CHAPTER 6

Politics, Public and the Periodical Press in the Low Countries

On 18 August 1656 the *Haegsche Weekelycke Mercurius* featured a report from The Hague. It presented nine different developing news stories, each summarised in a single sentence:

> From Danzig there is word of an engagement in which the Swedes have suffered many casualties, baggage, and a canon. Smilinski has proposed to bring 100,000 men to the Swedish cause, promising that they will be content with plunder rather than wages. The prince of Transylvania has offered the same. In Königsberg the city walls are being reinforced.
>
> There are no tidings regarding the state of Latvia. The plague is spreading rapidly through upper Poland. A Turkish ambassador has arrived in Stettin. 600 Englishmen have arrived in Stade. The Imperial army is marching out of Silesia to support the Poles, and all farmers' horses there have been confiscated to pull the cannons.[1]

This was not particularly unusual.[2] Seventeenth-century newspapers could be puzzling and demanding: they did not present a coherent chronological narrative of events. Sometimes newspapers included lengthier narrative pieces, such as an ambassador's speech, a foreign ordinance or an account of a battle, but the majority of the newspaper was given over to a variety of divergent and often disconnected news stories, many only one or two lines long. Like the report in the *Haegsche Weekelycke Mercurius* above, the reader required a fairly firm understanding of the affairs at hand in order to grasp the report's meaning. Readers had to be familiar with commander Smilinksi; with the location and importance of Stade (a small city a few miles from Hamburg); and the reason why the Imperial army would be marching towards Silesia to support the Poles. Little explanation, context or analysis was offered in the columns of the newspaper. Courantiers rarely offered discursive thoughts on the relative importance of particular news reports. There was generally little attempt to do things that would seem natural to journalists today, such as identifying the most important stories by giving them headlines or a more prominent place in the running order. The newspaper reader had to follow stories spread across several weeks or months in order to see them to conclusion—and even then a newspaper might cut short a story without further explanation.

By the end of the seventeenth century the fledgling newspaper reader could rely on special handbooks to assist them with their weekly newspaper. In 1692 the British historian Laurence Echard first published the *Gazetteer's, or News-man's interpreter*, a guidebook with an index of place names used in newspapers. A steady seller, Echard's guide went through seventeen editions in sixty years.[3] In 1732 the *Staats- en Koeranten Tolk* offered to Dutch readers a similar reference work, directly inspired by the popularity of the English *Gazetteer*.[4] We have already met Johann Hermann Knoop, the author of the *Kort onderwys, hoedanig men de Couranten best lezen en gebruiken kan*, the first Dutch handbook on newspaper reading, published in 1758.[5] Knoop considered the purpose of his guide to aid the "normal man, whether a peasant or a citizen, who cannot read and understand the newspaper the same as a lettered person, while many of them do wish to do so …."[6] It is already significant that Knoop imagined citizens of relatively modest social standing, even country folk, as among the newspapers' clientele. This was a notable change since the earliest days of newspaper publication at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

While Knoop praised the newspaper as one of the most important sources of information for those wishing to remain in touch with current events, he acknowledged that newspaper reading could be complicated, and required some preparation. According to Knoop, the competent newspaper reader had to satisfy the following six conditions:

1. To be able to read
2. To understand the jargon of the newspaper

1 *Numero 72. Haegsche Weeckelijcke Mercurius, vervattende alle gedenckweerdigste advysen van geheel Europa*. 18.08.1656.

2 See appendix F for full translations of four seventeenth-century newspapers.

3 Laurence Echard, *The Gazetteer's, or News-man's Interpreter* (17th ed., London, S. and E. Ballard, et. al., 1751).

4 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, p. 55.

5 See chapters 1 and 5 above. See also Broersma, *Beschaafde vooruitgang*, pp. 50–52.

6 Knoop, *Kort onderwys*, p. 4.

3. To know the location and importance of the most prominent towns and places mentioned in the newspaper
4. To read the newspaper regularly in order to understand it
5. Trust the writer or publisher of the newspaper
6. Pass rational judgement on the newspaper and evaluate its contents[7]

Knoop's conditions create a particular model of news consumption. The reader is presumed to be rational, critical and knowledgeable. Above all, the reader must follow the newspaper regularly, and must do so with tenacity. Enlightenment commentators like Knoop saw the newspaper as a sober tool of instruction and guidance, and its audience as inquisitive and attentive. But such presumptions are not wholly reflective of early modern readers and their interests. Newspapers were not only purchased for rational auto-didacticism; they could entertain or bore, provide bonding material in a coffeehouse or at the bourse, or be a means to achieve a higher social standing.

Reading the News

Scholars have recently begun to address the complicated task of reconstructing early modern reading habits and tastes. It is clear that there did not exist a single newspaper reading public with shared values or perceptions.[8] Joad Raymond, discussing English newsbooks of the 1640s, emphasises that "people of all literate classes" read news serials, and that readership was "socially and geographically diverse."[9] The high urban density of the Low Countries, especially in the Dutch Republic, stimulated the development of a highly politicised and literate society, certainly in comparison to other regions in Europe. It is estimated that by the middle of the seventeenth century around 60% of Dutch men and 40% of Dutch women could read.[10] Seventeenth-century commentators expressed wonder at the diversity of opinion circulating in the Dutch Republic and the political awareness of its citizenry. On 16 September 1666 Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht wrote in his *Mercurius* that "these days one hears many wondrous things everywhere, in carts and boats, [and] discussions of the present circumstances, and one can only admire the variety of opinions to be overheard."[11] That such discussions captured the imagination of the Dutch public is clear not least from the popular Dutch genre of dialogue-pamphlets: fictional political dialogues set in barges, taverns or houses, in which citizens from across the country debate the pressing issues of the day.[12] In a 1663 dialogue-pamphlet, one of the participants comments that "I used to know a curious person, who kept himself busy by travelling back and forth on the barge between Rotterdam and The Hague, in order to write up all the discussions and news exchanged on the barges."[13] Indeed, the character continued, in the barge "tongues are loose".

Newspapers seem to have played a considerable part in the daily political literature of many Dutch citizens. "Everyone reads them here", the French ambassador to the Dutch Republic, the Count of d'Avaux, sighed in the 1680s.[14] Marcel Broersma and Michiel van Groesen are likewise optimistic in their assessment of the scope of the audience for newspapers, ranging from the regent class to artisans and farmers.[15] How can we discover more about the readers of newspapers and their preferred reading practices? Scholars of early modern reading often turn to marginal annotations to study reactions, reading styles or provenance.[16] Sadly, Dutch and Flemish newspapers from the seventeenth century rarely feature extensive marginalia, unlike some English and Italian newspapers of the same period.[17] In most cases annotations are restricted to underlining or doodling; many newspapers were also used as scrap paper for financial calculations. If annotations are present then they are usually hostile. An issue

7 Ibid.

8 Robert Darnton, 'Writing News and Telling Stories', *Daedalus* 104, No. 2 (1975), p. 182.

9 Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper*, pp. 244, 253.

10 Van Groesen, 'Reading Newspapers', p. 4; Craig E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), pp. 59–60.

11 *Numero LXXIV. Donderdaechsche Mercurius Den 16. September 1666. Nieuwen Stijl*. 16.09.1666.

