Nova absolutaque Russiæ Moscovia et Tartaria

The Grand Duchy of Muscovy - the western part of Russia simultaneously covers the eastern end of Europe. One of the earliest maps of the country is also the most important document of the first travels of Englishmen, made as a result of searching for a proper route to China: the map of Russia made by Anthony Jenkinson, dated 1562. Jenkinson in 1559 seems to be the earliest Englishman to have drawn a map from well-authenticated inland travels outside his home country. Oddly enough the result was never mentioned in his journal, though a version of it, complete with date (1562) and author’s name, eventually appeared in Abraham Ortelius’ world atlas. Ortelius displayed the whole duchy of Muscovy with scales of latitude and distance and a variety of elegant ‘compartments’ and vignettes that helped to fill a double-page rectangular frame. The west and north of European Russia had evidently been obtained from previous maps or descriptions, as also were the rivers flowing from Bokhara and Tashkent. This means that Jenkinson cannot be held responsible for the drainage shown in the vicinity of Moscow, which led indiscriminately through interlinked channels to the White Sea, Caspian Sea, Black Sea, Gulf of Finland and Gulf of Riga. It may however have been his own idea to duplicate the River Oxus, misled by the existence of both a Russian and a Chinese name for it. Almost all Jenkinson’s geography looks strange to modern eyes, but at least he was right about the elbow of the River Don.

Jenkinson’s eight-month journey took him from Moscow to Bokhara, including boat trips down the Volga and through the northern waters of the Caspian. His chosen unit of distance was the longest available to him - the league, usually quoted in
multiples of five or ten and never subdivided. (In the non-exploratory section of the journey he had adopted the Russian verst, no doubt deriving the distances themselves from local information.) At Morum east of Moscow he 'took the sun', and altogether the journal gave latitudes for a dozen or so different places, each to the nearest minute, possibly observed with an astrolabe. Jemkinson’s results were sometimes several degrees in error and there was no reference to longitude in either the map or the journal.

Until 1987, the author and his map were known only thanks to the famous Abraham Ortelius’ atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. Until then, i.e. during more than four centuries, the genuine map had been considered lost and scholars could investigate only existing renditions – in Ortelius and Gerard de Jode’s atlases.

Some very interesting theories were discussed at the time by scholars interested in the map in question on the basis of known renditions only. In particular, de Jode’s derivative covers less than half of the territory represented by Ortelius, and the question then arose – who is right and whose rendition is closer to the genuine Jenkinson map. Now, we know that de Jode’s rendition portrays only the upper left side of the original area, while the Ortelius version is faithful to the original.

Long thought to have been lost forever, the map was suddenly but unexpectedly rediscovered in 1987. The priceless map survived countless wars finally to be found after World War II by a school pupil, supposedly in her cellar; she then gave it to her teacher as... a gift! The teacher used it for years as a teaching aid for history lessons unaware of the great value she had in her hands.

One day, the teacher, who was since long retired wished to give her map to a library. She showed it to different libraries but nobody expressed an interest in it.
Finally, because of the interest shown by the present author, it was purchased by the Wroclaw University Library cartographic collection. The map had been used for years as a teaching aid and was thus in very bad condition – it was twice folded and brought to the library in a plastic bag. As soon as it had been acquired, the map was given into the hands of the library’s Conservatory Division to undergo treatment for preservation. Whether fortunately or unfortunately, no ownership marks were found on the map.

The Jenkinson map is the final outcome of the author’s own travels as well as those of his predecessors, among others Anton Wied (1508-1558), Sigismund Herberstein (1486-1566), William Borough (1539-1599) and many others before them such as Sebastian Cabot (? - 1556) or Richard Chanceller (? - 1556). Undoubtedly the significant role of Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible, who let Jenkinson travel through the whole of then contemporary Russia should also be stressed.

As far as Jenkinson’s route is concerned, his first journey to Russia began on 12 May, 1557. He embarked from London, skirted the north coast of Scandinavia to Wordhouse – the castle Cape Kegor, entered into the Bay of S. Nicolas and through Colmogro, the river Dvina, the city of Ustiug, joined the country of Permia to the great city of Vologda and finally reached Moscow where he was invited to the court of Ivan the Terrible (6 December 1557). He traveled then on the great Volga River. One of the routes of the Jenkinson’s travels led to the city of Boghar in Bactria along the Caspian Sea. Another route he traveled crossing the city of Derbent, reaching the court of the great Sophy of Persia and living there eight months.

