

News Networks in Early Modern Europe

Edited by

Joad Raymond
Noah Moxham



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Contents

Acknowledgements	XI
List of Figures and Tables	XIII
Places and Dates	XIX
Abbreviations and Other Conventions	XX
Notes on Contributors	XXI

1 News Networks in Early Modern Europe	1
<i>Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham</i>	

PART 1

Networks

2 European Postal Networks	19
<i>Nikolaus Schobesberger, Paul Arblaster, Mario Infelise, André Belo, Noah Moxham, Carmen Espejo and Joad Raymond</i>	
3 The Lexicons of Early Modern News	64
<i>Paul Arblaster, André Belo, Carmen Espejo, Stéphane Haffemayer, Mario Infelise, Noah Moxham, Joad Raymond and Nikolaus Schobesberger</i>	
4 News Networks: Putting the ‘News’ and ‘Networks’ Back in	102
<i>Joad Raymond</i>	
5 Maps versus Networks	130
<i>Ruth Ahnert</i>	
6 International News Flows in the Seventeenth Century: Problems and Prospects	158
<i>Brendan Dooley</i>	
7 The Papal Network: How the Roman Curia Was Informed about South-Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean (1645–1669)	178
<i>Johann Petitjean</i>	

- 8 **The Iberian Position in European News Networks: A Methodological Approach** 193
Javier Díaz Noci
- 9 **Mapping the *Fuggerzeitungen*: The Geographical Issues of an Information Network** 216
Nikolaus Schobesberger

PART 2

Modes

- 10 **The History of a Word: *Gazzetta* / *Gazette*** 243
Mario Infelise
- 11 **International Relations: Spanish, Italian, French, English and German Printed Single Event Newsletters Prior to Renaudot's *Gazette*** 261
Henry Ettinghausen
- 12 **War News in Early Modern Milan: The Birth and the Shaping of Printed News Pamphlets** 280
Massimo Petta
- 13 **Elizabethan Diplomatic Networks and the Spread of News** 305
Tracey A. Sowerby
- 14 **Time in English Translations of Continental News** 328
Sara Barker
- 15 **Cartography, War Correspondence and News Publishing: The Early Career of Nicolaes van Geelkercken, 1610–1630** 350
Helmer Helmers
- 16 **News Exchange and Social Distinction** 375
André Belo
- 17 **'Newes also came by Letters': Functions and Features of Epistolary News in English News Publications of the Seventeenth Century** 394
Nicholas Brownlees

- 18 'My Friend the Gazetier': Diplomacy and News in Seventeenth-Century Europe 420
Jason Peacey
- 19 Intelligence Offices in the Habsburg Monarchy 443
Anton Tantner
- 20 Authors, Editors and Newsmongers: Form and Genre in the *Philosophical Transactions* under Henry Oldenburg 465
Noah Moxham

PART 3

Studies

- 21 News from the New World: Spain's Monopoly in the European Network of Handwritten Newsletters during the Sixteenth Century 495
Renate Pieper
- 22 The Prince of Transylvania: Spanish News of the War against the Turks, 1595–1600 512
Carmen Espejo
- 23 'Fishing after News' and the *Ars Apodemica*: The Intelligencing Role of the Educational Traveller in the Late Sixteenth Century 542
Elizabeth Williamson
- 24 'It is No Time Now to Enquire of Forraine Occurrents': Plague, War, and Rumour in the Letters of Joseph Mead, 1625 563
Kirsty Rolfe
- 25 'Our Valiant Dunkirk Romans': Glorifying the Habsburg War at Sea, 1622–1629 583
Paul Arblaster
- 26 A Sense of Europe: The Making of this Continent in Early Modern Dutch News Media 597
Joop W. Koopmans

- 27 **The Hinterland of the Newsletter: Handling Information in Space and Time** 616
Mark Greengrass, Thierry Rentet and Stéphane Gal
- 28 **'We have been Informed that the French are Carrying Desolation Everywhere': The Desolation of the Palatinate as a European News Event** 641
Emilie Dosquet
- 29 **Promoting the Catholic Cause on the Italian Peninsula: Printed *Avvisi* on the Dutch Revolt and the French Wars of Religion, 1562–1600** 675
Nina Lamal
- 30 **The Acquisition and Handling of News on the French Wars of Religion: The Case of Hermann Weinsberg** 695
Alexandra Schäfer
- 31 **'Secret and Uncertain': A History of *Avvisi* at the Court of the Medici Grand Dukes** 716
Sheila Barker
- 32 **Words on the Street: Selling Small Printed 'Things' in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Venice** 739
Laura Carnelos
- 33 **Natural Disasters and the European Printed News Network** 756
Carlos H. Caracciolo
- 34 **The 'Trouble of Naples' in the Political Information Arena of the English Revolution** 779
Davide Boerio
- 35 **Public and Secret Networks of News: The Declaration of War of the Turks against the Empire in 1683** 805
Stéphane Haffemayer

- 36 **From Vienna, Prague or Poland? The Effects of Changing Reporting Patterns on the Ceremonial News of Transylvania, 1619–58** 824
Virginia Dillon
- 37 **The Venetian News Network in the Early Sixteenth Century: The Battle of Chaldiran** 849
Chiara Palazzo
- Index** 871

‘My Friend the Gazetier’: Diplomacy and News in Seventeenth-Century Europe

Jason Peacey

In February 1681, the English government was hunting for information about European newspapers. Its new envoy at The Hague, Thomas Plott, duly obliged by writing that “The printed paper of Leyden ... I have never seen”, although he had heard that “such a paper had appeared”, and that “it had been suppressed”. That he knew this much reflected the fact that he had already made a point of getting to know “the French gazetier, who is my friend”, and who had previously been a “pensionary” of the English ambassador, Henry Sidney. Indeed, Plott also added that “what news he has he always communicates to me in a manuscript, but when there is nothing worth writing he only supplies me with his gazettes, so that what intelligence he had, I can always furnish you with”. Plott concluded by adding that

I have likewise another intelligencer here who is paid for it, that gives me twice a week what comes to his hands, whose original papers and likewise those of the French gazetier I shall hereafter send you, and when I return for England I shall settle a correspondence between you and them, that you may have a continuance of their news.¹

That Plott’s first tasks upon reaching The Hague had included familiarising himself with European print culture, its gazetteers and its intelligencers is highly revealing, and the aim of this piece is explore the significance of this letter, and of the practices to which it alludes. My goal is to suggest that Plott alerts us to the fact that there was a diplomacy of printed news and printed gazettes in the seventeenth century, in terms of the role that ambassadors and their agents played in acquiring and circulating, as well as in manipulating, printed gazettes. It is also to argue that Plott was merely perfecting techniques that had been pioneered by English diplomats from the early decades of the Stuart period, and most obviously from the civil war period in the middle of the seventeenth century. My purpose, in other words, is to explore such

¹ *The Dispatches of Thomas Plott (1681–2), and Thomas Chudleigh (1682–5), English Envoys at the Hague*, ed. Frederick Arnold Middlebush (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1926), p. 1.

diplomatic practices, largely although not exclusively in an Anglo-Dutch context, and to suggest that by doing so it is possible to supplement national and comparative histories of news in the early modern period with something more obviously international and transnational. In doing so, this chapter seeks to contribute to recent attempts to develop new ways of studying European diplomatic culture, and to bring to this field an interest in print culture, and questions relating to the 'public sphere'.² This involves being alert to the ways in which specific regimes tackled transnational phenomena such as the circulation of news and movement of texts, and to the ways in which their responses revealed entanglement, interaction and exchange within a multi-dimensional European public sphere.