12 Clazina Dingemanse, *Rap van tong, scherp van pen. Literaire discussiecultuur in Nederlandse praatjespamfletten* (*circa 1600–1750*) (Hilversum, Verloren, 2008).

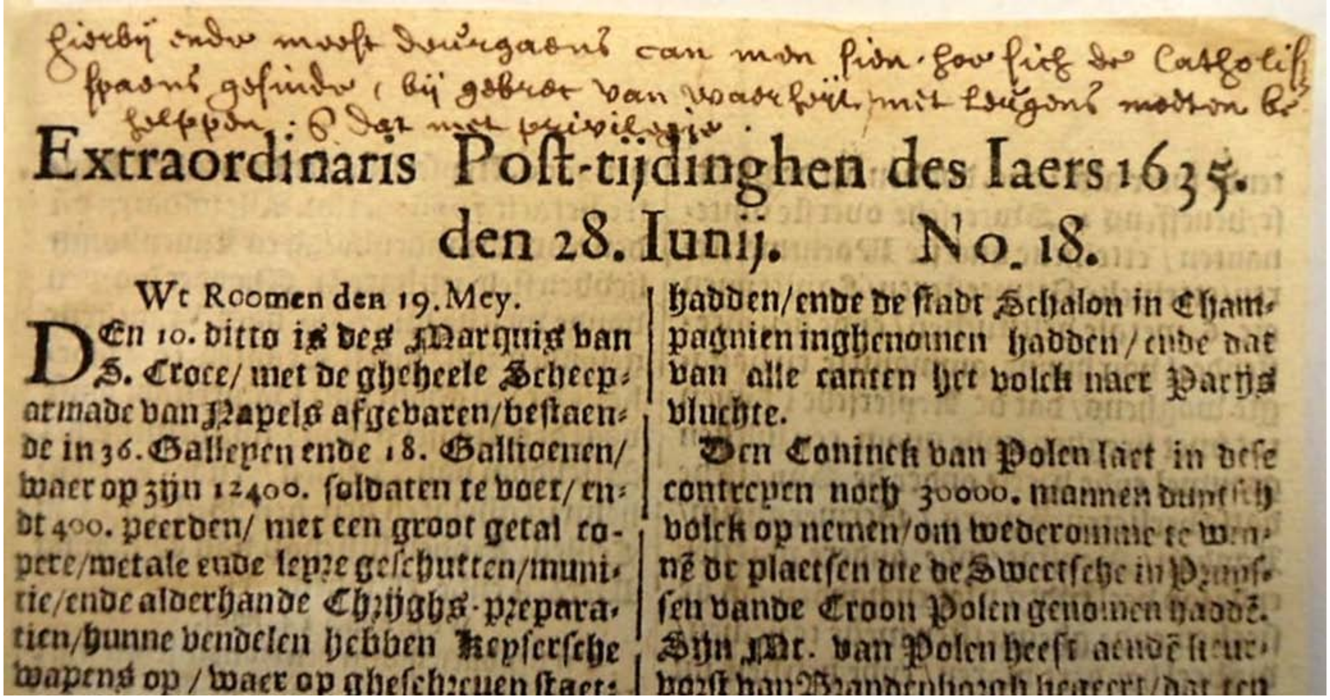
13 *t'Samen-spraeck, tusschen een Rotterdammer en een Geldersman* (Den Bosch, H. Ondanck [= s.l., s.n.], 1663).

14 Cited in Van Groesen, 'Reading Newspapers', p. 9.

15 Broersma, *Beschaafde vooruitgang*, pp. 45–49.

16 See especially Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper*, pp. 264–268 and Raymond 'News networks: putting the "news" and "networks" back in', pp. 6–7; Jeroen Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Dutch Diaries*, trans. Beverley Jackson (Leiden, Brill, 2009).

17 Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper* pp. 264–268; Lamal, *Late with the News*.



Extraordinaris Post-tijdinghen des Iaers 1635. den 28. Iunij. No. 18.

Wt Roomen den 19. Mey.

DEn 10. ditto is des Marquis van S. Croce/ met de gheheele Scheeps-armade van Napels afgevaren/ bestaende in 36. Galleyen ende 18. Gallioenen/ waer op zijn 12400. soldaten te voet/ ende 400. peerden/ met een groot getal copere/metale ende yzere geschutten/munitie/ende alderhande Chrijghs-preparatien/hunne vendelen hebben Keyserlsche wapens op / waer op ghescreven staet-

hadden/ende de stadt Schalon in Champagnien inghenomen hadden/ ende dat van alle canten het volck naer Parijs vluchte.

Den Coninck van Polen laet in dese contreyen noch 30000. mannen duytsch volck op nemen/om wederomme te winne de plaetsen die de Sweetsche in Pruyssen vande Croon Polen genomen hadde. Syn Mt. van Polen heeft aende keurvorst van Brandenborgh begeert/dat

ILLUSTRATION 6.1 *An angry Protestant reader marks his displeasure on this issue of the Antwerp* Extraordinarisse Post-tijdinghe *of 28 June 1635.*
KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET, STOCKHOLM

of the Antwerp *Extraordinarisse Post-tijdinghe* of 28 June 1635, present in the Kungliga Biblioteket in Stockholm, was clearly perused by an unsatisfied Protestant reader (see ill. 6.1). They noted above the title that "Here one can see in abundance how the Catholic Spanish need to help themselves with lies when truth is in short supply."[18] A copy of Abraham Verhoeven's *Courante uyt Duytschlandt* in the same collection contains the note "Vide et ride mendacia Papistica" (Look and laugh at these Papist lies). A copy of the *Opregte Leydse Courant* in the university library in Ghent is twice annotated with the observation that reports in the newspaper were "untrue".[19]

This, though extremely interesting, represents a relatively modest harvest of reader reactions; we are totally without examples of the sympathetic informed reader who responded directly to the reports in their paper by annotating their copy. Without such sources we must look elsewhere to learn more about the market for newspapers in the Dutch Republic. We can, in fact, learn much about the diversity of the audience for newspapers through a careful study of newspaper advertising.[20] As the *Arnhemsche Courant* of 24 February 1864 stated, "Four or five columns of advertisements teach us more about the morals and habits of a society than … a large book may."[21] We are especially blessed by the fact that Dutch newspapers made precocious use of advertising from the early seventeenth century onwards. Every Dutch newspaper had a different advertising profile. Studying the quantity and variety of newspaper advertisements provides some indication of the presumed audience of seventeenth-century newspapers. After all, advertisers had to be confident enough of the circulation and readership of a newspaper in order to pay for the placement of an advertisement. This was a substantial fee: we know from the accounts of the early-eighteenth century *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* that the average price of a standard advertisement of three lines was around 1.5 gulden.[22]

The first three decades of newspaper advertising were dominated by professionals in the book trade. The Amsterdam newsmen of the 1620s, 1630s and 1640s encouraged fellow printers and booksellers to notify colleagues and newspaper readers of their latest publications. Although it took around a decade for the practice to become truly popular, by 1645 the majority of active Dutch publishers had at

18 *Extraordinaris Post-tijdinghen des Iaers 1635. den 28. Junij. No. 18.* 28.06.1635.

