
ARTICLES

The Role of Atlantic France in the Baltic Trade: Dutch Traders and Polish Grain at Nantes, 1625-1675

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The role of France in the economic development of seventeenth-century Europe is considerably obscured by the lack of reliable information on the French economy. French external trade, for example, is of considerable importance to the political evolution of Europe during the century, yet very little has been added to our knowledge of this trade since the appearance of Jacques Savary's commercial manual.¹ It is precisely the sort of evidence provided by Savary, impressionistic and non-statistical, which has formed the basis for our understanding of France's role in the evolving European economic system.

The Levantine and Atlantic trades are two entirely distinct problems, and it is the latter which concerns us here. France had two roles within the Atlantic commercial area during the early seventeenth century. On the one hand, it formed part of the Western sector of the Dutch trading route which ran from the

¹ J. SAVARY *Le Parfait Négociant* (Geneva, 1752 ed.) first published in 1675. J. DELUMEAU, "Le commerce extérieur français au XVIII^e siècle," *XVIII^e Siècle*, n. 70-71, 1966, pp. 81-105, is a remarkably good overview of this problem given the very limited amount of published work on the subject.

Iberian peninsula to Poland. It was both a provider of goods, especially cheap textiles, for the Spanish market, and a competitor of the Iberian peninsula as a source of the two main commodities shipped from West to East: salt and wine. On the other hand, France and Spain engaged in an extensive local trade, one which was largely carried in Breton ships of 60-100 tonneaux (tx). Brittany was the major French center for this trade, which involved French textiles, fish and grain being exchanged for Spanish wool, oranges and iron.²

In the 1580's, Breton grain was shipped to Spain and Portugal in considerable quantities. André Ruiz, one of the major Spanish merchants of the day, was involved in several such transactions between 1579 and 1583.³ The French Civil Wars, particularly that of 1589-1598, severed this grain trade and allowed the Dutch, who were already trading extensively in the Iberian grain markets, to extend their domination. As we can see in Table I, a considerable portion of the salt shipped through the Danish Sound by the Dutch came from Portugal in the 1580's and 1590's. This salt was the return cargo of the grain ships which provided much of the Iberian peninsula, most especially Lisbon, with the cereals that covered their local deficits.⁴

France was also a partner in this trade, although Portuguese salt shipments exceeded the French on a 4:3 basis between 1580 and 1598. Dutch-Spanish hostilities continued past the Peace of Vervins (1598) and the Dutch consequently shifted their source of salt toward France. The Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) once again brought Portuguese salt up to 40% of the total, but French

² See below for details of this trade.

³ H. LAPEYRE, *Une famille de marchands: Les Ruiz* (Paris, 1955). André Ruiz lived in Nantes. See also H. TOUCHARD, *Le commerce maritime breton à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1967).

⁴ The Dutch also began to bring grain to the inner Mediterranean just before 1600. The key year at Livorno was 1591-92: F. BRAUDEL and R. ROMANO *Navires et marchandises à l'ancre du Port de Livourne (1547-1611)* (Paris, 1951), p. 51.

salt maintained its 1599-1609 level (45%) rather than shifting back to its subordinate position of the 1580-1598 period.

TABLE I
PERCENTAGE OF SALT DECLARED AS COMING THROUGH THE SOUND
ON DUTCH SHIPS FROM FRANCE AND PORTUGAL

	France	Portugal
1580-1589	30.74	39.59
1590-1598	28.13	41.44
1599-1609	45.21	25.96
1610-1618	45.40	40.70
1619	39.60	39.26
1620	56.63	22.36
1621	58.67	13.89
1622	48.14	8.69
1623-1627, 1629	66.61	7.15
1631, 1633, 1635-1640	55.07	13.78
1641-1646	54.66	23.51
1647-1649, 1654-1657	65.00	12.00

There are no listings on the Sound Toll Registers for 1632 and 1634, while the figures for 1628, 1630 and 1650-1653 are so reduced as to be worthless. J. DELUMEAU, "Le commerce extérieur," gives decennial percentages (pp. 83, 85, 88). I have avoided strictly decennial lines in order to take into account obvious changes such as the Twelve Years' Truce. The multi-year figures represent the median of yearly percentages within the period listed.

Source: N.E. BANG (ed.) *Tabeller over Skibsfart... 1497-1660*, v. 2, (Copenhagen, 1922). Henceforth referred to as *STR*.

As we can see from Table I, a dramatic shift occurred within this Dutch trade to France and the Iberian peninsula in 1620-1621: Atlantic France largely supplanted the peninsula as Holland's major western trading partner. In a recent article, Maria Bogucka pointed out that while only 16% of 259 sample Amsterdam freight contracts she examined for the period 1597-1631 mentioned France, 61% of 691 contracts from the period 1632-1651 did so. Only three contracts, however, are from the period 1622-1631, so her calculations are not relevant for the 1620's.⁵

⁵ M. BOGUCKA "Amsterdam and the Baltic in the first half of the Seventeenth Century," *Economic History Review*, s. 2, v. 26, 1973, pp. 433-447: 435, 437-439.

Others sources indicate that the shift occurred in 1620-1621. In addition to showing a dramatic increase in the proportion of French over Portuguese salt, the Sound Toll Registers also show a sharp increase in the number of ships declared as coming to the Sound directly from France and a corresponding decline in the number of those listed as being from the Iberian peninsula. In the period 1610-1619, an average of 135 ships per year came directly from Spain and Portugal (8.4% of the Dutch total), while the comparable figure for France was 171 (9.4%).⁶ In 1620, 91 Dutch ships (4.7%) came directly from the peninsula, while 193 came from France (10%).⁷ During the period 1622-1629, only 8 Dutch ships came directly from the Iberian peninsula to the Baltic, whereas 1887 made the trip from France. If we exclude 1628, a year of unusually low volume, 22% of the Dutch ships which passed the Sound in this period came directly from France.

It is hardly a coincidence that Lisbon, which was listed on the rate-lists of the Amsterdam Currency Exchange in 1619, was not listed again until 1642 — after Portugal had become independent again. The 1641-1646 period, which was one of a truce between Spain and Holland, also saw a higher volume of Portuguese salt and a small flurry in the number of Dutch ships coming directly from the Iberian peninsula through the Sound. Only 188 made the trip between 1630 and 1641 (1632 and 1634 excluded), about 1.9% of the total; 183 came directly from the peninsula to the Sound from 1642 to 1646 (4.3%), and only 258 between 1647 and 1657 (2.2%). The movement of this figure follows very closely the political relations between Holland and the Iberian peninsula, with the 1620-1621 cutoff marking the end of the Twelve Years' Truce and the 1641-1646 hiatus indicating the second Dutch-Spanish truce, Portugal's new independence

⁶ *STR*, v. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.* In 1621 the figures were France — 185 (10.3%) Iberian peninsula — 36.

and the Dutch-Portuguese understanding in Brazil (solidified in 1642).⁸

The main circuit followed by Dutch ships after 1620-1621 was from Gdansk to Amsterdam and then to France. The La Rochelle-Brouage-Seudre-Oléron-Ré area formed the main stop in France, with the local marshes, especially Brouage, providing salt and La Rochelle furnishing wine and eau-de-vie.⁹ La Rochelle also contained a large Dutch factor colony, a group which set up local eau-de-vie manufactures and greatly increased the portion of that product in the exports of the city after 1620 or so.¹⁰

This trade reached its peak in the early 1620's. Record quantities of both wine and salt went through the Sound between 1622 and 1626. "Anden vin" exceeded 10,000 *Piber* in only three years before 1660: 1623 (12,997 ½), 1624 (13,915) and 1626 (13,465 ½).¹¹ As one might expect, most of this wine was French: more than 70% of the total for these three years was declared as "fransk vin".

The largest quantity of salt registered before 1660 came through in 1623, the third largest in 1624: the ratio of French salt to Portuguese in these two years was 7:1. Similarly, the percentage of Dutch ships going directly from France through the Sound peaked in this period: 30.4% of the total in 1623 came from France, 26.6% in 1624, 22.4% in 1625 and 29.3% in 1626. In 1623, 459 Dutch ships went directly through the Sound from France; in 1624, 319 did so. In only one other year before 1660 (1608 - 308 ships) did the number of such ships exceed 300, and it must be pointed out that the average size of ships on this route rose greatly between 1608 and 1622.¹²

⁸ STR., v. 1. The percentage of such ships from 1642-1646 excludes 1645, when only 26 Dutch ships passed the Sound.

⁹ STR., v. 1, list of ports of departure.

¹⁰ E. TROCME and M. DELAFOSSE, *Le commerce rochelais de la fin du XV^e siècle au début du XVII^e* (Paris, 1952), pp. 112-114.

¹¹ STR., v. 2, table 1, heading C, appropriate years.

¹² STR., v. 1. In 1608, there were 562 Dutch ships over 100 lasts, 3538 of 30-100

The percentage of Eastbound ships carrying cargo also rose sharply in the 1620's, making the Baltic trade a much more balanced affair after 1621. While only a third of the Dutch ships moving from West to East between 1580 and 1599 were loaded, this percentage rose to 47% in the decade 1600-1609 and was about 43% from 1610 to 1622. From 1623 to 1629, it was 62%, it dropped slightly to 58% in the 1630's and to 51% in the 1640's. While there can be no question that the trade balance weighed rather heavily in favour of the East, nonetheless the second quarter of the seventeenth century (especially the period 1621-1639) represents a period during which the exchange became significantly more balanced.¹³

The shift to loaded ships in the 1620's is clearly connected to the shift away from Spain and Portugal and toward France as the major Western partner in this trade. French wine and salt provided profitable return cargoes for those who shipped goods out of Gdansk. Professor Bogucka has found that French salt was more profitable than Iberian salt; that, in fact, the latter was frequently shipped at a loss.¹⁴

This booming salt and wine trade does not explain the importance of the Dutch in France during the 1620's, however, as they could have traded their grain in the Iberian peninsula and then gone in ballast to France. The key element in replacing the peninsula as an outlet for the Baltic trade was a grain market or a market for a new type of diversified cargo. The greatest portion of the profits had been in the grain trade rather than the return cargo, with profits on the former usually 100% and sometimes as high as 300%.¹⁵

lasts and 262 under 30 lasts. In 1623, the figures were 1474 over 100 lasts, 1448 of 30-100 and 40 under 30 lasts. In 1624, the figures were 1314-1067-34.

¹³ *STR*, v. 1.

¹⁴ M. BOGUCKA "Merchants' profits in Gdansk foreign trade in the first half of the seventeenth century," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, n. 23, 1971, pp. 73-90: 73, 88.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-77.

In this sense, Atlantic France was a market of mixed possibilities. The major port cities — La Rochelle, Bordeaux and Nantes — were all in grain-deficit areas, but each was near large grain-exporting regions: Saintonge and Poitou for La Rochelle, upper Guyenne for Bordeaux and western Brittany for Nantes and for the other areas as well. While La Rochelle and Bordeaux were frequent importers of grain (usually from Brittany), they also exported in some years (La Rochelle in 1620, for example) and each was close to the massive western Breton granary and had long-standing ties to that area.¹⁶

Even during years of shortage, French grain prices rarely rose as high as those on the Iberian peninsula, particularly Lisbon. Nonetheless, the problems caused by the resumption of hostilities between Spain and the United Provinces after 1621 entailed at least a partial shutdown of the Iberian grain market. The French Civil Wars of the 1620's, with royal and Protestant armies marching up and down the area from Poitou to Guyenne, might have offered the Dutch a useful alternative market. While La Rochelle imported grain for most of the period 1621-1626, it would seem likely that any profits in the grain trade to France must have come largely from military supplying.¹⁷

The Dutch trade with France in the 1620's is difficult to analyze because of the lack of relevant data. None of the key French ports — La Rochelle, Nantes and Bordeaux — have import data available for the 1620's. The Sound Toll Registers show a relatively low level of grain shipments in 1624 and 1625, as well as from 1627 through 1631 (the latter due to Baltic problems), yet 1623 and 1626 were years of normal shipment (roughly 35,000 lasts of rye shipped through the Sound on Dutch ships). The

¹⁶ H. TOUCHARD, *Le commerce maritime breton* on history of this trade, TROCME and DELAFOSSE, *Le commerce rochelais*, 147-148, on aspects of it around 1600.