Before the Jenkinson map had been rediscovered, scholars could investigate only existing renditions. This event enabled us to show that the Ortelius derivative was the more faithful, especially with respect to the territorial scope, although the ornamentation was much poorer. The original turned out to be much larger than Ortelius’ 44 x 35.3 cm; it measures almost 102 x 82 cm, including a 6 cm border. Contrary to Ortelius, de Jode “cut out” the eastern and southwestern portion of the genuine map considered reliable.
Worth mentioning is the location of a very large lake in the eastern half of the map. The lake, two main rivers and some names are practically the only geographical elements in this right portion of the map. This lake has been called *Kitaia lacus*, i.e. Chinese Lake, and the two rivers – *Amow* and *Sur*. Since we know that in the part of Siberia no big lake exists, we could come to the conclusion that it might be the Aral Sea with the rivers Amur-Daria and Syr-Daria on the Jenkinson map shifted only to the north part of Siberia. Maybe this supposition could be confirmation of the fact that William Borough travelling along the coast of north Russia reached only the lower stream of the Ob river, which on the map has a much shortened flow into the *Kitaia lacus*.

![Kitaia Lacus and Ob River](image)

The river called on the map *Ougus* (known at that time as the Oxus, and to-day as the Amur-Daria) flows from the mountains called there *montes paraponisi* (Hindukush to-day), and into the Caspian Sea. In many sources including not only maps but written works, too, we can find confirmation of this fact. However, Jenkinson most probably took over this image from Ptolemy’s map. We cannot exclude, either, that the river in early times changed its course as mentioned above.

A large space of the map consists of decorative elements. We can admire very interesting genre scenes, figures of warriors, i.e. Tartars and Cossacks, camps of nomads, their carriages and animals, the pagan god called *Zlata Baba* [Golden Woman] and lastly the image of Tsar Ivan the Terrible sitting on his throne and probably Jenkinson bowing before him. These decorative fragments of the map we can assume come from Johannes de Schille the painter who is mentioned in the letter written by Reinoldus – the engraver of the map in question – to Ortelius. The letter is preserved in the British Library and quoted in the correspondence of Ortelius. It is very interesting in various other respects, too. There is information regarding 25 copies of the map that Reinoldus sent by order of Reginald Wolf – the king’s typographer, maybe the printer of the map in question.
Northwards of the Caspian Sea

Right-hand lower part
The White Sea region

Funeral ceremony by Kirghizes
Livoniae provinciæ ac eivs, Moscoviae Maximi amplissimi quæ ducaus chorographica descriptio, and Moscoviae Maximi amplissimi quæ duceatus

The map shown above is the derivative of Jenkinson’s map by Gerard/Cornelis de Jode, 1593, two maps on 1 sheet from De Jode’s Speculum orbis terrarum, Antwerp, first published in 1578, reissued by Cornelis in 1593. Size: 55 x 41 cm. Relief shown pictorially; bar scale on map given in Scala miliaria Ger. conti.; decorative border and cartouches, pictorial vignettes with figures and animals, ships, sea monsters. Shows topography, waterways, and vegetation.
Below are some translations of the various legends on Ortelius' map:

*Hæc pars Litu/anæ Imperatori/Rußia subdita est.* [This part of Lithuania is under the rule of the Russian Emperor.] Three blocks of texts in cartouches; five blocks of texts without cartouches, all at the right side of the plate. Cartouche top right: *Zlata Baba, id est aurea vetula ab Obdorianis, & lougianis religiose colitur. Idolum hoc sacerdos consultit, quid ipsis faciendum, quoe sit migrandum, imsumq. (dictu mirum) certa consulentib. dat responsa, certique eventus consequuntur.* [Zlata Baba, that is golden granny, is devotedly worshipped by the Odorians and Iougorians. The priest consults this Idol about what to do and where to go and (it is a wonder to relate) she gives clear answers to those consulting her, leading to certain outcomes].