19 *Opregte Leydse Maandagse Courant*. 17.07.1690.

20 Der Weduwen and Pettegree, *News, Business and the Birth of Modern Advertising*.

21 Cited in Sautijn Kluit, 'Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Dagbladpers tot 1813', p. 88.

22 NHA, Collectie Enschedé, HBA 3523.

some point advertised in an Amsterdam newspaper.[23] The *Courante uyt Italien* was the platform of choice for most booksellers, but the *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren* and the two Tuesday weeklies, the *Ordinarise Middelweeckse Courante* and *Ordinaris Dingsdaegsche Courante* were also patronised by a wide range of advertising booksellers. The only major paper which rarely featured advertisements was Mathijs van Meininga's *Europische Courant*—an indication that his tri-weekly was less popular with readers.[24] The overwhelming majority of books advertised were vernacular publications: bibles, psalters, almanacs, professional handbooks, emblem books, histories, news pamphlets and poetry. Large scholarly and Latin tomes were largely absent. The booksellers targeted a middling, vernacular readership in a competitive market for everyday literature.

In the 1650s and 1660s the advertising market diversified.[25] Booksellers continued to occupy a prominent position in the newspaper columns, but they were joined by numerous other professionals: Latin and French school masters, brokers, apothecaries, inventors, surgeons and postmasters all took space to advertise their services. Widows and heirs advertised the auction of libraries, art collections and the rarities and curiosities collected by their deceased relatives. These advertisements for goods and services competed for space with public announcements: notifications placed by municipal or regional authorities, or appeals for information or assistance from citizens spread throughout the country. Distraught parents appealed for information about lost children; others looked for friends who had set out on a journey but never arrived at their destination; yet others asked for information about a family member, enslaved for years on the North African coast. On 26 June 1655 an indignant citizen named Claes Jansz placed a notification in the Amsterdam *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren*, complaining that someone had placed a public announcement in last week's *Courante uyt Italien* that Jansz had fled the city with 500 ducats.[26] This, Jansz asserted in the *Tijdinghen*, was certainly not true: he could be found on the Zeedijk if anyone wished to speak with him.

The increasing prominence of advertising and public announcements strengthened the role of newspapers in urban society. Advertisements provided a new reason to read newspapers, and they pulled in new readers. In addition to the goods and services they advertised, advertisements were an interesting source of domestic news. The plaintive appeals for help in the recovery of lost goods brought glimpses of everyday tragedies to which readers could themselves relate; certainly far more easily than the dense and repetitive reports of military manoeuvres on distant fields.

Professional readers also seem to have been highly suggestible. Once one school master or broker had placed an advertisement, others followed suit. While many advertisements for professional services, such as schooling, was aimed firmly at the upper tiers of Dutch society, we also find many public announcements from more humble readers of lesser means. On 5 February 1661 the family of Joost Jansz, a 24-year old shoemaker from East Frisia, announced in the *Courante uyt Italien* that Jansz had gone missing whilst travelling from Groningen to Amsterdam.[27] A year later, on 8 August 1662, the *Ordinaris Dingsdaegsche Courante* carried an appeal concerning a 13-year old boy from Schoonhoven, an apprentice pipe maker, who had run away from home.[28] From a study of these advertisements we can deduce that the Amsterdam and Haarlem papers were popular with a more diverse range of readers. The newspapers of Adriaen Vlacq and Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht in The Hague and Utrecht never featured as many advertisements and public announcements as those in Amsterdam or Haarlem, but those they do carry hint at a wealthier class of readers: announcements regarding the theft of expensive jewellery or the loss of bonds worth thousands of gulden are common.

At the end of the seventeenth century all four remaining Dutch newspapers had different advertising profiles (see fig. 6.1).[29] Undoubtedly, the leader in the market was the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*. Thanks to its decorous publisher, Abraham Casteleyn, the Haarlem tri-weekly had acquired a reputation as the paper of record in the Dutch Republic. By 1670 it was indisputably the most popular paper in the country. It had replaced the Amsterdam papers as the preferred advertising platform for the book trade. The majority of advertisements in the pages of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* related to the publication of books or advertised book auctions—mostly taking place in Leiden, Amsterdam and The Hague. Public announcements came in from across the country: if a child had gone

23 See my article, 'Booksellers, newspaper advertisements'.

24 See chapter 17 in part two.

25 See also my article, 'From piety to profit: the development of newspaper advertising in the Dutch Golden Age', in Paul Goring, Siv Gøril Brandtzaeg and Christine Watson (eds.), *News in an Expanding World* (forthcoming, Leiden, Brill, 2017).

26 *Tijdinge uyt verscheyden Quartieren, 1655. No. 26*. 26.06.1655.

27 *Courante uyt Italien ende Duytslant, &c. 1661. No. 6*. 05.02.1661.

28 *Ordinaris Dingsdaeghsche Courante. No. 32*. 08.08.1662.

29 See also Couvée, 'The administration of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*', p. 102.

FIGURE 6.1 *The number of advertisements and public announcements placed in the four Dutch newspapers available in the Dutch Republic at the end of the seventeenth century*

Newspaper	Surviving issues (excl. variants and special issues)	Number of advertisements (ratio per issue)	Number of public announcements (ratio per issue)
Oprechte Haerlemse Courant, 1670–1700	4,449	10,816 (2.43)	4,704 (1.05)
Amsterdamsche Courant, 1670–1700	2,984	6,727 (2.25)	3,490 (1.16)
Opregte Leydse Courant, 1686–1700	699	1,476 (2.11)	328 (0.47)
Utrechtse Courant, 1675–1700	200	149 (0.74)	73 (0.36)

missing in Leeuwarden or Zwolle, the best chance of finding them rested with the wide circulation of the Haarlem paper. The advertisers of the *Amsterdamsche Courant*, triweekly from 1673, were made up predominantly of a local clientele interested in a local audience. In the 1680s and 1690s the majority of advertisements in the Amsterdam paper concerned local commercial services and auctions in the city, rather than further afield. One could find information on the sale of tobacco, sugar, ships, timber, military equipment, canaries, estates, medicinal potions and playing cards. The *Amsterdamsche Courant* was the newspaper of choice of the professional and merchant class of Amsterdam. On average, the *Amsterdamsche Courant* featured more personal announcements than its Haarlem rival: amidst the hubbub of Amsterdam, it was easy for people and possessions to go missing.

The tri-weekly *Opregte Leydse Courant*, published from 1686, had a very different character. It played a considerable role in the Dutch book trade and market for book auctions, and was popular from its inception with many booksellers throughout the country. Yet it rarely featured public announcements from beyond Leiden and its immediate vicinity. The bi-weekly *Utrechtse Courant* was a true local paper. It was unable to attract many advertisers, and the majority of those who did take advertising space resided in Utrecht itself. Its circulation was clearly more restricted than that of its rivals.

