

Article

Russia and Siberia: Russian People's Entry into Transbaikalia and the Amur Region

Aleksandr A. Brodnikov*
Petr E. Podalko**

The entry of Russian people into the Lena River basin naturally led to the study of its tributaries, which opened up prospects for the *yasak collectors*¹⁾ to penetrate into the new *zemlitsas*²⁾. It is quite obvious that this was understood not only in Siberia, but also in Moscow. It is no coincidence that when it came to the formation of a new administrative unit in Eastern Siberia, it was decided to create not a *uyezd*³⁾ at once, but a *razryad*⁴⁾. Probably, the officials

* Associate professor, Novosibirsk State University

** Professor, Aoyama Gakuin University

- 1) *Yasak collectors* - military servicemen who collected *yasak*, a natural tax, tribute levied by furs, from the already taxed aboriginal population. In the near-border districts, their task also included collecting information about the neighboring lands that has not yet been explored.
- 2) *Zemlitsa* - literally: a small land, territory. In Siberia, "zemlitsa" was the name for the territories inhabited by tribal groups of aborigines, which, as a result of their annexation to the Russian state, were taxed (fur). At the same time, the "zemlitsas" became taxable units, a.k.a. *volosts*.
- 3) *Uyezd* - a territorial and administrative unit in Old Russia, the basis of the administrative division of the Russian state.
- 4) *Razryad* - a large military and administrative unit created on the outskirts of the Russian state by combining some *uyezds* for operational management of the territory and to solve military problems (when necessary), a prototype of the future unit (prefecture, or state).

of the *Siberian Order*⁵⁾, who often had a very vague idea of Siberian realities, believed that several *uyezds* would have to be created on a huge and constantly expanding territory, covering not only the Lena basin, but even more remoted territories. Initially, by the decision of the Moscow government, the Lena *Razryad* was created in Eastern Siberia, which included only one *uyezd* – Yakut. Only a few years later, an independent Ilimsk *Uyezd* was established separately, the latter remaining a part of the Lena *Razryad*. Other territories that became part of the Yakut *Uyezd* after 1640, such as the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, the basins of the Kolyma and Indigirka rivers, and the Chukotka Peninsula, were also included as parts of this *uyezd*.

Detachments of Russian military servicemen would seem to have reached “the end of the earth”: two remote peninsulas, Chukotka (where the local tribes made a serious resistance to the Russians), and Kamchatka (to which they had yet to reach), remained as the territories that had not yet been explored and developed. In particular, the major new problem for Russian military servicemen was the war over the possession of *tundra*, that the local *Koryaks* and *Chukchi* had been waging among themselves for several decades; some of them had already switched to a new economic and cultural type: large-herd reindeer husbandry. But besides their movement from the Lena basin to the east and northeast, by the middle of the 17th century there was still one more direction for the Russian *yasak collectors* – further to the south-east, aiming at the Transbaikalia and the Amur regions.

However, let us go back a few decades earlier. After the formation of the Yeniseisk *Uyezd* and the founding of the Yeniseisk *Ostrog*⁶⁾ in 1619, when the territory of the Russian state expanded to the Yenisei River, and detachments of *yasak collectors* began to move up the Angara, Russian military intelligence

5) Order – a central government body that existed in Russia in the 16th – early 18th centuries. The orders were permanent institutions, and their activities were based (although not fully maintained) on the functional principle. The term itself comes from the word “*warming*” (“order” in Russian), meant here as an assignment. Initially, Siberia was governed by an Embassy Order. Then, from 1599, the administration of Siberia passed to the Order of the Kazan Palace, which was in charge of all the eastern territories of the Moscow Kingdom. It was only in 1636 when the Siberian Order emerged from it, and since then ruled Siberia until the formation of the Siberian province.

began to receive information from the local population about new lands lying somewhere further to the east, yet unknown to Russians. All such information was mostly nothing but only rumors transmitted from one tribal group of the aboriginal population to another, but it became a matter of interest among the Tobolsk *voivodes*⁷⁾ and stimulated the advance of detachments of military men further and further to the east.

The first such information was received by the founders of the Yeniseisk *Ostrog*, Petr Albychev, boyar son⁸⁾ from Pelym, and the Tobolsk *Streltsy*⁹⁾ centurion Cherkas Rukin back in 1619. The *Ostyak's*¹⁰⁾ *kniazec*¹¹⁾ Iltik, who

-
- 6) Ostrog - a small wooden fortress with towers (blind and passable), ditches and other defensive fortifications. The walls of the fortress could be in the form of vertically dug sharpened logs but there could also be chopped walls, sometimes double-built with inner space filled with stones.
 - 7) Voivode - a military leader, senior in the army, appointed from among the representatives of the nobility. In the 16th century to the first half of the 18th century, in the Russian state - an official who manages the administrative territory. The city of Tobolsk, built 18km from the city of Isker, the former capital of the Siberian Khanate, inherited the status of the main city of Siberia, and thus mostly representatives of the aristocracy were appointed as Tobolsk *voivodes*.
 - 8) Boyar son - an estate that existed in Russia at the end of the 14th - the beginning of the 18th centuries. In the 16th -17th centuries, *boyar sons* ("children"), along with the nobles, were included in the number of "military servicemen in the homeland" and carried out compulsory service, for which they received estates, were registered in tenths in the counties and constituted the local cavalry. In the 17th century numerous *boyar sons* formed regiments of the so-called "new system", serving as soldiers and dragoons in homeland Russia, and as Cossacks - in Siberia.
 - 9) Streltsy (plural form of "Shooter" ("Sagittarius" in Russian) - Russian military serviceman "on the device" in the 16th - early 18th centuries, who served in the state *Streltsy units* and were armed with a "fire fight", usually being infantrymen, less often cavalrymen. The *Streltsy* formed the first permanent army in Russia. Some foreigners also called them "Musketeers" or "Arquebusiers". The Streltsy centurion was the commander of a unit of 100 people. As senior officers, centurions were usually put in charge of detachments and appointed to minor administrative positions.
 - 10) Ostyak (a.k.a. Yenisei Ostyak, current name "Khanty") - Keto-speaking indigenous population who at the beginning of the 17th century lived on the left Bank of the Middle Yenisei, on the territory between the rivers Yenisei and Angara, on the right Bank of the Yenisei and more to the south from the current Krasnoyarsk. *Ostyaks* were supposed to be the remnants of the ancient population of the South- Western and Central Siberia, who then spoke the so-called "Yenisei languages". The Keto-speaking tribes included the