Cartouche top right: *Horum regionum incole Solem, vel rubrum pannum pertica suspensum adorant. In castris vitam ducunt; ac oim animatium, serpentiue, vermituque carne vescentur. ac proprio idiomate vtuntur.* [The inhabitants of this region adore the Sun or a red cloth hanging from a pole. They live their lives in fortresses and eat the meat of animals, snakes and worms, and they have their own language].

Cartouche mid-below
the two previous ones: Hec saxa hoim iumentorum camelorum pecorumque, ceterarumq. reru formas referentia, Horda populi gregis pascentis, armentaq. fuit; Que stupenda quadam metamorphosi, repente in saxa riguit, priori forma nulla in parte diminuta. Euenit hoc prodigium annis circiter 300. retro elapsis [This rock which has the shapes of people, cattle, camels and other animals and things was once a group of shepherds and their flocks who suddenly petrified in an amazing metamorphosis, without changing their previous appearance. This miracle took place 300 years ago]. Text block close to centerfold: A mangusla Shaifuram usq. 20 dierum iter habent, sine ullis sedibus, cum summa aque penuria. A Shayura usq. Bogar, var itineris interuallum latrocinjs infestum [from Manguslato Shaaijse is a journey of 20 days without encampments and with an excessing shortage of water. From Shaaijure to Bogar is a similar distance, infested by robbers]. Text block near bottom centerfold: Corasan parva, a Rege Persico adiuvantibus Tartaris 1558 expugnata fuit [The small city of Corasan has been captured by the King of Persia with the assistance of the Tartars in 1558]. Text block middle right edge of page: Kirgessi gens catyeriitum degit, id est in hordis habet, ritum huiusmodi, cum re divinam ipsorum sacerdos peragit, sanguinem, lac & fimu iumentorum accipit, ac terre miscet, inq. vas quoddam infundit, atq. concione habita, in populum spargit, atq. hec aspersio pro Deo habetur & colitur. Cum quis diem inter illos obit, loco sepulture arboribus suspendit [The Kirgessen people live in troups or hordes. They have the following custom: when a priest performs a religious ceremony, he obtains blood, milk and dung of beasts of burden, and mixes it with earth. He pours this in a specific vessel and climbs a tree with it, and when there is a gathering, he sprinkles it over the people, and this sprinkling is considered to be divine, and is worshipped. When someone of them dies, that person is hung up in a tree by way of burial]. Text block below the previous one, lower right: Shamarcandia olim totius Tartarie metropolis fuit, at nunc ruinis deformis iacet, una cum multis antiquitatis vestigijs. Hic conditus est Tamerlanes ille, qui olim Turcaru Imperatore Bayasid captum aureis catenis vincitum, circumtulit. Incole mahumetani sunt [Shamarcandia was once the capital of all of Tartary, but now it has decayed to ruins, with many remnants from antiquity. Here Tamerlan lies buried, once the captor of the ruler of the Turks, Bayasid. He took him as a prisoner and abducted him, bound in gold chains. The inhabitants are Muslims]. Text block extreme lower right corner: Cascara, hinc triginta dierum itinere orientem versus incipient termini imperij Cathaye Ab his limitibus ad Cambalu trium mensium interiacet. [Cascara. When travelling from here for thirty days, one reaches the borders of the Empire of Cathay [China]. The distance between these borders and Cambala is a journey of three months].

Approximate number of copies printed: 8,175.
Remarks: interesting folklore on eating, religion and "burial" of the dead in trees in texts and views on the right side of the plate.

Cartographica Neerlandica Map Text for Ortelius Map No. 162
This map does not comprise all of Russia, for here are lacking Polonia and Lithuania, which generally are also contained under the name of Russia. But the whole Empire of the Grand Duke of Moscouia is bound in the North by the frozen sea, in the East by the Tartars, in the South by the Turks [not in 1588S [and the Polish] not in 1588S], and in the West borders on Litonia and Sweden. All these regions and provinces have been described separately and in detail by Sigismundus Baron of Herberstein, unto whom we send the Reader thirsty [for more knowledge]. About the Religion, habits, manners, and
kind of life of this Nation, we have from him very willingly for your comfort selected
these few facts: In their Religion they mostly follow the rites and ceremonies of the
Greek Church. Their Priests are married. They have Images in their Churches.