¹⁷ Trocme and Delafosse, p. 118, are somewhat vague as to the re-export of grain to the Iberian peninsula and say very little about grain importation into La Rochelle in the 1620's.

1620's also saw wheat playing an increasingly important role. This trend started during the massive shipments of the 1618-1621 famine period, when the percentage of wheat in the combined total of wheat and rye shipped by the Dutch reached 13-14%, as opposed to the seven or eight per cent of the previous period.¹⁸

This trend accelerated in the 1630's, with wheat representing about 18% of the total in the period 1631-1636. In the late 1630's and in the 1640's and 1650's, wheat rose to 25% of the total. It is difficult to say with certainty that this change reflects increased importance for France as an outlet for Baltic grain, but French urban consumers had a marked preference for wheat over rye.¹⁹ It is also true that 1642-1643 and 1648-1649, years of known heavy shipments to France (see below), show the highest percentages of wheat shipment.

Nonetheless, the little evidence which survives concerning Dutch imports into France in the 1620's indicates that grain was not a major factor. Michel Morineau notes that the cargoes shipped into Bayonne and St Jean-de-Luz by the Dutch in the 1620's were almost exclusively draperies and spices.²⁰ Trocmé and Delafosse emphasize the importance of similar goods for La Rochelle.²¹ Nantes shows a similar reduced role for grain, but the goods imported into the city include naval stores and a wide variety of other products, draperies and spices being rather low on the list.²²

The Dutch attraction to Nantes is somewhat complex. While

¹⁸ STR, v. 2.

¹⁹ The preference of French urban consumers for wheat bread (*pain gris*) is one which has been extrapolated from impressionistic evidence by a number of historians. I will return to this point later, but I should note here that the main bread of popular consumption at Nantes does indeed appear to have been *pain gris*.

²⁰ M. MOLINEAU "Bayonne et St. Jean-de-Luz, relais du commerce néerlandais vers l'Espagne au début du XVIIe siècle," *94e Congrès des Sociétés Savantes*, v. 2, pp. 309-330.

²¹ TROCMÉ and DELAFOSSE, pp. 132-133.

²² See below, table VI.

the La Rochelle region was an excellent one from which to obtain wine and salt, it was far removed from the main interior French markets, particularly Paris and the Loire cities. During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, until 1627, the great tax privileges of La Rochelle made it a viable alternative for the importation of certain goods, such as draperies and spices. The goods were shipped to La Rochelle and then carted overland to Tours or Limoges. This costly method of shipment was made economically feasible by the high tax costs of the alternative method, which was shipment from Nantes up the Loire (or from Le Havre up the Seine).²³

The siege of La Rochelle in 1627-1628 quite naturally interrupted this trade and one of the most important consequences of the siege was that the city lost its status as a duty-free port. While this did not completely ruin the area, it did make the competition between Bordeaux, Nantes and La Rochelle much more even. Nantes profited the most from the new situation because it was the entry port for goods going up the Loire.²⁴

Nantes offered the Dutch many of the same qualities which they found in La Rochelle: it produced wine, eau-de-vie and salt and was in a grain-deficit area. The grain required to feed the city and county of Nantes, which grew vines rather than cereals, was imported from western Brittany, especially the ports of Vannes, Quimperle, Auray, Hennebont and Redon-La Roche Bernard.²⁵ The cheapness and abundance of this grain made Nantes, despite its constant grain deficit, a poor market for Baltic grain except in years of major crop failure. On the other hand, because of its constant ties to western Brittany, which was a fishing as well as a grain-growing area, Nantes was a

²³ R. GASCON, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVI^e siècle: Lyon et ses marchands* (Paris, 1971), figure 16 and p. 163: "Par ses prolongements (La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Spain), la route Lyon-Limoges devenait l'un des itinéraires du commerce internationale."

²⁴ Paris was also tied to the Loire route via Orléans.

²⁵ ADLA, B 2976, register of 1631; B 6662, register of 1643.

strong market for the naval stores which became an ever-greater part of Dutch cargoes leaving the Baltic in the 1620's and 1630's.²⁶

In return for Breton grain, the county of Nantes exported wine and salt to western Brittany. The two largest customers for this wine were Redon (5284 tx) and Vannes (4536 tx) in 1631.²⁷ St. Brieuc imported 2102 tx, while Hennebont received 2001 tx and Auray 1183 tx: the total for all of Brittany was 21,656 tx. Of this total, 7528 tx were Nantais wine, 6631 tx wine from Anjou and 7494 tx other upstream wine (*vin d'amont*).²⁸

The two other major elements of Nantais trade in the early seventeenth century were the shipment of salt up the Loire to the royal *greniers* of the *gabelle* and the commerce with Spain.²⁹ Nantes had a special arrangement with Bilbao, each city having permanent representatives in the other, and the merchants of the two cities had an organization known as the *Contractation de Nantes*.³⁰ The Spanish colony at Nantes was particularly important, providing the city with such major local families as the Ruiz, the Rocaz and the Espinozas.³¹

The trade between Nantes and Spain, which we can see outlined in Table II, involved a large number of products but was dominated by a few: iron, wool and oranges from Spain; *toiles*, by far the most important, paper and haberdashery from Nantes. Most of this trade was carried on Breton ships or on those of the

²⁶ There are a number of examples of this re-export of naval stores on the 1631 port register (ADLA, B 2976).

²⁷ ADLA, B 2976. Redon 807 tx Nantais, 2129 tx Angevin, 2348 tx Amont; Vannes 1097.5 tx Nantes, 1637 tx Angevin, 1801.5 tx Amont.

²⁸ ADLA, B 2976. Henceforth upstream wine will be referred to as Amont.

²⁹ The *gabelle* was the system of royally-regulated salt commerce. The area around Brittany had a special system called the *sel d'impôt* in which each person in a village had to consume a given amount of salt each year and buy it from the *grenier*. Brittany paid no salt taxes, a situation that led to widespread smuggling, as the price in nearby provinces was 50 times the price in Brittany.

³⁰ P. Jeulin "Aperçus sur la Contractation de Nantes," *Annales de Bretagne*, xl, 1932, pp. 284-331, 457-505.

³¹ The Rocaz and Espinoza families had many major local officers.

TABLE II

THE TRADE OF NANTES WITH SPAIN IN 1631

Nantes to Spain	
Nantais red wine	110½ tx
Nantais wine	154¾ tx
Calfskins (fd. = 6 dozen)	56 fardeaux
Tanned calfskins	227 dozen
Wax	8,850 lbs.
Caskwood	43,300
Paper (fd. = 150 lbs.)	696 fardeaux
<i>Toiles</i>	
to Bilbao	619 fd. (fardeau = 150 lbs.)
to Seville	274 fd. (fardeau = 225 lbs.)
unspecified	1224 fd.
"toiles et merceries"	533 fd.
<i>merceries</i>	41 fd.
Spain to Nantes	
Oranges	1,080,000
Lemons	62,500
Olives	6,000
Olive Oil	70,800 lbs.
Wool (ball = 250 lbs.)	2,173 balls
Iron	666,166 lbs.
Steel	88,416 lbs.
Draperies of Spain	41 <i>pieces</i>
Draperies, Spain/England	20 <i>pieces</i>
Alum	10,000 lbs.
Soap	20,000 lbs.
Rice	4,500 lbs.
Figs	65,500
Anchovies	15 <i>barils</i>
Cassonnade	64,000 lbs.
Pepper	2,500 lbs.

Other products sent from Nantes to Spain included books, draperies from Rouen, lead, tar, barrelhoops, ink and "un panier de vaisselle de fayance".

Products sent from Spain to Nantes included raisins, tobacco and "barbes de balleine".

small Poitevin ports near the Bay of Bourgneuf: 20 of 68 ships going between Nantes and Spain in 1631 were from "Polliguen" (near the mouth of the Loire), 11 from other Breton ports, 10 each from the two Poitevin ports of Olonne and St Gilles-sur-Vye and 13 from the Iberian peninsula. Only one Dutch ship, the *Marie* of Dordrecht, was involved.³²

The chapter headings for the receipts of the *prévôté de Nantes* (import-export duties) neatly summarize the trade of the city: 1) *chapitre de la mer* - duties collected on imports and exports from the sea, except to and from Spain; 2) *chapitre des escaffes venant de la mer* - salt boats going up to Nantes from the marshes of Guérande, Bourgneuf and (to a much lesser extent) Poitou; 3) *chapitre de la montée de sel* - salt boats going upriver from Nantes; 4) *chapitre des vins et blés d'amont* - duties on wine, grain, nuts and honey from upstream; most of the money (at least 95%) came from wine shipments; 5) *chapitre d'Espagne* - imports and exports to and from Spain. Table III shows us the percentage of the receipts from each of these categories in 1603 and 1631.³³

TABLE III

RECEIPTS FROM THE FIVE MAIN CHAPTERS OF THE PRÉVÔTÉ
DE NANTES IN 1603 AND 1631

	1603	%	1631	%
Sea	10,932 l.	28.4	24,833 l.	35.9
Salt to Nantes	3,949	10.4	7,133	10.3
Salt upstream	8,925	23.2	7,824	11.3
Wine downstream	13,271	34.5	25,259	36.5
Spain	1,429	3.7	4,085	5.9
Totals	38,506	100.2	69,134	99.9

Source: ADLA. B 2974 (1603); B 2976 (1631).

³² Two Dutch ships (actually the same one twice) also went to Malaga and Spain but were listed in the *chapitre de la mer*.

³³ These figures are for two isolated years and must be treated with some caution. The low figure for salt upstream in 1631 may be due to the rainy weather of 1630-1631. The low figure for Spain in 1603 is due to the ban on trade with that country in effect

The trade pattern of Nantes was considerably altered by the Protestant wars of the first two decades of the reign of Louis XIII. Rochelais pirates devastated Nantais commerce between 1617 and 1625 (intermittently) and the great siege of 1627-1628 completely disrupted local trade. The most important consequence of the siege was that La Rochelle lost its status as a duty-free port. The newly competitive position of Nantes attracted increased Dutch attention to the city. In 1631, slightly less than 24% of the export duties and import taxes which made up the *chapitre de la mer* were paid by Dutch ships. In addition, the wine which the Dutch bought from Anjou and Amont was about 11% of the total which passed the Ingrande control point. While conditions in the Baltic did not allow the Dutch to trade grain at Nantes, only one ship brought grain, the famine conditions and market behaviour during such conditions must have served as powerful stimulants to the Dutch grain traders' appetites.

The Dutch merchants of Nantes became increasingly visible in the late 1620's. During the plague of 1625-1626, they asked the provost of Nantes for permission to build a special house for afflicted members of their community.³⁴ In 1628, a ship from Medemblik was fined for putting 30 tx of ballast into the Loire; the ship was estimated at 300 tx and its cargo was wine.³⁵

The port register of 1631 and the records of the provost for the 1630's show that the Dutch traded heavily with Nantes and that the local merchants felt the competition of Dutch merchants living in Nantes very strongly.³⁶

The port register of Nantes for 1631 shows that 99 Dutch ships stopped at the city: of these, 24 came in November and 38 in December, the two most important months for the export

during part of 1603; in 1631, relations between France and Spain were also somewhat strained. Lastly, 1631 was a year of great famine.

³⁴ ABBÉ TRAVERS, *Histoire de Nantes* (Nantes, 1841, written about 1750), t. 3, pp. 253-254.