arrived at the newly built *ostrog*, headed the Kipan *volost*¹²⁾, located on the left bank of the Yenisei River at the mouth of the Angara River (or, as it was called in the 17th century—Tunguska, less often—Verkhnyaya “Upper” Tunguska), reported that somewhere behind the *portage*¹³⁾, to which it usually took about two weeks to climb up the Angara River, there was a large river on which ships could sail. Iltik also gave some brief information about this river. He said that the river (the name of which he did not know) was great, and large ships could sail along it; those ships carried some large bells ringing loudly along the banks of the river, and cannons which often fired, also loudly.

Apparently, this story of *Kniazec* Iltik was nothing more than a rumor about the distant Amur River and Chinese ships sailing along it that had reached the Yenisei *Ostyaks*. Such rumors could reach the *Ostyaks* of the Kipan *volost* in two ways - from the Angara *Tungus*¹⁴⁾ and from the nomads of Southern Siberia. It is known that the Iltik clan group was in kinship with the *Asan* who lived on the Lower Angara and along its left tributaries, and maintained regular relations with them. At the same time, if the *Keto-speaking* population represented the remnants of the ancient population of this territory, who came to the Yenisei basin, probably in the middle of the 1st millennium AD, after they were displaced from the foothills of the Altai to the north by the Turks, then the *Tungus* came to Angara 500 years earlier (very likely, after being

Kets, (a.k.a. *Yenisei Ostyaks*), the *Asan* of the left bank of the Angara, the Krasnoyarsk *Arintsy*, and several other ethnic groups. Now, only the *Ket* or *Yenisei Ostyaks* have remained from all of them, counting no more than about 1,000 people in total.

- 11) *Kniazec* (“little prince”) - this is how the Russians called the chief and other leaders of the aboriginal clan groups, distinguishing them from the bulk of their people.
- 12) *Volost* - from the Old Russian “power, country, district”. Here it means the territorial-administrative unit of the aboriginal population with the most authoritative leader, the chief, by whom certain amounts of furs were also collected.
- 13) *Portage* - an isthmus between two rivers or two other reservoirs, where ships and their cargo were dragged from one to the other along a dry path.
- 14) *Tungus* - numerous tribes who in the 17th century numbered about forty thousand people and occupied the spaces of Eastern Siberia from the Yenisei River to the Sea of Okhotsk, and from the tundra zone to the right bank of the Amur River. Currently, their descendants (*Evenks* and *Evens*) in Siberia number about forty thousand and twenty thousand people, respectively. Also, about forty thousand of *Evenks* live in China.

displaced from western Transbaikalia by the *Hunnu* tribes).

At the beginning of the 17th century, the areas inhabited by the *Asan* were surrounded by the *Tungus*, and the former were in a state of assimilation by the latter. The *Ostyaks* of the Kipan *volost*, which by 1628 ceased to be mentioned in the *yasak books*¹⁵⁾ of the Yeniseisk *Uyezd* due to its merger with the neighboring Kuznetsk *volost*, were still outside this process. But the *Ostyaks* from the left bank of the Middle Yenisei before the appearance of the Yeniseisk *ostrog* were constantly raided by the Lower Angara *Tungus*. For instance, in April 1626 those *Ostyaks* took part in a large campaign of the Yeniseisk military servicemen against the *Tungus kniazec* Tasei. Iltik, as an interpreter, played an important role in this campaign, as he turned out to be the only *Ostyak* mentioned by name in later documents about those events.

From the nomads of Southern Siberia, rumors about a distant river could reach the *Ostyaks* of Iltik through the *Arintsy*, who were also related to them and lived in the area of the future Krasnoyarsk, in the “Tyulkin's Land” (called “*Tyulkina Zemlitsa*” in Russian) surrounded by different Turkic groups. We also have some information that in the years before the founding of the Yeniseisk *ostrog*, there were many cases of attacks on them by *Tungus*, and also *Ostyaks* of Iltik “ran” to the “Tyulkin's Land.” In May 1626, this same Iltik with his men and the neighboring *Ostyaks* of the Kuznetsk *volost* “betrayed” the sovereign and fled to the *Arintsy*, this time from the Russian administration. They also took with them five horses from Russian peasants who had already appeared near Yeniseisk.

Since the ancestral groups of *Tungus* lived throughout Eastern Siberia from the Yenisei River to the Sea of Okhotsk and from Transbaikalia and Amur to the lower reaches of the Lena, the spread of certain information and rumors about the Amur River among the Siberian peoples seems quite natural. Given the incredible mobility of the *Tungus*, their ability to move quickly through the taiga forests for hundreds of kilometers, this information could be carried over long distances in a relatively short period of time – even several months.