It is clear that readers of seventeenth-century newspapers extended beyond what we may call "professional readers": statesmen, administrators, news writers and merchants. Many readers turned to the news for pleasure or recreation. The philosopher Justus Lipsius, the school master David Beck and the writer P.C. Hooft often read the news for leisure. Reading was a social act which stemmed from the traditional common exchange and discussion of news.[30] To share news was standard decorum in early modern society. When a Florentine diplomat wrote to a colleague in Spain in 1605 he noted that: "I am sending Your Most Illustrious Lordship some page of *avvisi* that I found in the office of the secretariat that you will find useful for a bit of recreation".[31] Hooft would read manuscript letters and newspapers to his guests in Muiden, satisfying "their ears with the taste of tidings."[32] In 1746 there was a "Friendly Society of Neighbours" in Cambridgeshire which met each week to share and read news.[33] Other people read newspapers to find their own names. Bishop Petrus Codde (1648–1710) in Utrecht kept amongst his personal papers his copy of the *Amsterdamsche Courant* of 28 October 1688 where it mentioned that "This week Peter Codde of Amsterdam has been appointed as Bishop of Utrecht, news which has been awaited for two years".[34] An issue of the same paper of 21 January 1676 was proudly preserved in the archive of the noble Van Weede family: the issue mentioned not one, but two members of the family by name in reports from Cologne and Brussels (see ill. 6.2).[35]

Newspapers had a variety of pedagogical uses. A 1658 tract published in Delft complained that the annual salary of a Reformed preacher (500 gulden) was far too low to sustain his household. The tract listed meticulously every single item which a preacher and his wife required throughout the year. This list included newspapers as an essential annual expense, alongside "books, paper, pens, and ink".[36] A preacher might read the newspaper out of

30 Arblaster, '"Dat de boecken vrij sullen wesen"', p. 88.

31 Sheila Barker, '"Secret and Uncertain": A History of *Avvisi* at the Court of the Medici Grand Dukes' in Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, Brill, 2016), p. 738.

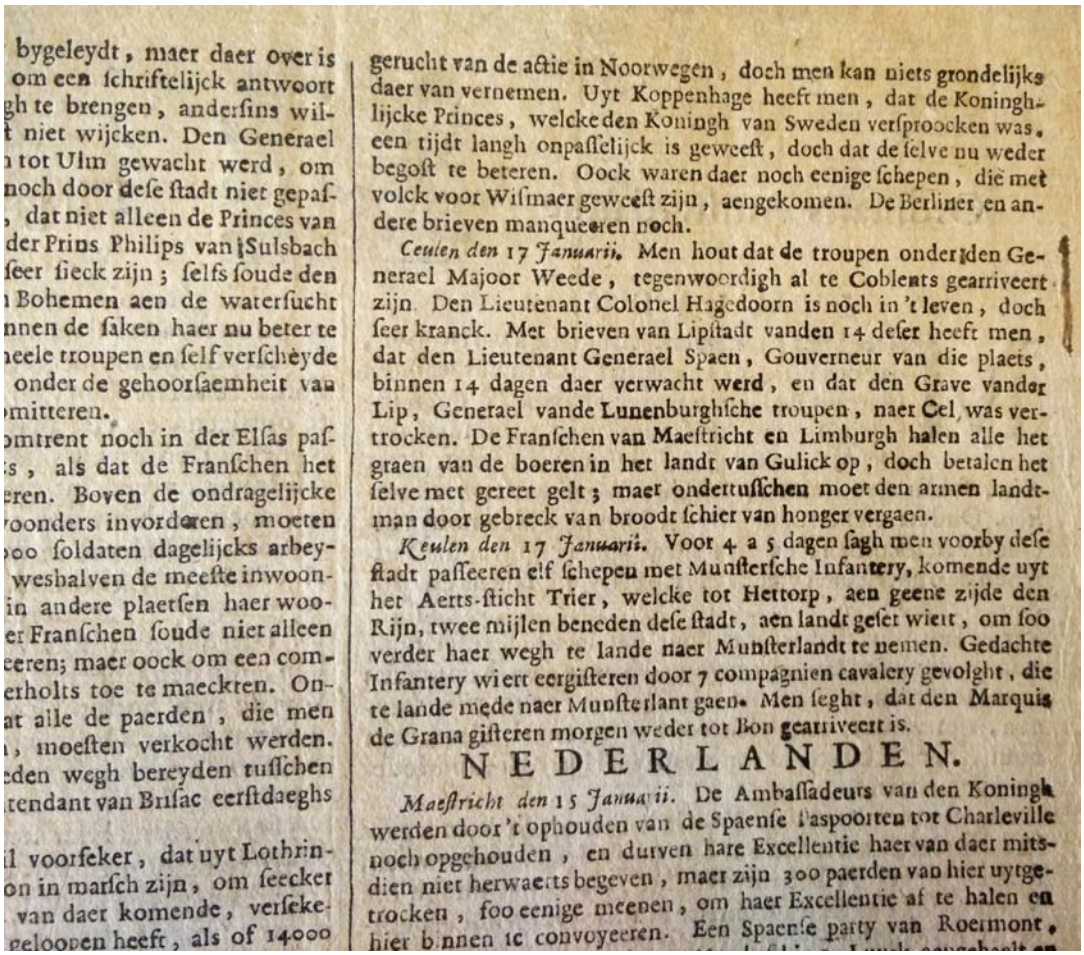
32 Hooft to Joachim de Wicquefort, 12 August 1645, in Van Tricht, *De briefwisseling*, III, pp. 705–706. Also cited in Stolp, *Eerste Couranten*, pp. 83–84.

33 Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, p. 56.

34 Found in Het Utrechts Archief, arch. 1003, inv. 411.

35 Found in Het Utrechts Archief, arch. 201, inv. 269.

36 *Bewys. Dat het een predicant met zijn huysvrouw alleen niet*



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Ceulen den 17 Januarii. Men hout dat de troupen onder den Generael Majoor Weede, tegenwoordigh al te Coblents gearriveert zijn. Den Lieutenant Colonel Hagedoorn is noch in 't leven, doch ſeer kranck. Met brieven van Lipſtadt vanden 14 deſer heeft men, dat den Lieutenant Generael Spaen, Gouverneur van die plaets, binnen 14 dagen daer verwacht werd, en dat den Grave vander Lip, Generael vande Lunenburghſche troupen, naer Cel, was vertrocken. De Franſchen van Maeſtricht en Limburgh halen alle het graen van de boeren in het landt van Gulick op, doch betalen het ſelve met gereet gelt; maer ondertuſſchen moet den armen landtman door gebreck van broodt ſchier van honger vergaen.

Keulen den 17 Januarii. Voor 4 a 5 dagen ſagh men voorby deſe ſtadt paſſeeren elf ſchepen met Munſterſche Infantery, komende uyt het Aerts-ſticht Trier, welcke tot Hettorp, aen geene zijde den Rijn, twee mijlen beneden deſe ſtadt, aen landt geſet wiert, om ſoo verder haer wegh te lande naer Munſterlandt te nemen. Gedachte Infantery wiert eergiſteren door 7 compagnien cavalery gevolght, die te lande mede naer Munſterlant gaen. Men ſeght, dat den Marquis de Grana giſteren morgen weder tot Bon gearriveert is.

NEDERLANDEN.