162.3. When their children are baptized, they are three times entirely dipped into the
water, and the water in the font is specifically consecrated for each individual child.
Although by their constitutions and canons they have a kind of Confession by Ear, yet
the common people think it only pertains to Princes and Noblemen, and hardly to them.
Confession being ended, and penance being meted out according to the gravity of the
offence and fault, they sign themselves on the forehead with the sign of the cross, and
with a loud and mournful cry they lament: Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on us. This
is their common form and manner of prayer, for few can say the Pater noster [=our
Father].

162.4. {not in 1588S} They do take part in the sacrament of the [holy] supper of both
kinds, mingling the bread with the wine, as if mingling the body with the blood. They
administer the Lord’s [holy] supper to children of seven years old, for at that age, they
say, men start to sin not in 1588S]. The better sort of men, after the communion ends,
spend the day in drunkenness and riot, and revere [the communion] with beautiful
attire rather than with inner devotion. The more common sort of people and servants
mostly [resume] work and labor as at other times, saying that to be idle and stop
working on a holy day is for gentlemen and masters, not for poor folks and servants.
They do not believe in Purgatory but yet they pray and perform other services and
ceremonies for the dead. No one besprinkles himself or allows anyone else to cast holy
water on him, except by the Priest himself.

162.5. In the Spring they fast seven whole weeks altogether. They marry, and tolerate
bigamy or permit a man to have two wives, but they question whether this is lawful
matrimony or not. They allow divorces and separations. They consider [bigamy] not to
be adultery, except when one man takes another man's wife. The state of women in this
country is most miserable. For they think that no [woman] can possibly be honest,
unless she [1606E only] is continually locked up in her closet, or so watched that she by no means can go outdoors.
This is a wily and deceitful people, preferring to delight in servitude and slavery, rather
than in freedom and liberty.

162.6. All of them acknowledge to be the Princes' servants. They are seldom at rest, for
either they must make war on the Lithuanians, Livonians or Tartars. And if they are not
employed in service for any foreign wars, then they are placed in garrisons around their
rivers {not in 1588S, 1602G & 1608/1612I} [Don (called)not in 1588S, 1602G & 1608/1612I]
and invasions of the Tartars. They wear long gowns without any ornaments, with
straight sleeves after the Hungarian fashion. Boots also, mostly red and short, which
hardly reach the knees, and shoes or clogs clouted and hobbed with iron nails. They tie
their girdles not around their waists, but beneath their prominent bellies, as low as their
hips. They do strict justice on thieves and such people as commit robberies along the
highways. Pilfering and manslaughter is seldom punished by death.

162.7. Their silver coins or money is not round but somewhat [ob]long, of an oval form,
or fashioned in an egg-like shape. The country abounds with those rich and precious
skins and furs which from here are transported and carried all over Europe. It is almost
everywhere full of huge woods.
162.8. All these particulars we have drawn from the above-mentioned Sigismund. Of many more things about this country you may read in Matthias of Michou, {1603L, not in 1609/1612/1641S[and] Alexander Gaguine} 1603L, not in 1609/1612/1641S], in his treatise on the Sarmatians, [in] Albert Crantz' Wandalia, [and in] Paulus Ioivius of the Embassy of the Moscovites [writing] to Pope Clement the seventh. [And in] Albertus Campensis on the same subject {1580/1589G, 1588S, 1592L, 1595L, 1601L, 1602G, 1602S, 1603L, 1609/1612/1641S & 1609/1612L have instead {to the same Clement}1580/1589G, 1588S, 1592L, 1595L, 1601L, 1602G, 1602S, 1603L, 1609/1612/1641S & 1609/1612L instead}, as well as in the Persian journeys of Ambrosius Contarenus. But I would also like you to read for further satisfaction on this the first and second book of Bonfinius' {1602G, 1608/1612I & 1609/1612/1641S only{first}1602G, 1608/1612I & 1609/1612/1641S only} Decade of the history of Hungary[1570L}, {1588S, 1602S & 1609/1612/1641S only{and about Moscovia by Antonius Possevinus of the Jesuits}{1588S, 1602S & 1609/1612/1641S only}{1601L{as also the first book of the life of Basilides written by Oderborne, together with the Chronicle of Saxony written by David Chytreus}{1601L}. 