But we should not forget about the problem of the accuracy of the translation of the information received by the Russian administration: there

15) Forbidden books - special notebooks to record information concerning the collection of forbidden from the aboriginal population.

were never enough interpreters in the Siberian *ostrogs*, including in the Yeniseisk. Over time, representatives of the aboriginal elite began to speak a little Russian. And some military service people, having direct contact with the *yasak* population when collecting furs, soon also began to understand the languages of local peoples. But in order to have a conversation about the exchange of furs for goods, or to find the way along the taiga or the river to neighboring tribal groups, it was not a major problem: depending on the case, sometimes it was enough to use some gestures for communication, or in extreme cases, one could find a local guide (called “*vozh*”¹⁶⁾ in Russian) – but it was another story to figure out with the help of a limited vocabulary what is happening somewhere in a remote territory or what is the distance to this distant “*Zemlitsa*”.

Probably because of such confusion, which arose due to the accuracy of the translation and the distortion of information transmitted by the *Tungus* from one generic group to another, Russian military service people began to try to look for this “great” river somewhere nearby. It is very likely that this information played a certain role at the initial stage of the advance of the Yeniseisk military service people’s detachments up the Angara River. In any case, back in December 1619, a written request was sent to the Tobolsk’s *boyar son* Maxim Trubchaninov of the Yeniseisk *prikazshik*¹⁷⁾ from the Tobolsk *voivode* Prince Ivan Kurakin with reference to Iltik’s story, which stated that the Yeniseisk administration should focus on the promotion of military service people up the Angara River, and personally *Kniazec* Iltik “and other *yasak* people of the Kipan *Zemlitsa*”. It was necessary to treat them generously, giving them “the sovereign’s salary”¹⁸⁾, in order to attract them for future

16) *Vozh* - a guide who perfectly knew the area and so was able to lead others to the required place.

17) *Prikazshik* - a clerk on low administrative position appointed by *voivode* from among the commanding staff of military serving people in Russian fortified points (*sharplyg, ostrozhek*) to control the collection of forbidden from the aboriginal population or over the performance of various duties by Russian peasants.

18) Sovereign’s salary – an annual salary paid from sovereign (tsar), a broad concept covering various kinds of payments to military serving people and, in this case, remuneration of representatives of the aboriginal elite, for agreeing to pay forbidden, in the form of copper and tin dishes, fabrics, iron products and so on.

campaigns as "*vozhs*" or guides.

As a result, searching for an unknown "great" river, the Yeniseisk military service people were able to climb the Angara to the mouth of the Ilim River, its right tributary, in a few years. The rumors received from the *Ostyaks* about the river, along which ships with bell ringing and cannon firing traveled, were not confirmed, but there was information about the way to another big river – the Lena, although even the mouth of the Ilim River turned out to be much further from the Yenisei than the originally wanted "great" river.

Soon another situation arose that forced the Yeniseisk administration to step up the advance of detachments of military service people up the Angara: the first Yeniseisk *voivode* Yakov Khripunov received "information" from the Lower Angara *Tunguses* about a silver deposit somewhere beyond the Angara River. *Tungus* *kniazecs* who came to the Yeniseisk *ostrog* with *yasak* in 1625 told him that they were mining silver somewhere in the mountains to the east, not far from the "*zemlitsas*" of neighboring *Tungus* tribal groups. *Voivode* took measures to clarify that important information for the Russian state – at that time, silver deposits in Russia were not known. *Voivode* Khripunov later related in Moscow in the *Order* of the Kazan Palace, that he, Yakov, guided by the information of the *tungus kniazecs*, in 1624 had sent three Yeniseisk military service people with an interpreter led by the *Strelec* Pentecostal Terenty Savin to those "*zemlitsas*" and told them to find out about silver in those "*zemlitsas*": with respect to the location of the mines and the quality of the silver.

The *Tunguses* questioned in Yeniseisk said that some *kniazecs* named Okun and Keltia, in whose "*zemlitsa*" there is silver, lived up the Angara River at the silver mountain, but not on the Angara itself, but "on the small river", to which they turn left from the Angara. According to the version of these *Tunguses*, the distance to those *kniazecs*, Okun and Keltia, and to the silver mountain up the Angara River, if ships were dragged with a rope, is five or six weeks, and less with the use of a sail. And in winter, *narty*¹⁹⁾ on this path take the

19) *Narty* – wooden sledges of various types; in Siberia *narty* were usually harnessed to reindeer or group of dogs and could be used for manual transportation of goods. When moving manually on a flat surface – the ice of a river or lake, they could set a sail.

same amount of time as in summer. Through the forest to those *kniazecs* there is no passage because of the steep rocky slopes of the mountains. No one had taken yasak from those *kniazecs* yet, since Yeniseisk military service people go up the Angara in large vessels called "*kochs*"²⁰⁾, and it was possible to go to those *kniazecs* along the small river, but only in small rowing vessels known as *strugs*²¹⁾".

A small detachment sent by *voivode* Y. Khripunov, led by Pentecostal Savin, returned to the Yeniseisk *ostrog* in the autumn of 1625, when Andrei Oshanin was already the *voivode* there. The information they received from the *Tunguses* differed from the initial report: T. Savin said that silver was extracted from the mountain up the Angara River, a *kniazecz* Okun lived near that mountain, and many people lived with him. But the distance from the Yeniseisk *ostrog* to the place of residence of the *Tungus kniazec* Okun and to the mountain from which silver is extracted, took more than a year to traverse by water. That is, the silver deposit was located much further from Yeniseisk than the Lower Angara *Tunguses* said. The informants themselves did not get to the silver deposit and were content with the information received from the *Tungus* there. However, T. Savin not only provided updated data on the distance to the silver deposit, but also brought A. Oshanin a sample of this silver: two small mugs and several small *Tungus* breastplates.