I Consuming European News

In part, of course, Plott's evidence is indicative of English demand for, and consumption of, European corantos and gazettes. This interest in printed news, which had been evident for a long time, can be shown to have developed long before the rapid development of the news industry—and its first emergence in England—with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. This is something that can be documented repeatedly from gentry archives, from the availability of translated versions of European gazettes, and from the integration of their material into commercial scribal newsletters.³ The advantage of exploring diplomatic correspondence, however, lies in what else can be shown to have been at stake, and by tracing the history of diplomatic fascination with European newspapers and gazettes back into the early seventeenth century it becomes clear how reading printed news became integral not just to the lives of individual citizens, but also to official duties. From an early stage, therefore, it seems clear that English diplomats read European gazettes in order to keep themselves apprised of developments across the Continent. During 1616, therefore, the English ambassador at the Hague, Sir Dudley Carleton, certainly relied to a certain degree on scribal news writers like John Pory for his news, but he also referred to "my gazetta", who related news from Venice (either in print or manuscript), and very soon he began to acquire gazettes from cities

² See for example: Helen Jacobson, *Luxury and Power: The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat, 1660–1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010).

³ See for example: *The Court and Times of James I*, ed. Thomas Birch, 2 vols. (London, 1849), 2: 276, 390, 421; BL, Harleian MS 389.

like Prague as well.⁴ He thus set a pattern that would be followed by other English diplomats, both in the Low Countries and beyond. By the 1630s, therefore, Carleton's successors at The Hague—such as his nephew Sir Dudley Carleton junior and Sir William Boswell—were regularly receiving and reading Dutch texts, including the Amsterdam gazette.⁵ Another contemporary diplomat, Sir Thomas Roe, acquired no fewer than twenty volumes of French mercuries, which were duly preserved within his library, and included in his library catalogue.⁶ During the 1640s and 1650s, meanwhile, the royalist ambassador in Paris, Sir Richard Browne, displayed a similar determination to obtain such material, and evidently received regular supplies of Dutch newsbooks and French *Gazettes*, his substantial expenditure on which was recorded in his invaluable financial accounts.⁷

In the very early part of the century, however, it is not entirely clear how such material was being used, or to what extent it was being circulated as part of official duties. In the case of Sir Dudley Carleton, for example, it is striking that, during the late 1610s and early 1620s, such material was almost never discussed with his superiors in London, and that its circulation merely seems to have involved the practices associated with sociable networks and news-hungry friends, such as John Chamberlain. At this stage, therefore, Carleton fairly regularly sent copies of European corantos to Chamberlain in London, referring repeatedly to “your gazettas” and “my freshest gazettas”, normally in order to relate events from other parts of Europe, and to convey “the affairs on the other side of the mountains”.⁸ On one occasion, therefore, he noted having sent “freshest letters from Venice, besides your gazettas”. This is perhaps suggestive of a less than entirely serious engagement with the early gazettes, and while Carleton merely loaned scribal newsletters to Chamberlain, he evidently did not expect to get his gazettes back, and he sometimes made clear that such material was not to be taken too seriously.⁹ In September 1618, for example, he explained that “for your entertainment (as I think you have good leisure in the country) I send you your gazettas”.¹⁰

4 TNA, SP 84/76, fo. 59v; SP 84/77, fo. 254v; SP 84/75, fos. 79–80; SP 84/84, fo. 117.

5 TNA, SP 84/144, fo. 250; SP 84/151, fo. 346.

6 Badminton House, FmS/D3/2/7.

7 BL, Add[itional MS]. 78194, fos. 69, 99, 182; Add. 78225, fos. 14–66.

8 TNA, SP 84/75, fos. 79–80; SP 84/76, fo. 59v; SP 84/76, fos. 128–9; SP 84/77, fos. 208–9; SP 84/78, fos. 26–8; SP 84/79, fos. 39–42; SP 84/79, fo. 168; SP 84/81, fo. 118; SP 84/83, fo. 75; SP 84/84, fo. 24; SP 84/86, fo. 231; SP 84/94, fos. 5–6; SP 84/95, fos. 207–8; SP 84/100, fos. 70–1; SP 84/101, fos. 244–7; SP 84/105, fos. 221–3.

9 TNA, SP 84/77, fo. 253v.

10 TNA, SP 84/86, fo. 107–8.

Fairly quickly, however, this somewhat relaxed, or even dismissive, attitude towards the gazettes gave way to much more serious interest in their contents and their value, and to an approach that involved rather careful thought about their potential utility. On one occasion in 1618, for example, Carleton paid a back-handed compliment to the Venetian gazettes, by noting that his scribal letters from the English ambassador there, Sir Henry Wotton, "have nothing more than the gazettes pricked to a new tune". As time passed, indeed, Carleton more regularly referred to having used these early gazettes to acquire information that was not available elsewhere, and to his attempts to verify the news that they contained.¹¹ Thus, while such texts were not always thought to be trustworthy, Carleton occasionally felt able to conclude that they were useful for getting "all foreign news" and "all ... things which are stirring". On one occasion he noted that, although one of the gazettes he forwarded "be of a stale date, yet I send it with the rest that you may see whether more be to be picked out of them than out of Fabrizio's [Sir Henry Wootton's] conceits".¹²

Such evidence provides early evidence of a broader trend, which involved contemporaries adapting to, and learning how to cope with, the new medium, and the natural upshot of this growing interest in the early 'gazettas' was that English diplomats began to forward such material to, and discuss its contents with, superiors in London.¹³ Carleton's comments about the gazettes in official correspondence were rare, although he would occasionally intimate to men like Sir Robert Naunton (secretary of state) that stories from the Cologne gazette had proved to be inaccurate.¹⁴ By the 1630s, however, such material was clearly being sent to the secretaries of state on a regular basis, and one of these, Sir John Coke, evidently developed an interest in such material which lasted well into his retirement, during which he relied upon his son to satisfy his appetite for such texts.¹⁵ Likewise, during the 1640s and 1650s, Sir Richard

11 TNA, SP 84/83, fo. 165v; SP 84/76, fos. 59v, 128–9; SP 84/86, fos. 107–8.

12 TNA, SP 84/95, fos. 207–8; SP 84/101, fos. 244–7; SP 84/77, fos. 208–9. See also: SP 84/144, fo. 250.

13 Joad Raymond, 'Irrational, impractical and unprofitable: reading the news in seventeenth century Britain', in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 185–212; Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 92–124.

14 TNA, SP 84/97, fo. 82.

15 BL, Add. 64923, fos. 57, 65, 80, 87, 89; *The Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper* (3 vols., London, 1888–9), 2: 291–4, 313–14, 317, 329, 331, 336–8. For a collection—perhaps a fragment of Coke's collection—of French gazettes during the late 1630s and early 1640s, see: BL, Add. 69922.

