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978-1-108-07513-8 - The Arctic North-East and West Passage: Detectio Freti Hudsoni, or Hessel Gerritsz's Collection of Tracts by Himself, Massa and De Quir on the N.E. and W. Passage, Siberia and Australia

Hessel Gerritsz

Excerpt

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# DESCRIPTION

OF THE

# Land of the Samoyeds

in TARTARY,

RECENTLY BROUGHT UNDER THE DOMINION OF THE MUSCOVITES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN THE YEAR 1609.

WITH AN ACCOUNT

OF THE SEARCH AFTER AND DISCOVERY OF THE NEW PASSAGE OR

STRAIT IN THE NORTH WEST TO THE EMPIRES OF

CHINA & CATHAY;

AND

A MEMORIAL

PRESENTED TO THE

KING OF SPAIN

CONCERNING THE DISCOVERY AND SITUATION OF THE LAND CALLED

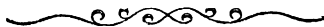
**Australia Incognita.**

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Translated from the Dutch edition printed at Amsterdam, 1612.

BY

F. J. MILLARD.



AMSTERDAM,  
FREDERIK MULLER.

1875.

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SOLOMON'S PROVERBS, XVI v. 9.

A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.

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## TO THE READER.

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The appearances or symptoms of gain & profit have always excited mankind to visit unknown lands and nations. So the handsome furs (with which we are provided by the Russian merchants), have awakened in our tradesmen a desire to travel through their countries unknown to us, in which they were assisted in some measure by a travel from the Moscow to Colmogro, described by the Russians and thence on Petzora where the nations received the Christian faith in the year 1518, and further to the Oby, and still a little further onward, in which innumerable fables have been mixed up of Satababa, the golden old woman with her children, and the monstrous people beyond the Oby. This Russian description is of Sigismund of Herberstain, Orator to the Emperor Maximilian, in his books on the Muscovite lands, translated and published by him. Afterwards Antonis Wied constructed a map of Russia by the instruction of a Ioannes Latzky, formerly one of the Muscovite Princes, who, on account of the disturbances, after the decease of Ioannes Basilus, the Grand Duke in Muscovy, had fled into Poland, which map was presented to a certain J. Coper, Counsellor of Dantzich, and edited in Russian and Latin characters, in the Wilda, in the year 1555. Then another map of this Russian land was made by the English, who had traded in these quarters. These maps and descriptions, such as they are and

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the further knowledge spread by and by, induced Olivier Brunel, born in Brussels, to sail thither in a small vessel from Enchuysen; he roamed about hither and thither in the vicinity and amassed in the Petzora much wealth, consisting of furs, Russian glass and crystal de Montagne, which with the boat were lost in the river Petzora. Thereupon, the former expeditions of the English, and of Olivier Brunel who had likewise been in Costinsarck on Nova Sembla, having raised in our Dutchmen a desire of gain, and enticed them by the riches of China and Cathay, to which they hoped to find access along these coasts, the Right Honorable States of the United Provinces dispatched thither two vessels, that were to go with Jan Huyghen of Linschoten to Waygats, and two others with Willem Barentsz., that were directed through the inducement of Rev. Petrus Plancius to proceed to the North and sail round above Nova Sembla. But Willem Barentsz. being locked up between the land and the ice, at the longitude of 77 degrees near the islands of Orange, returned on the first day of August, and Jan Huyghen sailed quite through the strait of Waygats, and fifty miles further; but on account of the north-east wind, and the year being far spent, came back also. Both sailed out again the next year in 1595, intending to place their marks further, or to find the passage quite through; but the cold and ice debarring their progress, they could not effectuate their purpose, for they could not pass the Waygats. And Willem Barentsz., who got a little further on his third expedition in the year 1596 than he could get on his first undertaking, left his vessel there on the ice-berghs for a mark and perpetual memorial of the extreme sailing in the North, whose adventurous history, sad end and the crews wonderful return homeward, one may read in their printed journals.