A. Oshanin sent the samples to Moscow in the *Order* of the Kazan Palace to the *boyar*²²⁾ Prince Dmitry Cherkassky. The *Order* questioned Khripunov,

20) Koch - sea vessel adapted by Russian residents of the White Sea coast for polar navigation. The additional lining of the sides in the waterline area allowed it to advance in broken ice. Its body had an egg-shaped shape, which, when frozen, squeezed it out with ice to the surface. And the absence of a keel made it possible to drag the ship across the ice. Koch could have a displacement of up to 200 tons, and had from one to three masts. By decree of Peter I, the construction of vessels of such type was banned in 1715, which undermined polar navigation. In this article, we are talking about a river vessel with an additional side covering, which was important in the conditions of numerous rapids on the Angara River.

21) *Strug* - Russian flat-bottomed sailing-rowing vessel of various sizes. On the North Dvina Reagerness there were *strugs* with a displacement of up to 160 tons. On the contrast, old *Yermak's strugs*, considering the practicability of the rivers along which he crossed the Urals, were small.

who had arrived in Moscow by that time and had confirmed the information he had previously received, adding that the *kniazecs* Okun and Kelya and their people from that mountain gradually melt silver themselves and wear it on bibs and exchange it for goods with Tungus living in other "*zemlitsas*", but to that silver mountain they, *Tunguses* of other generic groups are not allowed to pass. Khripunov gave recommendations in the *Order* on how and by what forces to make a campaign to search for this silver. In his opinion, a fairly impressive detachment of military service people numbering one hundred and fifty with firearms should be sent to the silver mining sites in light vessels, and along with them, without fail, those military service people who had already gone to explore for silver ore, headed by T. Savin. Clarifying information about a possible silver deposit, the *Order* also questioned those who found them. It was made later in Moscow with Yeniseisk military service people who arrived there with furs or with documentation. Their information generally coincided with what Y. Khripunov had said.

On the basis of seemingly "authentic" information about silver somewhere beyond the Angara rapids, a decision was made in Moscow to organize a special expedition to those places. The decision was made at the highest level: Prince D. Cherkassky with *dyaks*²³⁾ Ivan Bolotnikov and Ivan Gryazev made a report to Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich. This report contained not only proposals for organizing and conducting an expedition to the Angara River, but also calculations of the expected success. Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich reacted favorably to the initiative of the leadership of the *Order*, and had Yakov

22) Boyar - in the 17th century meant the highest rank in the hierarchy of the sovereign court of the Moscow Kingdom. There were *boyars* with a princely title (all of them were descendants of Old Russian and Lithuanian princes' families - Rurik and Gedemin), and without a title - these were most often descendants of old families of Moscow landowners. Cherkassky were descendants of North Caucasian Kabarda princes, relatives to Maria, the second wife of Ivan the Terrible.

23) Dyak (or diak) - a key-person of the bureaucratic apparatus of then Russian state. *Dyaks* were sort of clerks who supervised the work of central government bodies; they were assistants to the heads of large orders, or headed minor, secondary orders and local government bodies, maintaining the whole process of office work. Since the 15th century, *dyaks* have been receiving estates for their service. In the hierarchy of the Sovereign Court, they were placed between boyars and nobles.

Khripunov appointed as head of the expedition. On January 18, 1627, a royal decree was prepared on the decision to send an expedition to the upper reaches of the Angara, giving specific instructions on its preparation and conduct.

But the tasks of the expedition were not limited only to the search for a silver deposit. The newly appointed *voivode* Khripunov was required to put an *ostrog* in the new *zemlitsa* and assess its economic capabilities: the suitability of land for farming, the possibility of fishing, and the condition of other lands. If other deposits of silver were discovered in the vicinity of the new *ostrog*, then it was necessary to put small *ostrozheks*²⁴⁾ there as well. It was also necessary to deal with the *yasak* possibilities of the new *zemlitsa*. And, of course, Khripunov should have given a clear description of the way to the area and a proposal on the size of the new garrison. In essence, it was about the construction of an important fortified point, which could be turned into a new administrative center with a network of subordinate small *ostrozheks*, allowing the Russian administration to control an impressive territory and have the potential for its further expansion.

However, as a result of the "silver" expedition of the *voivode* Khripunov in the autumn of 1629, it turned out that the silver that fell to the *Tungus* of the Angara region was mined somewhere far to the east. By this time, his "regiment", as the documentation called a detachment of one hundred and fifty military service people formed for this purpose, assembled from different garrisons of Western Siberia, could only reach the *Brats Rapids*²⁵⁾ and, having plundered the local *Tungus* and *Buryat*²⁶⁾ population, stopped for the winter at the mouth of the Ilim River. After the death of *voivode* Khripunov in February 1630, the continuation of the expedition was not possible and its participants returned to Yeniseisk in May 1630. Apparently, the information received by the Yeniseisk military service people about the silver deposit was

24) *Ostrozhek* - little *ostrog*.

25) Brothers Rapids - Russians called the *Buryats* as "Brats" (Fraternal people, "Brothers") in the 17th century. The name *Brats Rapids* has been preserved since that time.