Browne sent copies of French and Dutch texts to members of the royalist court, which were then dispersed across Europe.¹⁶ In the Dutch context, of course, this professional fascination with printed gazettes became much more important with the development of newspapers like the *Haarlem Courant*, and after the Restoration diplomats like Sir George Downing clearly read and relayed stories from such texts to their superiors in Whitehall, with or without comments which indicated scepticism about their reliability.¹⁷ Indeed, it was during this period that it became standard practice for diplomats at The Hague to send regular supplies of various different Dutch gazettes back to England, and although the *Haarlem Courant* became the most important of these, others were also sent from The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam.¹⁸ In June 1668, William Davidson explained to the secretary of state, Sir Joseph Williamson, that the Dutch gazettes were being sent “constantly”, while two years later Sir William Temple indicated that such things were sent “weekly”. Both Davidson and Sir Richard Bulstrode demonstrated a willingness to continue sending their bundles of gazettes so long as these were required.¹⁹ In 1668, Temple not only indicated to Williamson that he had been continuing to send “the papers which come weekly to my hands, both [from] here and from France”, but also wondered whether Williamson still wanted the French “gazettes a la main”—which were scribal newsletters—which cost a hefty £15 per year. And in 1680 Henry Sidney explained that “I here send you a printed paper; if I have not done well, if you please to let me know it, I will henceforward only send you the Gazettes”.²⁰

From such correspondence, indeed, it is possible to develop a sense of the extent to which diplomats relied upon such material for their information, and of the way in which such material was treated. Writing from Nijmegen in December 1676, for example, Charles Davenant made clear that his attempts to supply Williamson with accurate reports on current affairs led to his reading extensively across a range of titles, including gazettes from Haarlem, Amsterdam and Cologne. In the same year, Sir Leoline Jenkins demonstrated to Williamson that he sought to check, and if necessary correct, stories from

16 BL, Add. 78194, fos. 69, 99, 182.

17 TNA, SP 84/168, fo. 104r–v; SP 84/173, fo. 50; SP 84/175, fo. 98; SP 84/176, fo. 77v; SP 84/199, fo. 11.

18 TNA, SP 84/171, fo. 14; SP 84/183, fos. 15, 66v; SP 84/184, fo. 18. For the issue of European news during the Restoration, see: James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 123–45.

19 TNA, SP 84/183, fo. 214; SP 84/186, fo. 104; SP 84/193, fo. 177v. See also: TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 11.

20 TNA, SP 84/184, fo. 77; SP 84/216, fo. 87. See also: TNA, SP 84/215, fos. 122v, 179v, 183v, 200v, 204v; BL, Add. 37981, fos. 6, 30v, 37, 50, 57; Add. 41809, fos. 70v, 82.

Dutch gazettes, and also that he read with care "the Latin gazette at Cologne", in order to sift worthwhile intelligence from worthless news.²¹ The end result, however, was a fairly considerable reliance upon European gazettes. During the late 1670s, therefore, Roger Meredith clearly assumed that his superiors in London were reading the *Haarlem Courant* as a matter of course, and as such he knew that it was not always necessary to write at length about news stories that had been covered by its editor. In other words, while Meredith made sure to check its stories against other sources of news, he often concluded that it was fairly reliable. More than once, therefore, he indicated that it was his "first informer" on many episodes, and that he found it difficult to add to its account.²² Similar conclusions were also reached by William Blathwayt, who reflected in June 1671 that "the ordinary Dutch gazettes" gave "so good an account" of key topics that he was unable to relate a different or more detailed story, and in 1675 William Carr apologised for being able to add little to "common news, such as stands this day in the Gazette".²³

This increasingly serious approach to European gazettes can be demonstrated not merely through the comments made by English diplomats, but also through other kinds of evidence. These include sources which reveal willingness to pay substantial sums for the acquisition of such material, and during the Restoration it was clearly possible for diplomats to include the cost of purchasing newsbooks amongst the expenses that they expected to be able to recoup. Sir William Temple's 1667–8 accounts included considerable sums for gazettes from Brussels, Paris and the United Provinces, while in the 1670s William Carr sought to recoup £100 "laid out in Gazettes and letters from all parts and paid for setting forth letters". For 1681–2, meanwhile, Thomas Chudleigh's accounts reveal payments of 250 guilders "to a stationer and to a bookbinder for paper, wax, etc., gazettes and other prints".²⁴ Beyond this, the importance and utility of European gazettes to the process of intelligence gathering is also clear from the substantial collection of Dutch texts that was amassed during the final decades of the seventeenth century, and from the fact that gazettes were not merely filed away, in what is now the National Archives, but also read fairly assiduously by men like Sir Joseph Williamson.²⁵ Finally, as was made clear at the outset, the second half of the seventeenth century witnessed fairly consistent attempts by English diplomats to develop working

21 TNA, SP 84/200, fos. 158, 176, 271.

22 TNA, SP 84/203, fos. 149, 177; SP 84/205, fos. 52, 121, 129v; SP 84/206, fos. 44v, 107.

23 TNA, SP 84/187, fo. 77; SP 84/199, fo. 6.

24 TNA, SP 84/183, fo. 215v; TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 162; *Dispatches of Thomas Plott*, pp. 133, 224.

25 TNA, SP 119/2–97; SP 9/151.

relationships with gazetteers and intelligencers. From Sir Richard Browne's accounts, therefore, it is possible to conclude that the sizeable payments that were made to the "gazetier" (Théophraste Renaudot)—ranging from £6 to £23 per month—must have involved more than merely the purchase of newsbooks.²⁶ Browne was almost certainly paying Renaudot for privileged information, and such practices were certainly evident later in the century. In 1680, for example, Henry Sidney explained that "there is a man here that makes it his business to furnish everybody with news, and sometimes he does it very well", while Thomas Chudleigh's accounts included an entry of over 120 guilders to "a man at Leyden for the gazette a la main".²⁷

II Circulating English News

The archives of English diplomats in the seventeenth century thus contain rich evidence relating to the process by which contemporaries became acculturated to novel kinds of printed news, and suggestive hints about the increasingly important role that continental gazettes played in intelligence gathering. Diplomatic correspondence, in other words, attests not just to contemporary fascination with the early newsbooks, but also to their perceived utility. However, it is also possible to suggest that there is more to such evidence than merely a desire to monitor events in mainland Europe, and to exploit the information that European gazettes provided. Much less obviously appreciated is the fact that this interest in continental news reflected official concern about, and involvement in, the wider circulation of material relating to contemporary affairs on the Continent, and a preoccupation with the audiences for news across Europe. The fascination with gazettes, in other words, reveals a concern about European 'publics'.

What seems perfectly clear, therefore, is that English diplomats and politicians became concerned about the ways in which English news was being reported abroad. In January 1639, for example, Secretary of State Sir John Coke explained to Sir William Boswell—English ambassador at The Hague—that

there is advertisement given (though not from yourself) that in a gazette printed at Amsterdam and published everywhere it is noised that the Lord Deputy of Ireland [the earl of Strafford] is recalled, and that thirty Irish lords are come over to charge him with exactions upon the Irish.

²⁶ BL, Add. 78225, fos. 14–66.

