

Jan Huygen van Linschoten  
(1563-1611):

An Annotated Bibliography

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Nuno Vila-Santa

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## Comments on Bibliography

Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1563–1611) was a key-personality in the beginning of the Dutch overseas expansion. His 1596 *Itinerario* provided the young Dutch Republic with the nautical, commercial, political, economic and social knowledge of Asia that enabled its first voyage to Asia: that of Cornelis de Houtman between 1595 and 1597. The rapid translation of the *Itinerario* into English, German, Latin and French, alongside its several re-editions during the 17th century, also ensured that Van Linschoten's book had a crucial role in the launch of the English and French maritime enterprises to Asia. For these reasons, Van Linschoten is widely known by experts from multiple disciplines, including history, history of science and cultural studies.

This interest in Van Linschoten is reflected in the amount of information about him and his works readily available on the internet. He has also been the subject of many academic studies, although this does not mean that all data on the Dutchman is of sound scholarly quality. Thus, it would be useful for both researchers and the broader public to try to organize this information. Due to the restrictions on travelling and temporary closure of libraries brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, this technical note has been prepared with the exclusion of some Dutch works, which were impossible to consult under present conditions. Such was the case of the collection of articles on Van Linschoten organized by R. van Gelder, J.

Parmentier and V. Roeper in 1998 and the books authored by A. van der Moer and Mies Visser, published in 1979 and 1942, respectively. The goal in this bibliography was to list the main works that directly address Van Linschoten. Bibliographical references to studies in which Van Linschoten only appears incidentally have not been included. Therefore, this technical note should only be considered a first approach to studies of Van Linschoten and his works. Any information on possible missing books and articles is welcome and may be included in another version of this technical note.

Linschoten-Vereeniging (the Dutch equivalent to the British Hakluyt Society) was responsible for the first modern editions of the *Itinerario* in 1910–34, 1939 and 1955–57. For the 1955–57 edition, an important introduction was written by H. Kern and H. Terpstra. It offered abundant information on Van Linschoten's biography and can be seen as a serious attempt to understand the man and his chief work. Yet, it was only in 1964 that what may be termed the first *official* biography of the Dutchman appeared: that of Charles McKew Parr. In a remarkable work for its time, Parr tried to grapple with Van Linschoten not just as the personality who published the *Itinerario*, but as a figure embedded in and shaped by the contexts in which he operated. In order to achieve this goal, Parr paid close attention on Van Linschoten's career in the Iberian world between 1583 and 1592, drawing on Portuguese scholarship and sources. He also tried to detail the Dutchman's later life by tracking the events between the first Dutch edition of the *Itinerario* in 1596 to his later works. Parr's book paved the way for several other studies. However, even in the 1960s the thesis that Van Linschoten was a Dutch spy sent to pilfer Iberian knowledge still prevailed. The 1960 article of H. Houwens Poët, or the 1963 study by J. Barassin, are good examples of this tendency. Although Parr did not explicitly give an opinion on this thesis, his reticence does not necessarily mean that he agreed with it. On the one hand, Parr's book lacked footnote indications of the documents and historiographical works the author consulted. On the other hand, Parr was able to show the richness and complexity of Van Linschoten's personality, drawing special attention to a trait that would prove crucial: his ability to adapt to very different circumstances across his life, be it in the Iberian world, or later on when he resettled in the Dutch Republic, in Enkhuizen. In a 1985 article, following Parr's

approach, J. Lanman analyzed Van Linschoten's report of his voyage to India in 1583, comparing it with other Portuguese sources.

