

Het ziet er trouwens wat de jaren vijftig betreft naar uit dat de wind uit een bepaalde hoek, die al flink is afgezwakt, binnenkort helemaal gaat liggen. Het postmoderne heden speurt naarstig naar ankerplaatsen voor de dolende ziel. De grote kwesties van de eerste decennia na 1945 lenen zich goed om als referentiepunt te dienen. Als dat iets zegt: op rommelmarkten gaat de prijs van artikelen uit de jaren vijftig nog steeds omhoog, en dat terwijl de kentering al twintig jaar geleden gekomen is. Wie geld te beleggen heeft, doet er verstandig aan te investeren in stoelen van chromen buizen die we ooit modern vonden, toen monsterlijk, en nu kennelijk (weer) mooi; in bijzet-tafeltjes met een blad van genbbeld en getint glas en pootjes van rotan; verder in ingewikkeld kronkelende lampenconstructies die ons met 'lichtspreiding' vertrouwd moesten maken, in radio's zonder transistors, in grammofoonplaten van Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry en Buddy Holly, in boekjes van Kapitein Rob, posters van Doris Day en James Dean, in lila en roze serviezen die zich met Kwattapunten bijeen lieten sparen, kortom in alle denkbare souvenirs uit een tijd waarin het geluk nog op straat lag. Vergeet clickfondsen, de optiebeurs en de termijnmarkt, laat de yen en de dollar links liggen en speculeer in uw jonge jaren. Want ook al zijn nog niet alle historici overtuigd, *die* hebben de toekomst.

The Dutch Bulk Carrying Traffic to Elbing in the Seventeenth Century (1585-1700): the Narrowing of the 'Mother Trade'

A Review Article on *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing 1585-1700*, ed. by J. Th. Lindblad with the assistance of F. C. Dufour-Briët (*Rijks- Geschiedkundige Publicatiën*, Grote Serie 225; The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1995, xxix + 499 pp., ISBN 90 5216 0619)

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Dutch seaborne commerce with Elbing (Elblag), a Hansa trading port of the second rank, situated near the mouth of the Elbing river, draining not directly into the Baltic but into the Frisches Haff (Zalew Wislany) which in early modern times provided only a narrow passage into the Baltic proper, never remotely rivalled in importance the Dutch traffic with Danzig, Koenigsberg or Riga¹. Nevertheless, as the principal editor of this volume observes 'even though Elbing was a minor and secondary port in the Baltic region, as opposed to Danzig for instance, it may be considered as a useful case study revealing much about the inherent dynamics of the maritime trade between the Dutch Republic and the Baltic during the Golden Age'².

The data gathered together in this compilation are taken from entries relating to Dutch shipping found in the surviving *Libri Portorii Elbingenses*, or *Pfundzollregister* preserved today in the Polish National Archives at Gdansk. It is unfortunate that what remains of these registers for the period 1585-1700 is far from complete. The books survive in fact for only thirty-four out of the 115 years with two especially large gaps extending from 1625 to 1653 and 1655 to 1685³. Very likely the rest were lost in the disastrous fire which swept the city hall and destroyed a considerable part of Elbing's archives in 1777. But, even though it is only a minority of the registers which remain, and while there is very little that can be conclusively established from what is left of a general nature about Dutch trade with Elbing in the seventeenth century, the material is still of considerable value especially given the general paucity of statistical data for most strands of Dutch commerce with the Baltic during the Golden Age. In particular, we need to consider carefully what light this material throws on the various unresolved questions historians have been grappling with concerning the general structure and development of the Dutch Baltic trade during the seventeenth century.

The material has been expertly assembled, and lucidly presented, by J. Th. Lindblad with the assistance of F. C. Dufour-Briët. In his analysis of the material, Lindblad observes that the 'Dutch share in Elbing's trade increased significantly in the course of the seventeenth century' but that this was due not to growth in the Dutch traffic, as

1 For the period before 1570, see the comments on Elbing in M. van Tielhof, *De Hollandse graanhandel 1470-1570. Koren op de Amsterdamse molen* (The Hague, 1995) 91, 95.

2 *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*, 402.