²⁷ TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 54; *Dispatches of Thomas Plott*, pp. 134, 224.

Coke also explained that the like "false report is there published and sent to the Gazette of France that the lord Marquis Hamilton is returned out of Scotland where he was implored to quiet the subjects there, but hath therein done no good but rather hurt". In the tense closing months of Charles I's 'personal rule', therefore, as war loomed across the British archipelago, Coke made clear his concern regarding a situation in which "such notoriously false and slanderous rumours should be put in print by the permission of any state". This was something that he considered to be "prejudicial to good government, and of ill consequence", and something that "agreeth not with the correspondence betwixt friends and good neighbours". This was clearly not an isolated incident, moreover, and Coke continued by saying that "you have been often troubled with like complaints".²⁸

Similar concerns would continue to be raised in the decades that followed, not least by men like Sir George Downing. During the early 1660s, therefore, Downing clearly read the *Haarlem Courant* in no small part for its coverage of English events. On one occasion he reported a story "that His Majesty was about selling Jamaica to the Spaniard for a sum of money", while in March 1663 he relayed a story from the same gazette about the capture of English ships off Algiers. In November 1663, meanwhile, he reported reading in the same source "that 20,000 foot and 2,000 horse were up in arms in Scotland against the bishops", adding that this particular gazette "always prints all vile news against His Majesty".²⁹ In November 1664, moreover, Downing noted that "The Haarlem gazetteer very often takes the liberty of decrying very infamously His Majesty and his affairs", adding that "the last week he printed that, whereas Cromwell could in a week have gotten 1,200 seamen in the town of Yarmouth, that His Majesty could not in much more time get above 200".³⁰ And in December 1664, Downing reported that "the Harlomer hath it in his gazette of Monsieur Rivigny his business at London was to follow a negotiation about putting Tangier into the hands of the French".³¹

Such comments raise questions about the precise source of Downing's concern, and about the audiences he had it in mind to protect from malicious and erroneous stories. In part, of course, Downing was almost certainly worried about the possibility that such stories would reach English readers *in England*.

28 TNA, SP 84/155, fo. 22.

29 TNA, SP 84/168, fos. 51, 86v; SP 84/169, fo. 233.

30 TNA, SP 84/173, fo. 34v.

31 TNA, SP 84/173, fo. 72. In July 1665, Downing explained to Arlington that 'The gazettes of this country are every week stuffed with news of prizes taken by their capers': TNA, SP 84/177, fo. 12.

By the Restoration, therefore, the authorities in London were clearly aware that Dutch gazettes were being read “at several coffeehouses” in London, alongside “all manner of Dutch pamphlets”, and that these were “discoursed of at a strange kind of rate”.³² Although Downing did not make the point explicit, he was clearly concerned that efforts to control the domestic news sphere—through the *London Gazette*—might be undermined by an influx of European newspapers. Beyond this, however, it seems clear that the concern also extended to audiences for news in mainland Europe.

Here too, it is evident that the fears which English politicians and diplomats expressed about European gazettes involved English ex-patriots and exiles, and as such it is possible to observe evidence of a desire to influence what news such people received from the old country. This can be observed fairly clearly, for example, from the work of Sir Richard Browne in the 1640s and 1650s, who provides vivid testimony regarding the appetite for news among Englishmen overseas. Browne himself, of course, was an avid reader of English news, substantial supplies of which he acquired from his father, many of whose letters were constructed from “fragments” out of English diurnalls, or else enclosed printed newsbooks.³³ In addition, Browne also received substantial parcels of printed texts, more or less carefully selected from the vast swathe of “factious and frivolous pamphlets” that was beginning to appear, and one letter in December 1642 referred to “a collection ... of the choicest of a few days pamphlets which are here daily cried about the streets”.³⁴ Subsequently, Browne received supplies from any number of other “intelligent friends”.³⁵ More importantly, however, Browne also played a vital role in supplying news-hungry exiles across the Continent with printed material, and became a significant conduit for English printed news. Such activity is intriguing, in part, because so much of this printed material was parliamentary, rather than royalist, which seems to indicate just how reliant royalist exiles were upon printed news, and perhaps also that they were more or less comfortable with handling such texts. More important for our purposes, however, is the possibility of observing the energy with which Browne circulated such material—including the official republican newspaper, *Mercurius Politicus*—across France and Spain.³⁶ In May 1659, for

32 TNA, SP 84/195, fo. 218.

33 BL, Add. 78220, fos. 1, 3, 13, 23.

34 BL, Add. 78220, fos. 14, 38.

35 BL, Add. 78191, fo. 139; Add. 78220, fos. 11, 62; Add. 78223, fo. 9; Add. 78197, fos. 72, 141, 207r–v; Add. 78198, fos. 21, 24.

36 BL, Eg[erton MS] 2536, fos. 344v, 363; Add. 78192, fos. 2, 84, 95; Add. 78193, fos. 25, 31v, 53v; Add. 78194, fos. 44, 56, 66, 67, 70, 71, 119v, 121, 131, 133, 135, 147v, 149–50, 151, 153, 159v, 163v, 165,

example, Browne wrote to Sir Edward Nicholas to say that "I hope your honour hath amongst other pieces lately printed at London a sheet of paper said to be written by Mr Prynne". This circulation of texts within the exiled community is also evident from a December 1647 letter from Nicholas, in which he enclosed "the copy of a paper whereof many were delivered to godly preachers in their pulpits in London the last month". And in June 1650, Richard Steward referred to Browne's circulation of printed material to "the ladies at Caen".³⁷ Similar motivations may also have underpinned the work of Sir Joseph Williamson after the Restoration. In the late 1660s, therefore, he sent copies of the *London Gazette* "constantly" to men like Thomas Higgons and Sir William Temple in The Hague, and in doing so he was clearly responding to local demand. Having received copies of the Gazette in 1672, therefore, Downing asked Williamson to "let me constantly have them from you".³⁸

Beyond the provision of texts for English agents, expatriates and exiles, however, a second and much more intriguing aspect of diplomatic interest in the circulation of printed texts involved concerns regarding the kind of English news that reached a much broader European public. This can be demonstrated very clearly through the papers of Cromwell's secretary of state, John Thurloe, and English diplomats during the Interregnum. Here the logic was made perfectly clear by John Pell, ambassador in Switzerland, who complained about the prevalence of false news on the Continent, and who explained that "if His Highness [Cromwell] do now send forth any public ministers, the greatest part of their time and endeavours must be spent in discrediting the false reports of English news abroad".³⁹ Later, moreover, Pell's reasoning was even more explicit, as diplomats like Downing feared the impact that Dutch newspaper reports of English affairs would have upon a *Dutch* audience, not least because of his suspicions regarding the ways in which Dutch gazettes were getting information from, and being used by, the Dutch government. In July 1665, therefore, he expressed concern to Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington, that "All manner of devices are still used to make the people believe that the Dutch prisoners in England are ill-used, to irritate the spirits of the generality of the people, whereby to make them the more willing to serve and contribute in

168v, 171; Add. 78195, fos. 39, 75, 93, 99, 101, 102, 103, 105v, 110, 111, 116, 137v; Add. 78196, fo. 31, 32, 42; 93; Add. 78191, fo. 133; Add. 78197, fo. 98; Add. 78197, fo. 66; Add. 78198, fos. 12, 15, 19, 21, 24, 86; Add. 15858, fo. 13; Eg. 2534, fo. 58.

37 BL, Eg. 2536, fo. 413; Add. 78194, fo. 66; Add. 78199, fo. 17.

38 TNA, SP 84/185, fos. 31, 87, 142; SP 84/188, fo. 6.

39 *The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. Robert Vaughan, 2 vols. (London, 1839), 1: 96, 159–60.

person and purse". He also reflected on how information from the Dutch ambassador in London, Van Gogh, was making its way into the Dutch press, saying that "from thence all the Gazettes of the country speak the same language".⁴⁰ In March 1665, moreover, he blamed men like Van Gogh for having "animated their people by their gazettes and libels concerning the cruelty of the English to their people". There was clear concern, in other words, about the ways in which Dutch gazettes were being used "to keep up the hearts of the people".⁴¹

As such, the question arose of how to counter such problems, not least by circulating different texts containing a different version of recent events. In no small part this meant the circulation of English texts on the Continent. Thurloe, for example, was heavily involved in organising the Europe-wide distribution of printed literature, including not just official declarations and protectoral speeches, much of which was translated into different languages and printed abroad in order to "undeceive and disabuse" local governors, but also newspapers like *Politicus*.⁴² And here the aim was not just to supply ambassadors like Pell and Samuel Morland with news from England. It was also to ensure that such material was dispersed more widely. Thurloe once told Pell, therefore, that he would "do well to disperse it [news] as much as may be, and in the language of the country", and Pell both circulated Latin texts and translated material into Dutch, in order to be "sent ... to the burgomaster and others to read".⁴³

This is where things got tricky, however, and where English ambassadors and their superiors in London faced considerable challenges, and successive regimes in London encountered a serious problem in relation to the distribution and dispersal of English texts across mainland Europe. To the extent that the audience for English material involved princes and magistrates, the challenge was to ensure that a text like *Politicus* could be used to address different audiences, in terms of serving the government's needs in England without offending European governments. As overseer of *Politicus*, therefore, Thurloe certainly received complaints from English diplomats about its content. In March 1655, for example, the English ambassador in Sweden, Bulstrode Whitelocke, explained that he was "sorry that so much of our letters from

40 TNA, SP 84/177, fo. 27.

41 TNA, SP 84/179, fo. 34; SP 84/195, fo. 63v.

42 CSPD 1651–2, p. 350; Philip Aubrey, *Mr Secretary Thurloe: Oliver Cromwell's Secretary of State 1552–1660* (London: Athlone Press, 1989), p. 58; *Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 1: 62, 103, 324, 2: 47; BL, Add 4365, fo. 179v; Add. 4364, fos. 145, 145v, 146, 152v.

43 *Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 1: 36, 44–5, 217, 259, 265, 295, 319, 320, 380; 2: 45, 56, 254, 258, 306.

Uppsala are printed, especially of discourse between the Queen and me", adding that "they have here the weekly diurnalls, and are not well pleased with them".⁴⁴ In November 1655, meanwhile, John Dury provided chapter and verse about the passages in a recent issue of *Politicus* which he thought undermined his irenicist mission on the Continent. Dury explained to Thurloe, therefore, that

I desire that *Mercurius Politicus* may not characterise me when he makes extracts, as he hath done in his news on Thursday October 11th to Thursday October 18th 1655 in his pages 5689, 5690, and 5691, where the circumstantial matters point me so out, as that I may suffer thereby hereafter.⁴⁵

Similarly, in August 1656, John Pell explained that the Protestant cantons in Switzerland desired that their news should not be publicised, and asked "that nothing of them might be put into English courants and mercuries, as being not yet ripe for the public view". Indeed, Pell was forthright in suggesting that *Politicus* "deserved to be thoroughly sifted and well circumstantiated, before it be printed by public authority".⁴⁶

In other words, there was a potential downside to the availability of English texts on the Continent, particularly in terms of the response from European regimes. During the Restoration, therefore, English diplomats occasionally expressed concern about the way in which intelligence which they had sent to London was being used in English newspapers. In June 1670, for example, Sir William Temple told Sir Joseph Williamson that he "must once more desire of you that they may not fall into the hands of the ordinary intelligencer, to use [at] his own discretion in drawing what he will out of them for furnishing his gazette". Temple explained, therefore, that a recent edition of the *London Gazette* had "set down the particular business and instruction of Monsieur Van der Tockt upon his return to Brussels", adding that

some such particulars before in your gazette had very near broke off my intelligence, and I should be very sorry to lose it, because he gives me what passes in the states of Holland as well as [the States] General, which

44 *Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 1: 320; Bodl[eian Library, Oxford], MS Rawl. A.24, p. 61.

45 BL, Add. 4365, fo. 339v; *Mercurius Politicus*, 279 (11–18 October 1655), pp. 5689–91. There was no direct evidence about Dury in this edition of *Politicus*, although readers may well have been able to make the connection.

46 *Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 2: 10, 47–8.

is not usual, and besides it would be very hard getting another at this time, upon the late rout among the clerks.⁴⁷

The same problem plagued William Blathwayt, who explained his inability to send intelligence from the Low Countries in July 1671 by saying that this was caused by the fact that “several things have been lately printed in the English diurnall”. Blathwayt singled out the issue of the *London Gazette* for 18–22 May 1671, which reported domestic machinations between various provinces over the status of the Prince of Orange, and which, he said, “have so highly offended the States General, in whose assembly that Gazette was read”. His fear, moreover, was that “the person that furnishes us with the intelligence has declared that he dares not venture any further, especially now [that] his quarter [i.e. quarterly pay] is at an end”. Blathwayt concluded that he would only be able to mollify his intelligencer, and thus retain his well-paid services, “with an assurance of a better management for the future of his advices”.⁴⁸

One potential solution to this problem—the problem of how to use one text to address multiple audiences—was to produce foreign language newspapers, and during the 1650s the English government evidently backed—or indeed ran—a French language newsbook—*Nouvelles Ordinaires de Londres*—which was designed for European consumption. Even here, however, problems could arise. In July 1656, for example, Samuel Morland asked that this particular “gazetteer” should be “admonished to write with more civility, and in terms better befitting so great a prince as his royal highness of Savoy”. Later, John Pell expressed similar concern about the risk that *Nouvelles Ordinaires* would offend the Duke of Savoy and Piedmontese grandees—who were known to be following press coverage of the sufferings of Waldensians—and complained about specific issues of the paper which he believed might cause “some great mischief” to be done to “that poor people”.⁴⁹

Beyond this, however, concerns regarding the continental impact of a variety of different texts—from republican newspapers like *Politicus* to Scottish covenanter propaganda and foreign language pamphlets—also provoked

47 TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 104.

48 TNA, SP 84/187, fo. 79; *London Gazette*, 575 (18–22 May 1671). Later, another complaint was made from Rotterdam about impact of passages in the *Gazette*: TNA, SP 84/195, fos. 123v–4. For the management of the *London Gazette*, see: Alan Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II, 1660–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Alan Marshall, ‘Sir Joseph Williamson and the conduct of administration in Restoration England’, *Historical Research*, 69 [168] (1996), pp. 18–41.

