

## The *Kuranty* in Context: Dutch Lading Lists and Their Russian Translations Part 2\*

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This essay concludes the study whose first part (published in the previous number of QR) provided background information about the cargo lists of Dutch ships from the East Indies, examined the translations made from lists published in 1628 and 1646, and explored the evidence about a Russian interest in Dutch naval affairs in the mid-1660s. The focus of this part is the lading lists of 1667 and 1671 and the complex contextualization of those translations which may help to explain why and for whom they may have been of particular interest in Moscow. Evidence supports an argument that their translation may have been of personal interest to Andrei Vinus, given what we know about his involvement with the project to build Russia's first European-style warship and his writings on maritime affairs and geography. The translations also could have been particularly relevant for Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, who was actively supporting Russia's eastern trade, and whose Privy Chancery contained other texts related to events in Asia and the European searches for new routes to the Indies. One such text, based on a Dutch source, probably was produced by Vinus. The article concludes that the circumstances explaining the translations of the several Dutch lading lists during the seventeenth century changed over time. To explain their interest in Moscow requires a broad consideration of their history and the specific contexts in which the translations were done.

*Keywords:* *Vesti-Kuranty*, news, information broadcasting, 17<sup>th</sup>-century Russia, Dutch ships, exotic goods

Статья является продолжением публикации, представленной в предыдущем номере QR. В первой части исследования обсуждались интерес в Голландии к публикации списков восточных товаров, русские переводы таких списков в 1628 и 1646 гг. и интерес со стороны России к голландским морским делам в середине 1660-х гг. В предлагаемой второй части иссле-

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\* *Citation:* Waugh, D. C. (2023). The *Kuranty* in Context: Dutch Lading Lists and Their Russian Translations. Part 2. In *Quaestio Rossica*. Vol. 11, № 3. P. 967–992. DOI 10.15826/qr.2023.3.829.

*Цитирование:* Waugh D. C. The *Kuranty* in Context: Dutch Lading Lists and Their Russian Translations. Part 2 // *Quaestio Rossica*. 2023. Vol. 11, № 3. P. 967–992. DOI 10.15826/qr.2023.3.829.

дования анализируются переводы со списков 1667 и 1671 гг. и вероятные причины того, почему они были переведены. Возможно, что переводчик Андрей Виниус выбрал их из многочисленных газетных статей благодаря личному интересу. Во время постройки первого русского военного корабля европейского типа он выступал переводчиком для приезжих голландских специалистов и к тому же написал трактат, в котором советовал царю создать флот на Каспийском море. Кроме того, в указанный период он составил географический справочник о самых известных городах мира, используя популярный голландский морской атлас. В бумагах Тайного приказа царя Алексея Михайловича есть сочинение о возможных путях из России в Китай и Индию, один из источников которого является голландским текстом о разыскании северо-восточного пути через Арктику. Вероятно, данный текст также принадлежит перу Виниуса. Кроме того, многое говорит об интересе царя к восточной торговле и товарам с Востока. В то время как переводы тоговых списков 1628 и 1646 гг. довольно просто объяснить, установить контекст переводов со списков 1667 и 1671 гг. сложнее. Как часто бывает в исторических вопросах, здесь возможны разные равноправные гипотезы. По мнению автора статьи, личная инициатива переводчиков, а не только их представления об интересах царя могла бы объяснить и другие переводы в «Курантах».

*Ключевые слова:* «Вести-Куранты», новости, трансляция информации, Россия XVII в., голландские корабли, экзотические товары

### **The Lading lists of 1667 and 1671 and their translations**

The fragmentary preservation of Dutch newspapers and the Muscovite *kuranty* around the time when the Dutch Indies convoy was arriving in early Autumn 1667 makes it difficult to be sure of the degree to which tracking the progress of that return fleet was of any interest in Moscow. Nonetheless, its entire lading list was received and translated, a fact which invites us to explore the possible explanations for that interest. Cryptic indications in a number of Dutch newspapers from the weeks before the arrival of the Indies fleet suggest that for the Dutch it was anticipated but with some trepidation about whether it would return safely. A typical report was buried in a longer article from The Hague, 14 September, published on 17 September in *TVQ* 1667/38, indicating that Dutch fleets were still at sea in expectation of the arrival of the Indies fleet but that there was still no news of it. A copy of this newspaper was received in Moscow, but we have no evidence as to whether it was translated. Wishful thinking about the Indies fleet led to optimistic, if apparently erroneous reports of sightings of it. Another of the Dutch papers obtained in Moscow, *ODC* 1667/39, reported from The Hague on 25 September the sighting more than two weeks earlier of what was assumed to be nine East Indies ships and a report that three others from the return fleet had foundered before reaching the Cape of Good Hope. However, already on the following day a report from

Amsterdam stated that this news was false<sup>1</sup>. The earliest such reports could have reached Moscow was probably late October.

The return fleet of 1667 included 12 ships, nine of them having sailed from Batavia in late January, and three, which had departed earlier from Ceylon, joining them at the Cape of Good Hope. The fleet left the Cape on 8 June, with ten of the twelve ships reaching home port between 9 October and 25 October<sup>2</sup>. As it would turn out, two of the ships in the return fleet never made it back, both wrecked in the North Atlantic in the stormy seas between Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The Dutch papers reported the delays, concerns and finally the bad news<sup>3</sup>.

There is little evidence to suggest that in Moscow there would have been particular interest in tracking closely the news and speculation about the Indies fleet *before* it would have arrived, although there are occasional summary notes in the *kuranty* regarding convoys whose wealth obviously would have been significant for their home countries<sup>4</sup>. At least two summary translations apparently refer to the Indies fleet [B-K VI/1, c. 233, № 66.1; c. 241, № 68.15]. The paragraph introducing the lading list that was received in Moscow in a copy of *Extraordinaire Haerlemse Donderdaegse Courant* (= *EHD*) 1667/19 (published on 13 October) named all the original ships of the fleet and included the information about the loss of two ships. However, that introductory material was ignored by the translator(s), who nonetheless produced an essentially complete rendering of the detailed cargo list compiled for the entire fleet<sup>5</sup>. In similar fashion, translation of the lading list for the return fleet in 1671 omitted the names of the ships and merely indicated they had all reached port, even though the Dutch paper published on 16 June had specified only five of the eleven had arrived, with the others still expected [B-K VII, c. 162–

<sup>1</sup> A second refutation of the news, in a report from The Hague on 28 September, was published in *EHD* 1667/17.

<sup>2</sup> The identities of all the ships and their fate, including the arrival dates of those which made it home can be established from the on-line database of [Bruijn et. al.].

<sup>3</sup> There are no extant copies of many of the Dutch newspapers which presumably would have been printing regular updates. Since we have a complete set of the Hamburg *Wochentliche Zeitung* for this period, it is possible to track what we assume summarizes news that was appearing in the Dutch papers on the fleet's progress. In reporting on the fate of the fleet for his annual retrospective compendium of news [*HM*, vol. 17, p. 154–155] Pieter Casteleyn reprinted the lading list as it had been published prior to the return of the entire fleet. Immediately following the list, he summarized a report about the wreck of one of the ships near Iceland. To reassure readers, he added a statement that the cargo of the fleets was good, so that the shares of VOC stock had risen and a generous dividend had been declared. His retrospective treatment of the news provides an interesting example of how it might be treated in hindsight and cautions us against assuming that when he quotes a source published in the previous year, he transmits it fully and accurately. We know from the VOC ship records that the two ships which never made it home carried approximately 23.5 % of the total value of the fleet's goods.

<sup>4</sup> For example, a translation from Dutch newspapers [B-K VI/1, c. 235, № 67.18] included a brief report from Madrid dated 6 September that the Spanish silver fleet from the Americas had arrived safely in the St. Luke Islands. This news packet also contains the translation of the 1667 Dutch lading list.

