

# EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION NETWORKS IN THE EARLY MODERN AGE

## A new framework of interpretation for the birth of journalism

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*Recent contributions to knowledge about early journalism developed in different parts of Europe—Italy, France, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain . . . —have made it possible to trace a fairly precise map for the historical origin of this phenomenon. However, the scope of work carried out with a view to developing frameworks of interpretation to explain the reasons for this appearance is not as far-reaching. This paper reviews the recurring theoretical models found to date in the specific bibliography and proposes a new framework of interpretation, capable of encompassing the complexity and pan-European nature of early journalism in history.*

**KEYWORDS** journalism; Early Modern Europe; corantos; gazettes; historiographical revisionism

Our knowledge of the backdrop against which journalism made its first historic appearance has received important contributions in recent years, through a significant volume of new data about the first newspapers published in Italy, England, the Netherlands, Germany . . . , as well as the social and communication networks into which they were inserted.<sup>1</sup> This abundance of factual information has not as of yet sparked interest among experts in attaining an understanding that would allow them to insert these data into an explanatory model. In our opinion, two recurrent confusions persist: the first, the frequent blurring between journalism and *pre-journalism*, which means that English *news pamphlets* or Spanish *relaciones de sucesos* are referred to as being both *within* the history of journalism and as an initial *background* chapter, even in the specialist bibliography.

The second confusion, broader in its scope, hesitates over how to interpret, in a general historic tone, this appearance of journalism at the start of the Early Modern period. What is the decisive historic factor that explains the appearance, *hic et nunc*, of journalism: the emergence of the bourgeoisie or, in a very different sense, the consolidation of absolutist States? For most cultural historians, journalism and printing, journalism and bourgeoisie, appear as closely linked historical factors. Journalism is born in Europe with the awakening of the bourgeoisie at the end of the fifteenth century, which uses printing to contrive its attack on political power—although this took three long centuries—whilst at the same time getting rich from a product increasingly in demand among urban readerships.

However, without discussing this general framework of interpretation, specialists in the History of Journalism superimpose onto the same a more precise chronology that

pushes back the appearance of the first *newspapers* to the start of the seventeenth century. The first two decades of the century witnessed the definitive consolidation of this cultural practice in most of the continent, and 1618 can be considered a *milestone* date to signal the birth of—'authentic'—journalism.

This postponement of the birth of journalism until the seventeenth century means that inevitably its genesis is framed against a broader phenomenon, the consolidation of the modern State and absolutist politics; hence, it is common to find, usually in general histories but even in the specialist bibliography, understandings according to which we cannot talk about a true naturalisation of journalism until state and linguistic borders are sufficiently delineated: within this new framework of interpretation, it is often claimed that the *Gazette* (1631), the *Gazeta Nueva* (1661) and *The London Gazette* (1665), state journalistic enterprises, are, respectively, the first French, Spanish and English newspapers. According to this new vision of the subject at hand, journalism is another manifestation of monarchical propaganda and is consolidated at the same pace and in the same spaces as the modern State.<sup>2</sup>

This paper aims to recover the main lines of interpretation with which specialists in various historic disciplines have attempted to explain the journalistic phenomenon in recent studies; we shall insist, in turn, on a pan-European approach that is not frequently found in the available bibliography. Concepts such as the 'English model' and 'French' or 'Continental model' of journalism, 'liberal thesis' or 'Marxist thesis' about the origin of journalism, shall be revisited in the following pages. The aim is to review some of the historical and methodological commonplaces that, in our opinion, are impeding further advancement in this area beyond the acceptance of the initial paradox outlined above, and prevent us from agreeing on a definitive framework of interpretation about the phenomenon of journalism in the Early Modern period.

There is sufficient documentation available to sketch a European map of early journalism; the data provided by experts in the last two decades contradict to a certain extent the chronology that until recently has been habitually followed in historic literature. The most common interpretation derives the appearance of journalism from the arrival of the printing press. According to this, journalism as a commercial activity would have spread throughout Europe at the same rate as printing expanded and, as we know, the rapid expansion of this technique was achieved by taking advantage of the dense network of enclaves that marked out the trans-European trade routes. There would have been newspapers or their predecessors in any place where the printing press reached in the late fifteenth century; although the phenomenon is European in its scope and there are examples that show the circulation of specific products beyond the local market, there is no common name for these pioneering formats applicable throughout Europe; hence, they are called *news pamphlets* in England, *Neue Zeitungen* in Germany, *ocasionnels* in France and *relaciones* in Spain, Italy and Portugal.

The production of these genres extends over a longer or shorter period of time depending on the modern State since the beginning of history: until the seventeenth century in Central Europe and until the 18th century, and even the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Spain. It is precisely this point that might generate an argument that relativises the importance of these pioneering genres as antecedents to European journalism, since in places where this process spanned a longer time period, we can see

how they existed in the market alongside other printed products that are eventually referred to as *newspapers*, and which come fairly close to current standards of printed information. In the meanwhile, news pamphlets evolved along their own lines until they become confused, at least in Spain, with so-called *popular literature* or *pulp fiction*—although without ever or almost never losing the informative vocation with which they were born. Hence, news pamphlets, we could conclude, are *at* the origin but are not *the* origin of contemporary journalism.