26) *Buryats* are Mongolian-speaking people living around Lake Baikal and in some areas of Mongolia and China. In the middle of the 17th century there were about 25 000 of *Buryats*. Currently, about 500 000 *Buryats* live in Russia, about 50 000 in Mongolia, and from 70 to 170 thousand in China.

rumors transmitted by the *Tungus* through the taiga about the silver mines of Transbaikalia, where the Nerchinsk factories were later built.

At the time when the detachment of *voivode* Khripunov was still in Yeniseisk, some not entirely clear information about the events that took place somewhere in the east, beyond the Mongolian state formations, reached the Russian administration.

In March 1629, Krasnoyarsk military service people who went to the Yenisei *Kyrgyz*²⁷⁾ brought disturbing rumors. The *kniazec* of the Yenisei *Kyrgyz* Ishay, who visited the Western Mongolian Altyn Khan in winter, saw messengers of a distant unknown king whom it was possible to reach the place of Altyn Khan in twenty days. Ishay was able to find out that this tsar came from somewhere "because of the Chinese Kingdom" and was waging war with the Chinese King, seizing cities and calling himself king to all kings. And they called him Duchyun Khan. This unknown king had already conquered vast territories in the east: he conquered the Labin kingdom and subjugated the yellow Mongols. Krasnoyarsk *voivode* Andrey Dubensky was puzzled by the fact that this unknown tsar had information about the Russian tsar and had a strong and victorious army. His army was armed not only with bows and spears, traditional for nomads, but also had firearms. In addition, according to the information received, his army had various skills for capturing cities – those cities that this Duchyun Khan could not take by storm, he drowned with water. In the captured kingdoms, he pursued the same policy that the Mongols had carried out five centuries earlier: he destroyed the nobility, left "black" people to continue working, and took military service people into his service, forming armed detachments from them.

27) Yenisei *Kyrgyz* are Turkic-speaking population of the steppes of the present Krasnoyarsk Krai (Territory). In the 17th century, small ethnic groups of their neighbors - the *Turkic*, *Selkup* and *Ket* population of the steppe and forest-steppe - subjugated *Yenisei Kyrgyz*, making them in a subordinate (vassal) position under the rule of the Western Mongolian Altyn Khan and later under the rule of *Dzungars*. In 1703, they were taken away by the *Dzungars* to the area of Lake Issyk-Kul. Later, some of them returned to their former place of inhabitation. Currently, their descendants are one of the constituent parts of the *Khakas*.

Krasnoyarsk *Cossacks*²⁸⁾ received information from the Yenisei *Kyrgyz* related to the actions of the South Mongolian Ligdan Khan against the Manchus. But there is another opinion in the scientific literature: The Yenisei *Kyrgyz* brought to the military service people information about the invasion of Ligdan Khan (who in Russian documentary sources is also found under the name Duchyun-kan, Dechen-kan, Chakhar Dyuchin Khan, Dyuchin-tsar, Dyuchin Khan, Chakhar-kan) into the Ming Empire in 1628.

Krasnoyarsk *voivode* Andrey Dubensky hastened to report this news to Tobolsk. But the reaction of the authorities for some reason was slow - only on November 30, 1631, an embassy of seven people headed by the *boyar son* Kazy Karyakin was sent to Altyn Khan from Tomsk by the sovereign's decree. The purpose of the embassy was to collect "authentic" information about this khan. However, Altyn Khan, having provided Karyakin with information about this distant unknown khan for Russians, did not let Karyakin go any further, referring to the fact that he was in hostile relations with Chakhar Khan and feared for the lives of Russian ambassadors in his land.

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1629, the new Krasnoyarsk *voivode* Arkhip Akinfov received similar information from the *yasak collectors* who returned from the *Motor*²⁹⁾ "*zemlitsa*": somewhere far to the east there is an unknown tsar who is fighting the Mongolian states and is going to fight the Chinese kingdom. The *voivode* transmitted the received information to Tobolsk. Already on March 11, 1630, a royal letter was sent from Moscow to Tomsk demanding him to find out from other Siberian peoples about this "unknown tsar": how

28) A "Cossack" is a free, independent person, an adventurer, a vagabond (originally from the Turkic languages). By the end of the 16th century in the lower reaches of the rivers of Eastern Europe, a certain type of republics of military "brotherhood" has developed; the people there lived by robbing neighboring territories and trading ships that passed along the rivers. The Russian government sought to use those "brotherhoods", or republics, to defend its southern borders from Tatar and Turkish invaders, and sometimes even periodically recruited *Cossacks* as an armed force. As a result, some of the *Cossacks* who retained their independence from the state, remained being free, and those who entered the service, became military servicemen and received the sovereign's salary (monetary, grain and salt).

29) The *Motors* were one of the *Selkup* ethnic groups that lived in the 17th century in the upper reaches of the Yenisei River. Subsequently, they were assimilated by the *Turkic* tribes and became part of the *Khakas*.

far is he from Russian cities, what kind of army he has in number and whether he owns firearms. The Yeniseisk *voivode* Prince Semyon Shakhovskiy had to organize the collection of this information: the Yeniseisk *Uyezd* was part of the newly formed Tomsk *Razryad*, and Shakhovskiy was subordinate to the Tomsk *voivode* Prince Peter Pronsky, who instructed the Yeniseisk *voivode* to check the information received.