<sup>5</sup> See the Russian text [B-K VI/1, c. 236–238, № 67.23–26], and the Dutch original with a brief analysis [B-K VI/2, c. 542–545].

Amsterdam den 15 Juny. 5 van de Oost-Indische Retour-schepen  
 311 al binnen; daer van al eenige hier zijn gekomen/ waer onder  
 oock den Heer Goens / Commandeur van de 11. Schepen: en  
 merden/boven dese Schepen / noch vier of ses andere onder den  
 Heere Speriman uit Indien die Jaer vermaet / sijn seght/  
 dat de Franss/onder Jhonst. la Haye/sijn gehouen een Capo Sate  
 dijn / niet verre van de Cap de Buon Esperance / om aldaer een  
 Vestigheyt te maken; doch dat oetens onder malkanderen maeren  
 gemoydenen sich hoeder niet de Gemoonders tier aensien/ dat al  
 daer niet sat; soude bijbren. In de sijnas soude een Schepje van  
 Hoy a Hoy zijn gekomen / met Robijs / dat rot H. Jahan groote  
 Betorte was / ober het stuen van de Ciboije en Hostie uit de  
 Meerke; soe dat al enige Der sooren waeren deacht gesmeten.  
 Generale C A R G A, ofte Ladinge van 11 Oost-Indische Retour-  
 Schepen, soo van Batavia als Ceylon, als te weten: 't Sticht van  
 Utrecht, Middelburgh, Vrye Zee, Dordrecht, 't Wapen van  
 Hoorn, de Gerechtigheyt, 't Wapen van der Gouwen Prins  
 Willem, den 20 November 1670. van Batavia verrocken: mits-  
 gaders 't Huys te Vellen, verrocken van Ceylon den 7 Decem-  
 ber Cattenburg en Soerendael maede van Ceylon afgegaen den 22 dito.  
 34350 flux diversich Guinees. 1948 Carty, 2 Teyl, 2 maes  
 Lywaet. Tongque ditto.

8500 flux Mouris.	180128 pont Indigo.
11160 flux Paracallen.	8694 pont Berjuyn Baros.
10460 flux Salampouris.	17440 pont Malax Tin.
9260 flux Bethielles.	219533 p. geraffineerde salpeter.
9000 flux Chavonys.	764310 pont diverse Suycheren.
7250 flux Gingans.	210177 pont Giroffel Nagelen.
1200 flux geschilderde Chits.	129848 pont Noten Muscaren.
275 flux Deceekens.	64680 pont Foelie.
8000 flux Negros Kleden.	428329 pont Ceylonse Canneel.
8000 flux Dongrys.	66100 flux geconfyte Nooren Mustaren.
3880 flux Zeyldoeck.	4569 Moeten diversich Ebben- hout.
4100 flux Adatheys.	205682 pont Callatourshout.
3700 flux Garras.	112903 pont Sapanhout.
9040 flux Baftas.	2508 flux rouwe Diamanten.
660 flux Mamoe dys.	50 flux Alcaityven.
5040 flux Chiauthers.	36 picol Tamarindi.
44068 pont Caroeene Garen.	828 flux geconfyte Miraba- lanen.
2000 flux witte Kannekyns.	2000 pont Tutia.
3880 flux blaauwe Boelangs.	502 oncen 6 Realen swaerte Beloarteen.
1920 flux Madaphons.	8 Realen swaerte Ambre Grys.
400 flux rouwe Longys.	29 pont diverse Amber van Mauritius.
2880 flux Saraffe Bloemwerek.	3106 pont Radix China.
2470 flux Gordel Chindos.	6800 pont Borax.
1920 flux Madops.	8566 pont Wierdoeck.
1600 flux Chelas van de Kuff.	5975 pont Cardamom.
320 flux swarte Chalouws.	75000 pont Japans Staef-kooper
1160 flux Poelongobars.	5390208 p. diverse swarte Peper.
1920 flux Tape Chindos.	
320 flux Calgangs.	
100 flux Saraffe Gobars.	
4325 pont Gommelack.	
91380 pont Persiaense Syde.	
120568 pont Bengaelse Syde.	
66 pont Ceylonse Syde.	

164; 548–551]<sup>6</sup>. The same mail from Vilna, received in Moscow on 6 July 1671, which brought the Dutch source (*ODC* 1671/24) for the lading list, also supplied German newspapers printed in Berlin. One of them included a summary report about expected return of the Indies fleet, citing a copy of the same lading list from which the German editor had extracted only the impressive statistics for three of the products: black pepper, Malacca Tin and Guinea fabrics (il. 1)<sup>7</sup>.

It is of some interest to compare the translations of the two lading lists, since that reveals the degree to which those working in the Ambassadorial Chancery could cope with often unfamiliar terminology and how sometimes hasty work could lead to errors in rendering the foreign news<sup>8</sup>. While one might assume both translations would have been done by Andrei

1. The report on the Indies return fleet and its lading list, published in *OHD* 1671/24, p. [2] on 16 June 1671

Vinius, it is possible that the first of them is not his work<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> As Maier notes [Там же, с. 550], even though this list also was published in *OHD* 1671/24 on the same day, a small variant identifies the Amsterdam *ODC* as the source used by the translator in Moscow. A copy of the Amsterdam paper has been preserved in RGADA and was the source for all of the other translations from Dutch contained in the one packet of news received via the Vilna post on 6 July [B-K VII, c. 161–162, № 20. 167–169 об.; c. 544–548].

<sup>7</sup> For the German sources and a discussion of their translations see: [B-K VII, № 20, c. 417–425].

<sup>8</sup> For details regarding the translation of the 1667 list see: [Maier, Pilger]. So far there is no equally detailed analysis of the translation of the 1671 list, but see Maier's commentaries in [B-K VII, c. 548–551]. It is important to remember that some of the problem renderings may have been introduced by the copyists of the texts.

<sup>9</sup> Other translators who could handle Dutch might have been available, though the records for the Ambassadorial Chancery do not indicate clearly exactly when there would have been a qualified person on the staff. One possibility is Timofei Angler, about whom see [Беляков и др.].

It would have been made most likely in late autumn 1667, at a time when he might well not have been available due to other obligations in connection with the building of Russia's first European-style warship. The translation of the list in 1667 is rather careless, suggesting great haste and lack of attention to detail. Some of the mistakes would seem inconceivable for Vinius, given his family background and what we know about his interests.

There are some inaccuracies in the rendering of the quantities of goods in the 1667 list, the most serious mistake being to translate the Dutch abbreviation for "pieces" as a unit of weight. This error is not found in the translation of 1671. Clearly a number of the specialized terms, especially those designating particular fabrics, were unfamiliar, but at least the translator understood that textiles were involved and indicated as much. Somewhat puzzling is the rendering of "Chinese Thee" as "Хинские травы хе" ("Chinese herbs He"), since one would assume that the translator, if Andrei Vinius, might well have known the word for tea, and tea drinking in China certainly was known earlier in Russia in the seventeenth century, although by the term "чай" (of northern Chinese origin)<sup>10</sup>. As in the 1667 translation, that of 1671 contains a good many instances where there seems to have been no known Russian equivalent for specialized terms, those terms then simply rendered with transcription. The cargoes included several varieties of wood, at least some of which may have been the raw material for preparing dyestuffs, but none appear to have been familiar to the translator who knew only the term "sandal" to designate oriental wood. Not surprisingly, a good many of the place names in Southeast Asia which for the Dutch designated the specific provenance of certain products may have been unfamiliar and in any event were simply transliterated.

While both of the translated lading lists form apparently integral parts of the manuscript packets of translations made from specific postal deliveries of Dutch newspapers, the lists are self-contained on separate sheets. They are known only in single copies. In normal practice the translated packets of news would have been read to the tsar and his advisers or at very least copied for his Privy Chancery. However, it is hard to imagine anyone just reading off a long and complicated listing of numbers and products. Furthermore, one might wonder what could possibly have inspired the translation of the lists at all.