162.8a. {1608/1612I only}{Et ultimamente Francesco da Collo Ambasciatore di Maßimiliano I. Imperatore l'anno 1518: mise alle stampe tutto quel trattamento di pace , in Padoua 1603. appresso Lorenzo Pasquati, & geograficamente tutto il viaggio: & narra la composition del Medo ò Meduno, beueraggio de grandi, fatto di mele, & fragole, & altri frutti di color & sapore al vino simile in Moscouia}{1608/1612I only}. 

[The text of the 1571/1573D, 1572/1573G, 1572/1574F, 1581F, 1587F, 1598D and 1598F editions differ considerably from the above text, are provided in translation separately here]

162.9. {1571/1573D}{The Empire of Ruyssen/ or Moscovien.} 

162.10. Russia has not entirely been depicted on the map, because it lacks the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania which also belong to the realm of Russia. Here we have only [shown] all countries resorting under the Duke of Moscovia (as we call him). He graces himself with the title of Emperor of Russia. His Empire extends from the Nordic sea to Poland and Lithuania, and the Mare Caspium in the South, where the city of Astracan lies, at the mouth of the river Volga, {1572/1573G only{where it empties into the Caspian sea}1572/1573G only} {not in 1572/1574F{which has only been captured by him few Years ago}not in 1572/1574F}. 

162.11. In the East it has the river Oby and Lake Kytaia bordering the Tartars. In the West it extends to the Kingdom of the Swedes, and Livonia, and it takes care (after the policy which is visible, for he has in recent years annexed part of it), that it will soon almost fully occupy Livonia. About these countries under this Emperor (as he calls him) and the peoples living in them, a very accurate description has been written by Sigismundus of Herbersteijn, who was Ambassador on behalf of Emperor Ferdinandus, from whose writings we have taken the following.

162.12. The inhabitants of this Land mostly resemble the Greeks in their Religion. Their Priests are allowed to marry a woman. They worship the statues in their churches. When they baptize their children, they plunge them three times under water, but they consacrate the water for each child specifically. Although they practice confession as a habit, yet the common people do not feel involved in this, considering that to confess is something which should only be done by important lords and rich people. When they have confessed and repented, doing penance for the sin they have committed, they will
bless their forehead and breast with the sign of the Cross, and they will shout in a wailing manner: IESVS CHRISTVS, son of God, have mercy on us.

162.13. This is commonly their prayer. For the Our-Father-who-Art-in-Heaven is known by only very few of them. They receive Holy Communion in both respects, for they mix bread and wine intended as flesh and blood. Children from seven years [onwards] they give the Sacrament, saying that from that age people are capable of sinning. Holy days are celebrated by the Lords and such people (after the service in Church has been completed) by dressing up splendidly, showing themselves off, and by getting drunk. The common people and servants mostly continue their daily chores, saying that celebrations and being idle is only the work of highly placed Lords.

162.14. They do not believe in Purgatory, but yet say mass for the dead. Nobody sprinkles himself with Holy Water but allows the Priest to do the sprinkling. In the time of Lenten they fast for seven weeks in a stretch. They marry too, and also allow a man to have a second wife, but this is hardly considered as a legal marriage. [1571D, 1572/1573G, 1572/1574F, 1581F, 1587F & 1598F only] They also have divorces. They only consider something as adultery if it concerns a married woman. Women have a poor life there, because no woman is ever trusted to be honest unless she remains indoors, and is kept there so that she cannot go out. It is a wily and deceitful people, more at ease with servitude than liberty. They consider themselves their Lords slaves. They are seldom at rest, for they make war with the Lithuanians, or the Livonians, or the Tartars, and if they do not make war, they guard the river Don (once called Tanais and the river Occa) against the Tartars in garrisons, so that these do not invade their country.

162.15. They wear long unpleated skirts [1571D, 1572/1573G, 1572/1574F, 1581F, 1587F & 1598F only] which hardly reach their knees. Their shoe soles are studded with iron. They do not belt themselves at their belly, but above the hips, covering their privy parts, and arrange their belt in such a manner that their belly protrudes. They carry out justice severely against hooligans and robbers. Theft or manslaughter seldom leads to the death penalty. They have silver coins, not round but oblong, like a fried egg.

162.16. This country is full of woods, and flat without mountains. And it has many furs, which are exported from here all over Europe [1571/1573D] © Marcel van den Broecke ©.

Reference: