

JOHN MILTON'S A BRIEF HISTORY OF MOSCOVIA (1682)  
AND JEROME HORSEY'S EXTRACTS (1626)<sup>1</sup>

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In this research note, the author draws attention to John Milton's use of Jerome Horsey's *Extracts Out of Sir Jerome Horseys Observations* (1626) in Milton's *A Brief History of Moscovia* (1682). Traditionally, scholars have identified two primary sources for Milton's text: Richard Hakluyt's first volume of *Principal Navigations* (1600) and Samuel Purchas's third volume of *Purchas His Pilgrims* (1625). However, Milton not only offers an overlooked marginal note but also uses of similar language that point to Horsey's *Extracts*, which was published in Purchas's *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (1626). *Extracts'* influence appears when Milton describes Ivan IV's reign, the end of Feodor I's reign, and Boris Godunov's alleged hand in the deaths of Dmitry of Uglich and Feodor.

**Keywords:** John Milton, Jerome Horsey, Richard Hakluyt, Samuel Purchas

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Even though scholars have not reached a consensus about when precisely John Milton (1608–1674) wrote *A Brief History of Moscovia* (1682),<sup>2</sup> or what it is exactly,<sup>3</sup> most do not question that Milton compiled his short history from explorers', travelers', merchants', and ambassadors' accounts in Richard Hakluyt's 1598–1600 edition of *Principal Navigations* and Samuel Purchas's 1625 edition of *Purchas His Pilgrimes*.<sup>4</sup> This understanding is reinforced by George B. Parks, the editor of *A Brief History* in the Yale edition, when he states that Milton's work is "a collection of notes on Russia, condensed and often tightened in statement, but all copied out of two books".<sup>5</sup> The "two books" from which Milton condensed his short history are Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, "especially in its first volume", and Samuel Purchas's *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, "its material on Russia being in the third volume".<sup>6</sup> Parks again affirms these two sources in his

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<sup>1</sup> Исследование выполнено при поддержке гранта Российского научного фонда (проект № 19–18–00186 «"Культура духа" vs "Культура разума": интеллектуалы и власть в Британии и России в Эпоху перемен, XVII–XVIII вв.»).

<sup>2</sup> More recent scholars have focused on the 1640s for *A Brief History*'s publication: Maltzahn 2009: 41; Campbell and Corns 2008: 192; Lewalski 2000: 212; Bedford 1993: 71. Earlier scholars have suggested wide-ranging dates, yet often overlap with the 1640s: Proudfoot and Deslandres 1985: 263, suggest 1626, as Milton had lived near Samuel Purchas; Parks 1982: 456, "conjectures have dated the book variously from 1633 to 1650"; Parker 1968: 939, states that "at some moment during 1648 ... *A Brief History of Moscovia* must have been completed"; Shawcross 1963: 361, "1642–early 1643"; Parks 1943: 400, notes, "December 1649 and January 1649–50"; Bryant 1950: 16, states, "between 1639 and 1641"; Masson 1880: 813, indicates "between 1649 and 1652, or possibly to his days of private study and pedagogy".

<sup>3</sup> Scholars have variously viewed it as an abandoned project, Gleason 1964; a handbook for ambassadors, Parks 1952 and Bryant 1952; or the popularization of a serious subject, Alekseev 1941: 302; or a "compendium", Bedford 1993: 71.

<sup>4</sup> Parks 1982: 458; Cawley 1965: 5.

<sup>5</sup> Parks 1982: 455; see also Cawley 1965: 38, for Milton's "concision and accuracy".

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 458.

second note in the body of *A Brief History*: “Milton’s marginal notes fully indicate [that] he did all his searching in two volumes”: Hakluyt’s first volume and Purchas’s third volume.<sup>7</sup> These two volumes are confirmed by Milton’s list of sources on pages 109–109.<sup>8</sup> Yet, Milton’s list of sources neglects one source that he actually mentions in one marginal note: i.e., Jerome Horsey’s *Extracts Out of Sir Jerome Horseys Observations*, which was published in Purchas’s 1626 edition of *Purchas His Pilgrimage*.