### **Andrei Vinius' Interest in Dutch Maritime Affairs and the Eastern Trade**

Might they reflect simply the personal interest of Andrei Vinius, the son of a Dutch merchant-entrepreneur and later head of the Apothecary

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<sup>10</sup> One needs to remember that tea often was used as a medicament; so "трава" would not have seemed inappropriate. That the Dutch would have used the word "Thee" is not surprising, since it would have been common in Southeast Asia, based on a southern Chinese word for tea. In his last years, the early eighteenth century, Vinius owned a book by Cornelis Bontekoe published in 1701 entitled *Drey Neue Curieuse Tractätgen von dem Tranck Café, Sinesische The, und der Chocolata...* [Книги из собрания Андрея Андреевича Виниуса, с. 58, № 37], which presumably reflects his professional interests developed while he headed the Apothecary Chancery.

Chancery with its stores of exotic foodstuffs and medicaments and a library of reference works? Vinius surely would have been well informed of Dutch maritime affairs simply from reading the newspapers and the books he was accumulating for his personal library.

His knowledge would have been relevant to the role he played in translating the documents concerning the hiring of Dutch shipwrights in 1667–1668 to build the *Orël* (Орёл), Russia's first European-model warship to defend the maritime trade in the Caspian Sea. In 1667, the tsar's Privy Chancery had commissioned Jan van Sweeden (the Dutch entrepreneur who was also Moscow's first international postmaster) to hire in Amsterdam the necessary specialists. Vinius was assigned to translate from Dutch contracts and documents pertaining to payments and procurement [ДАИ, т. 5, с. 211–215, 231–234, 249; Юркин, с. 88–95]<sup>11</sup>. Since Vinius apparently interacted directly with David Butler, who was hired by Van Sweeden to captain the ship being built in Russia, it is possible that Butler could have provided the Muscovite translator with information about the Indies trade. The initial hiring documents indicate specifically that Butler had been involved in the Indies trade and knew the languages, details of trade and customs of India, as well as techniques of celestial navigation [Там же, с. 218].

Around the same time that he was involved in translating the Dutch documents and engaged in at least two other compilations/translations, Vinius was compiling a geographic “guide”, an alphabetical listing of major cities with descriptive phrases identifying them and an indication of their distance from Moscow [Петров, с. 149–158]. The colophon indicates that he finished the work on 1 August 1667. Presumably a reference work such as this would have been useful in the Ambassadorial Chancery when the translators needed to provide an explanatory note identifying a place name in the *kuranty* texts. The heading for this work indicates that Vinius had determined distances using, inter alia, a book entitled “Водяной мир” (The Water World), which probably was a copy of one of the pioneering and best Dutch maritime atlases of the day, *De zee-atlas ofte water-waereld*<sup>12</sup>. The maps it contained included ones

<sup>11</sup> The interaction with the Dutch who came to work on the project may well have supplied the officials in Moscow with maps, images or books that could have been added to the reference library in the Ambassadorial Chancery or to the tsar's own collection in his Privy Chancery. In connection with a dispute between Butler and a Dutch merchant engaged in the project, Russian officials temporarily confiscated from Butler what the sources call “писма и грамотки, и черные немецкие книги, и черные росписи и иные всякие писма” [ДАИ, т. 5, с. 265–266, 268–269]. Butler provided the officials with a copy of the foreign naval regulations regarding discipline for ships' crews, since he was empowered to follow those rules during his command [Там же, с. 276–277]. The list of the various supplies Butler brought with him to Russia includes this notation: “2 чертежа на паргами-не, 12 на александрийской бумаге; и из того числа один взнесен к великому государю в Верх, 2 взяты в Посольской Приказ” [Там же, с. 275]. Most likely these were plans or drawings for the ship.

<sup>12</sup> Two different Dutch cartographers, Henrick Doncker and Pieter Goos, published atlases under the same title, Doncker's first edition [Doncker] appearing in 1659 and Goos' first edition [Goos] in 1666. There is no plausible reason to doubt that Vinius saw and used the atlas, even though there is no copy of it inventoried later in his personal library.

depicting the route around Africa to the East Indies. Depending on which version of the atlas he had, Vinius also could have obtained from it descriptive material about countries with basic information about some of their products. However, as recent work emphasizes, he had other sources. To determine what they were and how he used them is a complex problem that requires further study<sup>13</sup>.

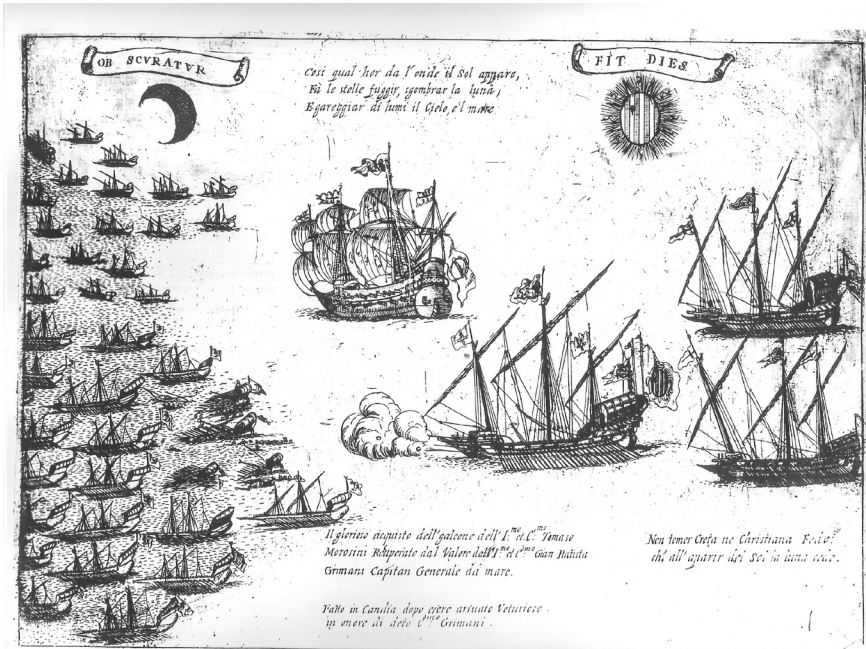
In early December 1668, Vinius wrote a memorandum for his superiors in the Ambassadorial Chancery proposing what he considered to be the most sensible way to create a workable fleet on the Caspian [ДАИ, Т. 5, с. 404–405, № 80]. Vinius argued that a whole fleet of galleys would make a lot of sense and that it was wrong to think that a sailing vessel such as that which was being constructed could be of use in the Caspian. The winds blew the wrong way; such a sailing ship thus could not always go where it was needed. Furthermore, being of deep draft, the ship could not go upriver in places where it might be of value. Of shallow draft and not dependent on the wind, galleys were much better suited to the geography, and they could travel under sail when the wind allowed. They had the additional virtue that they could be powered by captive Muslims and convicts. The creation of such a fleet with its guarantee of being able to protect commercial vessels would attract many more merchants, and the customs duties they would pay then would enrich the treasury. If a route could be discovered to India via the rivers and direct trade there undertaken, the benefits would be substantial.

It is not clear how Vinius would have known about such things as prevailing winds in the Caspian, but he surely was aware that war galleys were still very much a part of naval strategies at the time. Several of the engravings he collected in his scrapbook show naval battles, including those between the Ottoman and Venetian fleets in which galleys played a major role [Книги из собрания Андрея Андреевича Винуиса, с. 249, инв. №№ 7398, 7401; с. 251, инв. №№ 7428]. Reports from escaped captives of the Tatars and Turks, where the individuals in some cases had been forced to serve on galleys, were well known in Moscow. Vinius modestly suggested that if his superiors felt his proposal to be of interest they might bring it to the attention of the tsar. However, we have no evidence that Aleksei Mikhailovich ever saw it (il. 2).