Maeſtricht den 15 Januarii. De Ambaſſadeurs van den Koningh werden door 't ophouden van de Spaenſe Paspoorten tot Charleville noch opgehouden, en durven hare Excellentie haer van daer mits-dien niet herwaerts begeven, maer zijn 300 paerden van hier uytgetrocken, ſoo eenige meenen, om haer Excellentie af te halen en hier binnen 10 convoyeeren. Een Spaenſe party van Roermont,

ILLUSTRATION 6.2
A marginal highlight on this issue of the Amsterdamsche Courant *of 21 January 1676 indicates why the Van Weede family kept this particular copy in their archive.*
HET UTRECHTS ARCHIEF, UTRECHT

personal curiosity, but he could also, as the German Kaspar Stieler argued in his *Zeitungs Lust und Nutz* (The Pleasure and Utility of Newspapers), "incorporate material from the papers into his sermons".[37] Newspapers were often the first source for contemporary histories and news digests.[38] Some readers bound together issues at the end of a year to create a chronicle of events, but there was also a market for pre-bound collections of newspapers. The 1670 stock catalogue of Gerard Ameling, bookseller in The Hague, listed "a pack of Tuesday and Thursday Haarlem newspapers from 1660 to 1669, complete".[39] When Trijntje de Wit, a bookseller in Amsterdam, died in 1740, her stock inventory listed "80 volumes of newspapers".[40] In the mid-eighteenth century, a paper merchant in Amsterdam advertised for "old newspapers, whether they are printed in Amsterdam, The Hague, Leiden, Haarlem, or elsewhere, from the years between 1680 and 1750 or from later or singular years", which he promised to buy for a reasonable price.[41]

Newspapers could also be used in schools. By the mid- eighteenth century newspapers were used by Dutch school masters as class material.[42] Ephraim Chambers, in his *Cyclopedia* (1728), wrote that "Vigneul de Marville recommends a set of *Gazettes* well wrote, as the fittest books for the instruction of young persons, coming into the world".[43] In the early 1670s the wife of a skipper, Jannetje Jans, wrote proudly to her husband that "I wish to tell you that our daughter is already learning from the newspaper".[44]

This letter from Jannetje Jans, documented by Judith Brouwer, strengthens the growing evidence that Dutch newspapers did not circulate exclusively in the domain of

mogelijck en is op vijfhondert gul. eerlijck te leven (Delft, Pieter de Menagie, 1659), p. 5.

37 Pettegree, *Invention of News*, p. 263.

38 Joop W. Koopmans, 'The Varying Lives and Layers of Mid-Eighteenth-Century News Reports', *Media History* (2016), DOI: 10.1080/13688804.2016.1230009, pp. 11–12.

39 *Catalogus in quavis facultatum & lingua rarissimorum librorum* (Den Haag, Gerard Ameling, 1670).

40 Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel*, pp. 1008–1010.

41 Cited in Van Groesen, 'Reading Newspapers', p. 12.

42 Broersma, *Beschaafde vooruitgang*, p. 48.

43 Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopedia*, p. 129.

44 Cited in Brouwer, *Levenstekens*, pp. 225–226.

ILLUSTRATION 6.3
Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Reading the news at the weavers' cottage (*1766*), *after a drawing by Adriaen van Ostade* (*c. 1673*).
RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM, RP-P-OB-24.553

the political and mercantile elite.[45] Analysing a wealth of intercepted letters sent abroad from the Dutch Republic in 1672, Brouwer demonstrated that interest in political news was widely shared in Dutch society, including among individuals far removed from political decision-making. Wives and friends of merchants, skippers and artisans sent along copies of newspapers with their letters to the East Indies or Surinam. The drawings of the Haarlem artist Adriaen van Ostade, a specialist of homely tavern and workshop scenes, portray several newspaper readers in the act of reading.[46] Around 1673 Van Ostade captured not the wealthy regent with his weekly newspaper, but a weaver enjoying the same pleasure in his cottage (see ill. 6.3). Tavern scenes by Jan Steen and Cornelis Dusart from the same period also contain pictorial evidence of the circulation of newspapers in pub gatherings where they are perused by artisans similar to the weaver.

That is not to say, of course, that artisans like Van Ostade's weaver engaged with seventeenth-century newspapers with the same regularity or attentiveness as professional readers. The weaver in his cottage might have been reading an issue published a month ago. Readers had different styles and preferences of newspaper reading. This is clear from the diaries of David Beck and Jan de Boer, both meticulously analysed by Jeroen Blaak.[47] Beck was a school master teaching at the French school in The Hague in the 1610s and early 1620s, and he was provided with copies of Jan van Hilten's *Courante uyt Italien* by his uncle,

45 Brouwer, *Levenstekens*, pp. 222–226.

46 Van Groesen, 'Reading Newspapers', pp. 1–5.

47 See Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life*, pp. 41–112 (on Beck), and pp. 191–225 (on De Boer). Also Beck, *Mijn voornaamste daden en ontmoetingen* and David Beck, *Spiegel van mijn leven. Haags dagboek 1624*, ed. Sv. E. Veldhuijzen (Hilversum, Verloren, 1993).

who lived in Amsterdam.[48] When Beck travelled to Amsterdam he would visit Van Hilten's shop to buy an issue. It seems that Beck received the *Courante* on an irregular basis; he did not read the latest issue every week. Instead he read the newspaper for particular interesting accounts, or to follow a developing story in the West Indies or in the Thirty Years' War. Sometimes he read the entire newspaper, at other times it seems that he read only a particular story or report. With a salary of around 500 or 600 gulden a year, Beck was securely fixed in the middling echelons of urban society.[49] His friends and acquaintances included magistrates and delegates to the States General; he was well-versed in history and current affairs, and read widely. An annual subscription to an Amsterdam weekly would have cost Beck around half of one percent of his annual income: a weekly Amsterdam newspaper cost on average three gulden. He could clearly afford to read periodical news on a regular basis, but it remained a financial commitment.

The considerable price of an annual subscription imposed a natural barrier to the development of a mass readership in the seventeenth century. In Holland, one issue of a newspaper cost about the same as a litre of beer or half a kilo of rye bread, around a stuiver.[50] The cost of a Dutch newspaper was comparable to the cost of newspapers in the Habsburg Netherlands and the *London Gazette*.[51] The Paris *Gazette* and the Brussels *Relations véritables* were more expensive, costing around three times as much as the Dutch, Flemish and English periodicals.[52] The average price of Dutch newspapers would drop in the mid-eighteenth century, with most single issues priced around half a stuiver.[53] Newspaper publishers would, in any case, not have contemplated a true mass market, since the number of copies that could be pulled off the press in a day was itself limited by the capacities of the workmen and the number of presses available. Thus the range of customers and the potentialities of the technology achieved a rough equilibrium. Only the introduction of the steam press in the nineteenth century would permit a real step-change in circulation.