At the end of 1630, *voivode* Shakhovskiy wrote to the Tomsk about the execution of an assignment to verify this information. In the Yeniseisk *syezhaia izba*³⁰⁾, they were questioned by military service people from the Khripunov detachment who had visited the Buryat land, Krasnoyarsk *Cossacks* who came to the Yeniseisk *ostrog* on various business, and Yeniseisk *Streltsy* who had been under the Bratsk Rapids and on the Lena River. But nothing could be found out about this tsar. As the *voivode* Shakhovskiy wrote in Tomsk, all the people questioned in the *Yasak volosts* had never heard of that unknown tsar anywhere.

It is very likely that in Moscow, having compared both alarming news received from Krasnoyarsk in 1629 and having received information from the Yeniseisk *ostrog* that the inhabitants of the taiga regions had no information about the "unknown tsar", they came to the conclusion that in both cases it was a case of Mongol civil strife. Hence, apparently, such a slowness with the dispatch of the embassy to Altyn Khan, which was carried out only at the end of 1631, although the desire to find out "authentic" information about the strong ruler who had alarmed the Russian Siberian administration, was evident.

All the distorted information received by the Yeniseisk *ostrog* about some distant lands and rivers aroused interest in them among military service people who were professionally engaged in finding ways to the "new *zemplitsa*". Therefore, it is quite natural to consider the campaign of the Yeniseisk *ataman*³¹⁾ Maxim Perfiryev along the Vitim River, the right tributary of the Lena, made by his small detachment in 1639-1640, as a result of which information was collected about the Shilka River, a tributary of the Amur

30) Syezhaya izba - *voivode's* office.

31) *Ataman* - the elected leader of the free *Cossacks*. Those who were accepted for public service in the 16th -17th centuries sometime became appointed as a commander of the unit.

River, and the peoples who lived there.

Having risen in the summer of 1639 along the Vitim River to the mouth of the Mui River, its left tributary, M. Perfiriev captured the *Sheleginsky Tungus*³²⁾ Komboyk in the *amanat*³³⁾. From him and his relatives, and in this ancestral group of *Tunguses*, according to the *Cossacks*, there were at least 70 people, the Yeniseisk military service people received quite detailed information about the way to the previously unknown "new *zemlitsas*". M. Perfiriev, according to the stories of the *Tunguses*, found out that the *Daurian*³⁴⁾ *kniazec* Batoga lived up the Vitim River; it was possible to get there in about one month from the place where the Yeniseisk detachment planned to stay through winter. The military service people wintered at the mouth of the Kuanda River, which flows into the Vitim from the opposite side of the Mui River about 20-25 km downstream from its mouth.

According to the *Tunguses*, *kniazec* Batoga lived with his people at the confluence of the Karga River with the Vitim, as the Konda River was probably called at that time, flowing into the Vitim relatively close to the Yeravninsky lakes. Moreover, the Batogi *Daurians* led a sedentary lifestyle: they lived in chopped *yurts*³⁵⁾ and were engaged in cattle breeding. Separately, the captured *Tunguses* noted that the people of Batoga had a lot of sable and had silver. The latter circumstance should have aroused special interest among the military service people. As mentioned above, in Russia of the 17th century there were no developments of silver ores and imported silver was used for minting coins, so the government insistently demanded that the Siberian *voivodes* search

32) The *Shelegin Tungus* – a local tribal group of *Tungus* who lived along the river of Tunguska.

33) *Amanat* - a hostage taken from a tribal group by military serving people and brought up to stay at some Russian fortified point. The capture of *amanat*, who was usually the son, younger brother or nephew of the *kniazec*, guaranteed the payment of forbidden by the ancestral group. In this case, the relatives themselves came to such a point with forbidden.

34) The *Daurians* were Mongol-speaking people who lived until the middle of the 17th century in the Amur River territory, from the Shilka River to the Zeya River (both are Amur' s left tributaries). They had a highly developed agriculture. After the beginning of the confrontation with the Russian state, the *Manchus* were resettled on the Sungari River. Currently, more than 130 thousand *Daurians* live in China.

35) *Yurt* is a portable frame dwelling with felt covering, popular among *Turkic* and *Mongolian* nomads.

for this precious metal. The *Tunguses* also told about the "*zemlitsas*" adjacent to Batoga: from its villages up the Vitim on both sides of the river to the Yeravninsky lakes³⁶), numerous equestrian *Daurians* lived, differing, according to the observation of the *Tunguses*, in their language from the *Tunguses* and *Yakuts*, that is, speaking in Mongolian dialects.

Thus, M. Perfiriev received fairly accurate information about the way from the Vitim basin to the tributaries of the Shilka River: by portage from the residence of *kniazec* Batoga to the Shilka for three and a half days, that is, portage on the Ingoda River³⁷), which forms a Shilka after merging with the Onon River. The Yeniseisk *ataman* gives a fairly accurate description of the Amur itself – from the residence of the *Daurian kniazec* Lavkai at the mouth of the Urka River, which flows into the Amur River just below the confluence of the Shilka and Argun to its mouth – with an indication of the length of the journey and a description of the peoples living there. For an experienced explorer, it was quite obvious that with his relatively small detachment, without special training, it was not realistic to even try to go to a previously unknown river, no matter how tempting the prospects might look.