Apart from his having consulted a copy of a Dutch sea atlas, we cannot be certain what else Vinius was reading in these years. The catalog of the over 350 titles that are known to have been in his possession attests to the breadth of his interests and includes a good many volumes devoted to naval affairs, world geography and exploration. However, some of the items relating to events we are focusing on here were published in later

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<sup>13</sup> See: [Янссон, 2014, с. 11–18; Янссон, 2015]. There is additional material on the connections of the work and its copying in the Ambassadorial Chancery in [Янссон, Шамин]. Vinius' work on the *kuranty* may have provided some of the data and influenced the decision on which cities to include.



2. An engraving celebrating a Venetian naval victory over a fleet of small Turkish galleys during the siege of Candia. A page in the scrapbook of Andrei Vinius [БАН. 17.17.19. № 7401]

years, and even where the imprints antedate the 1660s, there are but rare indications when he might have acquired them. His inscriptions on a few volumes date their acquisition to the period when the Dutch embassy headed by Jacob Boreel was in Russia, for which Vinius served as the Russian translator [Там же, с. 67 (№ 53), 116 (№ 34), 119 (№ 141), 177 (№ 235, 236)]. Among Vinius' later acquisitions, as noted in our Part I, was a 1666 account of de Ruyter's voyage down the African coast and across to the Caribbean to attack English outposts [Journael] and a large history of the Second Anglo-Dutch War published in 1668 [Книги из собрания Андрея Андреевича Виниуса, с. 84]. Vinius owned a book on the Venetian-Ottoman war over Crete published in 1670 and Olearius' 1651 edition of the travel account to Persia and India by Johan Albrecht Mandelslo [Книги из собрания Андрея Андреевича Виниуса, с. 95, 130–131, 142–143]<sup>14</sup>. A book that could have been in his possession at the time of the project for a warship on the Caspian was a 1200-page compilation including an account about the late sixteenth-century Dutch search for a Northeast Passage to China and India and a dozen narratives of the first Dutch Indies voyages through the year 1629, published in

<sup>14</sup> When Vinius obtained the Olearius edition is uncertain. An inscription on the book indicates that on 20 April 1669, it was owned by one Volodimer Ivanov (possibly Vinius' brother-in-law, Wouter Jansz. Houtewall?).



Amsterdam in 1648<sup>15</sup>. Vinius' copy ended up in the collection of the Moscow College of Foreign Affairs which succeeded the Ambassadorial Chancery in the eighteenth century. His album also included a series of Dutch engravings depicting various Chinese cities, among them the important port of Canton [Там же, с. 250]. At very least this evidence is testimony to his interests relevant to the translations of the Dutch lading lists. It seems quite certain that a copy of Pieter Casteleyn's annual (*HM*) covering the year 1666 arrived in Arkhangel'sk on a Dutch ship by mid-summer 1667 [Посольство, с. 244–245]. Even though there is no evidence that any of the book was translated, logically Andrei Vinius might have been asked to look at it and could have kept the volume. His library eventually contained an extensive set of Casteleyn's annual volumes with their news about naval battles, publications of lading lists, and other information about the Dutch maritime trade [Книги из собрания Андрея Андреевича Виниуса, с. 103–113].

In short, there is a lot of circumstantial evidence that Vinius could have been quite knowledgeable about the Dutch Indies trade and took a personal interest in it. He certainly was in a position to have known about a number of other Russian initiatives to promote eastern trade.

### **The Government's Interest in the Eastern Trade**

Of course Vinius' interests and activities here may not be the most compelling evidence to help us understand why he would have translated the lading lists. In the first instance, we still assume the decisions about what to select from the foreign newspapers were guided by perceptions of what was known to be of interest to the tsar and the makers of Russian foreign policy. However curious and open to exotica the tsar was, he also was very focused on affairs of state, including the development of trade and other economic resources. Activities he deemed of particular importance in that regard were managed through his Privy Chancery (Приказ великого государя тайных дел). By looking at such evidence, we can further develop plausible hypotheses to contextualize the translation of the lading lists.

One way to approach answering these questions is to ask to what degree the products listed in the Dutch lading lists match "Eastern" wares known to have been imported into Russia. We have seen how in 1646, at least a selection of items from one such lading list seems to have focused precisely on such products. To the degree that the government and the tsar personally may have been involved in cultivating Muscovy's international trade in such goods, we may then have a plausible explanation for why the lading lists could have attracted interest. There is in fact a great deal of

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<sup>15</sup> The book is listed by [Белокуров, 1898, с. CCCXXI] in the library inventory compiled in 1784 with the annotation "ex libris Andrias Winus". The book is [Oost-Indische voyagien; Книги из собрания Андрея Андреевича Виниуса, с. 248, № 7392] apparently was unaware of this book, though she noted that the engraved title page of what apparently was the same book is one of the plates pasted into the "Vinius Album" of drawings and engravings.

evidence about commercial connections between Muscovy and, at least indirectly, Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia and China, where government initiative and control over such trade became particularly important during the seventeenth century<sup>16</sup>. Unlike in the case of most diplomatic missions to Europe, where envoys were explicitly forbidden to engage in trade, embassies to Persia, Central Asia, or India might double as trade missions. Russian merchants who had a particular interest in trade in Siberia or down the Volga and into the Caspian often were specifically commissioned as the tsar's agents, a *quid pro quo* for their being able to engage in private commerce. The initiative to engage in such trade also came from entrepreneurs or commercial entities in the "East", for example the Armenians whom the Persian shah had put in charge of the trade in Persian silk<sup>17</sup>.

There are two remarkable contemporary analyses of Muscovite trade, one written by the Swedish resident Johan de Rodes when he was away from his post in Moscow, visiting Reval (today, Tallinn) in October 1653, and the other compiled in 1674 by Johann Kilburger, who had spent some months in Moscow as a member of a Swedish embassy<sup>18</sup>. Both of these extensive reports draw on the Russian customs registers and tabulate prices for a wide range of goods that were obtainable in Russian markets. Writing as he was in the middle of the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652–1654), which had been detrimental to the Dutch trade to Arkhangel'sk, De Rodes argued for re-directing the flow of Eastern goods from the Volga-White Sea route to a route through Swedish-held territories in the Baltic. Kilburger was writing during the Franco-Dutch War (1672–1678) and in the immediate aftermath of the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–1674), a time when merchants active in the Russian trade were having to cope with the so-called New Trade Statute (1667) by which the Kremlin imposed strict limits on the commercial activities of foreign merchants.

<sup>16</sup> A descriptive chronicle of the exchanges with Central Asia is [Жуковский]. Among the missions for which we have substantial published documentation are that of Ivan Khokhlov to Bukhara and Khiva in 1620–1623 [Сборник князя Хилкова, с. 388–445, with an appended chronological survey of relations with Bukhara, с. 446–484] and that of the Pazukhins to Bukhara in 1669 [РИБ, т. 15, 7 пар.]. The inventories of the Privy Chancery, compiled soon after Aleksei Mikhailovich died, included documents relating to a mission by Ivan Khastov to Persia in 1661/62 and another by Fedor Narbekov in 1665/66 [Там же, т. 21, стб. 3]. This is but a small sampling of the evidence relating to the active exchanges with the Islamic regimes in the East.

<sup>17</sup> The discussion of Muscovite trade with Persia by [Куриц, 1915, с. 343–362] remains a valuable summary. One of the best treatments of the Russian documentation regarding trade from India through Central Asia is [Байкова], who draws heavily on the collection in [Русско-индийские отношения]. In English, see [Mathee, p. 168–171, 192–197], his focus being the trade with Persia and the role of the Armenians. See also [Dale, ch. 4; Levi, p. 225–232]. Dale's study focuses on the Indian community in Astrakhan, the seventeenth-century trade, and the early Russian missions to the Mughal Empire, first undertaken in the middle of the century.