Jerome Horsey (c. 1550–1626) was a merchant in the Muscovy Company, who entered its service in 1572, and an occasional dispatcher and diplomat, who conveyed communications between the Russian and English courts in 1580, 1585, 1587, and 1590–1591. His varied experiences of Russia, according to Robert Croskey, were first composed as his “Relacion or Memoriall abstracted owt of Sir Jerome Horsey his Travells, imployments, services and negociacions, observed and written with his owne hand; wherein he spent the most part of eighteenth years tyme”, or simply “Travels”.<sup>9</sup> This manuscript was first drafted in 1589–1590, revised in 1603–1604, and drafted again from 1625–1626, as he prepared for its publication as an addendum in Purchas’s 1626 edition, which primarily focused upon the world’s religions.<sup>10</sup> A shorter account, however, was published in Hakluyt and Purchas, depicting the pomp and ceremony of Feodor I’s coronation, Feodor’s early reign, and the tsar’s use of Horsey to carry “letters and requests” to Queen Elizabeth I,<sup>11</sup> which first appeared in the 1589 edition of *Principal Navigations*,<sup>12</sup> and also in the 1625 edition of *Purchas His Pilgrimes*.<sup>13</sup> Differing from this shorter account, Horsey’s *Extracts* offers a more extensive relation of his journeys and experiences, conveying a negative account of Ivan IV’s reign, Feodor’s reign, including Boris Godunov’s regency, an embassy to Denmark, Boris Godunov’s ascendancy to the throne, and a brief overview of the Time of Troubles (1598–1613).<sup>14</sup>

According to Croskey, Horsey likely had a role in preparing his original manuscript, “Travels,” for publication in Purchas’s 1626 edition,<sup>15</sup> and he likely used sources, such as Russian accounts of church affairs and letters and documents to draft his longer account.<sup>16</sup> He would have been familiar with Giles Fletcher’s *Of Russe Commonwealth* (1591), since Horsey helped Fletcher prepare his well-known account.<sup>17</sup> Indeed Milton was familiar with

<sup>7</sup> Ibid: n. 2, 475.

<sup>8</sup> Milton 1682.

<sup>9</sup> Croskey 1978: 362.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: 375.

<sup>11</sup> Hakluyt 1599: 469.

<sup>12</sup> Croskey 1978: 365.

<sup>13</sup> Horsey 1625.

<sup>14</sup> See Butler 2019: lv; Croskey 1978: 363 & 369, that Purchas’s account is mostly based upon Horsey’s manuscript, “Travels”.

<sup>15</sup> Croskey 1978: 370.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid: 372.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid: 367.

Fletcher too and even referenced him in *A Brief History*.<sup>18</sup> Even though Horsey drew upon different sources and even assisted with *Of Russe Commonwealth*, indicating that he used at least some sources in drafting his *Extracts* with which Milton read and was familiar,<sup>19</sup> his distinct language and singular relation of events emerge in Milton's *A Brief History*, demonstrating that Milton read, consulted, and used Horsey's *Extracts* to compile his account of Russia in *A Brief History*.<sup>20</sup> In fact, Milton refers to Horsey's 1626 work in an overlooked marginal note.

Horsey's *Extracts* appears in *A Brief History*'s Chapter 4 in which Milton provides a historical overview of Russian "Dukes and Emperours" (37).<sup>21</sup> Milton draws from *Extracts* to offer an account of Ivan IV's reign, to mark the end of the Rurik dynasty, and to mention Boris Godunov's alleged role in Feodor's death. Regarding Ivan IV, Milton covers his reign in one concise paragraph. In two sentences he describes the tsar's governance and his relation to the nobility: "The cause of his rigour in government, he alledg'd to be the malice and treachery of his Subjects. But some of the Nobles incited by his cruelty, call'd in the Crim *Tartar* who in the Year 1571. broke into Russia, burnt *Mosco* to the ground" (47). The first sentence, including the use of "rigour", originates from Hakluyt, his edited account "by a Polacke", who, according to Parks, is likely Daniel Printz von Buchau.<sup>22</sup> In this original, edited version, after mentioning Ivan's devotion and piety, Hakluyt writes: "Whether therefore by nature, or (which hee pretendeth to be the cause) by reason of his subjects malice & treacherie, he be so addicted unto all rigour and cruelty, I dare not determine, especially sithens he hath not an illiberal or mishapen countenance".<sup>23</sup> Milton's revises for concision, turning Hakluyt's and von Buchau's passage, "by nature, or (which he pretendeth to be the cause) by reason of his subjects malice & treacherie" into the more direct: "he alledg'd to be the malice and treachery of his Subjects". Further, Milton separates "rigour" and "cruelty" from Hakluyt's and von Buchau's original: the former, he moves to the first sentence to comment upon Ivan's type of governance, and the latter, he moves to the second sentence to indicate why his nobles summon the Crimean Tartars. This use of Hakluyt and von Buchau in the first sentence is not identified by Parks, nor is the source identified in his second sentence, when Milton connects Ivan's "cruelty" to his "Nobles". In this second sentence, Milton shifts to Horsey's *Extracts* in Purchas's 1626 edition. Horsey states: "The Crim *Tartar* his ancient Enemy invaded him, incited by his Nobilitie as he found out".<sup>24</sup> Milton revises for concision by joining Horsey's "Nobilitie" and

<sup>18</sup> See Berry 1960.

