

Dutch Ship Tiles



Dutch Ship Tiles

Amsterdam – Utrecht – Harlingen – Makkum
1660-1980

Jan Pluis

Primavera Pers, Leiden 2018

© Jan Pluis, 2018

ISBN 978-90-5997-262-9

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

Front cover illustration: Warship, 130 x 130 x 9 mm, Amsterdam, c. 1660.

Back cover illustrations: Square sterned yacht, Amsterdam c. 1660; Mijnlief, Utrecht, c. 1900; Tichelaar, Makkum c. 1930; Tichelaar, Makkum, 1975; Volendams interior with ship tiles of the type shown in fig. 28, photo 1910.

Illustration on p. 2: Fish carrier, 197 x 197 x 14 mm, Makkum, c. 1940 after a tile by Mijnlief, Utrecht, c. 1900 (fig. 87), which in turn is based on an etch by Groenewegen, 1789.

Design: Primavera Pers

Printing: Wilco Printing & Binding

Contents

Foreword	6
Mirrors of a seafaring nation — Remmelt Daalder	7
Introduction	13
Vessel types	13
Rigging	13
Tile works	16
Rotterdam	16
Amsterdam	18
Harlingen	26
The mantelpiece of the West-Indisch Huis in Amsterdam	27
Amsterdam ship tiles and imitations	28
Tegelfabriek Schillemans / Mijnlief in Utrecht	39
<i>Sponsen</i> (pricked stencils) from Schillemans/Mijnlief	41
Ship tiles with a characteristic wave structure	43
Muursteentjesfabriek De Nijverheid, Gebr. Ravesteijn, (1845-1907); Tegelfabriek Westraven, v/h Gebr. Ravesteijn, Utrecht (1907-1918); N.V. Faience en Tegelfabriek “Westraven” v/h Gebr. Ravesteijn (1920-1985)	46
Colour	51
Pattern books and price lists	52
The Jan van Hulst Works in Harlingen (1849-1933)	55
Ships in green and pink	68
A galley	70
<i>The Fortuna from Amsterdam on a Harlingen tile</i>	70
Muurtegelfabriek Sijbrand Tjallingii, Harlingen	74
Tegel- en Aardewerkfabriek Tichelaar, Makkum	78
The ‘Hou Zee’ series, c. 1940	91
Ship tiles and transfer technique	93
Notes	95
Bibliography	96
Photo credits	96

Tables

Table I Ship tiles at Nijenrode castle; Zaandam	25
Table II Amsterdam ship tiles and imitations	29
Table III <i>Sponsen</i> from Schillemans / Mijnlief	42
Table IV <i>Sponsen</i> and tiles from Ravesteijn with examples	48
Table V <i>Sponsen</i> Van Hulst, Harlingen	64
Table VI Tiles Van Hulst, Harlingen	65
Table VII Designs and <i>sponsen</i> from Tichelaar, Makkum	85

Foreword

This publication was made possible thanks to the generous cooperation of various museums, institutions and individuals, for which I am profoundly grateful.

Femke Diercks, curator of European ceramics at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, was so kind as to have photographs taken of the manganese ship tiles with blue waves of the mantelpiece of the West-Indisch Huis – these tiles formed the starting point of the present publication.

The collection of *sponsen* at Gemeentemuseum Het Hannemahuis te Harlingen was an important source. The museum's director, Hugo ter Avest, kindly allowed me to photograph all of the museum's *sponsen*. Museum Tresoar at Leeuwarden was also most cooperative: curator Tjeerd de Jong was unfailingly generous.

Among the many individuals I would like to single out Edwin van Drecht, who made his extensive collection of

ship tiles available to me. Let me also express my thanks to Roeland Kramer, who photographed important ship tiles especially for this publication. Peter Sprangers made tables of many hundreds of ship tiles and their production sites, which made it possible to trace specific designs over a longer period. These data were an important source for attribution. He was involved in the whole process, always critical and meticulous. I am grateful to mr I.G. (Sjaak) de Visser, model maker of the Frisian Maritime Museum at Sneek, for correcting the naval terms.

I would likewise like to thank Ger de Ree and Prosper de Jong for their involvement and corrections, and my wife Henny for her careful perusal of the manuscript.