49 *Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 1: 441; 2: 285–7, 301–2, 323, 333.

attempts to adopt rather different tactics for manipulating the European public sphere.⁵⁰ And while historians have long been aware that English diplomats sought to suppress various texts that emerged from European presses, attention has focused almost exclusively upon works that were being produced by English exiles in order to be imported into England, rather than upon neutralising the impact of texts that were printed in Europe and aimed at European audiences.

That European rather than domestic audiences became an increasingly important part of English diplomatic endeavours in relation to print culture is evident from the work of Sir Richard Browne in the 1640s and 1650s, at least in relation to topical pamphlets, if not necessarily to newsbooks. Browne's papers reveal that he became immersed in the business of suppressing unfavourable books, as well as in the business of translating, printing and dispersing more desirable works, and such activities clearly involved considerable expense.⁵¹ He seems to have been involved, therefore, in translating and publishing *History of the Kings Majesties Affairs in Scotland* (1648), by James Graham, marquis of Montrose, and the secretary of state in exile, Sir Edward Nicholas, certainly thanked Browne for sending him a copy of the book in April 1648, saying that he hoped to find more truth in it "than we are usually meet with in the relations of the feuds and factions of that nation, for certainly the author of it is a person of much honour and nobleness".⁵² Most importantly, Browne also became involved in the European audience for *Eikon Basilike*. In part, he sought to suppress unwelcome, unauthorised and unfavourable French translations of the "king's book", notably the one by Francois de Marsys, whose determination to rally French support for the royalist cause led to the unfortunate portrayal of Charles I as a Catholic. Browne thus oversaw the preparation of an account of "scandalous passages, false traductions, and contradictions in Marsys book styled *Les Memoires*", and was instructed to publish a censure of such books, but he also supported attempts to ensure that the original text could be "delivered to the world in a language common to the most part of the world". As such, he became involved with the work of a rival translator, Monsieur Testard; he was charged with "avowing and approving" Testard's books in public, and he was told to show "respect and kindness" to Testard himself, and indeed to "any other whom he shall employ for the publishing

50 BL, Eg. 2534, fo. 34; Add. 78198, fo. 89; Add. 78195, fo. 137.

51 BL, Add. 78225, fos. 13v, 19, 21v, 22, 24v, 31, 32, 35v, 44v, 57v, 60v.

52 BL, Add. 78194, fos. 69, 70. See: I[acobi] G[reaemi] *De rebus auspiciis* (Amsterdam, 1647), and edition published by J. Bessin in Paris, 1648; *The History of the King's Majesties Affaires in Scotland* (trans. G. Wishart, Amsterdam, 1649).

thereof, as may agree with his and their just desires, or your careful and reasonable performance".⁵³ Most intriguing of all, perhaps, are Browne's activities in response to a "villainous false" parliamentary declaration from January 1648, which involved a highly personal attack upon Charles I. Here, Nicholas's letters reveal a determination to issue a reply, and the hope that this should be "translated and published", and Browne certainly received copies of an English edition for dispersal in Paris.⁵⁴

Such efforts by Browne notwithstanding, this kind of concern becomes much more readily apparent from the Anglo-Dutch context in the early 1680s. Here, the problem faced by Charles II's government involved the zeal with which English Whigs circulated news (and other texts) in the Low Countries, not least through "phanatick" booksellers like Stephen Swart and widow Browning (or Brouning), whose shops were frequented by "all the phanatick English and Dutch merchants, and there for a stiver apiece read the news, which afterwards is spread upon the Exchange", or in the coffeehouse. And key here was Benjamin Harris's Whig newspaper, the *Domestick Intelligence*, new supplies of which were said to arrive at the shops of Swart and Browning "every post".⁵⁵ From there, of course, such texts could circulate much more widely, and from Amsterdam—a well-known hub for printed texts and news—William Carr reported that texts like these made their way to places like Heidelberg, and did "great hurt" across northern Europe. His determination to remedy this situation, however, was clear from his promise that "I shall not be silent so long as I see them here".⁵⁶

What Charles II's government faced, therefore, was the prospect of undesirable texts being used by English and Scottish Whigs—either in English, French or Dutch—to address not just English audiences at home and abroad, but also native audiences in the Low Countries and beyond. As such, attempts were fairly frequently made to prevent these texts from appearing and circulating. And in this battle for public opinion on the continental mainland it became perfectly clear that English diplomats could not necessarily rely on the Dutch

53 BL, Eg. 2547, fos. 1, 5, 7r–v, 9–10v, 11–13. See: *Les Memoires de Feu Roy de la Grand Bretagne*, trans. Marsys (Paris, 1649). See also: *Le Proces, l'adiournement personel, l'interrogatoire, et l'arrest de mort du roy d'Angleterre* (Paris, 1649); *Eikon Basilike. Le Pourtraict du Roy* (Paris, 1649).

54 BL, Add. 78194, fos. 67–8, 69, 72, 75. Nicholas also referred to a 'journal of the business of [La] Rochelle'—the abortive English attempt to raise Louis XIII's siege of La Rochelle in 1628—which was 'printed lately in French', and which 'doth sufficiently vindicate His Majesty for doing the best he could for their relief': BL, Add. 78194, fo. 75.

55 BL, Add. 37981, fos. 2v, 6, 10v, 12v, 35v, 58; TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 160.

56 BL, Add. 37981, fos. 10v, 12v, 35v.

authorities to take action in response to official complaints, and that as a result they tended to resort to more pro-active measures.⁵⁷ In December 1663, for example, Sir George Downing reported that "so gross and filthy a mistake" had been made in a recent issue of the Haarlem gazette, according to which "the Duke of York had been at the sessions in the Old Baily and was there found guilty [of Catholicism], but had since conformed himself to the church". Downing explained that he had duly "complained thereof to De Witt" [Johan de Witt, grand pensionary of the States of Holland], adding that "thereupon the said Gazetier hath in this last Tuesday's book printed that it was a mistake and that it ought to have been the Earl of Bristol". However, Downing also noted that "this gazetier still puts in one thing or another to the disreputation of His Majesty and his affairs and in this very last Tuesday's book wherein he made this recantation he put that the phanaticks had another design on foot in the north".⁵⁸

Faced with such difficulties, men like William Carr sought to pursue a more proactive and positive approach to the task of managing news and opinion in Europe. Carr, therefore, provided local burgomasters with his own version of the news, as supplied from Whitehall, "which doth much in taking off the belief of those phanatick papers".⁵⁹ His task, in other words, was to "undeceive" the Dutch, and it seems clear from his expenses that this involved translating English texts into both French and Dutch, getting them "printed and published at Amsterdam" and given "to the boys to cry on the Dam", and indeed produced in sufficient quantities to be dispersed across northern Europe. Both Carr and Thomas Chudleigh claimed that such tactics were "extremely necessary", in order to the "settling a good and right understanding" in the Dutch republic. The result was that they increasingly found themselves engaged in a paper war on Dutch soil, between different English factions, and in relation to English affairs, and they both professed that, as a result, "His Majesty's interest doth daily increase", not just amongst the magistrates, but also "amongst the people".⁶⁰ Indeed, Carr became somewhat boastful about the impact of his work. On one occasion, therefore, he reflected on how people in the Hague

formerly were possessed with a very bad opinion of our king, and the affairs of England, and were always mutinous against our king and court,

57 BL, Add. 37981, fo. 6.

58 TNA, SP 84/168, fo. 181.

59 BL, Add. 37981, fos. 3, 12r-v.

60 TNA, SP 84/217, fo. 80v; SP 84/216, fo. 161; BL, Add. 41809, fo. 100r-v; Add. 35104, fo. 11v; Add. 37981, fos. 27, 32, 36, 42, 68.

crying up as an idol the Parliament, declaring it not safe to make any alliances with the king, except the Parliament were therein joined, and printed arguments to engage the states rather to make alliances with France unless the Parliament were concerned, etc.