Still, the contention that Van Linschoten was a spy remained dominant in Dutch historiography. The belief was firstly placed in question by Cornelis Koeman's 1985 article on the Iberian nautical rutters that the Dutchman published and by J. Parmentier's 1997 article. But the thesis was only seriously shaken when a Dutch scholar (Arie Pos) collaborated with a Portuguese historian (Rui Loureiro) for the publication of the first Portuguese translation of the *Itinerario*. Arie Pos's background in literary studies and his interest in Van Linschoten's works had already motivated him to publish two articles, in 1997 and 1999. The 1999 article analyzed the relationship between Van Linschoten and Dirck Gerritsz Pomp, his friend and the first known Dutchman to have sailed to China and Japan. Among other important conclusions, Arie Pos raised the possibility that Pomp might have given important nautical rutters to Van Linschoten. The two articles likewise introduced some of the questions that Pos had already approached in the edition produced with Rui Loureiro. This Portuguese edition of the *Itinerario* was published in 1997 with financial support from the Portuguese Discoveries Commission, created to publish selected works and sources on the Portuguese empire to commemorate the 500 years anniversary of the Portuguese arrival in India. For the edition, Arie Pos and Rui Loureiro wrote an introduction to Van Linschoten's biography that remains relevant to this day. In these pages, Arie Pos and Rui Loureiro challenged the notion that the Dutchman had operated as a spy from the moment he departed Enkhuizen in 1579. Unfortunately, Rui Loureiro and Arie Pos did not translate into Portuguese the other three main sections of the 1596 *Itinerario* edition: the *Beschryvinge* (the American-African section), the *Reys-gheschrift* (the compilation of sailing rutters) and the *Extract* (the publication of the Portuguese and Spanish crown's revenues). Up until the writing of this technical note, these sections remain to be translated into Portuguese. Also in 1997, Suzanne Daveau produced a short review of the Portuguese edition of the *Itinerario*, alerting Portuguese historians to the significance of Van Linschoten's work to the history of the Portuguese empire. Indeed, apart from the 1983 and 1990 articles by João Afonso, which published some documents concerning Van Linschoten's shipping

negotiations at Angra between 1589 and 1591, no Portuguese scholar had dedicated systematic attention to the Dutchman. This scenario has persisted almost unchanged until today, with some cultural studies on the *Itinerario* comprising the main exceptions.

At almost the same time that Rui Loureiro and Arie Pos were preparing the Portuguese edition of the *Itinerario*, Dutch scholar Ernst van den Boogaart was working on an English re-edition of the *Itinerario* for the Hakluyt Society. Van den Boogaart's 1999 edition, like the 19th-century English version published by the Hakluyt Society, did not contain the *Beschryvinge*, the *Reys-gheschrift* and the *Extract* sections of the *Itinerario*. As a consequence, a present-day English reader wanting to get acquainted with these sections of the *Itinerario* still has to rely on the 1598 translation by John Wolfe (based on the 1596 original Dutch edition). Van den Boogaart's 1999 re-edition contained an important study on Van Linschoten's *Itinerario* as well as notes on his career. Combining Portuguese studies and sources with Dutch scholarship, Van den Boogaart disputed the idea that the *Itinerario* offered proof of Portuguese decline. Although he recognised that its publication helped to trigger the Dutch expansion, he argued that the *Itinerario* as a whole gave good evidence for Portuguese potency before the Dutch arrival in Asia. His detailed study of the plates published in the 1596 *Itinerario*, using the best Dutch works on the cultural ambience of the Low Countries, as well as wider European Renaissance historiographical concepts, was fundamental in stimulating a series of what can be broadly called cultural studies of the *Itinerario*. Van den Boogaart himself contributed to this trend with a 2002 article on the de Bry brothers' first Latin edition of the *Itinerario*, and with his well-known 2003 book entitled *Civil and Corrupt Asia*. His 2003 book was, as the author recognised, in several aspects, tributary to the 1999 English re-edition of the *Itinerario*, but Van den Boogaart focused on the 1604 *Icones* edition, adding new information and analysis. Van den Boogaart's studies opened up new directions in Van Linschoten studies. It is not by coincidence that most of the cultural studies on the *Itinerario* appeared after Van den Boogaart's 1999 English re-edition, since this book was met with far greater international circulation than the 1997 Portuguese edition by Arie Pos and Rui Loureiro.

