

# The Mediascape of Dutch Chroniclers (1500-1850)

## Labeling Media Mentions in Early Modern Chronicles Using CRF

Alie Lassche & Roser Morante

Leiden University, VU Amsterdam

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# Outline I

- 1 Chronicles and the early modern mediascape
- 2 Corpus and annotation task
- 3 Machine learning media mentions
- 4 Discussion

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# Chronicles and the early modern mediascape

## *Chronicling Novelty. New knowledge in the Netherlands, 1500-1850*

- Project managers: Judith Pollmann (Leiden University) & Erika Kuijpers (VU Amsterdam)
- About: Circulation and evaluation of new knowledge, ideas and technologies among a non-specialist public
- [www.chroniclingnovelty.com](http://www.chroniclingnovelty.com)



## Changing mediascapes and the collection of knowledge

- Explore how the use of computational methods allow me to get more insight in the media early modern chroniclers used and the information they received



# Chronicles and the early modern mediascape

- The whole of sources of information available to the early modern chronicler
- Two elements:
  - ▶ **The media that are mentioned by the authors of the chronicle**
  - ▶ The information that the authors are reporting on, which has been obtained from the media

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## Corpus characteristics

- 350 manuscripts, 70,000 pages
- Written in the Dutch language in the Low Countries between 1500 and 1850
- Transcribed and annotated with Transkribus (HTR) and the help of volunteers (VeleHanden)

## Three labels

- receiver, source, perception (oral/heard, written/read, seen, else)

This morning <source>mayor Vorsterman</source> came <perception: oral/heard> telling </perception> <receiver>us</receiver> that because of the disease, no one was allowed to be buried in the church



# Annotation task

Inter Annotator Agreement shows difficulty of the task

	<b>F-score 1</b>	<b>F-score 2</b>
<i>all labels</i>	0.589	0.742
<i>source</i>	0.208	0.764
<i>receiver</i>	0.777	0.619
<i>perception</i>	0.707	0.727

Table: Inter Annotator Agreement in the media annotation task.

Used data in first experiments: 12 volume chronicle by Jozef Van Wallegghem about Bruges (1779 - 1800)

<b>chronicle</b>	<b>p (% labeled)</b>	<b>n sources</b>	<b>n receivers</b>	<b>n perceptions</b>
Van Wallegghem	1165 (17%)	519	272	510

Table: Characteristics of the data.

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# Machine learning media mentions

- Classifier should assign a label to every token
  - ▶ 0, source-B, source-I, receiver-B, receiver-I, perception-B, or perception-I
- Word vector model was trained on the data, using fastText
- 100 dimensional vector were used as 100 features for the classifier
- Model was trained using Conditional Random Fields (CRF) in `sklearn-crfsuite`
  - ▶ Able to deal with sequential data implicitly
  - ▶ Useful when working with sequence labeling tasks
  - ▶ Calculates features during training
- Information about the previous and next word as features (onsets, offsets, digits, vectors)
- Train set and test set were manually split (70% training and 30% testing of every volume)

# Machine learning media mentions

	<b>precision</b>	<b>recall</b>	<b>f1-score</b>	<b>support</b>
perception-B	0.643	0.552	0.594	134
receiver-B	0.828	0.578	0.681	83
source-B	0.513	0.488	0.500	121
source-I	0.670	0.448	0.537	145
perception-I	0.500	0.143	0.222	7
receiver-I	0.125	0.111	0.118	9

Table: F-scores per label.

# Preliminary results

<b>label n</b>	<b>label n+1</b>	<b>weight</b>
O	O	4.163518
receiver-I	receiver-I	4.029864
receiver-B	receiver-I	3.232955
source-I	source-I	2.888268
perception-I	perception-I	2.374591
source-B	source-I	1.727776

Table: Top likely transitions.

<b>weight</b>	<b>label</b>	<b>feature</b>
1.988054	source-I	+1:word.isdigit()
1.744118	perception-B	word[-5:]: lesen
1.472060	perception-B	word[-5:]: ndigt
1.466354	O	bias
1.145304	source-B	-1:word[-5:]: nde

Table: Top positive state features.

## Three main types of errors

- The token with which the label starts: which token gets the suffix -B?
  - ▶ **de** Gendsche Gazette
  - ▶ **alderverschrikkelijkste** berichten
- Lonely tokens: model is better in predicting when there is a sequence of labeled tokens
  - ▶ decreet
  - ▶ gerugt
- Consistency of the model
  - ▶ The word *men* often appears as receiver, but not always
  - ▶ Model labels media mentions that are overlooked by the annotators
  - ▶ Annotator confused source with receiver, but model assigned the correct labels

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- **Removal of punctuation:** our data consisted of one long sentence
  - ▶ Problematic when trying to optimize the model
  - ▶ Early modern chroniclers were very inconsistent in using punctuation
- **Lowering all characters:** mentions of oral sources or newspaper could not be recognized by its capital
  - ▶ Early modern chroniclers were very inconsistent in using capitals
- **Cluster word vectors**
- **Add a lexicon:** using a lexicon with frequently used words might improve the labeling of lonely tokens
- **Goal:** train a model that can be used to label media mentions in the whole corpus, and that can be used as a method to facilitate the close reading



Thanks for your attention!