He felt able to conclude, however, that as a result of his efforts “this city is wholly changed”:

they now admire the king for both a wise and a just prince, and are convinced that the Parliament have been too hot and indiscrete in their votes and other things. They much applause the unanswerable declaration of His Majesty which plainly showed to the world that His Majesty rules by law, and desireth so to do, and on the contrary the Parliament who pretendeth much to observe the law yet broke through all and acted more like a number of Marcenelles met together, who was for altering the fundamental laws, right or wrong, therefore our magistrates say that they admire the long patience of our king in letting them sit so long as they did.⁶¹

III Manipulating the European Public Sphere

Such evidence suggests that English diplomatic efforts to engage with European publics involved not merely the distribution of texts to news-hungry English men and women, but also attempts to reach wider audiences and local communities. And while this could be done in any number of ways, it became increasingly clear that the circulation and even translation of texts that had initially been intended for an English audience might not prove adequate, and that it was necessary to respond to the kinds of texts that were being produced across Europe for a continental readership, either by trying to ensure that such works were suppressed, or by endeavouring to secure the publication of more satisfactory texts. Indeed, the evidence from diplomatic papers indicates that English officials were particularly exercised by European gazettes, and by the need to ‘undeceive’ their readers. Ultimately, the logic behind such concerns and practices led English diplomats to become concerned about, and involved in, much more subtle attempts to manipulate European newspapers, in a variety of different ways.

61 TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 159r–v. The precise allusion here is unclear, but seems to involve a reference to disorderly subjects from Marcinelle, near Charleroi during the early phase of the Dutch revolt.

In part, this involved observing, and learning from, the example set by others, in terms of how political pressure could be exerted to control or silence European newspapers. In February 1645, for example, Sir Richard Browne noted having learned about the creation of a new Italian gazette in Turin, and about how this was immediately "suppressed by the French ambassador's order ... to show his authority, and that nothing of that nature shall be published here without his participation".⁶² In 1671, William Blathwayt monitored the appearance of "a scandalous French gazette" in the Low Countries, especially because of its claims that "His Majesty [Charles II] was sending an embassy to the Pope, to declare himself a Catholic". He was doubtless pleased to be able to report, therefore, that this particular gazette had quickly been "suppressed by the magistrates of Amsterdam, and the author forbidden to write any more".⁶³ And in June 1677, Roger Meredith noted the suppression of "the French gazeteer of Amsterdam", upon a complaint from the city of Groningen, "of his having in one of his late gazettes written very scandalous things of that city upon occasion of the differences between them and the Ommelands" (the areas around the city within the province of Groningen).⁶⁴

Ultimately, however, the attempt to use diplomatic means to manipulate the Dutch public sphere also meant trying to mimic such tactics, and to do so in ways that might be more subtle. This was first recommended to Sir William Boswell by Sir John Coke in 1639, in response to the unfavourable accounts of English news in continental newspapers that have already been mentioned. Coke explained, therefore, that "I am well assured you have done your best in protesting against this licentious writing", and he added that "All therefore that can now [be] expected from you is that you would use some diligence to find out from what kind of people these malicious lies do proceed, that we may the better discover their practices which are fomented by these arts".⁶⁵ In the late 1640s and 1650s such attempts to can be shown to have been made episodically by both royalists and republicans. In March 1648, for example, Royalists who were fearful about the impact of old stories that Charles I had been complicit in the murder of his father, James I, prepared a "true relation" of the incident, and Sir Richard Browne was ordered to "procure the said answer to be with all diligence and care translated into French and put into the next [French] Gazette".⁶⁶ This had apparently already been done in the Dutch republic,

62 BL, Add. 78193, fo. 133v.

63 TNA, SP 84/187, fo. 67r-v.

64 TNA, SP 84/205, fo. 3v.

65 TNA, SP 84/155, fo. 22.

66 BL, Add. 78194, fos. 73, 75.

“where it hath given great satisfaction”, and Secretary Nicholas worried that parliamentary diplomats were hard at work in Paris “to put many things in print in French to the disadvantage of the king”. Nicholas added, therefore, that “lately (I am told) there is printed in French the four Articles or Acts, and propositions sent by the rebels to the king to the Isle of Wight; but not the king’s pious, just and magnanimous answer to the same”. He concluded by wondering “how this comes to pass I cannot imagine, or by whose procurement”, although he suspected the involvement of the parliamentary ambassador in Paris, René Augier.⁶⁷ Eventually, in mid-May 1648, Browne succeeded in meeting these demands, and Nicholas thanked him for “procuring the true relation of King James his death to be put into this week’s gazette”. Pleased with this success, indeed, copies were evidently sent to other diplomats across Europe, “that they may within their circles make use of it”, and also despatched to Denmark and Hamburg, “and all parts where you hold correspondence”.⁶⁸ Others too recognised that it was possible to influence the content—rather than merely the survival—of European newsbooks. In October 1654, for example, John Pell explained to John Thurloe that, having complained about press stories relating to England which had emerged from Cologne, he had persuaded the authorities in the Swiss cantons that he would provide “the printer of news” with “truer intelligence” every week, “by London letters”.⁶⁹ Similar concerns also seem to be evident during the Restoration. Writing from Nijmegen in March 1676, therefore, Sir Leoline Jenkins sought evidence with which to refute stories in a local gazette about English soldiers serving in the French army, and worried that the story also appeared “in the Nuremberg gazette”.⁷⁰

During the Restoration, indeed, links between English officials and European gazettes occasionally became much more systematic, as information was exchanged between Whitehall and men like Abraham Casteleyn of the *Haarlem Courant* on a regular basis.⁷¹ This was not entirely free from risk, of course, and in the early 1660s, ambassador Downing seems not just to have been kept in the dark about the feeding of intelligence to Casteleyn, but also to have been fearful of its consequences. In November 1663, therefore, he wrote:

67 BL, Add. 78194, fos. 74, 76, 77.

68 BL, Add. 78194, fos. 75, 77, 79.

69 BL, Add 4365, fo. 140; *Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*, 1: 65–6.

70 TNA, SP 84/200, fo. 420.

71 Peter Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State and their Monopoly of Licensed News* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 43–6, 54n, 84, 90–1, 102–3; TNA, SP 101/51.