Still, Arie Pos remained active and contributed to this new wave of cultural studies, especially with his 2004 and 2006 articles. Aiming to examine the impact of the five years Van Linschoten lived in Goa more closely, Arie Pos compared the Dutchman's portrait of Asia with the one provided by Portuguese sources and authors. In the 2006 article, he concluded that the Dutchman drew much of the *Itinerario's* content from Portuguese physician Garcia de Orta's book, adding several important remarks and observations of his own (not to be confused with the annotations by Bernardus Paludanus). In the process, Arie Pos stressed that much work was still required to fully identify all the sources used for the *Itinerario's* writing. The links between Van Linschoten and Orta's books were also investigated in 2005 by Agnes Trindade, a MA student from the University of Algarve. Furthermore, Arie Pos's work influenced the line of cultural studies that followed, which touched on several of the *Itinerario's* topics. Within Dutch historiography, the 2001 study by Benjamin Schmidt and the 2008 book by Michel Van Groessen, despite not focusing emphatically on Van Linschoten, contained several important contributions to Van Linschoten studies and somehow followed approaches by Van den Boogaart and Arie Pos. Van den Boogaart and Pos's influences are also evident in the 2000 article by Bill Frank, the 2001 study by Ivo Kamps, the 2003 article by Giuseppe Mazzochi, the 2007 study by Carmen Nocentelli, the 2009 article by Arun Saldanha, the 2011 contribution by Thom as Haddad, the 2014 article by  ngela Barreto Xavier, the 2015 study by C elia Tavares and the 2016 article by Ana M endez-Oliver. Although with different purposes and topics, all these studies tried to understand and interpret Van Linschoten's views (as a European) on several aspects of Asia within the huge umbrella of the Renaissance cultural concepts, a framework that Van den Boogaart had already developed in 1999.

Nevertheless, major contributions to Van Linschoten's biography have continued to appear. One of the most important of these was made by Dutch scholar G nter Schilder in a 2003 volume of *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, where the author dedicated an entire chapter to Van Linschoten. Later on, in 2017, Schilder, and in 2019, Schilder and Kok, revisited cartographical topics for two volumes on Dutch navigation and nautical cartography. Schilder pointed out the likelihood that Van Linschoten, with his career in and knowledge of Asia, might have given



information to Dutch cartographers for the production of some of the most renowned Dutch maps. Taking a different line of inquiry, in 2010, Bonny Tan reexamined a matter already mentioned in the studies by Parr, Koeman, Pos and Van den Boogaart: the origin of the Iberian nautical rutters that Van Linschoten published in 1596. Tan hypothesized that he might have obtained them during his Iberian career, thanks to his contact with Portuguese India Run pilots such as Vicente Rodrigues and Gaspar Reimão Ferreira. Analogously, the 2012 book (originally an MA thesis) by Humberto Oliveira focused on the famous depiction of Angra by Van Linschoten. After a careful study of the plate, Oliveira concluded that the Dutchman had not been alone in preparing this work. Unfortunately, his important research and its findings have not yet provoked further investigation into the hands behind Van Linschoten's graphical works. This is especially the case for the other cartographical images (such as those of Goa, Mozambique and the Santa Helena and Ascension islands) included in the first Dutch edition of the *Itinerario*, which are still usually attributed to Van Linschoten alone.

Among other key works published on Van Linschoten so far, a special note should also be made of the 2011 article by Arun Saldanha about the 1596 *Itinerario*'s connection with the first Dutch expeditions to Asia. In this vital study, Saldanha outlined the impact of the *Itinerario* and demonstrated the ways it affected much more than just the first Dutch expedition of Cornelis de Houtman. Saldanha's article likewise constitutes the most recent academic review and state-of-the-art on Van Linschoten studies. Thus, it may be deemed, in conjunction with Parr's biography, Van den Boogaart's studies and Pos and Loureiro's edition, the foundational scholarly references on the Dutchman, both offering a wider vision of his career and suitable for either academic researchers or non-academic readers interested in knowing more about Van Linschoten's life.

This outpouring of scholarship by no means indicates that Van Linschoten studies have reached their conclusion. Quite the opposite - the historiographical outline attempted above shows that many other issues still deserve attention, as they have not been subjected to in-depth analysis. One such issue is a better contextualization of the Dutchman's Iberian career, which continues to lack in detail. Such research is

essential for finally laying to rest the question of whether Van Linschoten was a spy, as this thesis centers on the interpretation of his life and career. Furthermore, as Arie Pos stressed in his 2006 article, there is work to be done on the identification of sources used for the *Itinerario*'s writing. Similarly, and so far, primarily addressed in Portuguese sources and scholarship, the impact of the nautical rutters published by Van Linschoten in 1596 merits more consideration. I have recently discussed some of these topics in two articles devoted to Van Linschoten. The first was submitted to the *Modern Asian Studies* journal and is entitled "A Chronicler or a Spy? Rethinking Jan Huygen van Linschoten and his *Itinerario*". In this article, I propose a new reading of Van Linschoten's career and contend that the *Itinerario* was initially meant to be a book for the Iberian audience. I also argue that Van Linschoten is better captured by the concept of the "go-between", decisively breaking the boundaries of scientific knowledge between Portugal and the Dutch Republic, than by that of a classical spy (a theory lacking documental evidence). The second article is forthcoming in the *Historical Research* journal and is entitled "Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Reys-gheschrift*: Updating Iberian Science for the Dutch Expansion". In this article, I try to identify the original Iberian nautical rutters that Van Linschoten adapted for publication and some of the changes he introduced. I also assess the *Reys-gheschrift*'s significance to the nautical aspects of the Dutch overseas expansion, alongside its contribution to 17th-century scientific development in Europe.