³⁵ ADLA, B 6653.

³⁶ See below for more on this point.

of wine. As we can see in tables IV-VI, the Dutch imported a wide variety of goods into Nantes, but the only exports which they took from the city were wine, eau-de-vie, vinegar and prunes.³⁷

The trade route which ran from Gdansk to Nantes did not preclude a stop in Amsterdam in each direction. Of the 62 Dutch

TABLE IV

HOME PORTS AND DESTINATIONS OF DUTCH SHIPS TRADING
AT NANTES IN 1631

Port	As home port (N of ships)	As destination (N of ships)
Rotterdam	30	30
Amsterdam	17	47
Edam	10	2
Zaandam	9	3
Enkhuizen	6	1
Akersloot	5	2
Flushing	4	1
Medemblik	3	0
Staveren	2	0
Hoor	2	1
Vlaardingen	2	1
Middleburg	1	2
Spain-Malaga	0	3
Hamburg	0	1

Single ships from: Moerdijk, Drenthe, Ossen (Oostzaan or Ostende?), Escagne (?), Elhave (?), Kampen, de Rijp, Dordrecht.

Single ships to: Moerdijk, Dordrecht, Gdansk, Escagne (?).

Rotterdam and Amsterdam seem to have been involved in different sorts of trade with Nantes, as the former sent almost exclusively laden ships (27 out of 30), 24 of which carried only Dutch or heavily Dutch cargo. In sharp contrast to this, seven of the 17 ships from Amsterdam were empty. Of the 44 ships which declared Amsterdam as their next destination, 22 were empty, seven were carrying Baltic cargoes, five mixed Baltic and Dutch goods and nine only Dutch goods.

³⁷ One ship also carried nuts. The ship which went to Malaga and later to Spain (separate trips) carried cargo more suited to that trade: *toiles*, "merrain à pipe" (cask-wood).

TABLE V

EXPORTS FROM NANTES TO HOLLAND IN 1631

Wine	Nantais	Angevin	Amont	Total
Amsterdam	2687	234	1402	4323 tx
Rotterdam	942	221	754	1917
Middleburg	135	0	126	261
Zaandam	147	20	66	233
Total (inc. smaller ports)	4932	485	2705	8122

Wine carried on Dutch ships

Hamburg - 57 tx Nantais Gdansk - 50 tx Angevin

Eau-de-vie

Rotterdam 480 tx 250 tx eau-de-vie and vinegar
Amsterdam 260 tx

Prunes

Amsterdam	180,000	Enkhuizen	16,000
Rotterdam	70,000	Zaandam	16,000
Flushing	25,000	Middleburg	4,000
Edam	17,500	and 4,000 nuts	

Shipped to Spain/Malaga

To Spain

1000 *merrain à pipe* (barrel-making wood)
600 *planches de sap* (planks)
20 *balls* of pepper (300 lbs. = *ball*)

To Malaga (same ship, separate voyage)

9500 *toiles* (unit of measure not mentioned, probably lbs.)
24 *fardeaux* other *toiles* (probably 150 lb. = *fardeau*)
3800 *merrain à pipe*

The Dutch ship which came to Nantes from Spain and was listed on the "chapitre d'Espagne," left Nantes for Morlaix with a cargo of 4 tx of Nantais wine.

TABLE VI

DUTCH IMPORTS INTO NANTES IN 1631

Commodity	Number of ships carrying commodity	Amount
Cheese	30	34,420 lbs.
chaudières à faire eau-de-vie (stills)	26	227
Planks	20	36,640
Pepper	17	84 balls (ca. 300 lbs.)
Herring		
" grisle "	11	26½ last
" droguerie et marque "	6	47 lasts
" blanc "	1	½ last
" herring "	2	42 lasts
Maroquins (fine leather)	10	244 dozen
Tar	8	443 barrels 7 lasts
Pig iron	6	46,000 lbs.
White iron	2	600 lbs. 4 barrels
Sugar	6	6,050 lbs.
Flax	3	4,800 lbs.
Anise	3	1,800 lbs.
Garance	3	2,250 lbs.
" Chaires "	3	34 dozen
Copper	4	2,550 lbs.
Empty barrels	3	180
Coal	3	6 fournitures
" Peaux de vaches de Roussy "	2	357
Wax	2	850 lbs.
Large masts	2	44
Medium masts	1	230
Small masts	1	142
Lead	2	11,200 lbs.
Grains		
Wheat	1	25 tx
Rye and beans	1	90 tx
Beans	1	108 tx
Drogueries	3	2,000 lbs.
Tallow candles	3	12,800 lbs.
Starch	2	2,000 lbs.
Oakum	2	1,000 lbs. 10 balls (prob. 250 or 300 lb. ca.)

Other goods included rice, butter, alum (3000 lbs.), tobacco, peas, Magrancy hams, pewter, soap, *mercurie*, fish oil, glue, strongboxes, horseskins, *cassonnade* and several others not easily identified. The Dutch ships arriving from Spain brought cargo, such as lemons, more usual in that trade. Three ships brought 670 *muids* of salt from Brouage.

ships which brought cargo to Nantes in 1631, 35 carried only goods — manufactures, colonial goods, herring, cheese — which may be said to have been shipped out of Holland. Eleven ships carried cargoes which probably came directly through the Sound — one carried grain, the others naval supplies, usually planks. Fifteen ships carried mixed cargoes and one came to Nantes from the Iberian peninsula.

It would seem likely, judging from the large number of ships which visited Nantes in 1631 as compared to the low number of ships which listed Nantes as a destination in the charters examined by Professor Bogucka and the complete absence of mention of Nantes as a destination by captains at the Sound, that Nantes was only one of several stops on the French Atlantic coastline for many of the ships which docked there.³⁸ This impression is re-inforced by a comparison of the list of 16 Dutch ships which called at Bayonne between September 1629 and July 1630 with our list of 72 separate ships calling at Nantes: three of the ships which appear on the Bayonne list also stopped at Nantes, along with a fourth which may have done so.³⁹

The size of ships docking at Nantes and its advance ports further confirms this hypothesis. While all references in the records of the provost which refer to river violations — essentially illegal ballast dumping — speak of ships between 250 and 300 tx, only one ship left Nantes with more than 200 tx of wine (270 tx on the *St Jacob* of Zaandam in early February). Between January and mid-October, that is, before the start of the export of the new harvest, 29 ships exported wine from Nantes: eight

³⁸ BOGUCKA, "Amsterdam and the Baltic," states that 54% of her charters mention only La Rochelle, while Nantes, Bordeaux and all other French ports are mentioned only on 7%.

³⁹ Morineau, p. 320. The ships are: *Pecheur* of Akersloot, captained by Nicolas Rammen (Claes Renen at Bayonne); *Seneur* (*Semneur*) of Medemblik, Heden Jance (Jansen); *St. Laurent* of Rotterdam, Martin Hehuisse (?) (Martin Zwart?). The *Saumon* of Akersloot (to Bayonne) may be the *Salomon* of Amsterdam, both skippered by Jan Adriance (Adriansen).

carried less than 50 tx, 11 carried between 50 and 100 tx, nine carried 100-150 tx and one 270 tx. After mid-October, 64 ships exported wine, of which 25 carried 50-100 tx, 35 shipped 100-150 tx and four 150-200 tx. The discrepancy between these cargo sizes and the reported sizes of the ships, some of which also carried prunes in addition to wine, leads one to believe that wine from Nantes was not the only cargo carried on the vessels. The most probable extra cargo was salt, but this cannot be proven.

The size of the ships involved in the Nantais trade cannot be determined with precision because of this uncertainty about the cargo. The ships mentioned by the provost in the 1630's were all 250-300 tx, which would put them in the same range as the ships involved in the Baltic trade.⁴⁰ It is distinctly possible that there was a triangular trade between Poland, Holland and France which stopped at Amsterdam in one or both directions. This is particularly true of ships leaving Nantes with a cargo of wine, because the wine had to be adulterated, sugar and alcohol added, before it was shipped to the Baltic. This adulteration, at least in the formative stages of the wine trade, took place in Holland. The preponderance of Dutch products in the cargoes shipped into Nantes in 1631 would also indicate that the ships stopped in Amsterdam on their return from Gdansk, or, and this is likely with the smaller Dutch ships, that they plied the Rotterdam-France route exclusively.

We can see the difference between the small number of ships, such as those of Foupes, Raoul and Joppe, which plied the route between Holland and Nantes, and those which were involved in a broader commerce, by examining the amounts paid as import

⁴⁰ The question of ship sizes on the Baltic route in this period is not entirely clear. The Sound Toll Registers show clearly, however, that there was a dramatic shift away from ships of the 30-100 lasts size towards those of more than 100 lasts. The major unanswered question is how much more than 100 lasts? See the discussion of this problem in J.A. FABER "Het probleem van de dalende graanaanvoer uit de Oostzeelanden in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw," *A.A.G. Bijdragen*, n. 9, pp. 3-28. He estimates the average grain cargo as 80 lasts (p. 7), see also his note 16.

TABLE VII

CARGO LISTS OF THREE SHIPS WHICH STOPPED AT NANTES
THREE TIMES IN 1631

St. Pierre of Rotterdam, capt. - Martin Foupes, arrivals on 24 Jan., 21 Aug., and 2 Dec.

Cheese (3 trips)	4100 lbs. to Rotterdam:	
Pepper (3)	3000 lbs.	45 tx Nantais (2)
Herring (2)	36 lasts	76 tx Amont
Copper (1)	200 lbs.	70 tx Anjou
Cordaiges (1)	300 lbs.	120 tx eau-de-vie
50 old wine barrels		11,000 prunes
7 eau-de-vie stills		
Duty	238 l. 19s 11 d	74 l. 2s 9d
	At Ingrande (est.)	128 l.

Amour of Rotterdam, capt. - François Joppe, arrivals on 9 May, 19 Aug., 2 Dec.

Eau-de-vie stills (2)	19 to Rotterdam:	
Maroquins (2)	29 doz.	69 tx Nantais
Cheese (2)	3000 lbs.	120 tx eau-de-vie
Herring (2)	28 lasts	59 tx Amont
Pepper (2)	1500 lbs.	
Pig iron (2)	20,500 lbs.	
Coal (2)	6 <i>fournitures</i> :	
Sugar (1)	800 lbs.	
Alum (1)	3000 lbs.	
Anise (1)	400 lbs.	
Tallow candles (1)	9000 lbs.	
50 Old wine barrels		
Duty	279 l. 3s 6d	47 l. 17s 3d
	At Ingrande (est.)	52 l.