While many newspaper publishers throughout Europe encouraged all their readers to take out a subscription and to collect the issues together at the end of the year, this was by no means the preferred method of consumption of all customers. Beck did not feel the need to dedicate a large portion of his salary to a weekly paper. Most literate urban citizens in the Dutch Republic might be able to afford the occasional newspaper issue, but the cost of the annual subscription fee was too high for many of them. Some would follow the news only at times of the year when it particular interested them, or when they had sufficient leisure to do it justice. A similar pattern is discerned by John Brewer, who demonstrated that the circulation of the London *Public Advertiser* between 1765 and 1771 dropped significantly outside of the parliamentary sessions.[54] The account books of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* of the early eighteenth century likewise demonstrate that many customers bought only the Saturday or Tuesday issue of the newspaper, rather than subscribing to a more expensive tri-weekly.[55]

While not as profitable to the publisher, who earned more through subscriptions, readers were happy to dip in and out of newspaper reading as suited them best. Publishers were forced to adopt strategies that accommodated these sorts of choices. Between 1689 and 1697, Jacob van Huysduynen in Leiden did not number his tri-weekly *Opregte Leydse Courant*; each issue was, in this sense, a stand-alone publication.[56] If it was competing in the same market as news pamphlets and short histories, one issue of a newspaper was a relatively cheap investment. Accounts of the expenses of Lieuwe van Aitzema in The Hague in the 1650s show that most news pamphlets were purchased for anything between two and six stuivers a piece, depending on their length.[57] The newspaper, at one stuiver, was a comparative bargain.

When Beck read his occasional copies of the *Courante* in the early 1620s, the newspaper had been a fixture of Dutch society for less than a decade. There was little choice available in the Dutch Republic. But during the mid and late seventeenth century, Dutch readers enjoyed a much larger range of available titles, and newspapers could play a more significant part in their daily reading.

48 Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life*, p. 79.

49 Ibid., p. 43.

50 Data on prices is from Jan Luiten van Zanden, 'The prices of the most important consumer goods, and indices of wages and the cost of living in the western part of the Netherlands, 1450–1800', on Jan Luiten van Zanden (ed.), *The IISH List of Datafiles of Historical Prices and Wages*, accessible at http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/brenv.php.

51 See Arblaster, *From Ghent to Aix*, pp. 101–102, and James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), *The Restoration Newspaper*, pp. 11, 32.

52 See Solomon, *Public Welfare, Science, and Propaganda*, p. 119 and Arblaster, *From Ghent to Aix*, p. 224.

53 Broersma, *Beschaafde vooruitgang*, pp. 45–46.

54 Cited in Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, p. 49.

55 NHA, Collectie Enschedé, HBA 3523.

56 See chapter 48 in part two.

57 See Keblusek, *Boeken in de Hofstad*, pp. 327–339.

FIGURE 6.2 *The price of newspaper subscriptions in Groningen (1674)*

	Take home	**Read in the shop**
Purchase a single issue	1.5 stuivers (24 penningen)	0.75 stuivers (12 penningen)
A year's subscription for one issue a week	3 gulden and 15 stuivers	1 gulden and 18 stuivers
A year's subscription for two issues a week	7 gulden and 10 stuivers	3 gulden and 15 stuivers
A year's subscription for three issues a week	11 gulden and 5 stuivers	5 gulden and 13 stuivers
A year's subscription for four issues a week	15 gulden	7 gulden and 10 stuivers

Readers were offered various ways of enjoying newspaper, to suit their purses and their preferences. During the 1650s and 1660s Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht published two concurrent newspapers in Utrecht: the bi-weekly *Mercurius* and the weekly *Ordinaire Donderdaeghsche Europische Courant*.[58] The first appeared on Mondays and Thursdays, and was interspersed with irregular topical news pamphlets. Van der Macht's second paper also rather curiously appeared on Thursdays. The *Ordinaire Donderdaeghsche Europische Courant* was published as a half-sheet folio, and contained a selection of reports published in the Thursday edition of the *Mercurius*, a full sheet quarto pamphlet which was filled with longer reports and always included the most recently arrived despatches. Van der Macht targeted two types of readers with these variant forms: a wealthier, professional reader for the *Mercurius*, and a more casual, less affluent reader for the *Ordinaire Donderdaeghsche Europische Courant*.

In 1674 the booksellers' guild in Groningen resolved to regulate the sale of newspapers in the city, establishing a set price to which all booksellers were required to adhere.[59] It was agreed that thirteen out of the eighteen booksellers in Groningen would sell newspapers: customers could buy one, two, three or four issues a week. Note that at this date there were no newspapers actually published in Groningen: in 1674 Dutch newspapers were published in Haarlem and Amsterdam (both tri-weekly on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays), and in The Hague (bi-weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays). Evidently customers could chose a selection of the above; it is likely that the Groningen booksellers also began to sell issues of the bi-weekly *Utrechtse Courant* published from 1675 on Tuesdays and Fridays (and later Mondays and Fridays). Customers in Groningen could purchase two types of subscriptions. The first was a regular subscription, where one would pick up one's copy to take home, but one could also choose to read the newspaper in the bookshop. Reading in the bookshop was half the price, allowing one to read a newspaper for less than a stuiver per issue (see fig. 6.2).

The variety and quantity of news increased in the early eighteenth century. By the 1740s newspaper readers could choose from eight tri- or bi-weekly newspapers, published in Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, The Hague, Utrecht, Delft, Rotterdam and Groningen. That some readers took advantage of this extensive range of choices is made clear from the diary of Jan de Boer, an eighteenth-century clerk living in Amsterdam. De Boer owned a library worth 200 gulden, and owned a second property worth 700 gulden, which he rented out.[60] De Boer was an avid news reader and chronicler: he kept an account of all noteworthy current affairs that he heard and read of, or otherwise witnessed himself. Around 16% of all news recorded in the diary of De Boer in the late 1740s and early 1750s was derived from newspapers.[61] He preserved many newspaper issues in the diary, especially when they contained long speeches or announcements.[62] He preferred the *Amsterdamsche Courant* and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, but also on occasion read newspapers from Leiden and The Hague.

De Boer came close to the ideal reader imagined by his contemporary Johann Hermann Knoop. He read regularly, and he did so with a critical eye, comparing reports of the same events in different newspapers. He subscribed to two tri-weekly papers, and bought specific issues of others when they contained an interesting ordinance, letter or news report. He read the newspaper largely for its foreign news; most of De Boer's knowledge of Dutch events was derived from his conversations with

58 See chapters 32–33 in part two.

59 J. Oomkens. J. Zoon, *Bouwstoffen tot eene geschiedenis van de boekdrukkunst en den boekhandel in de stad en provincie Groningen* (Groningen, Boekverkoopers-collegie te Groningen, 1854), pp. 56–57.

60 Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life*, p. 191.

61 Ibid., pp. 351–352.

62 Ibid., p. 225.

friends and neighbours.[63] The newspaper played a regular, but not a crucial role in the formation of his worldview.

Problematic Customers

Thousands of seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish newspapers survive outside the Low Countries. While men like David Beck and Jan de Boer made up much of the audience most newspapermen must have had in mind as they put together the text of their papers, newspapers reached another important audience that the courantiers might not initially have reckoned with. Dutch and Flemish newspapers have been preserved in the archives of statesmen in Sweden, England, France, Germany, the Czech Republic and Russia. Often they were forwarded by merchants and diplomatic agents with their regular correspondence. Michel le Blon, agent of the Swedish crown in the 1630s, sent copies of both Saturday Amsterdam weeklies to his employers; sometimes he would also send copies of Arnhem or Antwerp newspapers, together with engravings, maps and pamphlets.[64] To the relatively humble bourgeois reader who scanned the Dutch newspapers one can thus add the names of more illustrious men: Duke August of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, Cardinal Mazarin, Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna and Sir Joseph Williamson.

