well. Three young women in their Sunday best consult a card-layer in Oldenburg,

presumably to hear about their current and future lovers. Next to travelling fortune tellers and the sedimentary ones, there was a third category: the fortune teller on the fair. As far as is known she was mainly consulted by way of entertainment, again by young women or young couples. The fortune tellers in the big cities were different: they dealt with serious businesses.

Let us return to The Hague. The woman who was consulted by the young couple in 1851 was probably looking into the boy's hand. She may also have used the coffee grounds [Kaffeesatz]. She certainly applied cards. Cards were, as a matter of fact, the tools most frequently used by fortune tellers and it should certainly not be assumed that "planetary experts" always drew horoscopes. "Planetary expert works with two decks of cards", a miss. K. in the Hague advertised. Another "planetary expert" and "(female) astrologist" applied "seven decks of cards" and yet another one could do it "with and without cards". As two journalists observed in the 1930s: "A card layer [*Kartenlegerin*] may call herself planetary expert, but of course she *is* not". A similar conclusion can be drawn from the booklet *De Astroloog* [the astrologist], on sale for 40 cents. It did not deal with the stars, but was "the most complete manual to predict someone's future from cards". The same applies to the Brief Manual to the Art of Card Laying, which was subtitled: "How to draw someone's horoscope with the help of 36 playing cards".

In een vertrek met een litjumeaux, een onopgeruimde waschtafel en hier en daar een nonchalant neergeworpen kledingstuk van nog al discreten aard, zat het orakel.

Haar uiterlijk was tamelijk in strijd met den Engelschen naam, waaronder ze blijkens de advertentie optrad. Het was een dikke matrone die haar beste jaren reeds eenigen tijd achter den welgedanen rug had. Voorts vond ik dat de helderziende er niet bepaald helder uitzag.



„Het was een dikke matrone...”

Onder een warrig geveerd pagekoppje met ponny gluurden een paar stekende, sluwe oogen, die meer geschikt leken om in de portemonnaie dan wel in de nevelige toekomst te schouwen.

Timide nam ik plaats voor de wijze vrouw.

„Weet u dat het tarief een gulden is?” vroeg ze praktisch. Haar stemmetje deed meer aan den Zuid-Oost Buitensingel dan aan de Thames denken.

Ik antwoordde, dat zulks mij bekend was, waarop ze een spel groezelige kaarten nam en met haar okkulte werkzaamheden een aanvang maakte.

„Ben u getrouwd?”

„Neen”, zei ik en ik moffelde m'n trouwring weg.

Zij maakte met de kaarten een geheimzinnige figuur.

A certain Miss NESS in the Hague advertised as a "planeetkundige", although she merely layed cards. When in the 1920s a journalist called on her he asked the girl who opened the door for the *Kartenlegerin*. "You surely mean the clairvoyant", she corrected me. Luckily she was in. "Could I wait, because the *planeetkundige* just had a visitor".

In daily speech "*kaartlegster*" (the Dutch equivalent for *Kartenlegerin*) was the most common word. I found it in newspaper reports, as well as in the register of residence, as in court reports. This indicates that the

women labelled themselves in that way, too. But not in the advertisements. It was such a matter of fact that cards were layed that only the specifics had to be mentioned. Even the few clairvoyants layed the cards. There existed several methods to lay the cards and some fortune tellers indeed possessed several packs and offered different readings. A deck of 32 cards, for instance (without the numbers 2 to 6), constituted a system which was broad enough to incorporate the most important facets of life. Roughly put, the cards represented people and events in relation to the client. According to the cards life moved between men and women and between fortune and misfortune. As a certain miss LONETTI explained in the 1920s to a visiting (but undeclared) policeman:

She asked me, since I was unmarried, to draw seven cards. She put those seven into a cross. Meanwhile she started a conversation. I sensed very well that she did not see more in the cards than I did. In any way possible she attempted to find out what the main point was that bothered me. First she started about financial affairs, than about a police case [whether he was prosecuted], chercheurs were almost on to me, next false friends. Finally we reached the issue of women ...

Apart from ordinary playing cards, a deck of 36 fortune telling cards was used. On it a particular image and sometimes a small text, as a memory aid to the card's meaning. A card layerin in Amsterdam put them in four rows of eight cards, with the last four underneath. The distance to the client's card (again a man, but now another journalist), determined its effect. When the good cards were close to you, luck laughed you in the face. Bad cards, such as the coffin, the clouds, the snake and the cross, could best be as far away as possible. Mostly, they balanced out each other.