Ange of Rotterdam, capt. - Andre Raoul, arrivals on 9 May, 21 Aug., 12 Dec. (Dec. arrival lists ship as *Ange* of Amsterdam, captained by Harard Raoul)

Eau-de-vie stills (3)	17 to Rotterdam:	
Maroquins (2)	45 doz.	50 tx Amont (2)
Cheese (2)	3000 lbs.	40 tx Nantais
Pepper (2)	1200 lbs.	120 tx eau-de-vie
Chaires (2)	31 doz.	
Herring (1)	1 last	
Gabillaud (1) (fish)	4 lasts	
Etopes (oakum) (1)	1000 lbs.	
Iron (1)	5000 lbs.	
Garance (1)	250 lbs.	
Sugar (1)	450 lbs.	
Anise (1)	200 lbs.	
Planks (1)	600	
Cauldrons (1)	800	
Duty	171 l. 5s 2d	40 l. 11s 9d
	At Ingrande (est.)	44 l.

and export duties. During the first nine months of the year, when a considerable number of the ships brought cargo to Nantes, import duties paid by Dutch ships were 1516 l., while they paid only 181 ½ l. in export fees. In the final three months of the year, that is, during the peak of the wine-trading season, they paid 970 l. in import duties and 3388 ½ l. in export fees. In addition, the wine transported down the Loire from Anjou and the "Amont" areas would have paid about 2900 l. in additional duties at Ingrande.⁴¹

The records of the provost of Nantes (the chief local law officer and also keeper of the port) for the early 1630's show increased opposition to the Dutch from local merchants and enable us to complete our picture of the nature of Dutch commerce with Nantes in this period. In March-April 1632, the Parlement of Brittany, the city council of Nantes and the provost all issued *arrêts* and declarations supporting the merchants of Nantes in the maintenance of article 11 of their statutes. Article 11 forbade any non-Nantais to sell goods to anyone but a resident of the city within its jurisdiction; residency was defined as 10-12 years continuous residence and tax-paying.⁴² On 4 November 1633, the provost of Nantes issued a decree prohibiting the construction of barrels not of the measure (*jauge*) of Nantes, noting "qui est à l'oppression et ruine des pauvres laboureurs et aultres ausquelles ils fournissent lesd. fustailles pour mettre leurs vins."⁴³

The commodities shipped into Nantes by the Dutch in 1631 (see tables VI and VII) make it clear why the local merchants were upset about protecting their staple privilege and about preventing construction of barrels not of the local measure. The second most common cargo was "chaudières à faire eau-de-vie," which were carried on 26 of the 62 cargo-laden ships. In addi-

⁴¹ The Dutch exported 3315 rx of Amont and Anjou wine, thus 6630 pipes, taxed 9s 8d each (reduction of 20 for 22).

⁴² Travers, III, p. 286.

⁴³ ADLA, B 6655.

tion, three ships brought 180 empty old barrels. The importation of 227 stills, together with sample barrels and a significant amount of copper (for tubing?) indicates that the Dutch were probably establishing eau-de-vie manufactures in the Nantes area, just as they had done at La Rochelle. The barrelmaking activities served a dual purpose: they could ship eau-de-vie in barrels that were the same size as those used in Holland and they could produce wine barrels of the "German" fashion. These latter were used, according to the Nantais, to defraud the northern consumers into believing that Nantais wine was really Rhine wine.⁴⁴

The Dutch remained prominent at Nantes throughout the 1630's. In January 1634, for example, *honorable homme* Jan Loquel, a merchant of the "fosse de Nantes" (the mercantile suburb), protested to the provost that Mathurin de la Pierre, a non-Nantais merchant, had sold 40 *barriques* (10 tx) of eau-de-vie to a certain M. Velle (Velte), "marchand flamant."⁴⁵ This was a direct violation of the above-mentioned article 11 of the local privileges. In October 1636, we find Gervais Hilaiet, bargeman, telling the provost that three ships of Rotterdam, all 250 tx, were dumping ballast into the mouth of the Loire. Hilaiet was bringing 50 tx of wine from the Auvergne to the ships under the auspices of Velle.⁴⁶

The pattern of Dutch activity at Nantes during this period mirrors that which took place at La Rochelle somewhat earlier. The Dutch began by buying local wine and shipping it directly to Holland. In the case of Nantais wine, it would be converted there into eau-de-vie or to "vin frêlaté," that is, wine to which sugar and alcohol have been added. Angevin wine was also probably used for "vin frêlaté," while the higher quality wines

⁴⁴ ADLA, C 652, Nantais court brief of 1656; *Le commerce honorable* (Nantes, 1646), author listed as "Jan Eon," was possibly abbé Mathias de St. Jean. "Eon" was a propagandist for the Nantais merchants.

⁴⁵ ADLA, B 6655, 31 March 1634.

⁴⁶ ADLA, B 6656, 26 October 1636.

of Orléans and Blois were probably consumed as they were. In order to save money, the Dutch merchants established eau-de-vie manufactures around Nantes: it took five to seven tons of wine to make one ton of eau-de-vie, so the savings in shipment costs were formidable. The Dutch also had a base, the eau-de-vie stills outside the city limits of Nantes, from which to buy wine directly from the peasants or from merchants of the Loire cities, which saved them paying Nantais merchants to act as middlemen.⁴⁷

As we have seen above, the central element of Nantais commerce was an exchange of Breton grain for Nantais wine. The Dutch moved into one-half of that equation in the late 1620's but their opportunities for entering the other part of it appeared rather limited. The register for 1631, a year of dismal harvests (the highest prices of the first half of the seventeenth century), shows only one Dutch ship bringing grain and one other bringing beans (interestingly, the ship which brought grain is the only one to cite Gdansk as its next destination, with a cargo of 50 tx of Amont wine).⁴⁸ In 1643, however, a second famine, one for which the Dutch were better prepared (due to conditions in the Baltic), provided them with the opportunity to enter the grain market of Nantes and therefore provoked a renewed, and greatly more bitter conflict with the local merchants.

The disastrous French harvests of 1643 created a highly profitable situation for those with grain to sell. A series of memoirs written for the king's council in September 1643 noted that Brittany, Anjou, Poitou, Gascony, Provence, Languedoc and Dauphiné were all affected by the poor harvest.⁴⁹ One writer

⁴⁷ Trocmé and Delafosse and Morineau show similar patterns for both La Rochelle and Bayonne. R. DION, *Histoire de la vigne et du vin en France* (Paris, 1959), gives a broad survey of these developments.

⁴⁸ This ship, the *Griffon* of Esdam (Amsterdam) left on 12 July and returned on 22 October with 1500 planks, 1100 lbs. of "colle" (?), 250 lbs. of wax and 400 lbs. of cheese; it left with 124 tx of Nantais wine, 8000 lbs. of prunes and 4000 nuts for Edam.

⁴⁹ BN, MS FR 18595, ff. 16, 62-63, 75, 154-159.

pointed out that the western provinces were not a problem, as they could obtain grain from Holland. He stated that "on ne manque point les bleds en Holande et Poulougne."⁵⁰ The main problem for the council was how to feed Paris: one writer suggested 200,000 l. be used to purchase grain in Holland, with the king supplying either convoy ships or money to purchase insurance.⁵¹

A third writer told the council that Dutch grain landed at Bordeaux and Rouen. While there is no information about the latter, the published registers of the Jurade of Bordeaux show that Dutch grain reached that city in October 1643. The Parlement of Toulouse had forbidden export from its jurisdiction, which included the upper Agenais and Languedoc, Bordeaux's usual suppliers.⁵²

ce qui occasionnoit que le peu de marchands qui venoient des endroits mettoient le prix qu'ils vouloient à leurs blés; que ces raisons devoient engager la Magistrature de profiter de l'empressement des nations étrangères qui venoient en flotte au secours de la ville porter de seigle qui, bien qu'ils ne parussent propres que pour les habitants de la campagne, étoient néanmoins suffisant pour sortir la ville de la famine qu'elle éprouvoit.

The Parlement of Bordeaux seconded these efforts by the Jurade and issued an order to the citizenry to buy six months' worth of supplies from this fleet; the fleet, as we might expect, was Dutch.⁵³

In Brittany, the problem had a somewhat new dimension; not only did Nantes lack grain but western Brittany did as well. A merchant told the king's council "qu'en Bretagne le bled y

⁵⁰ BN, MS FR 18595, f. 16.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 62-63. Hamburg was also mentioned as a spot to buy grain. Insurance was said to be available for +/-4% depending on conditions in the Channel.

⁵² A. LEROUX, *Inventaire Sommaire des Registres de la Jurade*, t. 11, (Bordeaux, 1916), pp. 598-599. This declaration tells us something about urban consumers' attitude to rye.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 599-600.

est aussy cher qu'à Paris."⁵⁴ This shortage did not restrain local merchants. They continued to export to Spain, where the price was reportedly higher than in France.⁵⁵ This policy led to public unrest. Vannes, a major exporter in normal years, was the site of a two-day grain riot in May 1643 which forced the local presidium to forbid the export of grain "sur peine de vie."⁵⁶ It is in these extraordinary circumstances that we encounter Polish grain at Nantes in 1643.

One month after the grain riot at Vannes, on 19 June 1643, Guillaume van Loon and Paul Vos asked permission to land 500-600 tx of rye at the port of Nantes. They told the provost that 385 tx were still unsold and asked to sell that amount at 12 l./setier. According to their official declaration to the provost:⁵⁷

Lesquelz nous ont reputé qu'ayant cy devant donné adviz à leurs amiz et correspondantz d'Hollande du prix et cours des bleds pour lors en cette ville qui estoit quatorze, quinze et seize livres et leur faict esperer qu'il pourroict encores valloir le mesme prix ou aprochant ils leurs en auroient envoyer environ cinq et six cents tonneaulx...

In July 1643, a report of the grain stocks of the bakers of Nantes revealed Polish rye:⁵⁸

J. Larrion	6 set. froment, 3 set. seigle de dansic
N. Migubin	3 set. froment, 1 set. seigle de dansic dit qu'il y a 15 jours depuis il l'a achepté et est tiré en farine
P. Plotten	½ set. froment, 1 set. seigle de dansic en farine
G. Lefevre	3 set. froment, 1½ set. seigle de dansic

⁵⁴ BN, MS FR 18598, f. 75. The price of wheat at Paris was 20-21 1/2 setier from April to October 1643; that at Nantes was 18-21 1/2 setier. 1 Parisian setier = 1.063 setier of Nantes, so the report was accurate.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 76-79, report of two captains who took ships to Spain.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 113-115.

⁵⁷ ADLA, B 6685.

⁵⁸ ADLA, B 6662, 27 July 1643.

Two days later, "le sieur Parear," a Dutch merchant of Nantes, told the provost that he had sold 50 tx of "seigle de dansic" and noted that he had only 50-60 tx left from his original shipment.⁵⁹

Abbé Travers, in his *Histoire de Nantes* (written in 1750 and using the city records — some now destroyed — extensively), says that the city of Nantes bought 1000 tx of this "blé de Dantzic" later in the year. He adds that the city of Angers received permission from the duc de la Meilleraye (governor of Nantes and lieutenant general of Brittany) to take 500 tx of Polish grain from Nantes on 11 October 1643.⁶⁰

The records of the provost of Nantes cover grain imports for the period 16 April to 19 June 1643: these records enable us to see the impact which the importation of Polish grain had on the market. We can divide the port movement into three periods: 1) the last two weeks in April, which saw heavy activity; 2) a very light period from May 8th to June 11th; 3) a period of frantic activity from June 12th to June 19th. It should be noted that the second period was interrupted by one heavy shipment, on June 3rd.⁶¹

The last two days before the arrival of the Dutch shipment were particularly active. On June 18th, 35 tx of rye and 7 tx of wheat landed at the port; more significantly, François Suhart declared that he had 80 tx of rye in his *greniers* and a further 80 tx on the river moving toward Nantes. The next day, Jan Chiron, a local bartender/innkeeper who served as a factor for a large consortium of local merchants, announced 51 tx of rye and 41 tx of wheat. His price for the rye, 13 l. per *setier*, was higher than that of the Dutch.⁶²

⁵⁹ ADLA, B 6662, 29 July 1643.

⁶⁰ Travers, t. III, p. 321. Travers does not clarify the term "blé," so it cannot be determined whether this is rye or wheat — although it is most probably the former.

⁶¹ ADLA, B 6685.

⁶² See table, Appendix D.