<sup>19</sup> See Milton 1682:100.

<sup>20</sup> For Milton's role as a "compiler", see Parks 1982: 458.

<sup>21</sup> Milton 1682; subsequent in-text citations refer to this edition.

<sup>22</sup> Parks 1982: n. 1, 511.

<sup>23</sup> Hakluyt 1599: 224.

<sup>24</sup> Horsey 1626: 975.

“incited” with Hakluyt’s edited text from von Buchau, “cruelty”, to create a succinct statement upon Ivan’s rule and his nobles’ response.

Actually, Milton indicates his use of Horsey’s *Extracts* when he inserts a comment in the margin. Milton writes, “*Horsey’s Observations*”. Parks acknowledges this marginal note in note 15, page 515, but does not attribute it to Horsey’s *Extracts* in Purchas’s 1626 edition; nor does he attribute it to Horsey’s account of Feodor’s coronation. Yet Parks connects Milton’s marginal note implicitly to Horsey’s account of the coronation, since he refers to it as “Jerome Horsey report” in note 16, page 515.<sup>25</sup> Milton’s reference to “*Horsey’s Observations*”, however, could not be Horsey’s account of Feodor’s coronation because that account does not contain a reference to the Crimean Tartars’ Fire of Moscow in 1571. A relation of the burning is provided, instead, in Horsey’s *Extracts*, page 975, which, importantly, is identified by a running head in Purchas’s 1626 edition as, “Sir Jerome Horseys *Observations*”.<sup>26</sup> That is, Milton’s marginal note in *A Brief History* on page 47 refers to the running head that he saw when he read and consulted Horsey’s *Extracts* in Purchas’s 1626 edition at the top of page 974.

Milton could have acquired this information on the fire elsewhere, for instance, in Fletcher’s *Of Russe Commonwealth*, which was published in Hakluyt’s 1600 and Purchas’s 1625 editions. As already noted, Milton certainly read Fletcher, as he indicates in *A Brief History*: Fletcher’s “Relations being judicious and exact are best red entirely by themselves” (100). Fletcher offers an account of the burning:

In the yeere of 1571, he [the Crimean Tartars] came as farre as the Citie of *Mosko*, with an Armie of 200000, men, without any battell, or resistance at all, for that the *Russe* Emperor (then *Ivan Vasilowich*) leading forth his Armie to encounter with him, marched a wrong way: but as it was thought of very purpose, as not daring to adventure the field, by reason that he doubted his Nobilitie, and chiefe Captaynes, of a meaning to betray him to the *Tartar*.<sup>27</sup>

Fletcher recounts the year of the burning, and he indicates the tsar’s attitude toward his nobility, revealing that he suspects them of betrayal. Yet, Milton’s account in *A Brief History* more closely follows Horsey’s *Extracts*, utilizing similar language and even referring to Horsey in his marginalia.

Milton uses Horsey’s *Extracts* again when he depicts the end of Feodor I’s reign. Unlike page 47 in *A Brief History*, however, this time Milton does not provide a marginal note. After recounting the achievements of

<sup>25</sup> Parks 1982.

<sup>26</sup> Horsey 1626. In the first appearance of Horsey’s account of the coronation, Hakluyt 1589, the running head is “The voyages and discoveries M. Jerome Horsey.”; in Hakluyt 1599, the running head is “The Emp. coronation.” and “M. Jerome Horsey”; in Purchas 1625, the running head is “Pompous Ceremonies of Russian Emperours Coronation”, “Solemnities of Pheodors Coronation. Strife for precedence”, and “Sir Jerome Horseys double employment to and from Russia”.

<sup>27</sup> Purchas 1625: 439.

Feodor's tenure, Milton laments the loss of the Rurik dynasty, as Boris Godunov ascends the throne: "But this glory lasted not long through the treachery of Boris, who procur'd the death first of Demetrius, then of the Emperour himself, whereby the imperial Race after the succession of 300 years was quite extinguish't" (52). Parks does not offer a footnote for these sentences, which implicate Boris in the death of Ivan IV's youngest son by Maria Nagaya, i.e., Dmitry of Uglich, in 1591 and also Feodor's death in 1598. Yet, Parks does provide a note upon Milton's description of the rise and fall of Boris Godunov. In note 19, page 517, Parks indicates that Milton likely used Samuel Purchas's edited account of Jacques-Auguste de Thou, which implicates Boris in Demetrius's death, but, as Parks attests, "Purchas does not blame Boris for the death of Feodor".<sup>28</sup> If Milton did not use Purchas's edited account of de Thou to implicate Boris in Feodor's death, then Milton must have drawn this implication from elsewhere. Indeed, on pages 991-992 of his *Extracts*, Horsey not only implicates Boris in Dmitry's death at Uglich but also implicates him in Feodor's.