Having stopped for the winter on Vitim River four days away (as the *Tunguses* defined it) from the mouth of the Tsipah River, *ataman* Perfiriev decided after wintering to make a trip to the nearby "new *zemlitsa*", about which he then receives information from the above-mentioned *amanat* Komboyka. The captive *Tungus* told the Yeniseians that upstream, "beyond the stone³⁸" (apparently referring to the South-Muisk Ridge, between the rocks of which the Vitim flows, about 50 km from the mouth of the Kuanda River), the Tsypir River flows into the Vitim (currently called the Tsipa), which flows out of Lake Baunt, where the *Tunguses* live numbering more than two hundred people. After wintering, the Yeniseisk military service people attempted

36) The Yeravninsky Lakes make a group of lakes on the watershed of the Uda and Vitim rivers in Buryatia. There are 4 large and up to 40-50 medium and small reservoirs in the southwestern part of the Yeravninsky basin, most of which are drainless, some have a common flow to Vitim through the Holoï River..

37) In this case, dragging meant not only dragging ships along a dry path, but also moving along shallow rivers, where additional physical effort was often required.

38) "Beyond the Stone" – literally meant "beyond the mountains" .

to walk to the lake named by *amanat*. However, the path turned out to be more difficult than expected. If the *Tunguses* moved along the rivers on light *kayaks*³⁹⁾, then the vessels of the Russian military service people were much more massive and that did not allow them to pass rough rapids. It must be assumed that for this reason M. Perfiriev and his detachment did not get to the mouth of the Tsypir River in four days, but eight, having overcome about 160 - 180 km. Along the Tsypir itself, they climbed for another nine days to the big rapids, where the river flows through a mountain range (probably the Babanta Mountains)⁴⁰⁾. Since here, too, the future prospects of the campaign turned out to be quite vague and food supplies were running out, it was decided to abandon this venture and return to the Yeniseisk *ostrog*.

On July 27, 1640, when the first Yakutsk *voivodes, stolniks*⁴¹⁾ Pyotr Golovin and Matvey Glebov, with their large detachment of more than three hundred people, were moving up the Angara, they met Maxim Perfiriev, who was returning to the Yeniseisk *ostrog* with a small group of *Cossacks* from a hike to the "new *zemlitsas*". To them, as to the *razryad voivodes*, the *ataman* reported all the information about the results of his campaign. Perfiriev told the Yakutsk *voivodes* about how he, with a small number of military and *promyshlennyye lyudi*⁴²⁾, walked up the Vitim River, the right tributary of the Lena, and collected information about the way to the Shilka River and the silver ore mined there. He also recommended that *voivodes* Golovin and Glebov send a special expedition along the explored route to the Shilka River in the spring

39) The *Tungus* kayak is a small narrow light rowing boat with an open hull made of birch bark and driven by a two-bladed paddle.

40) Babanta Mountains, another name is the Tshipkan Mountains, stretching from southwest to northeast to the Ikat ridge. The South-Muisk Ridge is located in the north-west of the district. Between the Tshipkan Mountains and the South-Muisk Ridge is located the Baunt Basin, through which the Tshipah River flows, there is also the Baunt Lake, from which the Tshipah River flows.

41) Stolnik - a courtier, below the boyar as a rank, usually appointed from the representatives of noble families, becoming the highest position in the court administration. Originally it meant a courtier who served at the princely or royal table (until the 17th century).

42) Promyshlennyye lyudi - people engaged in the trade-hunting for fur-bearing animals or the organization of such a business, sometimes on a large scale, attracting dozens of people for this at their own expense.

of next year. Considering the impassability of the rivers explored by him, M. Perfiriev proposed using special small vessels, loading them with grain reserves as much as possible. According to the Yeniseisk *ataman*, a detachment of 50-60 people would be enough to bring the areas of residence of the *kniazeces* Botoga and Lavkaya named by him "under the sovereign's hand".

The information provided by the Yeniseisk *ataman* interested the Yakutsk *voivodes* so much that, while they were still on their way to the Yakutsk *ostrog*, to their place of service, they began to consider the possibility of sending a fairly large detachment from among the military service people of the Yakutsk garrison along the route explored by Perfiriev. At the same time, despite the rather high authority of M. Perfiriev, P. Golovin and M. Glebov considered it expedient to double-check the information of the explorer. Having stopped at the Lena Portage for wintering and preparing their detachment for further advancement along the Lena in the next navigation, in winter the *voivodes* returned to studying the question of the possibility and expediency of organizing a hike to the Shilka River.

On January 18, 1641, a small detachment of ten *Cossacks* headed by Ivan Osipov was sent from the Lena Portage. In four weeks, the military service people walked the *sledge way*⁴³⁾ down the Lena to the mouth of the Chaya River, which flows into the Lena above Vitim, and climbed up it. The initial task of this small detachment was to collect *yasak* from the local *Tungus*. From them *Cossacks* received information about the Angara River (the Upper Angara, which flows into the lake Baikal in its eastern extremity) and the tribal groups of aborigines living there. They also received confirmation of M. Perfiriev's words. As the *Tunguses* they met told them, in the upper reaches of the Vitim, beyond the portage, on the Shilka River, *Kniazec* Lavkai lived with a large family. The participants of this campaign also found out that the Chaya River is very dry and not navigable, which does not allow summer progress along it.

The campaign of the Yeniseisk *ataman* Maxim Perfiriev on the Vitim River was a fairly ordinary event in the Siberian history of the 17th century. An

43) Sledge way - a winter way of transportation, when people on skis transported their supplies put on sleds, on the ice of frozen rivers. A sail could be used to move on flat ice or dense snow.

average-sized detachment of military service people, having completed their main task - that is, having collected *yasak* from the Lena region *tunguses* and still having a sufficient supply of food—decided to go to a relatively nearby "new *zemlitsa*", hoping for a successful collection of furs from previously unknown *Tunguses*. However, as it turned out, the way to a completely new, previously unknown region opened up through the Vitim River, which differed in its capabilities from other territories of Siberia. Perfiriev was fully aware of the importance of the information he received, although, as it turned out, it was not quite accurate, but sufficient for the subsequent actions of the Yakutsk administration aimed at joining the Amur region to the Russian state.