IMPORTATION OF POLISH GRAIN AT NANTES, 7 APRIL TO 20 MAY 1644

James B. Collins

Merchant	Captain	Home port of ship	Cargo	Amounts	Date	Price in l./setier
G. Steerling and	H. J. Frayzeur		Rye	55 lasts	7 Ap	13
P. Vos and	L. Y. Houtard		Rye	100 lasts		13
A. Heindricq	H. J. Frayzeur		Barley	55 lasts		—
R. van Aerthen	G. Vlamicq	Flushing	Wheat	70 tx	7 Ap	18
			Beans	50 tx		12
			Barley	26 tx		11.5
	J. Claz	Middleburg	Rye	110 tx	7 Ap	13
			Beans	30 tx		12
			Rye	40 tx		13
J. van Armeijden	H. Jance	Rotterdam	Beans	20 tx	7 Ap	12
P. Bosch and	G. Corneille	Rotterdam	Rye	100 tx	9 Ap	13
M. Douer			Wheat	60 tx		20
R. van Aerthen	P. Constant	Rotterdam	Barley	45 tx	9 Ap	12
A. et R. Velle	J. Adrien	Ziereksee	Rye	32 tx	11 Ap	12
			Beans	6 tx		10
A. et R. Velle	A. Biscop	Flushing	Rye	5 tx	14 Ap	12
			Beans	32 tx		10
M. Molshoucq	A. Biscop	Flushing	Beans	50 tx	16 Ap	11
			Oats	15 tx		7

TABLE VIII

IMPORTATION OF POLISH GRAIN AT NANTES. 7 APRIL TO 20 MAY 1644 (*continued*)

Merchant	Captain	Home port of ship	Cargo	Amounts	Date	Price in l./setier
T. van Schoonhoven	J. Fausthen	Holland	Rye	80 tx	22 Ap	13
	P. Busius	Holland	Rye	30 tx		13
J. van Armeijden	R. P. Busmant	Rotterdam	Wheat	40 tx	22 Ap	18
A. Chastelain			Rye	500 tx	13 May	12
			Wheat	100 tx		18
			Beans	27 tx		pre-sold
R. Pernez			Rye	300 tx	13 May	12
			Barley	170 tx		11
			Oats	40 tx		pre-sold
B. Deidel	J. Sause	Zelande	Rye	250 tx	13 May	11.5
	J. Clement	Zelande	Wheat	80 tx	13 May	pre-sold
				Beans and Barley	70 tx	
G. Noy	J. Covost	"Damaist"	Rye	200 tx	20 May	11.7
	T. Sijmen	Alkmaar	Rye	150 tx	20 May	11.7
G. van Loon	A. Raoul	Rotterdam	Rye	120 tx	20 May	12
			Barley	50 tx		pre-sold
			Beans	25 tx		pre-sold

April: Rye 397 tx, 155 lasts; Wheat 170 tx; Barley 71 tx, 55 lasts; Beans 188 tx; Oats 15 tx; May: Rye 1520 tx; Wheat 180 tx; Barley 285 tx; Beans 87 tx; Oats 40 tx.

1 last was estimated by the Prevot as 2 tx, actually 1 last = 2.24 tx.

The reason for this sudden flurry of declarations is clear: the Dutch fleet was known to be approaching Nantes and the local merchants were selling their stocks in order to obtain more than the 12 l. at which the Dutch would sell. The price of rye dropped from 17 l. /setier to 13 l./setier between 10 and 17 June, a clear effect of the Dutch presence. The activity they undercut is best illustrated by the case of Michel Le Bache, who stored his grain in *greniers* outside the city in May. He had brought some of this grain to the city on 4 May and sold it for 14 l./setier. He sent the rest to the city on 30 May and tried to sell it for 17 l./setier. He was denounced to the provost and forced to sell at 15 l./setier; the provost further threatened a 500 l. fine for a second offence.⁶³

This Polish grain continued to be a major factor on the French market for the rest of 1643 and early 1644. It continued to dominate both the Bordeaux area and the Loire valley. We have already seen that the city of Nantes bought 1000 tx of it, while Angers received permission to import 500 tx. Travers tells us that an investigation of the merchants in January 1644 revealed 700 tx "blé de Dantzik" priced at 11 or 12 l. per setier. The "marchands flamands" told the city government that they had previously made a *traité* for 200 tx of "blé" at 10 l./setier. The provost put all of this grain at 11 l./setier. He also ordered information sent to each parish of the diocese of Nantes "que dans peu de jours il arriverait une grande quantité de blé de Dantzik et que chacun eut à s'en fournir."⁶⁴

Travers claims that Nantes profited little from this shipment, as Angers took 240 tx of rye and 150 tx of barley, Saumur took tx, Marmoutiers 20 tx and various other towns several hundred

⁶³ ADLA, B 6662. Grain which entered Nantes had to be offered for sale for three days at the public market, thus speculators kept their stocks outside the city. It should also be noted that part of the Dutch shipment was sold before it reached Nantes, so the price was well known.

⁶⁴ Travers, III, p. 324. Again, he does not clarify "blé."

tons. Nantes complained about these shipments and the king ordered all grain shipped through Nantes to "tenir planche" there for a month.

François Lebrun provides further information which verifies Travers' account and demonstrates the importance of Polish grain in Anjou in 1643 and 1644. He writes of those years:⁶⁵

Une récolte largement déficitaire en 1642 entraîne, dès le printemps de 1643, une disette avec hausse des prix des blés et manoeuvres de certains accapareurs; à Angers même, l'arrivée de blés polonais en février 1644 soulage grandement la population et contribue à assurer à peu près la soudure avec la bonne récolte de 1644.

Despite the important shipments to Angers and the other Loire cities, however, we must question Travers' judgment that Nantes received little benefit from the Polish grain shipments early in 1644. The size of the shipments in that period makes it clear that there was more than enough for all concerned.

A unique source enables us to follow the importance of Polish grain imports into Nantes from 28 March to 23 May 1644: "Second papier pour les bleds qui seront faictz venir et conduier au port de cette ville de Nantes tant par les Marchands dud. Nantes qu'autres forains et estrangers."⁶⁶

The first mention of Polish grain in this document occurs on 29 March: "honorable homme Guillaume Richard fils" asked permission "à ce qu'il luy soit permis d'enlever hors cette ville et forsbourgs le nombre du 10 tx de bled seigle de Dansicq qu'il a dict à acheter du sieur Renexit (?) van Aerthen marchand hollandoys demourant au forsbourg de Vretays." He further stated that he wished to take the grain to Moumières and that he intended to sell it there for 13 l./setier.

⁶⁵ F. LEBRUN, *Les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris, 1971), pp. 133-134.

⁶⁶ ADLA, B 12901.

On 7 April, we learn that there is a "flotte armée de Dansicq" which has been at Paimboeuf for three or four days.⁶⁷ This fleet had large amounts of grain for a variety of Dutch merchants of Nantes (see Table VIII). On 22 April, two merchants made declarations concerning the "dernier flotte armée de Hollande." It is unclear if these ships were in the same convoy, as no date is given for the arrival of the second group at Paimboeuf.⁶⁸ Three weeks later, Antoine Chastelain referred to the "flotte dernier venu de Hollande" when declaring his importations; the fleet in question was composed of ships from Holland and Hamburg. As was customarily the case, most of the grain had been sold before it reached Nantes.⁶⁹

How important were these deliveries of Polish grain in terms of the total flow of the port? Table IX gives the Dutch/Polish proportion of the wheat, rye and barley imported between 29 March and 23 May 1644.⁷⁰

It is clear from this table that grain from Gdansk dominated the Nantais market in 1643-1644. This was most true of rye, the dominant Polish grain, and least true of wheat, which was the main export grain of western Brittany.⁷¹ Much of this Polish grain, as we have seen, went up the Loire, so we may speak of Dutch/Polish dominance on the markets of Blois, Orléans, Angers, Tours and Saumur as well. To this, we must add the com-

⁶⁷ Paimboeuf was the city's advance port at the mouth of the Loire. Nantes had severe siltage problems and the town port was frequently inaccessible to large ships. See: E. GABORY, "La marine et le commerce de Nantes au XVIII^e siècle (1661-1715)," *Annales de Bretagne*, xvii, 1-44, 235-290, 341-398, esp. 388-389.

⁶⁸ БОГУЦКА, "Amsterdam," p. 440, claims 80% of all cargoes were in convoy between 1625 and 1650.

⁶⁹ Chastelain's declaration originally said "armée de Dansicq" but "Dansicq" was crossed out and "Hollande" put in.

⁷⁰ ADLA, B 12901.

⁷¹ This is not to say that western Brittany did not export more rye than wheat in famine years, as rye did indeed predominate in such cases, but in normal years wheat was the major export. Therefore, it would seem likely that the Breton share of wheat imported into Nantes would be higher than that of rye.

TABLE IX

IMPORTATION OF DUTCH/POLISH GRAIN INTO NANTES
FROM 29 MARCH TO 23 MAY 1644

	Total in tx	Holland/ Gdansk	%	Other	%
Wheat	613	350	57.09	263	42.91
Rye	2806	2227	79.36	578	20.64
Barley	558	436	78.13	112	21.87
Totals	3978	3013	75.74	965	24.46

Note: Oats - 55 of 259 tx from Holland (21.24%). Beans - 261 of 305.5 tx from Dutch merchants (85.43%). The beans were noted as "fèves de Zélande" which indicates they were not a Baltic product. Neither of these two products was used in breadmaking at Nantes.

plete reliance of Bordeaux on Polish grain during these two years.⁷²

Polish grain in the Loire valley would have influenced the price of grain at Paris because the two areas drew from similar grain sources (notably the area near Melun).⁷³ Similarly, Toulouse and Bordeaux were both supplied, in normal years, by the same areas, so that we may speak of Polish influence on the price of grain at Toulouse as well. Indeed, the price of rye at Toulouse plunged 48% between December 1643 and March 1644.⁷⁴

This Polish influence on the French cereal market continued in the famine of 1648-1649. The registers of the city council of Paris show the important role played by Polish grain in the

⁷² The highest volume of wheat to come through the Sound passed in 1643: 22,849 lasts. The next two highest years were 1648 and 1649. As we have seen above, p. 261, the Jurade of Bordeaux considered rye fit only for peasants. Various examinations of bakers' shops by the provost of Nantes between 1620 and 1660 usually show a predominance of "pain gris" (made from wheat) on the shelves.

⁷³ M. BAULANT and J. MEUVRET, *Les prix des céréales extraits de la mercuriale de Paris* (Paris, 1960, 1962) carte II, t. I.

⁷⁴ G. and G. FRECHE, *Les prix des grains, des vins et des légumes à Toulouse* (Paris, 1967), pp. 54-55. The price at Paris dropped from 21 l. in September to 19-19½ l. in October and on into the spring (Baulant and Meuvret, II, 15-16).

considerations of that body during the famine.⁷⁵ Advising the council in August 1649, the grain merchant le Picard suggested that the city buy Polish grain at Rouen in order to drive down the price of cereals from Champagne.⁷⁶ Twenty days later, Mazarin told a group of merchants that he intended to bring large quantities of such grain to Paris to force the price down. A month later the city agreed to two *traités* to bring grain from Bordeaux and from "the sea" to Paris.⁷⁷

In 1649, the city borrowed 150,000 l. for grain purchases from the members of the council. This grain was brought from "pays esloignez et estrangers."⁷⁸ In November 1649, the city council reported that poor harvests in Soissonnais, Champagne and elsewhere had forced the local grain merchants to obtain grain by sea; they further stated that for two months the city had subsisted on this grain.⁷⁹

We also find the Dutch involved in the grain trade further south, in Languedoc:⁸⁰

En outre, si le grain persiste à manquer, les vaisseaux du Nord, charges des blés de la Baltique, sont la pour l'appoint: ainsi, en 1649, l'archevêque de Narbonne, interprète du puissant *lobby* des blatiers locaux, vitupère-t-il "les calvinistes de Danzig et les anabaptistes de Hambourg", qui concurrencent le blé languedocien, jusque dans son aire de cabotage habituel.

Unfortunately, our information about the grain trade at Nantes from 1645-1650 is incomplete. The only prices available for 1648 indicate that the price of rye was lower at Nantes in October 1648 than it was at Amsterdam, although direct transport of

⁷⁵ LE ROUX DE LINCY and DOUET-D'ARCO, *Registres de l'Hotel de Ville de Paris* (Paris, 1846-1848) 3 vols.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 414.

⁷⁷ LE ROUX DE LINCY, II, 416-418.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 422.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 423.