<sup>18</sup> In the discussion below we have used the publication and analysis of these reports by [Куриц, 1914] (De Rodes), [Куриц, 1915] (Kilburger). Kurts' work has not been superseded by more recent studies.

While a many of the products brought to Europe by the Dutch East Indies ships are also recorded as imports to Muscovy, that was not necessarily thanks to the European ships arriving in Arkhangel'sk. When a Russian embassy to Mughal Shah Jahan, led by two merchants, departed in 1646, its instructions included obtaining commercial intelligence and specifically mentioned a variety of luxury goods, including textiles that are documented in other sources from Russian markets [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 58]. As Stephen Dale has suggested, this presumably is evidence that such products were already known from the trade at Astrakhan' [Dale, p. 92]. An Indian merchant who arrived in Saratov on his way to Moscow in December 1649 brought for sale a wide range of textiles, many possibly inexpensive cottons, but at least some probably more elaborately woven silk from northern Persia [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 93–94, № 42, 43]. It is difficult to determine whether similar wares were among the fabrics described as "Indian" which in 1616 and 1619 had been purchased for the tsar from an English merchant, or in 1651 would be purchased on the wharves in Arkhangel'sk from the Dutch [Там же, с. 25–27, № 2, 3; Курц, 1914, с. 221–224]. The tsar's purchases in 1651 seem to have been the more elaborate damasks, velvets and satins, whose place of manufacture generally is not noted. That list specifies some 75 different fabrics, grouped by types (taffetas, damasks, velvets, satins...) and identified specifically by their colors. Many such textiles probably were ones woven in Europe. The lading list translations of 1667 and 1671 have few specific fabric names (the generic *полотно* is used for most of them in the 1671 list), the translator(s) distinguishing the different items on the list in the first instance simply by transliterating the terms in the Dutch original. So it is almost impossible match those lading list textiles with the listings in the contemporary Russian economic documents.

Throughout much of his reign, Aleksei Mikhailovich seems increasingly to have been interested in expanding commercial relations with the East. In September 1662, while in Riga during a diplomatic mission to Western Europe, Ivan Zhelyabuzhskii had a conversation with the Chancellor of Courland in which the Russian posed the question of whether Courland could arrange to construct a merchant ship for the Russians that they could use in trade from India [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 139–141]. The Courland official indicated that theoretically it was possible, but it would be less expensive to have the ship built in Arkhangel'sk. Apparently there were no further inquiries or action on the matter.

The political obstacles and continual wars involving European countries would have been an incentive to explore alternatives for the trade in eastern products, and the need for new sources of government revenue made the collection of customs revenues of considerable importance. In a culture where gifting by the ruler was an activity of some consequence, being able to draw on a store of lavish and unusual goods was a priority. Thus the tsar arranged through his Privy Chancery one very successful purchasing mission to northern Persia in 1663–1665. Led by an undersecretary of the chancery, Kirill Demidov, the mission set out with a substantial treasury of furs, imported European textiles (known to be in demand in Persia), copper and

cash<sup>19</sup>. Its route took him to Shemakha (today's Azerbaijan) and on through Ardebil, Rash, Tabriz, Qazvin, Kashan, and the capital, Isfahan. Demidov kept careful financial records, so that we know where and when he sold or bought something, exactly what the quantity and price were. His purchases included *зарбафы* (brocades with varied decorative schemes created in part with gold and silver thread), *отласы* (satins), *камки* (silk brocades), silk and wool carpets, velvets, *дараги* (embroidered silks), *кисеи* (muslins), *сафьяны* (morocco leather), and *белый ладон* (white incense/frankincense) [РИБ, т. 23, стб. 1449–1450]. It seems likely most of the textiles were local production; in some cases a specific provenance was indicated (e.g., «зделано в-Бспогани киндяков», «лагажанские дараги», «тевризские сафьяны», «киндяки лековровые», «киндяки фереспиревые»). On Demidov's return, the goods were placed in a special storage area, from which, over the next years right up to the tsar's death, individual items or portions of the stock would be removed for gift giving, bonuses or payment for services. Each year a new inventory was drawn up for that which remained. While some of the textiles undoubtedly were for making garments for the royal family, and there are records that small quantities were sold, for the most part this supply of luxury items did not seem to have principally a commercial purpose.

Initiatives to negotiate a direct trade agreement with the Safavid government proved abortive. However, on 31 May 1667, an agreement was reached with an Armenian merchant "corporation" (probably in fact unofficially representing the Persian government) regarding the silk trade<sup>20</sup>. The Armenians were given free access to the Russian market and the ability to send goods through Russia that would be sold to merchants of other countries, providing that the appropriate customs duties were paid. The agreement was specifically for the trade in raw silk, and the terms included the presumably unrealistic promise that henceforth the entire export of Persian silk would pass through Muscovy.

This agreement is striking for its encouragement of foreign trade only a few weeks after the issuing of the so-called "New Trade Statute" on 22 April 1667 in response to Russian merchants' complaints about unfair competition within Russia from foreign merchants [СГГД, ч. 4, с. 189–204, № 55]<sup>21</sup>. Two of the

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the Privy Chancery's involvement in the Persian trade, see [Гурьянд, с. 193–196]. The main collection of documents pertaining to this venture have been published in [РИБ, т. 23, стб. 1413–1582]. The purchases of the European textiles were made from a Dutch merchant Justus Abramov (Bloemaert) [Там же, стб. 1419].

<sup>20</sup> For the text, see [СГГД, ч. 4, с. 204–208, № 56; ПСЗ-1, т. 1, с. 692–695, № 410]. A summary is in [Mathee, p. 193–194]. What the Armenian merchants could offer certainly was well known to Russians prior to this. See the list of goods purchased from some of them in 1663, including Indian wares [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 143–147].

<sup>21</sup> The government followed up on the statute by sending on 9 May a lengthy set of instructions to the *gosti* (leading merchants) who were to be responsible for collecting the customs duties at Arkhangel'sk [ДАИ, т. 5, с. 181–206, № 40]. The instructions included a long historical preamble about the earlier activities of foreign merchants, in particular focusing on what were deemed the abuses by the English. At the end of the document was a brief discussion of the negotiations with the Boreel embassy, in which the Dutch had been pressing Moscow to make the customs collections more efficient.

provisions (paragraphs 45 and 94) regulating the activities of the foreigners seem to have particular relevance to the trade we are discussing here, one directed at preventing them from offering Russians poor quality goods or imitations of ones that had real value, and the other, citing western sumptuary laws as a justification, attempting to control concealment of certain luxury goods such as pearls (that is, so that they could not be sold to ordinary people but rather reserved to the tsar). Indeed, of all the products we know the Dutch had been bringing on a regular basis to Arkhangel'sk and which also figure in the lading lists, pearls were among the most valuable. There was a great demand for them to use in embroidering rich fabrics and also for decorating the *oklady* of precious metals that were gifted to the church to decorate icons.

Clearly the Razin rebellion, which started with Cossack attacks on merchant shipping in the Caspian and peaked with the take-over of much of the lower Volga in 1670–1671, had a negative impact on Muscovite trade with the East [see, e.g., Курц, 1915, с. 350–351, 356]. So it is not clear to what degree the agreement with the Armenians of 1667 actually went into effect<sup>22</sup>. When envoys from Khiva were in Moscow later in 1667 and told the officials in the Ambassadorial Office about the opportunities to obtain Indian goods (киндяки, кисеи, гвоздика, корица, краска) thanks to the trade between their emir and India, the blocking of the Volga route at least for a time would have stood in the way [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 162]. One can hypothesize that if a normal flow of some eastern products was temporarily blocked, there would have been a greater interest in the possibilities offered by the Dutch via Arkhangel'sk in the relatively brief period between the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch wars. Thus, in this context there would have been good reason to look at listings of the goods brought to Amsterdam by the Indies fleets, since at least some of those items were ones normally marketed in Russia and sought after by the tsar, and since there might have been others, yet unfamiliar, which could have sparked Russian interest. The tsar's other initiatives in the last decade of his reign which are relevant to the issue of the Eastern trade included the building of the *Orël* and fruitless attempts to start a Russian silk industry in a country whose climate was too cold for it to flourish.