Jan Pluis, January 2018

Mirrors of a seafaring nation – *Remmelt Daalder*

The world's largest tile picture is situated in a tunnel underneath Amsterdam Central Station. Walls and ceiling of this underpass for pedestrians and cyclists which, since 2015, connects the town centre and the river IJ, have been covered with 70,000 blue-and-white tiles measuring 13 x 13 cm. The tiles were manufactured especially for this purpose by Royal Tichelaar in Makkum, a centuries-old company which Jan Plus discusses extensively in the present publication. Irma Boom, who designed this 110-meters-long work of art, was inspired by an eighteenth-century tile picture painted by Cornelis Bouwmeester, now in the collections of the Rijksmuseum. The herring busses and warship depicted on the tunnel's walls accompany the present-day cyclist to what was once the 'ship-filled IJ', and remind us of the intimate relationship between Holland and the sea.

This relationship is not something the average Dutch cyclist habitually ruminates upon – in fact, for most of the inhabitants of the Netherlands it is a matter of course. After all, our country was 'wrested from the sea', as the nineteenth-century Dutch poet Petrus de Genestet wrote, adding bitterly that this had not been done at his request.

Holland may have been wrested from the sea, but there was enough water left. For centuries, navigation provided our ancestors with means to make money, subjugate other peoples, and wage war. If one takes a look at the so-called 'Canon of the Netherlands', a chronological summary of Dutch history presented through fifty 'windows' or themes, one will find many with a maritime character: the Hanseatic League, the Dutch East India Company (VOC), admiral Michiel de Ruyter (1607-1676), to name but a few. Moreover, navigation plays a crucial role in 'windows' such as the ones devoted to Joan Blaeu's *Atlas Maior* and to slavery.

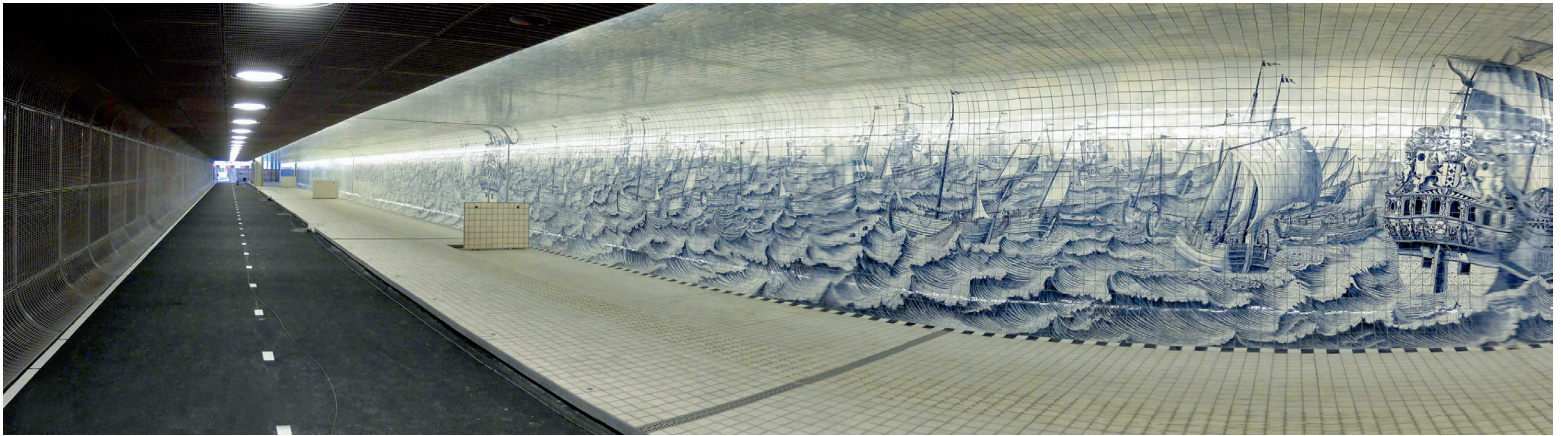
Both our historical canon and the extensive literature on our maritime history are concerned with the practical side of navigation: ships, routes, mariners, cargo, naval combat. However, shipping also had its effect on the world view of people who in their everyday life had little to do with the sea or with boats. How did they see the business of shipping? What role did ships and the sea play in their daily lives, their rituals, their language, their leisure pursuits? And in what way did these views find expression in stories, paintings and utensils?