⁸⁰ E. LE ROY LADURIE, *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris, 1966), 449.

Gdansk rye would still have been very profitable.⁸¹ This direct transportation may have been a reality in 1646 and 1647, when 31 and 54 ships respectively went directly to Nantes from the Sound, by far the largest numbers of ships to do so in the period 1600-1660.⁸² The price of rye at Nantes from December 1646 to June 1647 was 4.5-5 l./*setier*, or 99-110 l./last. The price at Amsterdam was again more than this, but the price at Gdansk would be the equivalent of 80 l. In July 1647, the price at Nantes jumped to 6 l./*setier*, but Bogucka lists no price from Gdansk, for that year. The 1648 Breton harvest was also not very good as rye went up to 8 l./*setier* in September and October and even more in November.⁸³ We also know the city of Nantes bought 500 tx of rye in January 1649 to force down the price, but it is uncertain whether this was Polish rye or grain from Guyenne.

The role of the Dutch in the other half of the Nantais equation, the wine trade, is much more evident at this time. Various lawsuits between the Dutch and the Nantais from 1643 to 1656 give us a great deal of information about the Dutch trade at Nantes and its upstream connections. A comparison of the lists of merchants named in suits in 1645 and 1656 with the list of grain merchants on the port books of 1643 and 1644 is very informative. The first of these suits, in 1645, concerned article 11 (the staple privilege); the case involved a Dutch merchant selling cloth to an Irish one.

In the Dutch brief for the case, we find that 21 merchants

⁸¹ AC de Nantes, serie FF, prices from 5 Sept. to Oct. 1648. The price was 8 L/tx, or 176 L/last. The Amsterdam price was 168 gulden in August, 166.6 in Sept. (Posthumus, p. 574); the price in Gdansk for 1648 was an average of 160 zlotys, which I estimate to be 108 l.t./last. The Nantes price would be about 147 gulden. Currency values and Dutch prices from Posthumus, currency values and Polish prices from Bogucka, "Merchants' profits," p. 81, table 5.

⁸² STR, v. I.

⁸³ BOGUCKA, "Merchants' profits," p. 81, table 5, estimates shipping and transit costs as about 21 l. in 1646, which makes this trade very marginal in that year. Travers, III, pp. 337, 343 on 1648 prices and purchase and sale by city. Some of the grain was sold at a loss to depress the price.

of Orleans, "faisant la plus grant partie fréquentant la rivière de Loire et trafiquans à Nantes," eight merchants of Blois and the *procureur* of the bourgeois of Saumur are cited as interested parties on the side of the Dutch.⁸⁴ In the final judgment, the merchants of Tours took the side of the Dutch, asking that the merchants of the Loire cities be allowed to buy directly from the Dutch at Nantes. The Nantais brief mentions that the adjudicator general of the *Cinq Grosses Fermes* also supported the Dutch.⁸⁵ The Nantais specifically argued that the Dutch should not be allowed to sell goods in the interior of the country. It is clear that the Dutch did trade with the Loire cities without using the Nantais as middlemen; the commodities traded were wine, eau-de-vie, draperies, spices and, in famine years, grain.

As for the Dutch merchants involved in this case, there is a strong concordance between the list of grain merchants and the list of those cited in the court brief: nine of the fifteen names on the brief list are grain merchants. We can also add the two Velles (Veltes) to the list of interested grain merchants, as they are cited by the Nantais brief.⁸⁶

A second case, in 1656, concerned the construction of barrels not of the measure of Nantes (much like the 1633 complaint on a similar matter). The brief for this case gives three grain merchants and one Garbrand Vos, who may have been related to Paul Vos the grain merchant.⁸⁷ This case followed a series of ordinances which had forced the local barrelmakers to mark their barrels and which had forbidden the production of beer in the dioceses

⁸⁴ BN, Ms Fr 18592, ff. 210-213. There was a guild of merchants known as the "marchands fréquentant la rivière de Loire." See: P. MANTELLIER, *Histoire de la Communauté des marchands fréquentant la rivière de Loire* (Orleans, 1867, 1864, 1869), 3 vols, I, chapters xii-xiv.

⁸⁵ ADLA, C 652. The *Cinq Grosses Fermes* was a collection of various indirect taxes, including the import-export duties of Anjou, hence the interest of the farmer.

⁸⁶ See list in appendix. It is worth noting that Velle has been cited twice before, in the records of the provost for 1634 and 1636 as a wine merchant (see p. 259 above).

⁸⁷ ADLA, C 702, cote 6.

and eau-de-vie in the city and faubourgs because these two activities were consuming too much wood and (in the case of beer) too much grain.

A complaint of some of the peasants of the country of Nantes in 1645 makes the manner in which the Nantais merchants used the tie between the wine and grain trades to exploit the local peasants much more explicit.⁸⁸

Suplie Maitre Mace Pelissonneau

Disait que certains marchants et marchandiers de la ville de Nantes auroient vandu grand nombre de grains les deux années dernières à quantité de pauvres gens laboureurs des paroisses de Bignon, Vertou, le Pont St Martin et autres à poix excessif au consideration du terme qu'ils bailloient de payer vendant le setier un écu plus qu'il valloit au marché et encores n'estoient ledit bled de grens de lin, orge, avoigne et mil au lieu de bon seigle et après contraignent les pauvres gens à leur faire payement de telles obligations uzuraus et se sont donné le vin desd. pauvres laboureurs à bas et vil prix, à 10 et 11 livres fustez et vin vendu en cette ville jusques à leur porter et par telles exactions et volleries se veulent enrichir aux dépenses et à la ruine des pauvres gens.

This complaint shows us that the merchants of Nantes sold grain to the local wine-growing peasants, with the latter using their prospective wine crops as the collateral on the loans used to pay for the grain. They were apparently required to sell their wine to the same merchant who had given them the grain. While it is difficult to estimate the validity of the claims made by these peasants, the price of Nantais wine at this time was about 20 l. per *pipe*, which would mean that they received only one-half of the

⁸⁸ ADLA, B 6663, 5 Nov. 1645. An *écu* was worth slightly more than 3 l. The complaint which follows the words "bas et vil prix" indicates that the merchants were requiring the peasants to provide their own barrels and also to deliver the wine directly to Nantes at their own expense. The custom was usually that they had to bring the wine to "eau portant." J. MEYER, *La noblesse bretonne au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1966), p. 762.

price being paid at Nantes.⁸⁹ Their claim to have paid an *écu* per *setier* more than the going price for rye cannot be investigated, not only because they do not list the price, but also because the price of rye ranged from 5 l. to 11 l. in the period 1644-1646. Nonetheless, the interest of the Nantais merchants in preventing the Dutch from getting into this trade is quite clear.

The merchants of Nantes carried on an extensive legal and propaganda campaign against the Dutch throughout the 1640's and 1650's. "Jan Eon," a Nantais propagandist writing in 1646, accused the Dutch of paying very high prices for wine when they first came to Nantes in order to achieve a monopoly in the trade and then drastically reducing their prices. Their high prices for wine also, again according to "Eon," convinced the local cultivators to switch from grains to vines, which led to famines. He added "on a déjà esté contraint par fois de prendre des Hollandais le bled à grand prix qu'au paravant leur demeure dans le pays où en a soit en abundance, et on en fournissoit même à leur pays."⁹⁰

As we have seen, far from increasing the price of grain at Nantes, the Dutch intervention decreased it sharply in 1643 and 1644, thus depriving the local merchants of the windfall profits to which they were accustomed in years of shortage. The price of *pain de chappitre* (the finest white bread) reached 30 *deniers*/pound in October 1643, while that of rye bread was 16 *deniers*.⁹¹ These

⁸⁹ While the peasants do not specify the quantity of wine for which they were paid 10 or 11 l., it is almost certainly a *pipe*. The city of Nantes paid 20 l./*pipe* for 3 *pipes* of white Nantais wine in Feb. 1646 (AC de Nantes, CC 169, municipal account of June 1645-1647). In April 1642, they paid 24 l./*pipe* (CC 168). If the wine was indeed already in barrels and was delivered free of charge to Nantes, the profits of the merchants must have been formidable.

⁹⁰ "Jan Eon," *Le commerce*, pp. 87-88. He is followed by almost all authors who have touched on this subject: H. Sée, "Le commerce des hollandais à Nantes pendant la minorité de Louis XIV," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 1926, pp. 247-260, uses both "Eon" and the Nantais court briefs. He is followed by Dion, *La vigne*. Better use of the sources is made by Delumeau in his "Le commerce extérieur...".

⁹¹ Travers, III, p. 321. AC de Nantes, série FF.

prices indicate the cost of wheat was 14-16 l./setier and rye 12 l. As we have seen, the April prices reached 16-18 l./setier for both of these grains; *pain de chappitre* was already 30 den./pound in the spring of 1643, while rye bread was 20 den.

In contrast to this, the prices in January 1631 rose to these levels: *pain de chappitre* — 48 den./pound; *tiré à sa fleur* (fine white) — 46 den.; *tiré à sa fin* (*pain gris*) — 38 den.; *métail* (half rye, half wheat) — 33 den.; rye — 24 den.⁹² Given a grain riot at Vanes in May 1643, and a poor harvest in that year as well, we can only wonder if the crisis of 1643-1644 might have approached or exceeded that of 1631 without Dutch/Polish grain.

It is likely that the Dutch were instrumental in changing the local crops from grain to vines.⁹³ While the ancient trade of wine for grain meant that much of the land in the county of Nantes was already covered by vines, the increased export to Holland, both of wine and eau-de-vie, the latter particularly important in the county of Nantes because of the poor quality of its wines, meant that more land was removed from cereal cultivation and put under vines. The lease of the *métairie* of La Chapelle aux Moines, for example, stipulated in 1641 that 1½ *quarterons* of white wine plants be added in 1642 in the location stipulated by the owner.⁹⁴ Yet it can hardly be said that this was necessarily a pernicious development, as Nantes was in such close contact with the granary of western Brittany.

The Dutch themselves, in their defense of 1656, noted the importance of their wine/eau-de-vie trade at Nantes:⁹⁵

⁹² AC de Nantes, FF 154. ADLA, B 6662. The price equivalents of bread and grain are based on the bakers' complaint.

⁹³ LE ROY LADURIE, *Paysans*, p. 433, states that wine production rose considerably in Languedoc from 1600 to 1650 and then declined sharply. He also notes that the increased export of wines from Atlantic France opened up new French markets for Languedocian wine.

⁹⁴ ADLA, H 275, cote 3.

⁹⁵ ADLA, C 702, cote 6, *arrêt* of Parlement, 12 Oct. 1656; pleadings of 23 Nov. 1656. The *jaugeur* of Nantes refused to pass barrels not of the local measure but a spe-

les marchands de lad. ville de Nantes ayant conspiré de miner le commerce de chasser lesd. marchands hollandoys dud. Nantes sans consider que cela troict au destruisant et à l'antière ruine de leur patrie et que les vins nantois et eaues de vie et gresse dont ils ont traffic n'estant par eux agetés et enlever Il ne s'en trouveroict de deffaicts dans lesd. pays et les habitans et autres perdroyes et dimu-neroyes de la moitié de leur revenu...

The Dutch first took away the profits of the Nantais as middlemen by buying directly from the sources of production and thus they also cut off the exorbitant profits which the Nantais could make in years of famine. There was also a general downturn in the local wine market, a problem which was related to both Breton and non-Breton developments.