Even though Kilburger quotes in detail the customs registers of Archangel'sk for 1671–1674 and provides as well price lists for 1674, without more comparative data for previous years, it is impossible to be certain whether in fact there was any shift in the assortment or relative quantities of the goods which might be connected with the disruptions of the eastern trade<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> The agreement was re-negotiated in 1673 [СГТИД, ч. 4, с. 280–283, № 83; ПСЗ-1, т. 1, с. 883–884, 916–923, № 514, 539]. Soon after the death of Aleksei Mikhailovich, the Dutch envoy to Moscow, Kunraad van Klenck, petitioned Tsar Fedor Alekseevich to allow the Dutch privileges analogous to those of the Armenians in the silk trade through Russia. However, the Dutch request was refused, given the opposition of Russian merchants concerned about their own profit from this trade.

<sup>23</sup> For the lists, see [Курц, 1915, с. 123–147], and his explanatory notes [Там же, с. 229–234], where he gives the complete original text of one of the 1674 price lists. For prices of spices, from a different document dated 1673, see also [Там же, с. 517].

Large quantities of both large and small pearls continued to be imported; there were many different kinds of fabrics, including silks, but with no indication about the provenance of most of them. Presumably for their use in making dyes, there were large shipments of exotic woods from the Americas (Brazil, Pernambuco and blue wood), not from Southeast Asia; there were two types of indigo, designated as Guatimalo and Lauro, and there were some other dyestuffs. Some products, especially spices, which undoubtedly came from South or Southeast Asia, had long been known in Muscovy: pepper, cinnamon, saffron, nutmeg, cardamom, cloves. There also had long been a demand for incense (ладан, which may be a generic term). And there was an item called *Radix Chinae* (China root / хинный корень), a treatment for venereal disease, which traditionally had been obtained from Siberian merchants but the better quality also from Germany. While the Dutch were bringing at least some Persian carpets to Amsterdam, the Russians obviously had been able to obtain them via the Volga route and in fact still had some in the store managed by the Privy Chancery.

### **A Compendium about Possible Routes to China and India**

One small but very interesting file preserved in the Privy Chancery archive offers some intriguing additional evidence about both the tsar's interests relating to Asia and the Asian trade and the possible involvement of Vinus in producing some of the documents. The original file apparently contained three main parts. By the time the archive's remains were inventoried in 1713, the parts had been separated and listed as: [Part A] "A binding, in which is explained why it is impossible to travel by sea to China and thence to East India, and containing as well [Part B] a quire on the search for a passage past Novaya Zemlya to China and thence to East India"; [Part C] "An itinerary (роспись) of the land route to the lands of India from the Yaik River Stone fort" [Опись делам, с. 5, 23]<sup>24</sup>. The editors of the modern republications of Parts A and C suggest the texts were prepared in conjunction with the sending of a mission to Mughal India in 1675 – theoretically possible, but perhaps not the most persuasive hypothesis about their date and origin. The content of Part C is distinct from Parts A and B, even though all three parts are addressing the question of how one might (or might not) get to India (or the Indies), and to China. That is, the texts represent a compendium which pulls together information about the possible routes to the East.

<sup>24</sup> The files are now archived in [РГАДА. Ф. 27. Оп. 1. Д. 333, 485] (listed in the online typed inventory on л. 34, 49). We have added the designation of the "Parts" to facilitate the discussion. Sergei Belokurov published Parts A and B (from MS № 333) in two installments [Белокуров, 1893; Белокуров, 1895] with a note [Белокуров, 1893, с. 14] that the itinerary (Part C) referred to at the end of Part A had not been preserved. In fact, it had been published earlier (from MS № 485) by [Наказ царя Алексея Михайловича], who noted the copy was in more than one hand and contained a duplicate section. Part C has been re-published in [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 218–220, № 124]. [Русско-китайские отношения, т. 1, с. 488–490, № 205, 206] re-published Parts A and C, without the duplicate section of text in the latter which Kobeko had included. A photo facsimile of MS № 333, along with a new transcription of the texts, is in [Боярский и др., с. 56–60]. For a full analysis, see [Yo, 2023].

Parts A and B draw on Western geographic literature, though not all the exact sources so far can be established. As the author of Part A indicates, the English and Dutch had been searching unsuccessfully for a Northeast Passage to China and the Indies, only to find the way blocked by ice. They had not known whether Novaya Zemlya was an island which could be passed, or an extension of the American continent, and had not managed even to sail as far as the Ob-Irtysh River system that debouched into the Arctic Ocean. Whether those rivers might provide a water route to China was yet to be determined. Hence the relevance of the land route through Central Asia, which was a known way to reach India (or China beyond). This Part A of our compendium reads as though it is a summary produced by someone in Muscovy who had a familiarity with the relevant western sources.

Part B, also devoted to the search for the Northeast Passage, is a much more detailed account, focusing specifically on the third Dutch attempt in 1596–1597, led by Willem Barentsz, during which his party was forced to winter on Novaya Zemlya. Barentsz himself perished, but a small boat constructed from the remains of their ship enabled some dozen of the Dutch to sail to safety when the ice melted during the brief Arctic summer. Clearly the ultimate source for the summary Russian account of Barentsz' third voyage was the diary of one of the survivors, Gerrit de Veer, which was published in 1598, translated into other European languages, and became an important source for geographies and atlases during the seventeenth century<sup>25</sup>. A comparison of our Russian text with a range of the most likely sources has identified as its source a condensed version of De Veer's account which went through several Dutch editions, in particular one published in Amsterdam in 1648 [Verhael] (il. 3).

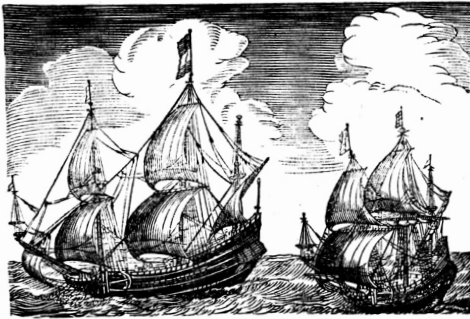
The Muscovite author summarized and condensed from his Dutch source in the same way that the foreign newspaper reports were being summarized for the *kuranty*. In the early portions of the Russian text, some sentences correspond exactly with passages in the diary. However much of the account skips ahead, including material taken from an interpolation into the original diary found in this particular Dutch condensation, and specific information found in printed marginal notations next to the main text. After relating how the survivors managed to make it to the Kola peninsula and head home, the Russian manuscript has a heading for a short "Description of Novaya Zemlya", which could have been composed by our author largely on the basis of the De Veer text, but presumably supplemented by some other geographic work.

Of interest because of other sightings recorded in Muscovy is a passage selected from the Dutch original describing the observation of an unusual astronomical phenomenon – in the words of the translation, a "miraculous

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<sup>25</sup> The standard scholarly edition is [Veer, 1917]; an English translation of the original also is available from the Hakluyt Society [Veer, 1876], useful for its introductory essay describing the various editions and condensations of De Veer's account [see: *Ibid.*, p. CLXIX–CLXXI]. For additional bibliographic information on the various editions, see [Mémoire bibliographique sur les journaux des navigateurs néerlandais, p. 112–116].