You are laying, with card number 28, that is the card of your man person, in the middle of row 2. And now pay attention to how I will explain it. Not so long ago some evil elements disturbed your rest - is that the case? ... yes? ... right -, because it is written here in the cards of the fox, the birds, the anchor, and the mouse; they surely attempted to immerge you into misery, but they did not succeed. Now you are rewarded, because there is the tower, meaning a happy old age. You conquered the rod, which predicted strife in your household. But the stork indicates that you will move soon. There is the evil seize, which should bring some misfortune, but that will yield in face of the key which is lying very well directly underneath you, and with the help of the ring of fidelity. Everything that would turn out to be unpleasant is kept at a distance ... Your luck is considerable since the cards predict reward for your virtues.

So, that is enough, the world is bad and [verdorben] - we all know that - but you are protected by [Vorsehung], which won't leave you from the cards. Thus an Amsterdam fortune teller in 1910.

The cards used were those designed by Madame Lenormand, famous for having foretold the fate of Napoleon. She thus occupies a slot next to occult celebrities such as Paracelsus, Etteilla (in a sense Lenormands predecessor who had popularized tarot reading) and Trismegistus. (The titlepage features her as the main author) The cards are still (or again) available, although there are very slight differences in the 1910

description and the cards I bought almost a century later. At the early twentieth century only a few fortune tellers advertised with the name. The ad by Mademoiselle Jeanne in which she refers to her success at the fair, is from 1893. Miss ANTHONIA merely stated that she descended from the French woman. And often the name was misspelled. The cards may have been more popular in individual use, as a kind of do it yourself cards. For they were often advertised for that purpose: "These are [diverse] plays or pleasantries with cards, that can be done by a single person, and with which one can have great fun".

The several thousands of advertisements provide a stable background grid against the more random reports of visitors may be situated. Without exception those visitors were male, and although they do reveal some of the exchange between fortune teller and client, they were thus generally atypical. Foremost it concerned journalists, who sensed a juicy item that would certainly interest their readers. However, the vice squad of the Hague also send out a plain-cloth officer to check whether the ladies were involved in "DARK AFFAIRS", mostly abortion and he left a number of rather unique reports. Occasionally fortune tellers appear in court cases: as witness, as victim and as perpetrator. In 1896 an Amsterdam newspaper even reported the murder of a woman known as a fortune teller (by her husband). In another Amsterdam case of 1908 a fortune teller had sold stolen grammophone plates and told the cleaner who had retrieved them that the cards showed that the police was still far away from her. In a Rotterdam case a thief was reported to be married to a fortune teller, who basically earned his living for him. In yet another instance a fortune teller was accused of fraud (which was difficult to establish when the client believed in what she said). And there are of course a number of abortion cases in which fortune tellers feature.

Mej. Fenna,
Katerstr. 37, hnis, de eenige
in geheel ons land, die
werkt als Mad. Leonard,
die Keizer Napoleon's toe-
komst voorspelde. Spec.
uitlegging van afwezige
personen en verm. voorw.,
prijs 15 cts., van 'smorg.
8 tot 's av. 11 u. MR

1910

MEJ. FENNA
Deze schitterende
ster was zeer jong-
digen leeftijd reeds
zienster, groot in de
mirakels door haar
verricht, sielzeker.
slapster, visioenen
uitleester. Adr.: Hek-
kelaan 6, bovenhuis
bij N. Haven en Zwaar-
teweg. DPR

1920

MEJ. FENNA,
de oudste planeetleze-
res v. geh. Nederland.
dankbetuigingen ter in-
zage v. hooggeplaatste
pers., van hier en het
buitenland, droomuit-
legster, onthulster van
het verleden, op 10 j.
zienster. Werkt voor
heeren, ook Zondags te
ontbieden, Hekkelaan
6, bovenhuis. CKA

1930

Haagsche Courant: Mej. Fenna

Reconstructing the backgrounds of fortune tellers on the basis of the thousands of advertisements is tedious work, but surely necessary. Here I can only give a few other examples. In 1910 Miss Fenna, whose 1923 ad I showed earlier, advertised to be the only one in the Netherlands to work as "Madame Leonard" had done, "who predicted the future of emperor Napoleon". In 1920 she appeared to have moved house, to the Hekkelaan. Now she emphasized her clairvoyance which she possessed since a being young girl, and the many "miracles" she had performed. She was a "reader of souls", a "sleeper" [somnambule] and could explain visions. In 1930 (at 66 years of age) she could boast to be the "eldest planetary reader of the whole of the Netherlands", who had letters of thanks from highly placed people, also from abroad. She could explain dreams, reveal the past, with a 10 years range. And she also admitted gents. Another way to look at the advertisements is serially concentrating on the name. This shows a differentiation of methods, which may of course just have been a differentiation in presentation. Fenna's move was to a more strategic location in between the two railway stations of The Hague. Her address also allows identification (I cannot show the registry of residence where it says that Fenna Wolthuis lived at the Hekkelaan nr. 6). In 1924 she was involved in a court case because she would have directed a woman to an abortionist. This could not be established and she was .. Freispruch ... She remained active till her death in 1933.