Statesmen and diplomats read foreign newspapers because they believed both that newspapers reflected public opinion and that they possessed the authority to influence public opinion. Jason Peacey has demonstrated the extraordinary concern of English administrators and diplomats for the content of continental newspapers and news pamphlets.[65] Statesmen tried to influence the press abroad to promote the cause of their government and to maintain the reputation of their monarch. Newspapers were also pored over to ensure that policies or state secrets had not been leaked, and that diplomats or heads of state had not been defamed. Controlling the dissemination of news and managing the reputation of a state and its officers was not an easy task, but statesmen could employ a variety of tactics. Peacey has shown that diplomats often tried to court foreign newspaper publishers with favours.[66] When a persuasive approach proved impossible, foreign rulers were quick to raise complaints. The Russian court in Moscow complained several times in the 1640s, 1650s and 1660s of the use of the title "grand prince" instead of "Tsar" when the Tsar was described in Dutch newspapers. The Russian court acted mainly through Dutch merchants in Russia, who complained to the burgomasters of Amsterdam and other towns, asking them to take action against the newspaper publishers.[67] Another complaint came in to the States of Holland on 18 December 1680: the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* of 12 September 1680 had, in its report on the marriage of the Tsar, denigrated the Tsar's bride and the ceremony.[68]

The *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* was subject of more scrutiny in January 1681, when the Swedish ambassador complained about a piece identifying the Swedish king's principal advisors.[69] The *Oprechte Rotterdamse Zee-en Post-tijdingen* received two objections from England in July and September 1667 after publishing "insulting comments".[70] The burgomasters of Cologne reserved particular derision for the *Utrechtse Courant*, which they criticised three times in the 1680s. The city of Lübeck did likewise in 1683.[71] These complaints did have a significant impact. Newspapers in the Dutch Republic were not subject to pre-publication approval (as was the case in the Southern Netherlands). Dutch authorities had little interest in censoring publications when complaints were not received.[72] Repeated criticism from abroad, especially at times of diplomatic tension, could motivate the regents to take action.

Scholars of the press have always emphasised the prominent role of the state in the censorship of the press. Most of Sautijn Kluit's articles, written during the final decades of the nineteenth century, place the authorities in an adversarial relationship with the emerging newspapers; the two are opposing, hostile forces, jostling for control of the public sphere.[73] The research of Simon Groenveld, Guido de Bruin, Ingrid Weekhout and Donald Haks has reinforced this viewpoint.[74] According to this interpreta-

63 Ibid., p. 217.

64 Marika Keblusek, 'The business of news. Michel le Blon and the transmission of political information to Sweden in the 1630s', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 28, Nos. 3–4 (2003), pp. 211–212.

65 Jason Peacey, '"My friend the Gazetier"'.

66 Peacey, 'Managing the News'. See also Haks, 'War, Government and the News', p. 173.

67 Ingrid Maier, 'Zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse couranten vertaald voor de Tsaar', *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis* 12, No. 1 (2009), pp. 27–49, here p. 42.

68 Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', p. 23.

69 Ibid., pp. 23–24.

70 Sautijn Kluit, 'De Rotterdamsche Courant', pp. 15–16.

71 Sautijn Kluit, 'De Hollandsche en Fransche Utrechtsche Couranten', pp. 39–43.

72 Helmers, *Royalist Republic*, p. 36.

73 Especially Sautijn Kluit, 'Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Dagbladpers tot 1813', pp. 87–284.

74 Weekhout, *Boekencensuur*, pp. 79–83, 362–363. Haks, 'War, Gov-

tion, a shift occurred in the use of repressive censorship in the second half of the seventeenth century. The number of edicts and persecutions against "seditious" books and pamphlets increased and financial punishment for convicted authors and booksellers increased tenfold during the course of the century. From the 1650s onwards newspapers were harassed by increasing scrutiny and prosecution.[75] From the 1670s, French gazettes published in the Dutch Republic were also frequently banned, so frequently, indeed, that on one occasion the French ambassador petitioned to have a title re-instated: apparently it was enjoyed at the French court, and now missed.[76] Of the forty-nine newspapers and serials included in this bibliography at least nineteen are known to have been pursued or banned by the authorities.

One should be careful, however, before assigning the statesmen of the Low Countries a role as the bogeymen of the press. While regents and political commentators were quick to deride "licentious" news reports, prosecution generally consisted of a stern warning rather than imprisonment or banishment.[77] Punishment was more often than not a symbolic mark of respect in response to the representations made by a foreign ambassador or head of state. Many sentences handed out to newspapermen were shortened, or not carried through at all. When the King of England, the Dutch William III, wrote to the Leiden burgomasters asking them to prohibit Jacob van Huysduynen from publishing his *Opregte Leydse Courant*, they consented.[78] They banned Huysduynen in December 1693, but by June 1694 he was publishing once more. The bans and fines handed out to Crispijn Hoeckwater, Samuel Browne, Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht, the heirs of Broer Appelaer, Jacoba de Somere and Joannes Naeranus were all reduced, or not in fact enforced.[79] When Sir George Downing, the English ambassador, complained to Jan de Witt in 1658 after the Amsterdam *Courante uyt Italien* included a scathing report on Oliver Cromwell's funeral, De Witt paid little heed to the grievance, and the Amsterdam courantier suffered no punishment.[80]

The key figures at the heart of central and municipal government in the Dutch Republic appreciated the newspapers too much to enforce harsh sentences. Newspapers were regarded as a beneficial service to urban and commercial communities.[81] Statesmen continued to read newspapers with enthusiasm: from 1700 the States of Holland were sent each week thirty-nine copies of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, thirty-one copies of the *Opregte Leydse Courant* and twenty-eight copies of the *Amsterdamsche Courant*.[82] From the later 1630s onwards national and local authorities also began to use newspapers as tools of state communication. The States General, the States of Holland, the Admiralties and especially town councils placed ordinances, notifications and warnings in Dutch newspapers. The authorities announced the regulation of market days, the sale of naval prizes, the introduction of new canal barges and postal schedules, and warned their citizens of criminals and impostors. The state had gained confidence that the influence of the periodical on literate society was on the whole beneficial.[83]

Ultimately the greatest impact of the state on the production of newspapers was financial. In 1674 the States of Holland passed an ordinance which established a new tax on printed paper.[84] The ordinance targeted in particular "newspapers, gazettes and post-tidings". It stipulated that all newspapers printed on both sides of a half sheet (described as "the usual manner") were to be taxed at four

ernment and the News', p. 172; S. Groenveld, 'The Mecca of Authors? States Assemblies and Censorship in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic', in A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse (eds.), *Too mighty to be free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands* (Zutphen, De Walburg Pers, 1987), pp. 63–80; Guido de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad: De geheimhouding van staatszaken ten tijde van de Republiek (1600–1750)* (The Hague, Sdu uitgevers, 1991), pp. 406–411, 431–434.

75 Groenveld, 'The Mecca of Authors?', p. 72.

76 Hans Bots, 'La *Gazette d'Amsterdam* entre 1688 et 1699: Titres, éditeurs, privileges et interdictions', in Duranton, Labrosse and Rétat (eds.), *Les Gazettes Européennes*, and Feyel, *L'Annonce et la nouvelle*, p. 512.