The sea had a profound impact on the Dutch imagination, so much is certain. This can, for instance, be deduced from the vast print runs of simple, illustrated books about sea journeys. Ten thousands of readers have been pleasantly horrified by the gruesome adventures of IJsbrant Willemsz Bontekoe, master of an East Indiaman which miserably foundered in the Indian Ocean in 1619, since his journal was published in 1646. As late as 1924, the journey was the subject of a popular children's book, *De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* (Bontekoe's cabin boys); a motion picture based on the book was released in 2007. Bontekoe's story is best known, but several other sea journeys – preferably of the blood-curdling kind – have made best sellers since the seventeenth century. Willem Barentsz' expedition of 1596-97 and the crew's terrible winter on Novaya Zemlya, the *Batavia* mutiny (1629), Michiel de Ruyter's heroic deeds, and even the remarkable antihero J.C.J. van Speyk (1802-1831), who, in 1831, blew up his ship so that it would not fall into the hands of the rebellious Belgians – it is all part of our collective memory.

Art historical research has shown that during the Dutch Golden Age (roughly spanning the seventeenth century), many citizens had maritime paintings on their walls: pictures of naval battles, harbours or roadsteads with ships,



Ship portrait of the homeward-bounder *Pieter en Paul* of the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch East India Company, on the IJ in Amsterdam. Painting by Abraham Storck, 1698.



Tile tableau in the bike tunnel near Amsterdam Central Station, designed by Irma Boom in 2017 and made by Tichelaar Makkum. Photo by Jos van Zetten.

or ship's portraits – depictions of actual ships, often somehow related to the owner of the painting. Captains and admirals, including Michiel de Ruyter and Cornelis Tromp, are known to have bought work from specialised maritime painters, such as Reinier Nooms or Willem van de Velde the Elder and his son of the same name. However, countless citizens who had little to do with navigation also owned maritime paintings. Everyone who was prepared to spend a few guilders could add a maritime painting to a nice landscape or a biblical scene. Many inventories include maritime paintings, often described as 'a little storm' or 'a sea battle'. In many cases the owner was an ordinary landlubber – an innkeeper, a clerk or a merchant, a butcher, a baker. Images of the sea must have been ubiquitous.

During the nineteenth century, navigation was an important part of the Dutch national identity, perhaps even more so than during the Golden Age. The colonial ambitions of the Kingdom of the Netherlands formed one part of this, but there was also a nostalgic element. The Dutch looked back on their glorious past, when the Republic was one of the Great Powers of Europe, with a certain wistfulness. But there was more than just wistfulness. Naval heroes, such as Michiel de Ruyter and Piet Heyn, were hon-

oured with statues, and the praises of the maritime past were sung by poets such as Hendrik Tollens (who, in 1821, wrote a lengthy poem on Willem Barentsz' ill-fated expedition of 1596-97, mentioned above) and Jan Pieter Heije (who, in 1847, wrote a song about Piet Heyn still familiar to many Dutch). Dozens of nineteenth-century painters, many of whom now forgotten, devoted themselves to the reanimation on canvas of the maritime enterprise of the Golden Age. Incidentally, the term *zeewezen* (which encompasses every aspect of navigation) was coined at the time. The first Dutch reference work on maritime history, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewezen* (Naval history of the Netherlands, ten volumes, 1833-1848), by J.C. de Jonge, also appeared at this time. Aficionados of the subject united in societies, for instance the Vereeniging 'Het Nederlandsche Zeewezen' (Society 'The Dutch Maritime Enterprise'), which organised exhibitions and issued a journal and various other publications.

For centuries, the sea has been a constant presence for the Dutch – not only as a threat or a challenge, but also as a frame of reference for people who would not know a ketch from a koff. These landlubbers, however, did read about sea journeys (whether it concerned those of Barentsz

or of the popular cartoon character Kapitein Rob), owned paintings and prints depicting the deeds of gallant naval heroes, and were taught songs about those same heroes at school. Children wore sailor suits and played with toy boats – wooden shoes with little sails (nowadays they use Lego or Playmobil).