Regarding Dmitry's death, Horsey states that he was in Yaroslavl when Prince Andrei Nagoy, the empress's brother, knocked upon Horsey's gate "at midnight", reporting that Dmitry's throat had been cut. Horsey incriminates Boris first by indicating that it "was given out that Demetrius his Mother, her Brother [...] had practised to kill the Emperour and Protector, and to burne the whole Citie of Musco". Further, when "the Suburbs of Musco" were burned after Demetrius's death, Horsey states that "Boris his guard had the spoyle". Horsey continues, adding: "Little did Boris think that his Ghost [Dmitry's] should after root out him and his Family".<sup>29</sup> Horsey implies that aspersions were cast upon Dmitry, his mother, and brother, implicitly at the behest of Boris, indicating they sought to kill Feodor and Boris in order to permit Dmitry's early ascent to the throne; further, the tumult and conflagration after Dmitry's death was exploited by Boris and his guard; and finally False Dmitry I served as the "ghost" of the slain Dmitry to punish Boris for his actions. Even though Horsey spends a paragraph implicating Boris in Dmitry of Uglich's death, he devotes a sentence on Feodor. He states: "Boris had made away most of the chiefe and ancient Nobility, and now removed the Emperour *Theodor*".<sup>30</sup> Horsey depicts Boris's rise to the throne as ambitious and bloody, dispatching Dmitry of Uglich, nobility, and then the emperor.<sup>31</sup> In short, what Parks could not find in Purchas's edited account of de Thou emerges in Horsey's *Extracts*. As such, Milton's reference to Boris's hand in Dmitry's death could have originated from Purchas's edited account of de Thou, or it could have originated from Horsey's *Extracts*. Even still, Milton's reference to Boris's hand in Feodor's death is found in *Extracts*.

<sup>28</sup> Parks 1982: n. 19, 517.

<sup>29</sup> Horsey 1626: 991.

<sup>30</sup> Horsey 1626: 991-992.

<sup>31</sup> For Horsey's negative depiction of Boris, see Butler, Introduction, P. LXVII-LXVIII.

Reinforcing Milton's use of *Extracts* in this passage, Milton borrows Horsey's language when he describes the end of the Rurik dynasty. Horsey's original passage states: "Thus the Race of *Ivan Vasiliwich* which had continued above 300. years was raced out and extinguished in blood, the Emperour soone following".<sup>32</sup> Milton's concise revision states, "the imperial Race after the succession of 300 years was quite extinguish't". Milton condenses Horsey's "Race of *Ivan Vasiliwich*" into "Imperial Race"; he refines Horsey's "continued above 300. years" to "succession of 300 years"; and he reduces Horsey's "raced out and extinguished in blood" to "quite extinguish't". Here Milton does not provide a marginal note for *Extracts*, as he did previously, but his reference to Boris's role in Dmitry's and Feodor's deaths as well as his use of Horsey's language, indicate that he compiled information from Horsey's 1626 account to provide an account of Boris's rise and the end of the Rurik dynasty. In short, even though Milton does not cite Horsey's *Extracts* in his list of sources and Milton's use of the text traditionally has been overlooked by scholars, Horsey's *Extracts* should be added to the sources that Milton studied and consulted to compile and compose *A Brief History of Moscovia*.

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<sup>32</sup> Horsey 1626: 991.

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### **John Milton's A Brief History of Moscovia (1682) and Jerome Horsey's Extracts (1626)**

В этой статье автор обращает внимание на то, что Джон Мильтон при написании «Краткой истории Московии» использовал ««Извлечения из обзора сэра Джерома Горсея, посвященного семнадцатилетним путешествиям и деятельности в России и других примыкающих странах», опубликованное в компендиуме травелогов С. Перчейса 1626 г. Традиционно ученые рассматривали два источника сведений Дж. Милтона о России. Это первый том издания Р. Хаклюйта «Главные путешествия, посольства, торговые сношения и открытия английской нации» (1600) и третий том собрания С. Перчейса «По следам Хаклюйта или Пилигримы» (1625). Однако Мильтон использует не только примечания на полях, но и схожие формулировки «Извлечений» Горсея 1626 г. Влияние этого сочинения проявляется явно тогда, когда Мильтон описывает правление Ивана IV Грозного, конец правления Федора Иоановича и предполагаемую роль Бориса Годунова в кончине царевича Дмитрия и царя Федора.

**Ключевые слова:** Джон Мильтон, Джером Горсей, Ричард Хаклюйт, Сэмюэль Перчейс

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