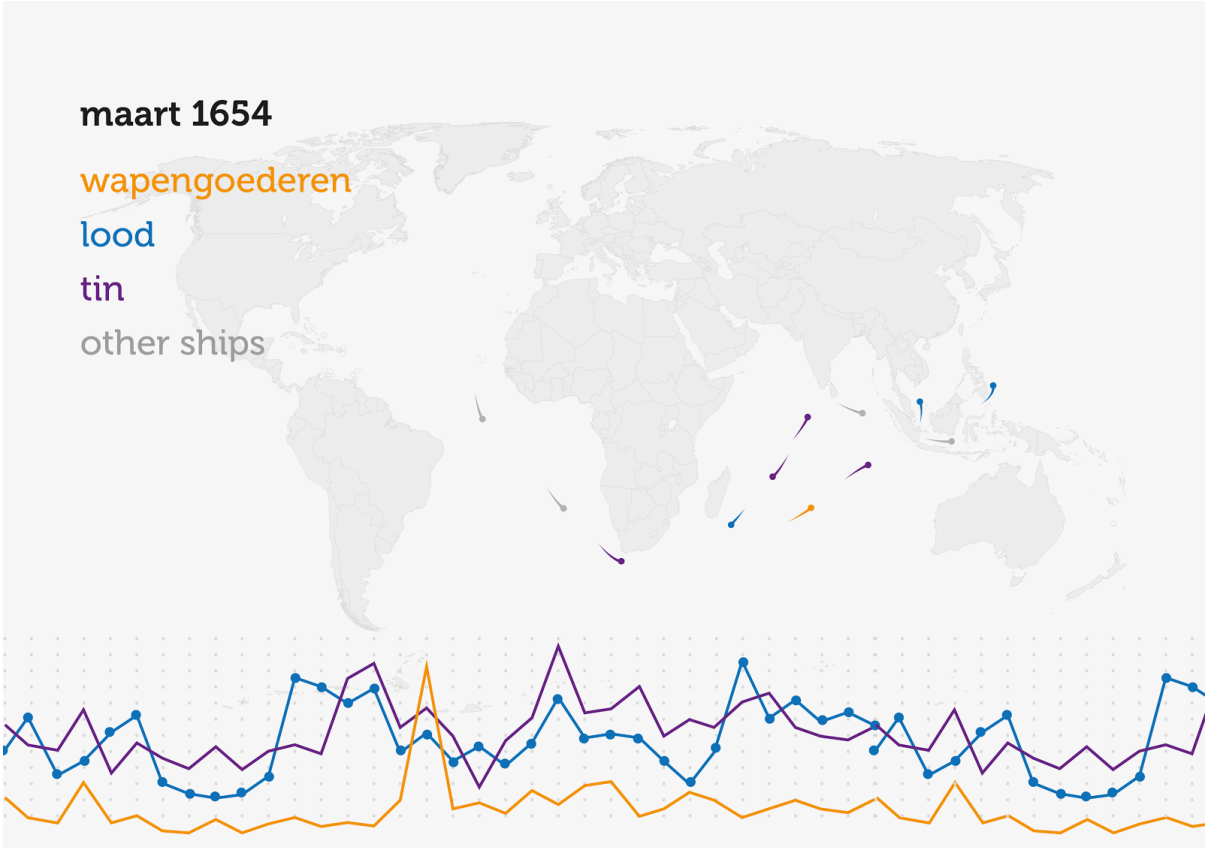
**Analyzing the Dutch-Asiatic Trade in the 17th and 18th centuries by using a spatial and quantitative approach**

Robert-Jan Korteschiel, bachelor student art history (UvA)
Erik van Zummeren, bachelor student history (UvA)

In recent years the Dutch Huygens Institute has released several datasets on Dutch shipping in Asia. Examples include the digitisation of the Dutch-Asiatic Shipping dataset (DAS) and the Bookkeeper-General Batavia database (BGB). These databases contain an impressive amount of information. It does not only contain basic information such as a place and date of departure of every single voyage that went from the Dutch Republic to Asia and vice versa. But it also contains, in the case of the BGB database, a detailed list of on-board commodities. However, in it's present day usage these sets are mostly used as a work of reference. By visiting the DAS or BGB-website you can get a good understanding of a single voyage, but it's quite difficult to see the bigger picture.

By creating an open source web based GIS system we hope to tackle this problem. Our approach consists of plotting 18 000 voyages on a world map. Each of these voyages is linked with it's date of departure and arrival. The canvas of our application only shows the voyages from a user specified time period. For instance if a user selects March 1643 only those voyages who were sailing in March 1643 show up. Further insights can be gained by colour-coding voyages that contain certain commodities such as tin, opium or Chinese paper. The sum of their financial value is distributed in years and are plotted in a graph underneath the map. Events are also added to the map. They show how the voyages relate to certain events, and they provide a narrative.




A very early concept drawing that shows the main concept behind our tool

A play button and an interactive timeline enable the user to literally scroll through time. By doing so the user can not only see how trade evolves in time, but they also get a sense of the grand scale of the

entire Dutch-Asian trading network. The tool also gives the possibility to dig deeper. For example how are certain commodities related to each other? Does an increase in the trade of weapons, for example, also increase the number of medical goods? Do certain products influence the distribution of other products, and what was their influence on the Dutch economy? (Misschien nog wat betere voorbeelden bedenken)

This project evolved from a course we did during the Digital Humanities minor (UvA/VU). Therefor this presentation/demo might not only be interesting for those who are into (H)GIS, maritime history or data visualisation, but also for those who want to get an idea how an average digital humanities student project looks like.