This intimate relationship with the maritime world is also evident from the simple objects that form the subject of this book: tiles. These were applied by people from all walks of life to protect the walls of their kitchens and fireplaces against dirt, moisture, and grease. Those who could afford paintings decorated their houses with biblical and historical scenes, still lifes with flowers, scenes from daily life, and land- and seascapes. Wall tiles were cheaper and more practical, and, in addition, carried much the same motifs. In his many tile books, Jan Pluis discussed them extensively: mythological and biblical subjects, children's games, and everything that was part of daily life – household utensils, animals, food, and, last but not least, ships. All of these images reflect the world of the original users: their religion, their stories, the circumstances in which

they lived and worked. Some of them, decorated by skilled artists, are veritable works of art, but, in contrast to those who produced 'fine art' (paintings or prints), the names and backgrounds of tile painters are often unknown. However, Jan Pluis' investigations have greatly contributed to our knowledge of tile production. Pluis shows how the images were copied with the help of *sponsen* (pricked stencils), and provides valuable details about the many tile works our country had and, in fact, still has. The enormous tile picture underneath Amsterdam Central Station demonstrates that these techniques are still very much alive. Pluis' research ties in with current trends in art history, which not only recognise the importance of styles and motifs, but also of production systems, the management of workshops, and the relationship between artist and customer. *Dutch Ship Tiles* not only offers an attractive overview of all those vessels which populated our waterways and the high sea, but also presents us with a mirror of a society whose identity was, in many respects, shaped by navigation.

Remmelt Daalder, January 2018



Fluyt, 129 x 129 x 9 mm, Amsterdam, ca. 1690. After an engraving by Salomon Savery (1610-1665), see fig. 1.



1 Salomon Savery (1610-1665), *fluyt*, number 3 of 6, 130 x 161 mm. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; RP-P-OB-5576)

Introduction

During the seventeenth century the Netherlands were a seafaring nation. Increasing prosperity brought about a demand for luxury goods – the use of painted tiles was part of this trend.

In the course of the seventeenth century, several tile works produced tiles with ships, especially in Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Harlingen. The first half of the eighteenth century saw a decrease in the popularity of ship tiles and in the years that followed only a few series were produced. After 1880 there was a renewed interest in the ship tiles which were produced in Utrecht after seventeenth-century examples. These would serve as models for tile works in Friesland.

This publication presents descriptions of ship tiles as well as examples of ship tiles produced by various tile works. It focuses on the influence of ship tiles from Amsterdam on the ‘old-Dutch’ ship tiles produced in Utrecht and Friesland after 1880.

Because of the frequent reference to vessel types, ship components, and rigging, it seems useful to provide some introductory information regarding these subjects.

Vessel types

It is not always easy to designate a specific vessel type. This is especially the case with inland craft, which often have regional names. In this publication, the term *market ship* will be used to designate various types of inland vessels.

Ships may be distinguished according to the number of masts (rigging): three-, two- and one-mast vessels.

Three-master: Warship with artillery on two decks; smaller types (frigate, pinnace) usually have only one deck for artillery. A split pennant often designates a warship.

Merchant ship: East Indiaman, whaling ship, boatship, *fluyt*, three-masted hooker.

Two-master: Coaster (koff, smack), fishing vessel (hooker, buss), market ship.

One-mast ship: Inland craft with one mast with a square sail, a spritsail, or bezan rig. This type of vessel is usually a market ship (for cargo or passengers).

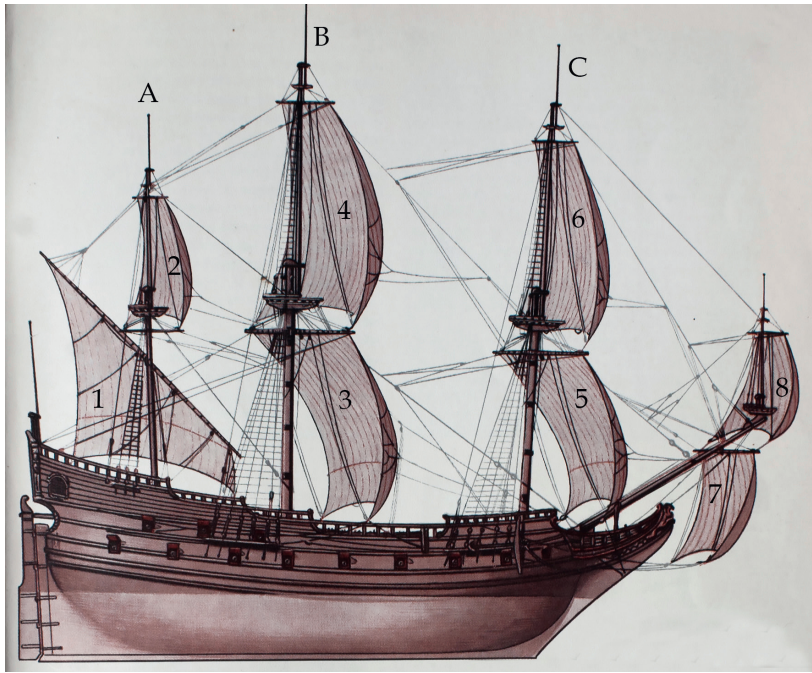
Type and function frequently mingle. An East Indiaman may be a frigate, but is usually a *fluyt*. The *fluyt* – a three-master with a narrow upper deck and a rising after deck – was a common vessel type during the first half of the seventeenth century. It was mainly a merchant ship (fig. 1), but could have a small number of cannon.