These topics are only a few of the unresolved questions awaiting research in the field of Van Linschoten studies; much work remains to be done. To date, there has been no serious comparative study of the several editions of the *Itinerario*. The work closest to attempting such a study is the 2011 article by Adrien Delmás, which provides a crucial contribution to the history of the *Itinerario* after Van Linschoten's death, its later editions and how its publication came to be formally, but fecklessly, forbidden by VOC (the Dutch East India Company). In light of Delmás's investigation, it would be profitable to analyze the *Itinerario*'s contents and compare changes that emerged between the Dutch editions and the translations into Latin, German and French. In short, we still need to clarify how the *Itinerario*, as a body of knowledge, evolved during the 17th century, and to track its true influence on nautical science and the building of maritime and commercial empires.

This issue relates directly to recent investigations by Isabel Casteels and Djoeke van Netten. In 2019, Casteels published an article, based on her MA thesis about Enkhuizen in the 1590s, in which she highlighted the role of the networks operating in Enkhuizen. These networks included Van Linschoten, Bernardus Paludanus, Lucas Jansoonz Waghenaer, Franciscus Maelson, Balthasar de Moucheron and Barent Eriksz. They were critical to the preparation of the Dutch expeditions to Guinea in 1593, as well as to all the voyages in search of the Northern passage to China, including those of 1594, 1595 and 1597. Casteels argued for the significance of these under-studied networks on the grounds that they preceded the well-known hegemony of Amsterdam within the Dutch Republic. In her 2020 articles, Djoeke van Netten outlined the ways that the “richest country” (as China was perceived in the Dutch imaginary during the 1590s, after the dissemination of Dirck Gerritsz Pomp and Van Linschoten’s reports) affected the preparation of such expeditions. In order to trace Van Linschoten’s influence on the events unfolding in Enkhuizen, the city where he spent his final years, further study of his relationship with these critical figures and their projects is still needed.

Another article by Djoeke van Netten on sailing and secrecy brings to the fore the secrecy of the nautical knowledge that Van Linschoten published in the *Itinerario*. This theme can be viewed in connection with a spy mission ordered by Petrus Plancius in 1592, for which Frederick and Cornelis of Houtman set off to Lisbon to acquire Portuguese cartography and nautical rutters. In this area, Erik Odegard’s ongoing research into the preparation of an edition of the Houtmans’ manuscript (which contained contributions by Van Linschoten), held at the Maritime Museum of Amsterdam, may offer significant insights. Much remains ambiguous with regard to the precise role played by Van Linschoten in all these occurrences. Odegard’s edition will certainly aid, moreover, in understanding how Van Linschoten affected the Dutch nautical and cartographic science that enabled the VOC’s foundation, and later on that of WIC (the Dutch West India Company). After all, the establishment of the VOC (and the role that Van Linschoten played in it) cannot be fully grasped if we do not consider it in relation to several episodes of the 1590s, as Van Netten and Casteels rightly argue in their studies.

Another matter, connected to the issue discussed above, is Van Linschoten's later career and works. This topic has not yet been adequately explored, and Parr's studies continue to be the main reference work. Van Linschoten's report on the voyage to the North, known as *Reizen van der Noorden*, still need to be analyzed in the context of his later career in the Dutch Republic. The same applies to his 1609 translation of Philip III's of Spain letter to the duke of Lerma regarding the Moorish revolt in Spain, and, even more importantly, to Van Linschoten's 1598 translation from Spanish into Dutch of José de Acoſta's book. Such cases make it clear that Van Linschoten's efforts as a translator, operating within the cultural and scientific ambience of the Dutch Republic, have not been stressed enough in the historiography. A similar conclusion can be stated about Van Linschoten's scientific disputes with Petrus Plancius. Overall, the part that Van Linschoten played in Dutch science of the period deserves further inquiry and evaluation. A comparison of Van Linschoten's role in the Dutch context with that of contemporary Iberian, French or English cosmographers could also be interesting. Given the paucity of research into this area, any relevant contributions will be welcome additions.