One of the Rotterdam fortune tellers was Miss. Louise. In 1913 she boasted to be wissenschaftlich. She even advertised that she did not advertise. This was her way of saying that her fame did not depend on advertising but on the experience of her clients ("many proofs of thanks"). No <Betrüg> whatsoever, but just amazement about what she knows of your past. Meanwhile she was one of the few (or as far as I have seen, the only one) who put her picture in an advertisement, which then of course by far exceeded the simple and cheap small ad. Her address identified her as a widow who apparently picked up the trade after the death of her husband, a Tapezierer. The ads also show her living on the doorstep of the Rotterdam cattle market, which will ensured her of a steady flow of clients from outside Rotterdam. On the same grounds the fair was held and at other days there were markets.

Helderziende, Planeetkundige.
 Binnenrotte 41, naam op het raam. Oprecht de wereldberoemdste Somnambule en Planeetlezeres. Hollandsch, Duitsch en Engelsch, silveren medaille van Spanje voor haar schitterende bekwaamheid, kunst en Wetenschap, eenigste helderziende gedachtenlezeres uit aan geboren natuurlijke aard. Onovertreffbaarste ziet alles, het verleden, tegenwoordige en toekomstige, zegt waar u geboren zijt, ouderdom, welk geloof, groote karakterlezeres, Familiezaken, Huwelijken, Echtscheidingen, Erfenissen, Politiezaken, Handelsbetrekkingen, Ongesteldheden, Afgebroken Liefdesbetrekkingen, enz. Bezoekt ALGONDA DAMASO, die met buitengewoon voldaan zijn door haar schitterende bekwaamheid, gratis bewoering van M. Werkt met Portretten. Bronzen Medaille van Zwitserland voor geheime kunst, Spiritisme, maakt afgebroken Liefdesbetrekkingen goed, geeft onderricht in Planeetlezen. Te spreken alle dagen, ook Zondags.

Planeetkundige.
 ALGONDA DAMASO Binnenrotte 41. Wereldberoemdste Planeetlezeres. Niet in woorden, maar in daden. Niemand overtreft haar. Zilveren Medaille van Spanje voor haar schitterende bekwaamheid. Groot succes met geheime kunst, Spiritisme. Zij vraagt niets, ziet alles. Huwelijken, Echtscheidingen, Erfenissen, Familiezaken, Politiezaken, Handelsbetrekkingen, Ongesteldheden, Afgebroken Liefdesbetrekkingen, enz. Onovertreffbaarste helderziende Karakterlezeres. Dagelijks te spreken.

Leest dit!
Helderziende.
 Huwelijken, Echtscheidingen, Familiezaken, Politiezaken, Handelsbetrekkingen, koopen en verkoopen, veranderingen van Betrekkingen, Ziekte, Ongesteldheden, afgebroken Liefdesbetrekkingen, voorspelt u de grootste Helderziende onzer eeuw, de beroemde ALGONDA DAMASO, Hugo de Grootstr. 109a, onovertrefbare, helderziende Karakterlezeres, werkt met Astrologische Spiegel, geheime Kunst, Spiritisme. Velen danken hun positie en geluk aan haar, niet één Planeetkundige kan haar evenaren dat is vanouds bekend. Tevens bezitster van wereldberoemde Boeken. ALGONDA DAMASO, is dagelijks te spreken. Alleen Hugo de Grootstraat 109a, boven de Glazenwasserij.

Helderziende
 Somnambule, Planeetgelaat- en Handlinkundige. Stelt iedereen in de gelegenheid hiervan te profiteeren. En is dan vanaf heden dagelijks te spreken vanaf 25 cent. ALGONDA DAMASO geeft raad in alle Zaken, zooals Huwelijken, Echtscheidingen, Erfenissen, Familiezaken, Politiezaken, Handelsbetrekkingen, koopen en verkoopen, Ziekte, Ongesteldheden, afgebroken Liefde, enz., zij spreekt Hollandsch, Duitsch en Engelsch. Raadpleeg deze Helderziende, Hugo de Grootstraat 109a, vrijen opgang, aparte Spreekkamer, Stipte geheimhouding, succes verzekerd.