The hooker (with one, two or three masts) was a smaller vessel type, most often used for fishing. It has a round bow and a fairly deep sheer (i.e. the lengthwise line of the hull first drops and then rises again towards the after deck).

The *herring buss* was a distinctive type of vessel used for catching herring (cf. Table II-4) – tiles often show the hauling in of the nets. The square sail on the mizen mast at the rear served to keep the ship steady. The mainmast and the foremast would then be lowered. The herring buss had a flat lower stern (transom); there would be a lantern at the front, because fishing was done at night.

The galley was a special type of vessel, which will be discussed and illustrated below (figs 157-168).

Three-masters usually constitute more than half of a series of ship tiles. In the case of the Westraven works, however, three-masters only make up one third of the ship tile series.



2 Rigging of a small seventeenth-century warship (pinnace). Adapted from Björn Landström, *Het Schip*, Den Haag 1961, fig. 364.

A Mizzen mast

B Mainmast

C Foremast

1 Mizzen (a three-cornered lateen sail)

2 Mizzen topsail

3 Main sail

4 Main topgallant sail

5 Foresail

6 Fore topsail

7 Spritsail

8 Spritsail topsail

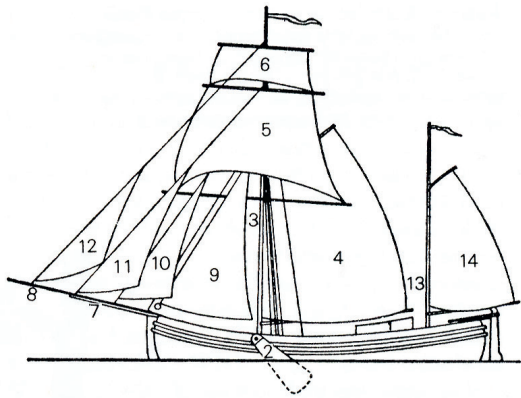
Rigging

The accompanying drawings of a pinnace and a koff (figs 2 and 3) serve to illustrate rigging terms.

Spritsail. Sprit rig was first used for inland craft around 1500 and remained in use until well into the eighteenth century. Reinier Nooms represents two sprit-rigged *kagen* (a Dutch type of inland craft); the sail of the *kaag* on the right has been lowered (fig. 4).

Square sail. The term 'square-rigged' designates the use of square sails attached to a yard (fig. 5). Square sails were already used in classical Antiquity. Reinier Nooms' print shows three square-rigged fishing vessels (pinks).

Bezan rig. Bezan rig evolved from sprit rig during the seventeenth century. At the top the sail would be attached to a straight or bent gaff. When there was also a boom at the bottom, the term 'gaff rig' (or 'fore-and-aft rig') would be used (fig. 6).



Kofschip. 1. roef; 2. zwaard; 3. grote mast; 4. grootzeil; 5. marszeil; 6. bramzeil; 7. boegspriet; 8. kluiverboom; 9. stagfok; 10. kluiver; 11. buitenkluiver; 12. jager; 13. bezaansmast; 14. bezaanzeil. Tekening J. van Beylen.



3 Rigging of a koff, after J. van Beylen, in: *Zeilvaart Lexicon*, Antwerpen 1980, 119.

4 Reinier Nooms, *kagen* (plural of *kaag*, a Dutch inland vessel). (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; RP-P-1891-A-16549)



5 Reinier Nooms, pinks with a square sail. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; RP-P-OB-20.554)

6 Market ship with gaff rig. From: E.W. Petrejus, *Scheepsmodellen Binnenschepen*, Bussum 1964, p. 71.