"pray tell Mr Williamson that always, word for word, I find in this gazette the same news he sends me". Having apparently been unaware that stories were being fed to the Dutch newsbooks, Downing also urged caution, noting that "several church matters" in such papers

were very fit to be known, yet by no means fit to be published in this Presbyterian country, as for example that concerning ministers in Scotland their preaching against order, and being proceeded against for it.⁷²

Subsequently, in November 1664, Downing felt compelled once again to express concern about how English officials were distributing to Dutch journalists material that ought to have been dispersed discretely to diplomats like himself, noting that "what was written to me by my lord chancellor the week before he had the same in his book".⁷³

Beyond the potential problems involved in gauging which stories to feed, surreptitiously, to Dutch journalists, it also became clear that English governments faced the problem that they were not alone in trying to influence the Dutch gazettes. Here, the challenge faced by English diplomats became particularly acute during, and after, the Exclusion Crisis, as English 'phanaticks' likewise sought to manipulate Dutch newspapers, in order to serve their own political interests. In October 1680, therefore, Thomas Plott explained that "the scum of the fanatics of England and Scotland" had "vented their malice in print", by "getting it inserted" in the Rotterdam gazette "that the affairs of England were in such confusion that a revolt was daily expected".⁷⁴ Similar letters were sent on other occasions, and in December 1683 Sir Roger L'Estrange—the Restoration government's press mastermind—expressed concern that a paper which the republican author and plotter, Algernon Sidney, had delivered from the scaffold had been printed in the "*Harlem Courant* ... at length".⁷⁵ Here too, the English government faced a severe problem. Thus, although the Dutch ambassadors in London promised that action would be taken against their gazetteers, they also warned that such men "take a liberty to revile their own state as well as foreign nations", and there is some evidence

72 TNA, SP 84/168, fo. 86v.

73 TNA, SP 84/173, fo. 34v. See also: Fraser, *Intelligence*, p. 73.

74 TNA, SP 84/216, fos. 52–3.

75 TNA, SP 84/217, fo. 39; *Dispatches of Thomas Plott*, p. 95; TNA, SP 29/435, fo. 98. See: *The Very Copy of a Paper Delivered to the Sheriffs upon the Scaffold ... on Friday Decemb. 7. 1683* (London, 1683, Wing S3766).

that the complaints made to local magistrates fell on deaf ears, or else resulted in only half-hearted responses.⁷⁶

Another option was to make approaches—perhaps even threatening approaches—to particular editors. William Carr certainly made a personal visit to Casteleyn in March 1681, following some undesirable coverage that the latter had given to English affairs, and Casteleyn apparently “promised never to commit such a fault more”.⁷⁷ And such tactics were clearly not uncommon.⁷⁸ However, the processes involved in monitoring the Dutch press and making such interventions would obviously have been painful and time-consuming, not least because so many editors were shady figures who were hard to identify and locate, and they also might not even work. Having assumed that Casteleyn would become “one of the kindest relators of our affairs”, by means of such a “sharp rebuke”, therefore, Thomas Chudleigh soon discovered that the editor of the *Haarlem Courant* had fallen back into his old ways, thereby making in necessary to “observe the gazettes” with more care.⁷⁹ Observing the gazettes, in other words, could involve not just acquiring information, but also ensuring that they stayed on-message. Alternatively, the English could try to “furnish the gazette on that side with news that might be for your service”, and the Dutch ambassadors in London seemed confident that such offers would be fairly readily accepted.⁸⁰

IV Conclusion

Such evidence regarding attempts to manipulate the content of European gazettes brings us, as it did English diplomats, to the logical conclusion of the story of the diplomacy of news in the seventeenth century, in terms of the kinds of practices that were devised to engage with continental news culture. This engagement involved consuming, reading and thinking about European texts, as well as attempts to influence the flows of texts across state borders, and the circulation of information around mainland Europe. But it also involved attempts to influence the European public sphere, and its more or less discrete component parts, through censorship, translation and localised

76 BL, Add. 35104, fo. 59; TNA, SP 84/216, fos. 52–3; SP 84/217, fo. 39; SP 104/68, fos. 27v–8; *Dispatches of Thomas Plott*, pp. 95, 140–1.

77 BL, Add. 37981, fo. 9; TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 150v.

78 BL, Add. 41823, fo. 22.

79 TNA, SP 84/217, fo. 84r–v; *Dispatches of Thomas Plott*, p. 142.

80 TNA, SP 104/68, fos. 27v–28; *Dispatches of Thomas Plott*, pp. 140–1.

printing, all of which involved a considerable investment of time and money on the part of English diplomats. At their most subtle, indeed, these diplomats sought to wield power in the softest of possible ways, by influencing not merely magistrates and officials, but also the editors of particular gazettes. The more subtle they became, of course, the greater are the challenges involved in tracing their practices and tactics, and establishing the degree of success that they (or indeed their Whig opponents) achieved. Equally difficult is the task of fathoming the political strategies that underpinned contemporary attempts to manipulate European publics, although there are at least occasions when diplomatic reasoning becomes clear. Thomas Plott and William Carr, for example, can be shown to have been concerned about the impact on both the Dutch government and people of reports—not least that were being spread by English Whigs—about the state of affairs in England, and about the instability of Charles II's regime. It was thought to matter, therefore, not just that "a good union" between the king and his people should be maintained, but also that such a 'union' should be perceived to exist amongst citizens of the United Provinces, in order that Charles might become "master of all the affairs of Europe". And it was also recognised that a watchful eye needed to be kept on the diplomatic machinations of the French, who would seek to capitalise on any evidence—perceived or real—regarding the king's weakness, in order to renew their own pressure on the Dutch. And at the same time concerns were also expressed about stories in the Dutch media that Charles might seek to unite his people by pursuing a war strategy, perhaps even by renewing hostilities in the Low Countries. Indeed, it was a report to this effect in the *Haarlem Courant* that prompted Carr to pay his visit to Casteleyn.⁸¹ As such, and as Carr himself explained, the goal was not just to "undeceive the Amsterdamers from believing our English phanaticks", but also to undo damage that was being done to Charles II's interests in the Dutch public sphere by "the French emissary's designs in this country". His aim, in short, was to ensure that the mood in the Dutch republic continued to favour an alliance with England, rather than with Louis XIV.⁸² It was precisely these concerns which help to explain why Carr spent so much government money on "printing and composing several small books and letters in French and Dutch to disperse amongst the states and cities", on "Gazettes and Letters from all parts", on "travelling to ... several cities and places, and employing people to disperse papers", and on getting

81 TNA, SP 84/216, fos. 52–3, 150v; BL, Add. 37981, fo. 9.

82 BL, Add. 37981, fo. 68; TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 161.

“news and intelligence how the French ambassador and his emisaries did proceed”.⁸³

Thus, however difficult it might be to fathom English diplomatic tactics and strategies, it also seems clear that doing so forms an essential part of understanding the relationship between news and the shape of Europe in the seventeenth century. This is because contemporaries were aware that news—and the texts by which it was carried—travelled across the Continent; aware that it was important to influence a variety of European publics; and aware that there were various ways for states to influence transnational phenomena. Not the least of the tasks which the seventeenth century diplomat sought to undertake, in other words, was to grapple with the existence of overlapping and interlocking communities of opinion, not least by making intelligencers and gazetteers their ‘friends’ and ‘pensioners’.

83 TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 162.