ALGONDA DAMASO Hugo de Grootstraat 109a, vanouds bekend als de eenigste
Helderziende
 Somnambule, Planeetgelaat- en Handlinkundige, stelt iedereen in de gelegenheid hiervan te profiteeren. En is dan vanaf heden dagelijks te spreken vanaf 25 cent. ALGONDA DAMASO geeft raad in alle zaken, zooals Huwelijken, Echtscheidingen, Erfenissen, Familiezaken, Politiezaken, Handelsbetrekkingen, koopen en verkoopen, ziekte, ongesteldheden, afgebroken liefde, enz., zij spreekt Hollandsch, Duitsch en Engelsch. Raadpleeg deze Helderziende, Hugo de Grootstraat 109a, vrijen opgang, aparte Spreekkamer, Stipte geheimhouding, succes verzekerd.

Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad 1909, 1913: Algonda Damaso

The ads of Algonda Damaso appeared in the Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad of 1909, 1913-1919. (At least those years are available online at the moment). They are relatively extensive: consider the first: She portrayed herself as a Hellsehende, Planeetkundige. She could speak Dutch, German and English. Had received a Spanish medal (at the end of the ad a Swiss medal is mentioned, too), was the only mindreader who had been born with the gift. Sees everything: past, present and future, tells you where you are born, how old you are, which faith. After these, supposedly confidence inspiring skills, followed a list of the areas in which she could give advice: Family affairs, marriages, separation, inheritances, police businesses, <ongesteldheden>, commercial relations. In different order similar lists are mentioned in subsequent advertisements. There is an additional "astrological mirror" (in the middle, have no idea what that is). And in the later ads prospective clients are told that there is a separate entrance, a waiting room and a consultation room.

On both the addresses lived W.G. Bredewold, who was first registered as a shoemaker and later as a merchant. He was married to Theresia Hoornstra whom I suspect to have been the fortune teller (unless they had a relative living in). The marriage took place in 1906 and their daughter Allegonda (!) was born soon afterwards (there were also earlier children). Again close to cattlemarket. Like Miss Louise she will probably have had male clients, too.



1914



1915



1919



August 1919

Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad

ALGONDA DAMASO

Apart from satisfying curiosity, identifying a fortune teller helps to better establish an individual, and in the end a common, profile, although not every advertising fortune teller can be identified through her address, also because there were several hundreds of those ladies and some of them only practiced for a short while. But one of the things, it shows that not every fortune teller was necessarily old; they could also be in their early thirties. In the case of the ones for whom identification is possible, there are two further considerations to be made. One relates to the advantage of historical distance and access to registration of residence (this useful source was lost in Rotterdam, by the way); in other words, the researcher can discover connections most contemporaries could not. The second reveals something about the double identity of the fortune teller herself. The address book of Rotterdam was available at the time and every one could check who lived at the address of the fortune teller. Especially when she advertised to have moved, such as Ms. H. in 1913, it becomes easy to see that at the subsequent address the seamstress J. Hoogeveen lived. In the rare case of Miss ANTHONIA (the so-called descendant of Lenormand) there could be no doubt whatsoever as she gave her occupation as fortune teller ("waarzegster") in the address book. (her surname was Jopse, her first name Thona, and a few years before had been a cleaner). To act as a fortune teller involved participating in a kind of fantasy world of which both the actor and her clients could be aware. Sometimes.

Advertisements allow the mapping of fortune tellers in space and through time. This can show a particular practice and its success (measured in number of years) within a particular neighbourhood, especially in terms of social status and the opportunities to connect with the wider world. It also related the different fortune tellers to each other; how they both tried to distinguish themselves from one another and went with the current fashions, even when the ads only represented a part of their practice and foremost how a fortune teller wanted to present herself. I could easily occupy you the rest of this afternoon with more examples, but I will conclude with three more issues.

The Rotterdam Miss LOUISE shared a house number with a merchant, whose mother was to become one of the most notorious female healers in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1919 she (the mother) was convicted of having procured an abortion in the course of the previous summer. The healer and the fortune teller will no doubt have known each other, but at the moment any other conclusion will be speculative. In the case of Miss FENNA in The Hague, the evidence is more convincing, although in the end not enough for the court. Her colleague Miss NESS certainly was involved in abortion cases. Her pseudonym Ness was, in fact, derived from the actual surname, Nesselaar, of yet another fortune teller who went by the name of Miss MERTENS and who had lived at the same address. This was purely to confuse the police. Talking to the police officer, whom she took for a client, Ness asked whether he had "perhaps shoot too far". The man nodded. She resumed to studiously consider the cards. There was "young life" in my family. She could see it in the stars. The man confided that he was at his wits end and was looking for a solution. She looked at the cards again: I could "dissolve" it. "Is that possible," the man asked. "That is very well possible." A similar conversation took place some time later when the same fortune teller was visited by a journalist.