This downturn in the wine trade may have been the critical factor in the estrangement of the Dutch and the Nantais. The period 1640-1660 was filled with periodic crises in all sectors of the Nantais economy and the disaster of 1661-1662 merely served to exacerbate earlier problems. The *octrois* of the city of Nantes rose in value from 1600 to 1641 and then declined.⁹⁶ The *don gratuit* voted by the Estates of Brittany to the king was paid for entirely by wine taxes until 1643, when an extraordinary hearth tax of 800,000 l. over two years was added on. This tax was voted again in 1647, 1653, 1655, 1657 and became permanent in 1661.⁹⁷

The trade of Loire wine was particularly affected. The farm of "cinq sous/pipe de vin hors le cru du pays passant sous le pont de Nantes" owned by the Cathedral chapter of Nantes declined

cial Dutch *jaugeur* was appointed by the king when he ruled in favor of allowing the use of Dutch barrels (the Parlement also ruled for the Dutch).

⁹⁶ AC de Nantes, CC 150-170.

⁹⁷ ADLA, B 78, ff. 166v-173. ADIV, C 2773, 2980. The regular direct taxes were about 400,000 l./year at this time. They had been about the same since the end of the fifteenth century, so their real value had obviously gone down considerably. Wine taxes, on the other hand, quadrupled between 1620 and 1640. (duty of the Estates only).

TABLE X

LEASE PRICE OF THE FARM OF FIVE SOUS/PIPE CREATED IN 1613

1613	9000 l.	1656	6900 l.
1613 (a)	5567	1671	2250
1617	6300	1674	2300
1621	7000	1687	3000
1625	8500	1695	905
1633 (b)	4000	1704	1410
1644	9100	1707	1140
1650	6650	1713	1500

(a) The rebate was for 10,300 l. over three years and was due to problems with Rochelais pirates and to weather.

(b) This is the price suggested by ADLA, B 75, ff. 94v-95, it may reflect the combined effects of the La Rochelle siege (which caused tremendous shortfalls in the receipts of the duty of the Estates in 1627-1628) and the 1630-1632 famine. However, the actual volume of wine descending the Loire to Nantes in 1631 was about 60,000 pipes, far more than is suggested by this lease price.

Sources: ADLA, G 87, assorted pieces.

ADLA B 71, f. 250, 1613 rebate.

ADLA, B 75, ff. 94v-95, for 1633.

throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. This trend is confirmed by the base figure for wine sales used to compute the *petit devoir*, a wholesale wine tax used to pay wage increases of the Parlement and Chambre des Comptes, and the duties of the Estates. Using 1612-1614 as an index of 100, the base for the *petit devoir* rose to 122 by 1625, dropped to 95 by 1641 (most of the drop coming in 1627) and then fell off to 68 in 1643, 62 in 1645 and 53 in 1652.

One major reason for the decline of the amount of wine coming to Nantes from up the Loire was that Nantais wine was much cheaper, as was the local eau-de-vie. While this price differential reflected a difference in quality to some extent, it mainly showed the effect of the draconian taxes levied on wine shipped down the Loire to Nantes.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ The portion of the price difference represented by the various levels of quality was greatest in the case of Amont wine (from Orleans or Blois) and least in the case of

The general wine export market was closely connected to events in the Baltic, as that area was one of its major customers. When the farmer of the "cinq sous" between 1656 and 1662 asked for a rebate, he cited, among other problems:⁹⁹

la Guerre du Nort qui auroit beaucoup contribué à l'anéantissement de lad. ferme, ayant faire cesser le commerce et transport des vins aux royaumes de Suède, Dannemarck, Pollogne et autres pays estrangers...

Colbert later told the *Compagnie du Nord* that the problems they encountered in selling eau-de-vie were due to the unusually good harvests throughout Europe in the 1670's; these harvests made it possible to make eau-de-vie from excess grain.¹⁰⁰

The Dutch importance in the wine trade of Nantes, coupled with their role as a major exporter of salt from the Loire marshes, made it easy for them to enter the Nantais grain market whenever the opportunity presented itself. Polish rye is mentioned on the *apprécis* of Nantes in May and July 1659, January 1661 and March 1662. 'Froment de flandres' was sold at Nantes in July 1662. Unfortunately, the *apprécis* of Nantes was kept very erratically: the merchants who kept it were rotated every few months and some were far more thorough than others. The lack of mention of Polish grain does not mean that it was not present.¹⁰¹

In the larger French context, we know that Polish grain was present at Paris from 1654 to 1657 and that Louis XIV bought Polish grain in 1661-1662 to help feed many French cities, inclu-

Angevin. A. M. BOISLISLE, *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux*, (Paris, 1874), I, n. 417. B. DE NOINTEL, intendant of Tours, claims in June-July 1687 that the *élection* of Saumur has been ruined by competition from Breton wine and eau-de-vie.

⁹⁹ ADLA, G 87, piece 21.

¹⁰⁰ P. BOISSONNADE and P. CHARLIAT, *Colbert et la Compagnie du Nord* (Paris, 1930).

¹⁰¹ ADLA, Series B.

ding Paris, Rouen and Tours.¹⁰² In January 1662, the mayor of Angers wrote to Colbert:¹⁰³

Le secours que j'ay tiré de la Bretagne et celuy que j'en espère encore, avec celuy que j'attans de Hollande, adouciron t la misère du temps.

While the spring saw the problem worsen at Angers, in June grain from Guyenne, Brittany and Holland relieved the situation: part of this grain was bought by the *intendant* but most by local merchants. Rouen was also totally supplied by the Dutch at this time.¹⁰⁴

This constant Dutch/Polish presence on the French grain market created a new situation there. After 1641, France was tied to the Amsterdam-Gdansk market and grain prices at Paris follow the same curve as those in Gdansk and Amsterdam. This was not true before 1641: the French market before that date was largely independent of the Baltic. The connection lasted into the eighteenth century, as Louis XIV bought grain at Gdansk in 1693-1694 and 1709 to feed both his armies and certain provinces. Far more significantly, however, the price curve established between 1641 and 1660 continues up to 1715.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² N. DELAMARE, *Traité de la police* (Paris 1729), II, estimates the king spent two million l.; C. DREYSS (ed.) *Mémoires de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1860), II, pp. 548-549; P. CLÉMENT, *Lettres de Colbert* (Paris, 1862), II, pt. 1, pp. 52-53, mentions 30-40,000 lbs. of bread per day after 1 Feb. 1662. J.-Y. TIRAT, "Circulation et commerce intérieur dans la France du XVIII^e siècle," *XVIII^e Siècle*, n. 70-71, pp. 65-79, 75-76, n. 31.

¹⁰³ LEBRUN, *La mort*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰⁴ P.-M. BONDOIS, "La misère sous Louis XIV. La disette de 1662," *Revue de Histoire Economique et Sociale*, XII, pp. 53-118: 103.

¹⁰⁵ See appendix on 1641-1660. M. KOMASZYNSKI, *Polska w Polityce gospodarczej Wersalu 1661-1715* (Warsaw, 1968), p. 170 on 1661-1715 correlation, 153-174 on 1709 purchases. Boislisle, n. 1366, gives an accounting by the *intendant* of Flandres maritime of grains bought in 1694 (5 July 1694).

CONCLUSION

The overall movement of the Baltic trade between 1600 and 1660 is one toward making France the third partner in the exchange. The Sound Toll Registers indicate that French control of the salt market dates from 1621, showing the importance of the end of the Twelve Years' Truce, yet French salt had risen sharply as a proportion of the total salt shipped through between 1599 and 1609 and had maintained its increased share of the total despite the Truce. The end of the Truce merely accelerated a movement which had already begun.

This early trade centered on La Rochelle for three reasons: 1) the port could supply wine and wine derivatives: 2) it could supply, from nearby Brouage, salt and 3) it was a duty-free port. The siege of 1627-1628 and the loss of the port's tax privileges forced the Dutch to diversify their efforts and raised their interest in other French ports, particularly Nantes: the Nantais court brief of 1645 noted that the Dutch had taken over their trade some 15-20 years before. The large number of stills imported in 1631 would tend to confirm that the Dutch interest in Nantes did indeed increase greatly around 1625-1630.

This trade with France forced the Dutch to alter their method of transporting goods along the Baltic route. It was impracticable to ship grain directly to France from the Baltic because, at least in the 1620's, the market there was limited. Instead, the Dutch shipped the grain back to Holland and then sent finished manufactured goods, such as leather or draperies, or items such as herring, cheese, spices and sugar on to France. The shipment of stills, copper and old barrels into Nantes in 1631 also shows us that Dutch commercial capital was invested in manufacturing in France.

The period 1628-1641 was an erratic one for Dutch trade because of problems in the Baltic and elsewhere. Nonetheless, it seems clear that in the late 1630's Dutch trade with France

was flourishing. In the 1640's, the failure of several French harvests dictated another shift, toward shipping grain directly to France in 1643, 1644, 1648 and 1649. It is possible that grain was also shipped to France in 1641-1642 and 1646-1647, but there is no clear evidence of this.¹⁰⁶ This trend continues in the 1650's whenever Baltic events allow it to do so.

The shift to France as a partner in the Baltic trade also prompted other changes. The shipment of hemp, flax, hempseed and flaxseed all rose sharply in the 1620's and continued to go up in the 1630's and 1640's. It would seem likely that much of this material went to France, particularly Brittany, where there was a considerable (and flourishing) linen industry centered around Morlaix. The Dutch also brought planks and naval stores to Nantes. These stores were then re-exported to the small Breton fishing ports such as Audierne, Port Louis and Douarnenez.¹⁰⁷ It is also possible that naval stores and raw materials for linen were brought to La Rochelle, where Breton ships would bring fish and grain to exchange for them.

The return route fluctuated a great deal because of changing conditions in France. In the early 1620's, when the Dutch traded most heavily with La Rochelle, where they had been established for at least a generation and therefore had set up eau-de-vie and barrel-making manufactures, the number of ships going directly from France to the Sound reached its highest level. In the early 1630's few ships (only 9.8% of the total from 1630-1637) went directly to the Sound because the Dutch were establishing themselves in new areas, particularly Nantes, and the wine exported from these areas had to be sent to Holland so that it could be adulterated before being shipped to the Baltic. In the period

¹⁰⁶ AC de Nantes, FF 150, shows extensive fining of bakers giving short weight in 1646, which is usually a sign of rising prices and possible shortages of grain.

¹⁰⁷ There are dozens of examples of this in the port register of 1631, with "planches de sap de flandres" going to Poldany, Audierne, Quimper, Noirmoutiers, Vieille Roche, Port Louis and many other ports.

1630-1657, the percentage of such ships varied from 6.8% (1630) to 20.6% (1647), with a median of 12.1%.¹⁰⁸ The annual number of ships varied from 50 (1630) to 213 and 217 (1651, 1647).

This trade was undermined by a series of events in the 1640's and 1650's, the most important of which was probably the Great Northern War.¹⁰⁹ Before Dutch-French trade could re-establish itself, France created a series of tariff barriers to their relations (1659, 1664, 1667). As we have seen in Table X, there was a sharp drop in the amount of Loire wine coming to Nantes after 1644 and a second and much more dramatic drop between 1656 and 1671. It is difficult not to see the tariffs as key factors in this second drop.

After the tariff of 1667 was rescinded (in 1678), we once again find the Dutch heavily involved in commerce with France (during periods of peace). They exported 133,790 tx of wine from Bordeaux between 1699 and 1702 and they took 6090 tx of wine and 1752½ tx of eau-de-vie from Nantes in 1728.¹¹⁰ While Holland and the Baltic littoral continued to be Nantes' main European trading partners in the eighteenth century, the 1728 figure was by far the highest for that century and wine was no longer the main Nantais export. The chief attraction of Nantes became sugar, a development which began in 1666 with the installation of the first sugar refinery in the city.¹¹¹

The sugar and wine trades were very dissimilar in their effects on the local economy, however, as the latter spread prospere-

¹⁰⁸ STR, v. 1. This compares with over 25% in the 1623-1626 period.

¹⁰⁹ Other major problems included Dutch-English hostilities and the Fronde.