77 See also Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture*, pp. 111–114, 127, 129.

78 W.P. Sautijn Kluit, 'De Hollandsche Leidsche Courant', *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* (1871), pp. 13–14.

79 See chapters 21, 32, 34, 40 42 and 46.

80 Stadsarchief, Amsterdam, archief van de burgemeesters, inv. 87. Also *Courante uyt Italien ende Duytslant, &c. 1658. No. 52*. 28.12.1658, and Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', pp. 229–230.

81 Keblusek, *Boeken in de Hofstad*, p. 136. Also chapters 3 and 4 above.

82 De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, p. 408.

83 Der Weduwen and Pettegree, *News, Business and the Birth of Modern Advertising*. See also Joop W. Koopmans, 'The Early 1730s Shipworm Disaster in Dutch News Media', *Dutch Crossing* 40, No. 2 (2016), pp. 139–150.

84 Simon van Leeuwen (ed.), *Groot placaet-boeck, vervattende de placaten, ordonnantien ende edicten van de Staten Generael ende van de Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt: midtsgaders van de Staten van Zeelandt. Derde Deel* (Den Haag, Jacobus Scheltus, 1683), pp. 847–848. See also Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', pp. 237–238.

penningen per copy. A tax collector was to demand the payment each week at the newspaper printer's shop.

This was an extraordinarily heavy tax. The new rate quadrupled the cost of paper to courantiers, perhaps cutting their profits by half. Abraham Casteleyn in Haarlem was one of the first publishers to complain, before subverting the tax. He was duly investigated for tax evasion by the States of Holland with tedious regularity throughout the 1670s.[85] It is therefore not a surprise that demands for greater freedom of publication in the seventeenth century were not demands for editorial freedom, but for "books to be free" of excise.[86]

Alongside a regular tax, authorities throughout the Low Countries required ever-larger payments from newsmen for their privilege. The Enschedé family were required to pay 2,500 gulden to the Haarlem alms-house each year for their appointment as newspaper publishers in Haarlem in 1737.[87] Three years earlier the new courantier in The Hague paid a lump sum of 6,600 gulden for his position.[88] In the Southern Netherlands Jan Meyer paid 8,000 gulden for the licence of the *Gazette van Ghendt*, while the new publisher of the French *Gazette des Pays-Bas* in Brussels paid 4,000 gulden in 1786.[89] In 1775 the new Antwerp courantier paid only 600 gulden for a twelve-year privilege, a diminutive sum compared to some of his peers; yet even this seemed expensive in comparison to the meagre 6 gulden which Jan van Hilten and Broer Jansz had to pay for their licence to print a newspaper in Amsterdam in 1624.[90] Financial pressure, rather than political repression, was the true power of the state over the press.

A Dynamic Press

The seventeenth-century periodical press was a dynamic force. This has not always been the conventional perspective. Seventeenth-century newspapers have often been neglected or derided by scholars due to their lack of domestic reporting.[91] Digests of foreign news were at best considered a curious taste for citizens' use of their precious leisure time, at worst an organised distraction from affairs of state at home. If we use the modern press as a point of comparison for the seventeenth-century newspaper, these early papers resemble jumbled, confusing sheets of little political consequence. Without any notable qualitative development in the style or scope of reporting, the newspaper was an apolitical product, incapable of exciting its readers or influencing their decisions.

This narrative warrants serious reconsideration. Foreign news reports were by no means apolitical or of little consequence for the welfare of domestic political society or policy-making. The first newspapers published in the Low Countries emerged precisely because of the gravity contemporaries attached to foreign events. Chronicling the confessional and political struggle taking place in the Holy Roman Empire, newspapers were catapulted to the forefront of public imagination and concern. The constitutional crises which tore through the Dutch Republic in 1618–1619, 1650, 1672 and 1684 were all stimulated by changes in the European balance of power and the contested judgement of these changes among different groups within the Dutch Republic. Citizens across the Low Countries felt intimate connections with foreign communities and territories, through kinship, faith and politics. The struggle against the Ottomans or Barbary corsairs in the Balkans and the Mediterranean could excite the same joy or anguish as political victory at home. As Popkin so eloquently wrote, foreign news was "passionately exciting" to early modern readers:

> They reached for these texts more avidly than many of the other eighteenth-century works we now find more fascinating. The words on paper in newspapers were words that made a difference: they were an important aspect of eighteenth-century reality itself, affecting the functioning of its political institutions and the outcome of movements as momentous as the major revolutions of the time.[92]

Seventeenth-century newspapers were not required to comment on political affairs at home. Citizens enjoyed a wide range of other political media to cultivate their opinion and make their voice heard. The Dutch Republic in particular was a highly politicised society in which pamphleteering and petitioning provided efficient means to express and coordinate dissent. Early modern society was undemocratic, but nevertheless based on intricate sys-

85 ARA, Gedeputeerden van Haarlem ter Dagvaart van de Staten van Holland, inv. 355.

86 Arblaster, '"Dat de boecken vrij sullen wesen"', p. 94.

87 NHA, Collectie Enschedé, HBA 4831.

88 Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', pp. 39–40; Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, p. 61.

89 Van Impe, 'Mediamagnaten', p. 153.

90 Ibid., p. 152.

91 Schneider and Hemels, *Nederlandse krant*, especially pp. 56–77; Roeland Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie: Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2011), pp. 26–28; Dixhoorn, '"De opgeworpen rechtbank der publieke opinie"', p. 63.

92 Popkin, *News and Politics*, p. 4.

tems of consent and communication. The newspaper very quickly found its voice, and its role, in political society. It complemented, a few times a week, the thoughts and considerations of its readers on the state of the world, drawing attention to the achievements and failures of its rulers, and generating interest in affairs of state. The newspaper offered to many readers a window into the realm of courts, kings and armies which had not previously been open to them.

Readers continued to enjoy a wide variety of news media alongside their newspaper. The newspaper was the product of a commercial market for news, in which various other media were already deeply imbedded. Manuscript newsletters, pamphlets, almanacs, histories and maps were flexible and overlapping commercial genres, and the newspaper was one further addition to this fluid culture. The news market would continue to diversify and expand after the arrival of the newspaper. From 1651 onwards the brother of Abraham Casteleyn, Pieter, published a hugely popular annual news review, the *Hollandse Mercurius*—a hundred years later rival annual reviews would compete for customers as vehemently as newspapers. By the end of the seventeenth century the *Haegse Mercuur*, a satirical society journal, would likewise make its mark on Dutch news culture. Literary and scientific journals and political spectators (modelled on the famous English periodical of the same name) would become the great new vogues of eighteenth-century literary culture. Yet the newspaper was there to stay. The pioneers of the first age of the press—Abraham Verhoeven, Broer Jansz, the Van Hiltens, Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht, Nicolaes Jacobsz, Mathijs van Meininga and Abraham Casteleyn—had given the newspaper its form, and tempted their customers to return every week for more. The shape and content of the newspaper was not set in stone, and successive generations of newspaper readers could be invited to enjoy, or simply accommodate, new innovations. Every decade brought changes in news networks, the quantity of reports, typography, advertising and periodicity, and each courantier introduced his own tone. The survival of the newspaper is due to its diversification; its popularity assured by the continuous endeavour to surprise and satisfy readers with something new.