3 *Ibidem*, xi, xxii-xxiii, xxvi.

such, but rather to a tendency on the part of the English, who were dominant at Elbing in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, to move their activity elsewhere, particularly Danzig, with the consequence that Elbing tended to lose stature as a Baltic port 4.

The annual average of Dutch ships visiting Elbing was highest towards the end of the sixteenth century, a peak of over one hundred vessels per year being reached in the years 1596-1597 which indeed may well have been the absolute peak for Dutch vessels entering the harbour for the whole of the early modern period. Later the annual average amounted to 46, on the basis of the surviving registers for the 1650s, and 52 for the period 1685-1700. Although, unfortunately, the registers contain no data indicating the size of the ships visiting Elbing, the editors feel that it is safe to assume that the tendency was for ships to increase in size during the course of the century and to conclude that the pattern of Dutch shipping movements at Elbing was fairly stable which 'testifies to a fundamental continuity in the long run that predominated above short-run fluctuations caused by, amongst others, extra economic factors such as naval warfare'⁵. Since we lack data for the dimensions of the ships involved very little more can be said with any certainty about the scale and frequency of Dutch shipping at Elbing. However, I think it should at least be mentioned, at this point, that there is room for doubt as to whether the size of Dutch ships visiting Elbing was in fact increasing. For recent studies of the decline of the bulk-carrying traffic at Hoorn and Enkhuizen with the Baltic, after 1621, have demonstrated that where there is a tendency for ships based in Holland — chiefly West Friesland and Amsterdam — to dwindle as a proportion of total Dutch shipping participating in the Baltic traffic and for vessels based in Friesland and the Wadden Islands to grow as a proportion, this involved a trend towards reducing, not increasing, the size of vessels being used⁶. And precisely such a shift as this, away from West Frisian *fluits*, and ships based in Amsterdam, towards vessels whose skippers (and probably whose crews) were Frisian and from the Frisian Islands, is clearly demonstrated, at any rate for the period after 1653, by the Elbing *Pfundzollregister* (see Table I).

But despite this not insignificant question mark, let us, for the sake of discussion, accept that there was a roughly stable or even perhaps growing Dutch shipping capacity entering the port of Elbing across the seventeenth century as a whole. Lindblad deduces from his assumption that 'it is highly unlikely that smaller ships came to be used' that, in consequence, the data assembled from the Elbing registers are difficult to 'reconcile with a general decline in the importance of the Baltic trade': 'judging from the numbers of ships', he argues, 'Dutch maritime trade with Elbing is more likely to have increased than to have declined in absolute terms during the seventeenth century'⁷. Lindblad here links his general conclusion with the argument which he set out in an earlier publication to the effect that 'there is little evidence to support the view that

4 *Ibidem*, 403

5 *Ibidem*.

6 C. Lesger, *Hoorn als stedelijk knooppunt* (Hilversum, 1990) 85-86, 172; on this general point see also J. I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its rise, greatness and fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1995) 316-318.

7 *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*, 405, 412.

Baltic trade suffered a major decline during the seventeenth century', remarking that in the historiography, and not least in my own work, there has been a tendency to overstate the contraction of the Baltic grain trade, and the Dutch Baltic bulk traffic in general, during the course of the second half of the seventeenth century 8.

Yet it is arguable that the statistical data gathered here from the Elbing registers, like parts of the statistical appendix to Lindblad's general discussion on Dutch Baltic trade in the Golden Age, in reality point to very different conclusions than those which he himself draws from the material. In the first place, the Elbing data clearly illustrate, despite what he asserts, a substantial overall decline structurally, competitively, relatively and, above all, absolutely in the Dutch bulk carrying traffic to the Baltic certainly after 1650 but very likely commencing much earlier than this. Lindblad does not indeed deny that in the 'eastbound trade, in the commodities delivered to Elbing, there was a conspicuous shift away from traditional imports such as herring and French salt. The share of Dutch herring in total import value dropped from one-half to one third between the early seventeenth century and the middle of the seventeenth century, whereas French salt had to give way first to an assortment of many different kinds (sundries) and later to wine⁹. Further on, referring to the second half of the century, Lindblad mentions in passing that 'Dutch herring virtually vanished as a major import product for Elbing'¹⁰. Yet these are his only remarks about a structural shift which seems to demand a good deal more attention and rather more emphasis than it receives. In particular, it seems to me necessary to point out that it was not only herring and French salt among traditional Dutch export commodities to the Baltic which collapsed dramatically after 1650 according to the Elbing registers. On the contrary, the registers also show that there was a parallel collapse in shipments of higher quality Iberian salt and also German and French wine (see Table II).

The trend evident in the Elbing registers is more marked but by no means out of line with the wider tendency towards contraction in Dutch bulk exports to the Baltic which emerges from the average annual shipments per decade given in Lindblad's statistical appendix to his general essay on Baltic trade. These show (see Table III) a general shrinkage of Dutch bulk exports to the Baltic as a whole from the 1650s onwards. In the case of herring, it was not only Dutch consignments but total exports, in ships of all nations, which fell off rather dramatically. By contrast, in the case of salt, total shipments remained rather stable across the century while shipments of wine in vessels of all nations tended to expand from the 1670s onwards. From this one must conclude that in salt and wine there was a relative, and competitive, Dutch decline rather than any contraction in the traffic and market as such.

Obviously, Lindblad's central conclusion that 'continuity and consolidation accompanied by some vital changes underscore the dynamic character of Dutch

8 See J. Th. Lindblad, 'Foreign trade of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century' in K. Davids and L. Noordeggraaf, eds., *The Dutch economy in the Golden Age. Nine studies* (Amsterdam, 1993) 231 - 239.

9 *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*, 411.

10 *Ibidem*, 413.

shipping and trade with Elbing' 11 does not draw any support whatsoever from the data we have on the pattern of Dutch bulk exports to Elbing. The evidence shows, on the contrary, that there was a severe and wide-ranging deterioration in the Dutch position. If we ask how, then, Lindblad comes to his central conclusion it is plain that he bases it entirely on the evidence for a dynamic pattern of Dutch grain shipments from Elbing¹². But even here, it seems to me, the argument which he is putting forward runs up against some rather serious problems. It is perfectly true that the figures demonstrate that Dutch annual average grain shipments from Elbing — especially wheat and barley which in the early period were considerably less prominent as import commodities than rye — rose during the course of the seventeenth century quite substantially (see Table IV). But is this evidence sufficient to demonstrate that Dutch commerce with Elbing overall during the Golden Age offers a picture of sturdy dynamism and of 'continuity and consolidation'? My own opinion, despite my admiration for Lindblad's expert research, is that his conclusions do not follow from his evidence. I have already offered elsewhere my criticisms of the tendency in the relevant historiography to place a heavy and almost unquestioning emphasis on the role of grain shipments in the making of the Dutch economic Golden Age¹³. But it seems worth posing the question yet again: can grain imports from the Baltic to the Dutch entrepot really have been of such overriding and decisive importance as Lindblad's argument implies? The value of Dutch grain imports to the Republic, after all, was rather modest compared with the much higher value of Dutch imports from Spain, the Levant and the Caribbean — let alone of imports from the East Indies. Grain, moreover, unlike Baltic timber and tar, or Swedish iron and copper, supplied no Dutch industries or processing activities. It was purely for consumption in the Netherlands and southern Europe and, as we see in the case of Elbing increasingly came to be balanced not by bulk exports from the Republic but, at least to some extent, by ballast — often whole ship-loads of roof-tiles.

Furthermore, it has to be said that the evident rise in Dutch grain shipments from Elbing in the second half of the seventeenth century was somewhat out of line with the overall trend in Dutch grain shipments from the Baltic. With some justification, Lindblad has suggested that there has been a tendency in the older historiography, beginning with Faber, to overstate the extent of the decline in the Dutch Baltic grain trade in the second half of the seventeenth century¹⁴. He has pointed out that in this sector, contrary to the trend in salt and wine, the Dutch improved their competitive position after 1650 with the result that the total contraction in shipments of grain from the Baltic to the west from an annual average of 65,000 lasts, in the first half of

11 *Ibidem*.

12 *Ibidem*, 410-413.

13 J.I. Israel, *Dutch primacy in world trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford, 1989) 27,48-52; J.I. Israel, 'The 'new history' versus 'traditional history' in interpreting Dutch world trade primacy', *BMGN*, CVI (1991) 476-477; Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 316.

14 Lindblad, 'Foreign trade', 236,239; the criticism is directed in particular to J. A. Faber, 'Het probleem van de dalende graanaanvoer uit de Oostzeelanden in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw', *AAG-Bijdragen*, IX (Wageningen, 1963).

the century, to 55,000 lasts, in the second, was appreciably more severe than the overall decline in Dutch shipments of grain from the Baltic. But even if we accept Lindblad's own figures, the Dutch share fell by around 10%, from approximately 50,000 to 45,000 lasts¹⁵, and given that this was the only sector of the Baltic bulk carrying traffic where the Dutch did improve their competitive position a fall of 10% is far from being a negligible matter.

But the general trend in Baltic grain shipments after 1650 is by no means the only difficulty with the proposition that the Elbing data illustrate the continuity, consolidation and dynamism of the Dutch Baltic bulk traffic. A still more serious objection is that if we look at other bulk imports from Elbing to the United Provinces we see that in the case of several key commodities there was a collapse not much less dramatic than the severe contraction in bulk exports from the Republic to Elbing (see Table IV). Thus, consignments of pitch and tar from Elbing in Dutch vessels, a substantial traffic in the early seventeenth century, had fallen to negligible levels by the 1680s and 1690s¹⁶; and a rather similar sharp contraction is evident also in Dutch carrying of flax, timber and wool from Elbing¹⁷. In other words, far from presenting a picture of 'continuity and consolidation' what the Elbing *Pfundzollregister* really show us is that the decline of the Dutch Baltic bulk traffic in the second half of the seventeenth century, and its necessarily dwindling role in supporting the edifice of Dutch world trade primacy, was not just a matter of overall contraction and shrinking volumes, but also of a drastic narrowing in the range and composition of the Dutch Baltic bulk trade. Many bulky commodities which figured prominently in the Dutch traffic to and from Elbing in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century had all but ceased to play any part in Dutch trade with Elbing by the late seventeenth century.

But if the Elbing registers arguably point to the decline, and even more the narrowing, of Dutch bulk carrying in the second half of the seventeenth century, there is also another side to the picture — the steady rise, strengthening and diversification of the Dutch 'rich trades'. In the sixteenth century before 1585, Dutch trade to the Baltic, in contrast to that of Antwerp, was almost entirely a matter of low-value, high-volume commodities with manufactures, luxury goods, and colonial products playing only a minimal part. By 1586-1587 small quantities of pepper, almonds, figs, sugar and raisins, goods then chiefly obtained in Spain and Portugal, already figured in Dutch exports to Elbing but, as yet, the quantities were modest and there were hardly any

15 Lindblad, 'Foreign trade', 236

16 *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*, 401 (Table 8).

17 See again Table IV; Michael North has drawn attention to the importance of Elbing as a source for industrial raw materials, especially flax and hemp, for the Dutch market in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, see M. North, 'A small Baltic port in the early modern period: the port of Elbing in the sixteenth and seventeenth century', *The Journal of European Economic History*, XIII (1984) 124-127; and M. North 'The export trade of Royal Prussia and Ducal Prussia 1550-1650' in W. G. Heeres, L. M. J. B. Hesp, L. Noordegraaf and R. C. W. van der Voort, eds., *From Dunkirk to Danzig - Shipping and trade in the North Sea and the Baltic, 1350-1850. Essays in honour of J. A. Faber* (Hilversum, 1988) 388-389; the fact that Königsberg, as North explains, outstripped Elbing, from the second decade of the seventeenth century, as an exporter of flax and hemp to Holland, did not, as his figures show, prevent Elbing remaining a major source down to the middle of the century.

manufactures¹⁸. During the Twelve Years' truce period (1609-1621), it is striking that quite substantial quantities of Spanish wine and a variety of other Spanish and Ibero-American products, including Brazil-wood and indigo, appear in the picture only to recede again in the 1620s¹⁹. But by that time Dutch textiles and processed goods, such as refined sugar, were beginning to play a more substantial role. By the 1650s, the range of manufactures and processed goods being shipped from the Republic to Elbing was much wider than in the 1620s and now included much more refined sugar, numerous different textile products ranging from woollen stockings to Leiden says, and products like tobacco, tobacco-pipes, paper and books which had scarcely figured earlier²⁰.

As Lindblad points out, the quantities of manufactures and processed goods being shipped to Elbing between 1685 and 1700 were not very impressive²¹. But given the dynamic figures for exports of Dutch textiles and colonial products to the Baltic region as a whole after 1650, it seems best to assume that, for whatever reason, Elbing simply failed to develop into an important depot for western manufactures and colonial goods²². Nevertheless, it does strike me as significant that whereas the range of bulk products being traded by the Dutch on any scale at Elbing had narrowed drastically by the late seventeenth century, the range of manufactures and processed goods had, on the contrary, appreciably widened. Certain commodities which had not previously played a part appear with fair frequency in Dutch cargoes arriving in Elbing in the 1680s and 1690s. Thus the *Vrijheid* which arrived at Elbing on 16 April 1685, from Amsterdam, brought, besides consignments of cheese and herring, quantities of tobacco, tobacco-pipes, and earthenware, probably Delftware. The vessel the *Zon* which arrived two days later, again from Amsterdam, unloaded besides herring, tobacco and earthenware, processed whale oil and tiles. The *Vergulden Ster* which arrived from Amsterdam on 4 July delivered brandy, mirrors — a frequent Dutch export to Elbing in the 1680s — Delftware, kitchenware and, again, another frequent item by the late seventeenth century, tobacco-pipes. By the 1680s if not earlier, whale oil, tobacco, tobacco-pipes, Delftware, mirrors, and Mediterranean citrus fruits — especially lemons — had become typical and regular items of import on Dutch ships to Elbing.

Nor can there be much doubt that this reflects a general and extremely important structural change in Dutch Baltic trade during the later seventeenth century: as the range of bulky goods being traded narrowed both the quantity and diversity of

18 *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*, I -23.

19 *Ibidem*, 159-228.

20 *Ibidem*, 239-271.

21 *Ibidem*, 411.

22 Lindblad, 'Foreign trade', 242; this can be explained by the fact that Elbing, as North stresses, was essentially just a regional market for the East Prussian Oberland, a region without any significant towns, see North, 'Small Baltic port', 126-127; North, 'Export trade', 309.

manufactures and colonial goods which the Dutch were exporting to the Baltic steadily expanded. If Dutch textile manufactures to the Baltic after 1650 grew less in number of pieces than in value — as Leiden fine cloth, camlets and silk products replaced the cheap woollens of the past, the range and quantity of many other items expanded spectacularly. Fed especially by the dramatic increase in demand for Dutch refined sugar and tobacco, total exports of colonial products from the United Provinces to the Baltic increased by more than three times between 1650 and 1700. It was here, then, and not in the sphere of the traditional bulk products, that Dutch commerce with the Baltic in the later seventeenth century showed not 'continuity' or 'consolidation' but rather genuine dynamism and capacity to adjust and find new markets.

To sum up, it is evident that, except in the case of grain exports to Amsterdam, Dutch trade with Elbing in the seventeenth century, as reflected in the surviving Elbing *Pfundzollregister*, by no means present a picture of 'continuity and consolidation'. On the contrary, both Dutch bulk exports of salt, herring and wine, to Elbing, and Dutch bulk imports of flax, hemp, pitch, tar, ash, wool and timber, from Elbing, declined drastically during the course of the seventeenth century and to such an extent that it is by no means an exaggeration to speak of a collapse. However, this decline and narrowing of the Dutch bulk-carrying traffic with Elbing was compensated for by an evident growth and diversification in Dutch exports of textiles, sugar, tobacco, tobacco-pipes, Delftware, tiles, brandy, whale-oil and kitchenware. The editor asserts that my argument that the 'dynamic force underlying the hegemony of the Dutch Republic in world trade shifted away from trade in bulk goods, primarily with the Baltic, and moved to the so-called rich trades' has occasioned 'disbelief and apprehension among Dutch economic historians'²³. I can not see why that should be but, in any case, is not precisely such a shift in dynamic force from 'bulk goods' to the 'rich trades' the real story told by the Elbing Pound-toll registers?

23 *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*, 402 ; Lindblad is here referring to Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 408-409.

Table I: Provenance of Masters of Dutch Ships trading with Elbing

	1585-1600	1601-1625	1653-1655	1685-1700
Total for the Republic	307	375	95	261
West Friesland (and N.Holland other than Amsterdam)	178	211	35	50
Amsterdam	32	19	3	21
Frisian Isles	55	61	34	104
Friesland	23	70	20	74

source: *Dutch entries in the Pount-toll registers of Elbing*, 420, 426.

Table II: Volumes of Major Dutch Bulk Exports to Elbing
(annual averages)

Commodity	1585-1600	1601-1625	1653-1655	1685-1700
Herring (lasts)	145	189	87	
French salt (lasts)	352	595	423	32
Iberian salt (lasts)	32.5	4.5	0	3.25
French wine (oxheads)	15	13.5	118	30.5
German wine (ahmen)	14.5	101	25	1.5

source: the figures for herring and French salt are given on page 421 the rest are extrapolated from the annual lists in *Dutch entries*.

Table III: Dutch Exports of Bulk Products to the Baltic (1600-1700)

Decade	Herring (lasts)	Salt (lasts)	Wine (Pipes)
1601/10	7877	17356	4587
1611/20	8059	22953	6440
1621/30	6774	23115	8313
1631/40	6737	19631	5413
1641/49	8465	25695	4625
1654/57	4998	20209	4493
1661/70	2554	14902	3177
1671/80	1906	12031	3625
1681/90	2940	17891	5007
1691/1700	1736	9406	2329

Source: Lindblad, 'Foreign trade of the Dutch Republic', 242

Table IV: Dutch Imports from Elbing (1585-1700)

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>1585-1600</i>	<i>1601-1625</i>	<i>1653-1655</i>	<i>1685-1700</i>
rye (lasts)	1014	1174	727	1234
wheat (lasts)	810	720	1398	1224
barley (lasts)	502	518	1192	1558
wool (stones)	228	865.5	1452	297.5
pitch and tar (lasts)	448	640	34	1
flax (lasts)	61.5	41	68	0.5

source: *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing*

Repliek

naar aanleiding van: 'The Dutch bulk carrying traffic to Elbing in the Seventeenth Century (1585-1700): the narrowing of the Mother Trade door Jonathan Israel

J.THOMAS LINDBLAD

Het is de hoop en wens van elke samensteller van een bronnenpublicatie dat het boek ook daadwerkelijk gebruikt zal worden door andere historici. De hier besproken bronnenpublicatie, *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing 1585-1700*' verscheen in 1995 en heeft nu al de weg gevonden naar tenminste een goed onderlegde gebruiker. Ik durf er niet mijn hand voor in het vuur te steken dat Jonathan Israel al de ruwe gegevens via Internet heeft gedownload. Toch kan zijn recensie-artikel, waarin hij aanstipt hoe zowel de overzichtstabellen als de afzonderlijke waarnemingen gebruikt kunnen worden, dienen als uitgangspunt voor verdere speurtochten door de geïnteresseerde historicus. Dat is een hele geruststelling. Het is ook een goede zaak dat de verstrekte informatie onmiddellijk is ingezet om de historiografische discussie over *bulk* tegenover *rich* in de handel van de Republiek gedurende de zeventiende eeuw nieuw leven in te blazen

De bronnenpublicatie betreffende de Nederlandse handel op Elbing in de zeventiende eeuw heeft een driedelig doel. Ten eerste, de ontsluiting van de oorspronkelijke informatie uit het archief te Gdansk. Ten tweede, het aanreiken van een machine-leesbare versie van het grootste deel van de informatie in de vorm van databestanden gevoegd bij de gedrukte publicatie. Ten derde, een demonstratie van het type analyse dat op deze gegevens kan worden losgelaten, compleet met samenvattende tabellen en voorlopige bevindingen. Israel gaat vooral in op het laatstgenoemde doel.