On the basis of selected examples, a convincing case can be built as to the equation of fortune tellers and abortionists. But it is also a matter of rhetoric, of presentation. Of the total number of abortions, only a fraction practiced as fortune teller. In the Hague 68 abortionists were convicted between 1912 and 1930 and only six of them were also fortune tellers. During the same period in Rotterdam also six fortune tellers were prosecuted as abortionist, of a total of 111. When there were roughly one hundred fortune tellers in these cities each during the same period, the overlap is put into some more perspective. Of course, when the nine aborting fortune tellers of Amsterdam are also thrown in, a discussion of over twenty cases may sound convincing, the more so when it is decorated with contemporary opinion which equated the two trades. What should be distinguished, however, is the practice of abortion (and its scale, which varied), and the referral to abortionists. Unwanted pregnancy was certainly one of the issues to put before a fortune teller, and with hardly any medical provisions (and those not very expert at that), lay abortionists naturally stepped in.

What else, where fortune tellers consulted about?

"The questions put to card layers and their ilk", a reporter remarked in 1918, "mainly go into the amorous direction, while those to somnambules are often related to illnesses". That seems to be more or less accurate. In all advertisements where there is mention of illness, it concerns clairvoyants. For the rest the information

in the ads is fickle; lists as those of ALGONDA DAMASO are, on the whole, rather exceptional. Of course there is mention of the future, sometimes in relation to the past (even the past could be predicted). Miss B. "gives consultation for daily life and predicts you the future soon", miss L. was "clairvoyant in life circumstances". When these very vague indications are further specified, it relates to "affairs or other circumstances", "secret affairs, inheritance and commercial affairs", or "broken engagements", "love affairs, also separation." Several women even had "famous powder for broken off love". For the rest, secrecy ruled. The fortuneteller "revealed dark affairs, no matter how secret", she could be consulted for "all secret and difficult affairs", she was the "Enthüllerin of the deepest and hidden secrets". She "tells everything, however secret", "resolves every secrecy", "uncovers the deepest secrets". The question is, of course, whether these secrets should remain secrets, forever buried in an unaccessible past, or whether an attempt should be made at recovery?

In a letter to the *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* in 1919 a certain V. complained that many a "decent father was being branded as the biggest shapegoat" by "these people". Lichtgelovige women could easily be let astray. A next "victim" found that fortune tellers did not care whether they made someone unhappy, as long as they earned money. Curiosity was the culprit. In a slightly earlier report, of 1917, it was put in this way: "They [the fortune tellers] warn about a <falsify?> and than indicate a "dark" or "blonde" person living in the surroundings of the <female> questioner". A client of Mrs. Sonja "suspected that her man was seeing other women. That made her very tense". As Mrs. Adrino told the plain-cloth policeman: "Women come to me with all kinds of problems. The one does not trust her husband, the other wants to go steady, a third has to marry [= pregnant]". The female clients of Mrs. B. in Rotterdam complained about a corpulent husband, a drinking husband, and a lack of children. They also wanted to find a husband. Also some muddlers had visited her. It seems, one can conclude, that fortune tellers fulfilled a need: they attracted women who were looking for luck and not finding it.

A similar study is more than possible for Germany. I have already shown several prints by German artists. There is also the occasional spill in the Dutch newspapers. In 1911 the Dutch newspaper HET CENTRUM reported (presumably from a German source) the presence of 34.607 "star gazers, card layers, fortunetellers male + female, wizards and witches" in Berlin. According to another newspaper in 1914, they had become "a plague" in Berlin, where they were distributing address cards and advertising leaflets. They should then specifically have concentrated on telling female relatives how soldiers fared in the war. There was the occasional trial, such as the one against Mrs. Gunther-Geffers who had often been officially consulted to discover murderers, arsonists and other criminals. But the prosecutor insisted that she practiced fortune telling as a trade, which was legally forbidden. In 1934 the Minister of Justice published a warning against fortune tellers. As it was impossible to predict the future, they were all fake, he insisted - which shows he knew little about their practice. Foto's of the Berlin fortune teller Madame Sylvia taken in 1932 even turn up in a Dutch foto archive. In 1930 she had been involved in a famous case of treasure finding in Zaandam which even made it into popular songs.

These German examples only present the tip of the iceberg. I feel the same way about my Dutch material.