¹¹⁰ C. HUETZ DE LEMPS, "Le commerce maritime des vins d'Aquitaine de 1699 à 1716," *Revue Historique de Bordeaux*, 1965, pp. 25-43, tables on 43-43. The Dutch share dropped to 0 from 1702-1704 and 1711-1712 due to war. P. JEULIN, *L'évolution du port de Nantes* (Paris, 1929), table 3bis, p. 243. Holland and the Baltic took 80% of the sugar exported to Europe from Nantes in 1728.

¹¹¹ DELUMEAU, "Le commerce extérieur," p. 98. There were five refineries in 1691. He also notes that ships leaving La Rochelle for the West Indies, Africa and Canada rose from 273 in the 1670's to 411 in the 1680's (p. 96).

rity throughout the Atlantic French region. Trade with Holland, particularly the wine trade, played the key role in the economic growth of Atlantic France in the first 40 years of the seventeenth century. The problem of this trade was that while France could offer only wine, salt and prunes, Holland sent a bewildering variety of goods to France. When the Dutch no longer bought French wine, the French had no one to whom they could sell. In a larger context, there was no way to pick up the slack for the declining wine trade and the French Atlantic economy collapsed.

Wine, unlike grain, was marketed to a considerable degree by the peasantry. Most of the vines in the Nantais area were leased under the *complant* system: the peasant received hereditary tenure of the vines in return for giving the landlord a fixed portion of the crop — usually a fourth or a third.¹¹² Vines also produced a much more valuable crop from a similarly-sized piece of land than did cereals. The wine growers, most of whom were either peasants or semi-rural labourers living in the faubourgs or banlieu of Nantes, therefore saw their spendable income go up in the first half of the seventeenth century. This income jump took place in a period of relatively stable grain prices — the cost of bread at Nantes rose only a small amount in the period 1600-1650.

Increased spendable income led to greater demand for products such as fish or oranges. The demand for fish led to unparalleled prosperity in the fishing villages of Brittany - Le Croisic, Audieme, Poldany, Cancale, etc.¹¹³ These villages therefore spent

¹¹² MEYER, *La noblesse bretonne*, pp. 755 and ff. He states that three-fourths of the tenants paid one-quarter shares. LE ROY LADURIE, *Paysans*, pp. 437 and ff. documents a similar phenomenon in Languedoc. He notes that the wine growers of the seventeenth century were peasant "propriétaires."

¹¹³ H. BOURDE DE LA ROGERIE, "Introduction," *Inventaire Sommaire des Archives Départementales du Finistère*, t. III (Quimper, 1902), states that parish churches of western Brittany had more ornaments at this time than any other before the Revolution.

more to outfit new ships, aiding the Breton and Poitevin linen manufactures, and increased their purchases of salt, which was used to cure the fish, thus spreading some prosperity to the salt marsh villages. One would suspect that they also increased their intake of wine.¹¹⁴

Because this pattern of growth was so closely tied to the wine market, however, the severe decline in demand for wine after 1640 caused these other areas of the economy to decline as well. The chain reaction described above merely took place in a negative manner. While internal French developments had a major role in the reduced demand for wine — heavy taxation forced lower-class drinkers to turn to beer (as in Nantes) or cider (as in western Brittany), the wars of the 1650's, the tariffs of the 1660's and the combination of more wars, excellent grain harvests throughout Europe (allowing distillation of grain-based alcohol) and the introduction of gin in the 1670's combined to destroy the export market that was so critical to the wine trade of Atlantic France.¹¹⁵

The recession in linen production (especially after 1680), lower fish consumption, lower demand for salt and wine combined to completely *collapse* the Breton (and Atlantic French) economy. Lower peasant income depressed those sectors of the market not directly connected to wine, such as the famous Breton horse fairs.¹¹⁶ Commercial activity stagnated and capital flowed into land, increasing its price tremendously: rents around Nantes

Audierne, Penmarc'h and ten villages also built new churches between 1635 and 1650. H. Moret, *Le Croisic* (Rennes, 1917), p. 162, gives Louis XIII's reign as the local high point; H. Le Carquet, "Le Cap-Sizun. La morue du Raz de Fonteroy," *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère*, t, 37, pp. 8-26, says the same of Audierne.

¹¹⁴ The portion of the wine duty of the Estates paid by the bishopric of Léon, for example, rose from 8.8% in 1627-28 to 12.2% in 1646-47.

¹¹⁵ The reduced income of the wine-producing areas would also decrease internal French demand because they would buy less from other areas, who would, in turn, spend less on wine.

¹¹⁶ Bourde de la Rogerie, "Introduction," CCVIII.

jumped dramatically between 1640 and 1660. Land and tithe leases formerly held by peasants and rectors were taken by notaries and merchants (with peasant partners to do the work) who could afford the inflated rents.¹¹⁷

In this light, it is easier to understand the Dutch policy of Louis XIV and Colbert. The original idea was to cut off French markets from the Dutch in the belief that France held the more indispensable role in the trade relations of the two countries. When this policy failed, Louis turned to military efforts to subdue the Dutch and these, too, failed. In the end, Colbert and Louis were forced to recognize Dutch commercial superiority and rescind the 1667 tariff (new tariff of 1678). At this point, however, it was already too late for the marginal wine lands such as the county of Nantes. Local capital had turned to land and then to the colonial trade, especially sugar, to replace its lost wine export profits.

In his history of the port of Nantes, Paul Jeulin notes that the 13,544 tx of wine exported to other European countries in 1728 was the largest figure for Nantes in the period 1700-1929 (when he wrote).¹¹⁸ In 1631, a year of general and severe cereal crop failure in western France, Nantes exported about 17,000 tx of

¹¹⁷ ADLA, G 244-245, various leases of properties owned by the Cathedral chapter of Nantes for the period 1600-1730. The *dime* (tithe) of St. Luc, for example, was rented to a silk merchant in 1660 at a rent increase of 13.33%. At Valets, it was a merchant taking over from the rector in 1643: the rent jumped from 1450 l. to 1600 l. J. JACQUART, "La rente foncière, indice conjoncturel?" *Revue Historique*, 1975, pp. 355-376, hypothesizes, based on data from the Hurepoix south of Paris, that a sudden increase in rents indicates a conjunctural downturn. The evidence which I have from the records of the properties of the Charterhouse of Nantes and the Cathedral chapter supports the conclusion of M. Jacquart.

¹¹⁸ Jeulin, p. 240. The normal eighteenth-century figure was between 4000-6000 tx, of which Holland and the Baltic area took 43-67%. The harvests of the period 1629-1631 were ruined by rainy weather, which would also diminish the wine crop.

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wine to the rest of Europe and almost 22,000 tx to western Brittany. The wine trade at Nantes (and in France as a whole) in the early seventeenth century dominated the economy to an extent which is not yet fully appreciated. The importance of this wine boom and bust must be investigated further and understood more fully if we are to make any sense of French - and European - history in the seventeenth century.

APPENDICES

A. Weights and measures

Grain

1 tonneau (tx) = 10 setiers = 160 boisseaux (measure of Nantes)

1 tonneau = 2000 French pounds = 979 kg.

1 last = 2.24 tx (see note)

Nantais officials used the equivalency 2 tx = 1 last

Wine

1 tonneau = 2 pipes = 4 barriques

1 barrique = 240 liters

I have used the estimate of Z. Binerowski for a *last* of Gdansk rye - 2190 kg. F. Lane gives the value of a *last* of Gdansk rye as 2257 kg. He estimates an Amsterdam *Scheepslast* to have been 1976 kg, while a Hanseatic or Dutch one was 2032 kg. He adds: "Accordingly, this French *tonneau* was approximately one-half of a *last* by volume as well as by weight and was so considered by contemporaries (more precisely it was .495 of an Amsterdam *Scheepslast* and .477 of the Danzig *Kornlast*)."

F. Lane, "Tonnages, Medieval and Modern," *Venice and History* (Baltimore, 1966), pp. 345-370: 360-61.

Z. Binerowski, "Gdanskie miary zbozowe w XVII i XVIII wieku," *Zapiski Historyczne*, XXIII, 1957, pp. 59-81.

Y. Renouard, "La capacité du tonneau bordelais au Moyen Age" and "Recherches complémentaires sur la capacité du tonneau bordelais au Moyen Age," *Etudes d'Histoire Médiévale*, t. I, (Paris, 1968) pp. 257-265, 267-279.

ADLA, B 12901, declarations of merchants Steerling, Vos and Heindricq.

B. Bread and grain pricing

All grain which landed at Nantes had to be declared to the provost and offered for sale for three days at the central dock markets. The price of bread was determined by the price of grain at the three previous

weekly (Sat.) markets. While the official system was one of selling bread only by the pound (ordinance of 2 June 1632), keeping a fixed size for loaves and changing the price to conform to the *deniers*/pound figure set by the provost, in fact, at Nantes as elsewhere, loaves were sold at fixed prices — 1 *sou*, 2 *sous*, etc. — and the size of the loaf was varied.

C. *Comparison of list of grain merchants, 1643-1644, with those involved in 1645 court case*

Grain merchants, 1643-44

Paul Vos
Reinert van Aerthen
Timon van Schoonhoven
Martin Domer
Henri Molshoucq
Antoine Chastelain
Gerard Noy
Becal Deidal
Guillaume van Loon
Rene Velle (Velte)
Alexandre Velle (Velte)
Andrien Hendricq
George Steerling
Rocher Pernez
Picoz Bosch
"le sieur Parear"
Jan van Armeijden

Supplicants, 1645

Cited by Nantais, 1645

P. Vos
R. van Aerthen
T. van Schoonhoven
M. Domer
H. Molshoucq
A. Chastelain
G. Noy (Noc)
B. Deidal (Dedal)
G. van Loon
R. Velle
A. Velle
Rene Tinnebec
Gilbert Constant
Girard Vermeer
Jean Sondach
Mathieu Bael
Nicolas Nicolai
"et plusieurs autres"

Jan van Armeijden was mentioned in a Nantais court brief of 1656.

ADLA, B 6685 (1643), B 12901 (1644) for grain merchants.

ADLA, C 652 (Nantais brief of 1645)

BN, Ms Fr 18592, ff. 210-213, (Dutch brief of 1645).

D. Grain importation in Nantes, 16 April - 19 June 1643

Date	Rye (tx)	Price	Wheat	Price	Barley	Price
16-IV	28	9.75-10	10	13		
17-IV	60	9.5-9.8				
18-IV	57	9.75-10.25	8	15		
27-IV	12	10.75	6	13		
29-IV	47.5	10.6-11.5				
30-IV	92	11-12	28.5	15-15.5		
Sub-total	296.5		52.5			
4-V	2.6	10				
5-V	30	13				
6-V	8	15				
7-V	26	13 (6 tx) 15 (20 tx)				
15-V	4	14			12	11
18-V	19	14	12	18		
19-V	12.5	14.25				
21-V	40.25	14-14.5				
22-V					11	11
23-V			2	19		
25-V	8	17			2	13
26-V					18	12
28-V	4	18			10	11
29-V					9	12
2-VI	27	16-17	10	15	21	12
*3-VI			100 263	18 15		
5-VI	4	16				
8-VI	14	16 (8 tx) 18 (6 tx)	2	18		
9-VI	4	17				
10-VI	10.5	16 (4 tx) 17 (6.5 tx)	1.5	18		
11-VI			1.5	18		
Sub-total	202.6		29 plus *363		83	
12-VI	61	15-16 18 (3 tx)	36	16 (33.5 tx) 21 (2.5 tx)		
13-VI	48.5	13-15			5	13
15-VI	83	14-15	35	17		
16-VI	4	11				
17-VI	27	12-13	9	16		
18-VI	35	12	7	15		
19-VI	51	13	41	17		
		both prices for 19-VI scratched out				
Sub-total	309.5		128		5	
	160 declared on 18-VI, of which 80 tx en route on the river, 80 tx in warehouses outside the city					
Totals	968.8		572.5		88	