The information received by the Yeniseisk people, and then the additional information that confirmed it, showed the administration of the Yakutsk *ostrog* the right direction to search for extensive "new *zemlitsas*". After confirming the information about the route to the Shilka River, the Yakutsk *voivodes* decided to send a detachment of 50 military service people to that area along the Vitim River. The second *Pismenny golova*⁴⁴⁾ of Enaley Bakhteyarov was put at the head of the detachment.

For the success of the campaign, four interpreters were sent together with the military service people - two Yakuts and two Tunguses and *amanat* Bilchaga with them. For *Kniazec* Bilchaga's interest, he was given a "sovereign's salary" in the form of clothes. Not hoping for easy submission of the numerous inhabitants of the Shilka River, the *voivodes* issued a copper cannon with a pound and a quarter core (about 0.5 kg), gunpowder for a cannon of 1.5 *puds* and lead for 40 charges - and also 1.5 *puds*⁴⁵⁾. The same amount of lead and gunpowder was issued for hand firearms. In addition, each of the participants of the campaign was personally given half a pound of lead and gunpowder and half of the annual bread salary "for the Vitim service for passage".

44) *Pismenny Golova* ("the literary head" or "the writing head" in Russian) - is one of the officials who formed the regional administration of the Moscow State and subordinate to the city (*uyezd*) *voivode*. They were usually appointed from among the nobles.

45) *Pud* - a unit of mass measurement of the Russian traditional system of measures. It was used in Russia before the transition to the decimal system of measures. *Pud* =16.38 kg.

E. Bakhteyarov had to climb up the Vitim River to the *tunguses* captured by M. Perfiriev's detachment, to once again clarify the path to the Shilka River, and to find out the authenticity of information about silver ore and other minerals, as well as the possibility of establishing arable land in those places. In addition to the fact that the military service people were traditionally supposed to take the "best people" from among the representatives of the local population to the *amanats*, the *voivodes* demanded that if a deposit of silver ore was discovered, they were to put an *ostrog* in that place. At the same time, the participants of E. Bakhteyarov's campaign had to perform an intelligence function: to collect information about different peoples, including the Chinese state, and make some drawings and paintings as additional information.

The E. Bakhteyarov's campaign on Vitim River was also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, this circumstance did not affect the formed opinion of P. Golovin and M. Glebov about the expediency of continuing attempts to move south in search of that "big river" from rumors (Amur), along the banks of which people live in "wooden yurts" and "sow bread". Russians eventually came to the Amur River a few years later and the beginning of a difficult relationship between the Russian state and the Qing Empire ensued.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Bakhrushin S. V. Ocherki po istorii kolonizatsii Sibiri v XVI i XVII vekakh [Essays on the history of the colonization of Siberia in the 16th and 17th centuries]. In: Bakhrushin S.V. *Nauchnye trudy* [The scientific works]. Moscow, 1955, vol. 3, part 1, pp. 72 - 160. (In Russ.)

Brodnikov A. A. *Vitimskiy pokhod Maksima Perfir'yeva 1639 goda i pervyye popytki proniknoveniya russkikh na Amur* [Maxim Perfir'yev's Vitim campaign of 1639 and the first Russian attempts to penetrate the Amur River]. In: Vestnik NGU. Seriya: istoriya, filologiya. T. 10. Vyp. 1. Istoriya. Novosibirsk, 2011, pp. 40 - 44. (In Russ.)

Brodnikov A. A. *Yeniseysk i Yeniseyskiy uyezd (ocherki iz istorii XVII veka)* [Yeniseisk and Yeniseisk uyezd (essays from the history of the 17th century)]. Novosibirsk, 2019, 382 p. (In Russ.)

Dal' V. I. *Tolkovyy slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo yazyka* [Explanatory

Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language]: In 4 Vol. Sankt-Peterburg, 1996. (In Russ.)

Dolgikh B. O. *Rodovoy i plemenny sostav narodov Sibiri v XVII v.* [The family and the tribe structure of the Siberian nationality]. Moscow, 1960, 608 p. (In Russ.)

Miller G. F. *Istoriya Sibiri* [The history of Siberia]. Moscow, 2000. Vol. II. 800 p. (In Russ.)

Miller G. F. *Istoriya Sibiri* [The history of Siberia]. Moscow, 2005. Vol. III. 600 p. (In Russ.)

Vasilevich G. M. *Nekotoryye voprosy problemy etnogeneza tungusov* [Some aspects of the problem of the ethnogenesis of the Tungus]. In: *Proiskhozhdeniye aborigenov Sibiri*. [The origin of the aborigines of Siberia] Tomsk, 1969, pp. 120-130. (In Russ.)

Vasil'yevskiy R. S., Rezun D. Ya. *Letopis' sibirskikh gorodov* [Chronicle of Siberian cities]. Novosibirsk, 1989, 304 p.

Yermolova N. V. *Vozvrashchayas'k tungusskoy probleme: poisk etnicheskikh istokov evenkov i novyye predpolozheniya* [Returning to the Tungus's problem: the search for the ethnic origins of the Evenks and new assumptions] In: *Sibir'. Drevniye etnosy i ikh kul'tury*. [Siberia. Ancient ethnic groups and their cultures]. Saint-Petersburg, 1996, pp. 117 - 145. (In Russ.)