To conclude, although much remains to uncover, research so far has made it abundantly evident that we cannot overstate Jan Huygen van Linschoten's importance to Dutch science and the broader European maritime expansion. It is for this reason that I have pointed out not only the key texts in Van Linschoten studies, but also the numerous promising avenues of research development. In what follows, the reader will find the studies I mentioned above, as well as websites about Van Linschoten and a listing of his major works.

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<http://www.linschoten-vereeniging.nl/nl/jan-huygen-van-linschoten> - Biographical section on Jan Huygen van Linschoten on the Linschoten-Veererning website.

<http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/navegaport/d26.html> - Short biographical note on Jan Huygen van Linschoten organized by the Portuguese Instituto Camões

## **Editions of Jan Huygen van Linschoten's works**

<https://www.aseaofbooks.org/#linschotens-itinerario> – Website organized by RUTTER project with a section on the several editions of the *Itinerario*, the *Reysgheschrift* and the *Beschryvinge*. For the other sections, I have added the weblinks of the editions when they are available online.

### **Modern editions of the *Itinerario***

**1884-85** - *The voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies : from the old English translation of 1598*, edited by Arthur Coke Burnell and Pieter Anton Tiele, 2 vols., London, Hakluyt Society. – Reedited in 1970 and 2010.

### ***Itinerario's* editions**

**(Date, Language, Place of publication and editor)**

- 1596** – First Dutch Edition – Amsterdam, Cornelis Claesz
- 1598** – English Edition – London, John Wolfe
- 1598-1600** – German Edition – Frankfurt, Johan Gaur
- 1599** – German Edition – Frankfurt, Matthæum Becker
- 1600** – German Edition – Frankfurt, Johan Theodor and Johan Israel Bry
- 1599** – Latin Edition – The Hague, Cornelis Nicolae
- 1600** – Latin Edition – Frankfurt, Wolfgang Ritcheni
- 1601** – Latin Edition<sup>1</sup> - Frankfurt, Johan Theodor and Johan Israel Bry
- 1604** – *Icones* Edition<sup>2</sup> - Amsterdam, Cornelis Nicolai
- 1610** – French Edition – Amsterdam, Theodore Pierre
- 1613** – Latin Edition – Frankfurt, Erasmus Kempffer
- 1614** – Dutch Edition – Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburgh
- 1616** – German Edition – Frankfurt, Johan Theodor and Johan Israel Bry
- 1617** – German Edition?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Analyzed by BOOGAART, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Studied by BOOGAART, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> I found reference to the existence of this edition but not to the place of publication and its editor.

- 1619 – French Edition – Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1623 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1628 – Latin Edition – Frankfurt, Erasmi Kempfferi  
1629 – Latin Edition – Frankfurt, Sumptibus Wilhelmi Fitzeri, excudebat Caspar Rotelius  
1638 – French Edition – Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1644 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1668 – Dutch Edition – Amsterdam, Gillis Joosten Saeghman

*Reys-gheschrift's* editions

(Date, Language, Place of publication and editor)

- 1595 – First Dutch Edition – Amsterdam, Cornelis Claesz  
1604 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Cornelis Claesz?  
1614 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg?  
1619 – French Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1623 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1638 – French Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1644 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg

*Beschryvinge's* editions

(Date, Language, Place of publication and editor)

- 1596 – Dutch Edition – Amsterdam, Cornelis Claesz?  
1604 – Cornelis Claesz – Amsterdam, Cornelis Claesz?  
1619 – French Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1623 – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg  
1638 – French Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburg

*Reizen naar het Noorden's editions*

(Date, Language, Place of publication and editor)

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**1623** – Dutch Edition - Amsterdam, Jan Evert Cloppenburgh

**1914** - *Reizen van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naar het Noorden, 1594-1595* / uitgegeven door S.P. L'Honore Naber, Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten-Vereeniging; 8. –<https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identificer=KONB10:000019195>

*Editions on José de Acoſta's Hiſtorie Naturae's translated by Linschoten*

(Date, Language, Place of publication and editor)

**1598** - First Dutch Edition – Enkhuizen, J. L. Meyn -

<https://archive.org/details/scnesdelaviecal00unkngoog>

**1624** – Dutch Edition – Amsterdam, Hendrick Laurensz - <https://archive.org/details/historienaturael00acos>

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