Verhael van de eerste  
**SCHIP-VAERT** /  
 Der  
*Hollandische ende Zeeusche Schepen,*  
 Door't  
**W A Y - G A T,**  
*By Noorden Noorwegen, Moscovien ende Tar-*  
*tarien om, na de Coninckrijcken Cathay ende China. Met drie*  
*Schepen, nye Texel gezeelt in den Iare 1594.*  
**Hier achter is by-ghevoegt de beschrijvinghe van de Landen**  
*Siberia, Samoyeda, ende Tingocia. Zeeer vryemt en vermaact*  
*adlyck om lefen.*



T A M S T E R D A M.

Door Joost Harigers, Boeck-verkooper in de Gasthuys-steegh/in de  
 Boeck-winkel/besijden het Stadt-huys. 1648.

3. The title page of *Verhael*, the condensation of the Dutch accounts about the expeditions to find the Northeast Passage



4. The parhelion recorded on Barentsz' third voyage [Veer, 1612, between pp. 32–33]

vision" (чудное видение) – of three suns joined by rainbows, which was included in engravings illustrating editions of De Veer's account<sup>26</sup>. This was in fact a natural atmospheric event (a parhelion) (il. 4), produced by refractions from ice crystals to suggest that the actual sun was flanked by two other suns, in some cases connected with rainbow-like arcs. Aleksei Mikhailovich's Privy Chancery held a depiction of a "heavenly sign", in fact just such a parhelion accompanied by imagined symbols predicting Christian victory over the Turks<sup>27</sup>. That image and the text accompanying it were copied into other late Muscovite manuscripts.

It is reasonable to suppose that Vinius was the author of these texts about the efforts to find the Northeast Passage. As indicated above (see n. 15), he owned a copy of the book published in 1648 containing the condensation of the diary concerning the Barentsz expeditions [Verhael]. What we do not know is when and from whom he obtained the book. Possibly Nicolaas Witsen,

<sup>26</sup> The engraving would be copied in other geographic works. *Verhael* has a foldout frontispiece with six rather crude woodcuts inspired by but not exactly replicating the engravings of the earlier editions of De Veer. One of these shows the parhelion.

<sup>27</sup> For an extended illustrated discussion regarding this document, see [Yo, 2022].



who was already interested in learning about possible routes to East and South Asia, brought it with him to Moscow in 1665 at the time of the Boreel embassy, or conceivably it was one of the books in the possession of David Butler, hired to captain the *Orël*.

At the end of our Part A is a note (in the hand of the same scribe) referring the reader to an attachment of land route itineraries to the East (Part C). Very likely that guide to possible land routes (in different handwriting) also could be the work of Vinius. Its main sources clearly were itineraries recorded from envoys and merchants; there is a passing mention of information obtained from Europeans<sup>28</sup>. The text concerns the routes Central and South Asia, with China but briefly mentioned, along with a reference to the fact that it had been visited by Fedor Baikov (sent there on an embassy in 1654–1657). This reference is tantalizing. Baikov submitted his end-of-mission report in Moscow in 1658. It seems certain that Nicolaas Witsen obtained a copy when he was in Moscow with the Dutch embassy in 1665<sup>29</sup>. Even though the tenure by Vinius as head of the Siberian Chancery dates to later in the century, his first contact with Witsen, to whom he would eventually supply a great deal of information from the Russian archives, dates to the time of that Dutch embassy. Vinius could at least have seen the Baikov report a year or two before he was compiling his own geographic handbook and might have been the individual who gave a copy to Witsen.

Vinius' geographic guide undoubtedly drew on the kinds of sources which formed the basis for our Part C text. There was an abundance of such material available in Moscow for the compilation of geographic route books. The increasingly detailed Russian maps covering Central Asia incorporated the data both for river travel and for overland routes which sometimes were approximated with dotted lines connecting towns [Waugh, p. 73–74]. Of course Vinius was not the only one working on such material. It is certainly possible, as Russian scholars have suggested [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 218, прим. 1], that our Part C with the itineraries of overland routes was put together to provide guidance for an embassy dispatched to India in 1675.

Such itineraries, which included the names of major cities, could well have been useful reference works for the officials in the Ambassadorial or Privy Chanceries. We know, for example, that another of the books kept in the archive of the Privy Chancery was described as “quires in quarto, describing the Indian

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<sup>28</sup> The end-of-mission report submitted by the Pazukhins on their return from Bukhara in 1673 includes an itinerary very similar in form to that of our Part C for the route from Khiva to the Mughal capital. The information was obtained by a member of the Russian mission sent to Balkh, where he quizzed travelers who had recently arrived from India. However, the list of the cities is different from that in our Part C, as are elapsed travel times where it is possible to compare them. So there is no reason to think this itinerary was the source for our Part C. The Pazukhins also submitted a quick summary itinerary for travel on three different routes to Bukhara [РИБ, т. 15, 7 пар., с. 62, 21]. Clearly the Pazukhins were following their instructions, which had specified that they find out about the routes to India [Там же, с. 13].

<sup>29</sup> On the fate of Baikov's report and its copies, see [Демидова, Мясников, с. 101–112].

state, selected from various writers and according to a Russian chronicle of the year 7140 (1631/32)<sup>30</sup> [РИБ, т. 21, стб. 850]<sup>30</sup>. Unfortunately, there is no explicit evidence about the contents of the text or whether the tsar might have read it. Yet it would have been relevant during a period when there was active interest in developing the Persian trade and, beyond that, establishing possible direct relations with Mughal India. The Privy Chancery archive also contained a translation from German of what at the time was considered to be one of the most authoritative accounts of the Manchu conquest of China by a Jesuit who had personally witnessed the events in the 1640s, Martino Martini (О Хинейской войне от татар) [Там же, стб. 2, 348]<sup>31</sup>. It is easy to understand the interest of Martini's book in Moscow in the era of the first Russian diplomatic missions to China and the expansion in the Far East which would bring the two empires into conflict. Apparently a second, rather free translation from the Latin edition of Martini's book, was done by Nikolai Spafarii-Milescu, who appended it in 1678 to his long end-of-mission report about his mission to China. The Ambassadorial Chancery may well have provided him a copy of the book<sup>32</sup>. That such works about the more distant parts of Asia were in the Privy Chancery collection may testify to the personal interest of the tsar and thus at least indirectly support a hypothesis that the texts about the search for routes to China and India were produced with him in mind<sup>33</sup>.

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There are several possible explanations for the Russian translations of the Dutch lading lists. In 1628 there is no evidence that the list was

<sup>30</sup> Clearly some information about government and royal politics in the Mughal Empire was being obtained from missions to Persia. For example, in 1665 the Russian envoys sent there reported about civil strife amongst the Mughals, information presumably obtained from merchants involved in the Indian trade [Русско-индийские отношения, с. 154–155]. Western geographies that were being acquired and translated in Moscow are another possible source. For example, that compiled by [Linda] contains a section on India, with details of geography, administration, customs, etc. However, the Russian translation, known only from an early eighteenth-century manuscript, does not specify when it had been done and by whom [Соболевский, с. 63–64].

<sup>31</sup> The Amsterdam edition, published by Johann Blaeu, is [Martini]. Blaeu published a Latin version dedicated to Polish King Jan Kazimierz which appears to have been the source for the German translation. The listing for the book in the Privy Chancery inventory includes a date, the year 7164 (= 1655/56), which may indicate either when the book was received or when it was translated. On Martini, see [Mungello]; on early Russian relations with China, see [Mancall]. It is possible that the tsar's interest in Martini's book also is to be explained by its dedication, where clearly Martini was signaling Jesuit support for the Polish king's defense of Catholicism in the Commonwealth.

<sup>32</sup> On Spafarii-Milescu, see [Лебедев, с. 127–158; Андреев, с. 73–80 (specifically for his being supplied with a copy of the Martini, с. 80); Белоброва]. Manuscript copies made from the translation attributed to Spafarii-Milescu circulated in the late seventeenth century, one of them owned by Tsar Fedor Alekseevich.