Hij kan zich niet vinden in de uitkomsten van deze nog altijd voorlopige analyse. Hij meent zelfs dat er andere conclusies uit deze gegevens getrokken hadden moeten worden. In dit verband ziet hij ook een schone kans om commentaar te leveren op een geheel andere publicatie van mijn hand, te weten een artikel dat opgenomen is in de door Davids en Noordegraaf geredigeerde bundel uit 1993 over de economie van de Republiek ten tijde van de Gouden Eeuw 2. Het is nog niet opportuun om in detail in te gaan op alles wat Israel te berde brengt. Deze summierere repliek dient vooral om aan te geven op welke punten verwarring c.q. verschil van mening bestaat.

i De volledige titelbeschrijving luidt: J. Th. Lindblad with the assistance of F. C. Dufour-Briët, ed., *Dutch entries in the Pound-toll registers of Elbing 1585-1700* (Rijks Geschiedkundige publicatiën, Grote Serie 225; The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse geschiedenis, 1995, xxix + 499 pp., ISBN 90 5216 0619).

2 J. Th. Lindblad, 'Foreign Trade of the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century', in: K. Davids, L. Noordegraaf, ed., *The Dutch economy in the Golden Age. Nine studies* (Amsterdam, 1993) 219-249.

Ik denk dat het belangrijk is om een onderscheid te maken tussen drie dingen:

- 1) de tegenstelling tussen de handel van de Republiek op de Oostzee in het algemeen en het specifieke geval van de handel op Elbing;
 - 2) de tegenstelling tussen oostwaartse en westwaartse handelsstromen, dat wil zeggen tussen enerzijds Nederlandse uitvoer naar Elbing en anderzijds Nederlandse invoer uit Elbing;
 - 3) de tegenstelling tussen 'bulk' en 'rich trade' in de handel van de Republiek.
- Ieder van deze tegenstellingen verdient afzonderlijke aandacht.

Elbing kan dienen als een 'case study' die het algemene patroon van de handel op de Oostzee bevestigt. Dat vinden Israel en ik allebei maar om verschillende redenen. Volgens Israel liep de handel op Elbing in de zeventiende eeuw achteruit evenals de handel op de Oostzee in het algemeen. Volgens mij vertoonde de handel op Elbing een zekere continuïteit op de lange termijn evenals het geval was met de handel op de Oostzee in het algemeen. Dit wordt beweerd in het hoofdstuk getiteld 'Analysis of Dutch shipping and trade with Elbing', een gedeelte van de bronnenpublicatie dat per slot van rekening niet meer dan 40 van de in totaal 500 pagina's van het boek beslaat. Kortom, veel in deze discussie draait om de vraag hoe we de algemene ontwikkelingslijn in de handel op de Oostzee zien, in het bijzonder de graanhandel in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw.

Weinigen zullen betwisten dat de aanvoer van graan uit de Oostzee in de zeventiende eeuw terugliep. In mijn zojuist genoemde bijdrage aan de bundel van Davids en Noordegraaf stel ik alleen dat de achteruitgang minder steil was dan vaak is gedacht. Hoe zeer het beeld van een steile en dramatische achteruitgang sinds Faber post heeft gevat in de historiografische traditie moge blijken uit de gezaghebbende synthese van De Vries en Van der Woude die overigens na mijn artikel verscheen. De Vries en Van der Woude maken het meest mogelijke van de achteruitgang door het niveau rond 1700 te vergelijken met de opzienbarende piek in de jaren veertig van de zeventiende eeuw³. Mijn artikel, daarentegen, vergelijkt een gemiddelde berekend over de gehele tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw met het gemiddelde van de eerste helft van de eeuw. De achteruitgang komt dan neer op 10 %⁴. Israel lijkt overtuigd te zijn van de juistheid van deze methode maar is er ook evenzeer van overtuigd dat de achteruitgang echt dramatisch was. Het is dus een kwestie van interpretatie: Is een achteruitgang van 10 % veel? Israel vindt van wel terwijl ik blijf aarzelen hoewel ik me er terdege van bewust ben dat de achteruitgang van de graanhandel een bron was van grote zorg onder tijdgenoten.

Israel en ik zijn allebei onder de indruk van de dynamiek in de Nederlandse handel op Elbing maar onze conclusies lopen uiteen omdat we naar verschillende zaken kijken. Israel laat de uitvoer van graan uit Elbing naar de Republiek voor wat ze is en

3 J. de Vries, A. van der Woude, *Nederland 1500-1815. De eerste ronde van moderne economische groei* (Amsterdam, 1995) 483.

4 Lindblad, 'Foreign Trade', 236, 243.