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In order then, to promote in some measure, the knowledge of the locality of these lands (which our merchants have acquired by these previous voyages), we now place in your hands an account of the new dominion of the Rufsians in the lands of Tartary, whence may be seen the agreement with the very interesting drawings of Jan Huyghen, and the further situation of the countries lying on yonder side the river Oby.

Besides this description of Siberia and the most northerly part of Tartary, we likewise hand you a map, translated from the Rufsian, of all the adjoining countries, delineating the entire sea to the east of Waygats, and a way to proceed to the south of Cathay. But if the passage were situated too far to the north (as it appears from the map), it might, to judge from appearances, have been possible to get by water to the Oby, or any other of the large rivers, for those coasts are indeed always navigated by the Rufsians with their canoes or small vessels, and then they proceed inland with boats by water or by land, and it seems one might then discover remarkable things. But as the Waygats is only open or unthawed for a short time in summer, as appears from the two expeditions made thither by J. Huygen and W. Barentsz, this exploration could not easily be made, for it appears that nature has placed the cold and the ice there as our enemies to moderate our desires;— yet notwithstanding all the examples of such excellent men as W. Barentsz, J. Heemskerk & J. Huyghen and the unlucky voyage which Kerckhoven performed for Isaac Le Maire, still some inexperienced reckless men have boldly dared to request the Noble Lords of the Admiralty, and the Mighty Lords the States, again to appoint them to sail to the north-east above Nova Zembla, confidently affirming it to be, at the height of 72

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degrees north warmer and warmer, on account of the long days. This was also done by a certain Heliseus Röslin, a doctor of Hanau, at the end of his little pamphlet (written and dedicated to the Mighty Lords the States in 1610, on the 22 of December,) in which (after many absurdities which he grounds on the maps drawn of Tartary from very old times, when the Rufsians themselves were unacquainted with it) he says: that the nearer the pole the warmer it is in summer time, and that no impediment could befall the vefsels on account of the ice or cold. And our people thought even that the sun would rather make salt than ice at the North of Nova Sembla. With these opinions they sailed out in the spring of 1611 to go far round above Nova Sembla, and thence, as their maps showed, to proceed south-south-east to the strait of Anian, and further to the long sought-for Cathay and China; but it did not come so far, that they could see whether their maps were correct or defective, for as they sailed out too early in the season, and against their expectation were prevented by the ice, they came to Costinsarck near Nova Sembla, and having suffered damage by the ice they ran into Moscovia for repairs. Thence, without making any further attempts, they sailed to the coasts of Canada between Virginia and Terra Nova, to take up winter-quarters, having visited nearly all the coasts to the Norenbega, where one of their companions and six others were shot with arrows. Of this company one of the vefsels came home, and the other proceeded again to the North, the better to carry out their purpose. But as the English after these aforesaid expeditions of W. Barentsz., had still made several voyages by way of trial in the north-east, the Gentlemen Directors of the East India-Company sent thither some years ago a certain Mr. Hudson, who as he could find no way in the east, sailed towards

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the west, whence without having obtained any advantage, he arrived in England. Afterwards, when the English again sent him out, he had much more prosperity but less good luck, for having after much trouble arrived about 300 miles to the west of Terra de Bacalaos, and having taken up his winter-quarters there and wishing at  $52^{\circ}$  of latitude to push on further, he was, with all the Commanders, put on shore by the crew, who refused to go further and returned home. His designs we subjoin at the close of the book, hoping that we shall receive of the vessels now expedited thither, further news and tidings of a thorough passage, by which they would reap eternal honor and fame, because so many years such august personages and intelligent pilots have endeavoured to come by means of a new short road to the riches of Cathay, China, the Molucks and the Peruvian nations. Among these have been Martin Forbisher and John Davis, who in the years 1585, 86 and 87 sailed between Terra Nova and Greenland northwards up to  $72$  degrees, but were kept back by the ice, and without having done anything subservient to their purpose, returned home.