<sup>33</sup> Another circumstantial bit of evidence in this regard is the fact that in 1674, an anonymous communication sent from Amsterdam to the Royal Academy in London (the author most likely Nicolaas Witsen), told about a new map illustrating a discovery made "by the express order of the Czar" which showed that Novaya Zemlya was not an island, as had been previously assumed, see: [A Letter; Witsen, vol. 3, p. 383].

singled out for special attention. At a time when the Western newspapers were being received only sporadically, they tended to be translated in their entirety. One such newspaper contained the lading list, which thus was duly translated. There is no documentation to specify who may have found the list to be of interest, even if we might hypothesize that the tsar or one of his officials could have been curious about products from the East, some of which were, as near as one can tell, as yet unknown in Muscovy.

There is certainly a logical explanation for the translation of the 1646 list, which happened to be copied in a letter to one of the merchants involved in the trade through Russia in Persian silk. The letter was intercepted with a lot of other correspondence of this large foreign merchant corporation, where the government interest in what they were writing seems quite clear. Elite Russian merchants who were suffering from what they saw as unfair competition were petitioning the government to curb that foreign trade. So the focus here was specifically on the economics of the silk trade, even though there might have been curiosity about other products, some of which were already known in Muscovy.

The possible explanations for the translations of the 1667 and 1671 lading lists are more complex, in part because they had been selected for special attention out of a substantial amount of foreign news. The establishment of the foreign post in 1665 made possible the receipt of Western newspapers on a regular basis. Given the quantity of that news, selectivity in translation was essential. To hypothesize what news of international affairs would have particularly interested the tsar and his foreign policy advisers is easy, but the lading lists do not fit quite so neatly into any scheme that focuses mainly on political questions. *Kuranty* translations were regularly being read to the tsar and his councilors. However, is it logical to assume a long list of goods, many of whose names were unfamiliar, would have been read aloud to a ruler who was known to be impatient at times with the deluge of intelligence reports he was receiving from various directions?

By exploring widely the possible explanations for the decision to translate the lading lists, we can offer hypotheses that are not mutually exclusive (and, may be equally probable, if not provable). Given his broad curiosity and policies to promote the Eastern trade, the translators might well have understood how the lists would interest Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. At the same time, he also authorized one of the most significant measures to curb the activity of foreign entrepreneurs in response to petitions from Russian elite merchants. In that respect the situation was analogous to the circumstances in 1646.

Even though standard treatments of the *kuranty* assume that the translators focused above all on what the tsar might want to know, personal preferences of a translator could explain why certain news was chosen. Andrei Vinius was certainly involved in selecting and translating from the incoming Dutch newspapers an impressive amount of news

relating to the Netherlands<sup>34</sup>. For Vinius to have chosen some of this material out of personal interest (and not just because he perceived it would be valuable for the tsar) would not be out of keeping with the procedures in the chancery, whereby the translators in fact had some flexibility (and the responsibility) to determine what should be extracted for translation in the generally very short time between the arrival of the mail and when the news was to be ready for reading to the tsar.

Vinius' library documents his interest in the history of his ancestral homeland and its maritime affairs. His involvement in the project to build the first European-model warship in Russia, and his compilation of a geographic handbook drawing on a Dutch maritime atlas are evidence relating to his interest in the Eastern trade. While the evidence may be deemed circumstantial, it is plausible to hypothesize that he was the author of the texts regarding exploration of various routes to reach East and South Asia.

It was quite normal for government functionaries in Europe to be involved in the unofficial exchange of information they could obtain in the performance of their official duties. News was a commodity whose sharing through personal contact could elicit reciprocity and possibly enhance one's career [Droste]. Vinius' assignment to translate for the Boreel embassy laid the basis for his long association with Nicolaas Witsen, a prominent Dutch burgher and intellectual with whom he would exchange books and other materials. Vinius certainly had active contacts with the foreign community in Moscow and among the Russian elite and shared news (including copies of newspapers) with his acquaintances. Translation of the lading lists might have seemed useful to burnish his credentials as an expert on the Eastern trade, an expertise he thought might attract the attention of the tsar but also would be of value to the Russian elite merchants. We continue to learn about the way in which foreign news was treated in Moscow and how, as the century progressed, some of it increasingly would spread beyond the closed circle of the tsar and his elite advisers. At very least then we should keep in mind how Vinius' personal interests could help explain the decision to translate the lading lists.

#### **Periodicals and continuing editions used in the article**

Early imprints<sup>35</sup>

*EHD Extraordinaire Haerlemse Donderdaegse Courant* (Haarlem)

*HM Hollandtze Mercurius* (Haarlem)

*ODC Ordinarius Dingsdaeghsche Courant* (Amsterdam)

*OHD Oprechte Haerlemse Dingdaegse Courant* (Haarlem)

*TVQ Tijdinghe uyt Verscheyde Quartieren* (Amsterdam)

<sup>34</sup> It is also possible his personal interest helps explain why so much news about the Jewish False Messiah, Shabbetai Zvi, was being translated in 1665–1666. We shall deal with this subject at a later time.

<sup>35</sup> Most of the Dutch newspapers may be accessed on-line via <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten>, although the database does not contain all extant copies. Copies cited which are not extant have been documented from [Weduwen]. German newspapers may be accessed via <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/zeitungen17>.

Books and pamphlets<sup>36</sup>

A Letter, not Long since Written to the Publisher by an Experienced Person Residing at Amsterdam, Containing a True Description of Nova Zembla, together with an Intimation of the Advantage of Its Shape and Position // *Philosophical Transactions*. 1674, March. Vol. 9. No. 101. P. 3–4, 20.

*Doncker H.* De zee-atlas Ofte Water-Wæreld, Vertoonende alle de zee-kusten Van het bekende Deel des aerd-bodems... Amsterdam: H. Doncker, 1659. I, 38 leaves.

*Goos P.* De zee-atlas, ofte Water-weereld, Waer in vertoont werden alle de zee-kusten Van het bekende des aerd-bodems... Amsterdam: P. Goos, 1666.

*Journael, Gehouden op 's Lants Schip de Spiegel, Van 't gene gepasseert en verricht is op de Vloot van haer Ho. Mo. de Heeren Staten Generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden, soo in de Middellantsche Zee, als op de Custen van Africa en America. <...> In den Jare 1664 en 1665.* Amsterdam: P. la Burgh. 1665.

*Linda L.* Descriptio orbis & omnium ejus Rerumpublicarum. In qua Praecipua omnium Regnorum & Rerumpublicarum. Amsterdam: J. de Zetter, 1665.

*Martini M.* Histori von dem Tartarischen Kriege, im welcher erzehlt wird, Wie die Tartaren zu Unserer zeit in das grosse Reich Sina eingefallen sind... Amsterdam: J. Blaeu, 1654.

Oost-Indische Voyagien Door dien Begin en Voortgangh / van de Vereenighde Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie... Eerste Deel. Amsterdam: J. Hartgerts, 1648. 13 parts with separate pagination in one vol.

[*Veer G de.*] Dritter Theil / Warhafftiger Relation Der dreyen newen unerhörten / seltzamen Schifffahrt / so die Holländische und Seeländische Schiff gegen Mitternacht / drey Jahr nach einander / als Anno 1594. 1595. und 1596. verricht... 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Franckfurt am Mayn: Hulsius: Kempffer, 1612.

Verhael van de eerste Ship-Vaert Der Hollandische en Zeeusche Schepen, Door 't Waygat, By Noorden Noorwegen, Moscovien ende Tartarien om, na de Coninckrijken Cathay ende China... Amsterdam: J. Hartgerts, 1648.

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<sup>36</sup> Copies of most of the early Dutch imprints may be located on-line through Delpher, the database for the [National Library of the Netherlands].

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*The article was submitted on 18.02.2023*