The hope of finding out this newly discovered passage or strait above Terra Nova discovered by Mr. Hudson, is strengthened by the testimony of the Virginians and Floridians, who confidently affirm that to the north-west of their country is a large sea, saying that they have seen vessels there like those of the English. We read also in Iosephus d'Acosta in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the 3<sup>d</sup> book, about the natural productions of the West-Indies, that the Spaniards believe the English Captain Thomas Candish to have been well acquainted with this passage. It is also said, that the Spaniards endeavour to keep this road unknown, and that some of them, on returning from the conquest of the Philippines, have come

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back home along this road. Therefore the King Philip ordered a strong fort to be built on the northern coast of Mar Vermejo, to the west of New Grenada, to prevent our nation or any of his enemies from depriving him, through this avenue, of the riches he possesses in peace near Mar del Zur; this has been related to us as quite true.

This road then, if it continues as it appears, will afford our people access, not only to the Chinese, the Molucks, or Peru; but likewise enable them to go and see what nations live on the south side of the South Sea, what harbours and merchandises are to be found there; as they will find every where plentiful refreshments, whether they go to the islands, whither the Bishop of Quito went (of which we have got information from one of our countrymen who has been there with said Bishop, and related a good deal about it to the Advocate Barneveld and the Honorable Lords Directors of the East-India-Company), or whether they land on the continent, whereof I now hand you a discourse and narrative, hoping that this may be agreeable to all those who traffic in the remote parts of the earth, and also to all who like to know more and more of the globe and its inhabitants; which knowledge I hope may increase in you to perfection and bring you riches and unperishable honour.

Your very zealous Servant  
HESSEL GERRITSZ FROM ASSUM,  
*Lover of Geography.*



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## C O P Y

OF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDS OF SIBERIA,  
SAMOIEDA & TINGOESA WITH THE WAYS ALSO FROM MUSCOVIA  
THITHER EAST AND EAST NORTH, AS DAILY TRAVELLED  
OVER BY THE MUSCOVITES.

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There dwells a nation in Muscovy called the children of Aniconij and they are of farmer-descent, sprung from a countryman named Anica. This Anica being rich in land, lived near a river called Witsogda, wick runs into the river Duyna, that falls at 100 miles' distance thence into the White Sea near Michael Archangel a castle thus denominated.

This Anica then being rich as related, had also many children and was well provided for by God with every good thing and abundantly blessed. Actuated however by a great desire of gain, he wished to know what kind of countries the people possessed that came yearly to Muscovy to trade in precious furs and many other goods, that were of strange speech, garb and religion and manners, calling themselves Samoyeds and also by many other names. These came every year down the river Witsogda, with their merchandises, dealing with the Russians and Muscovites in the cities of Osoyl and Vstinga on the Duyna which was, at that time, the staple of all kinds of things and also of furs. This Anica then (as just stated) was desirous to know whence they came and where they dwelt. Thinking too that great riches might thence be obtained, considering the handsome furs they imported every year, produced such

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great treasures, he silently contracted an alliance and friendship with some of these peoples. He sent also some of his slaves and servants thither, to the number of 10 or 12 along with them into the country, ordering them diligently to spy out every thing in the lands they travelled through and to take due note of their manners, abodes, mode of living and mien, and thus to give him a good account of every thing when they came home. They having duly followed up his orders, he treated well those who had been there and showed them great favour, but told them to keep every thing quite secret and made them stay with him without acquainting any one about the matter. But the next year he sent larger parties thither and also some of his friends with goods of small value, as German haberdashery, bells and similar articles. These men also accompanied the others and like them pried and looked into every thing, and proceeded as far as the river Oby through many deserts and along several of the many rivers, contracting with many Samoyeds close friendship and alliance. They heard too that the furs there were of small value and that riches were to be got there. They saw also that they dwelt not in cities, but lived in companies peaceably together and were governed by the oldest among them; in their diet they were very uncleanly and subsisted of the game they caught, unacquainted with corn or bread. They were mostly good archers and their bows were made of tough wood and some (arrows) were pointed with sharpened stone and some with sharp fish-bones, with which they shot the game that was found there in great abundance. They also used fish-bones to sew with, taking the sinews of small animals, instead of thread, and thus joined the skins together with which they covered themselves, wearing in summer the fur outside, and in the winter inside. They likewise co-