Various recent studies indicate the importance of written informative practices in the genesis of modern journalism; the printing press was undoubtedly a catalyst for production as of seventeenth century, but the product and the professional networks in which it was produced were already consolidated in the parallel market of manuscript writing in at least the second half of the sixteenth century. Amanuensis workshops dedicated to the serial production of news sheets have been located in various parts of Europe in the Early Modern Age; according to Infelise (*Prima dei giornali*), the phenomenon emerged in Italian cities, especially Venice and Rome, two major centres in the compilation of news stories from the north and south Mediterranean. It is highly possible that other European cities fulfilled similar roles in their respective regions: Prague and Vienna, which specialised in circulating news from the German Empire, or Hamburg, a point from which information was channelled towards more northern parts.

The product of this activity receives, throughout Europe and using almost identical lexical formulas, the name *avvisi*. Handwritten *avvisi* transmitted, through public or private routes throughout the continent, news about international political current affairs, for which minority circles of professionals from politics, trade, the Church or culture were eagerly clamouring. At the end of the sixteenth century, therefore, when the printing press had already been developing for over a century, news pamphlets coexisted in the information market—at least in certain Italian and Central European cities—alongside other cheap printed genres, aimed at a majority readership, on the one hand, and handwritten news *avvisi* circulated among a more select clientele, on the other. In addition to the conditions of production and dissemination, the kind of discourse used is another difference that sets these two formats apart: news pamphlets usually contained just one news item according to the historiographical/literary canon, whereas *avvisi* compiled short news items, one or two paragraphs long, and used with few exceptions a new kind of discourse, stripped bare of literary resources, which could probably already be termed *journalistic discourse*. However, there is one crucial distinction between the two formats: news pamphlets, and other printed journalistic formats in Early Modern Europe, were subject to institutional controls, which prevented almost without exception the dissemination of information that would have been displeasing to the authorities. Handwritten news reports on the other hand benefited from their selective circulation and were better able to get around censorship.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly afterwards—at the start of the seventeenth century—these handwritten *avvisi* begin to adopt the printed form, initially in Germany and the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup> The first printed newspapers that reproduce the discursive model of the *avvisi* are simply titled ‘aviso from Rome’ or ‘from Italy’ or ‘Germany’ . . . , but there are two names under which the format would become definitively known throughout Europe (once again with hardly any lexical variation in the different European languages): *coranto* and *gazette*.<sup>5</sup> The

conjunction of Italian and Central European sources with the initiative of Dutch and also German printers was, therefore, decisive in the consolidation of journalistic activity in Europe. Raymond points out that this was a European phenomenon, curiously transnational within the rise of modern nationalisms, capable of overcoming political, religious and language boundaries that began to be sharply delineated during these decades.<sup>6</sup>

This phenomenon appeared in 1618, the date around which—in the midst of the news fever sparked by the start of the Thirty Years War—the Central European model was exported to the rest of the continent: the bibliographies for England, France<sup>7</sup> and Spain<sup>8</sup> include corantos or gazettes—at times translations of the same original—published prior to 1620.

News circulated from Italy and Central Europe—fundamentally—to Holland and Germany, and from there, as we have just seen, in an authentic news explosion, to the rest of Europe. The reasons as to why Holland and Germany then became the driving force behind the consolidation of journalism in Europe are undoubtedly linked to their status as economic powers of the time. Influential master printers such as those in Antwerp, firstly, and later Amsterdam, were able to profit from the news fever sweeping across Europe.<sup>9</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, the centre of this commercial activity moved definitively from Italy to Central Europe—mainly Amsterdam and Hamburg—and England (Arblaster).

Therefore, the somewhat mechanical and simplistic explanation that journalism was born with and through printing cannot be maintained. However, in turn, the sequence of events seems to confirm the *Weberian* interpretation mentioned at the start of this article. Central European bourgeoisie, founded on the dual pillar of Capitalism and Protestantism, capitalised on the economic, political and moral freedom that they enjoyed to turn previously disperse journalistic practices into a lucrative business, moved like so many others through trans-European networks. Both the *Liberal* and the *Marxist* theses find support for their arguments in the sequence of historic events described: these can be read, successively, as the victory of liberal political aspirations that eventually imposed a model of free journalism, away from state supervision, or as the appropriation of the information market by the bourgeoisie, with the subsequent alienation of any communicative aspiration by other social classes.<sup>10</sup> In either of the two cases, the appearance of journalism acquires historic meaning in the same framework in which the emergence of this public bourgeois sphere is explained.

The Liberal or Marxist readings, which reinforce the historic complicity between journalism and bourgeoisie, underscore most histories of European journalism written to date. However, the shifting interest of experts in modern journalism towards the early decades of the seventeenth century means that the growing prominence of personalism and monarchical absolutism as explanatory factors in the consolidation of journalism still hover over the accounts of most national histories. The conceptual tool that draws a distinction between the *English model* and the *French or Continental Model* of journalism is still widespread.<sup>11</sup>

Those who emphasise this distinction point out that French journalism—and that of Spain and Portugal to a lesser extent—in spite of common initial moments, is confirmed as a kind of aberration as regards the liberal model, as of the mid seventeenth century. In France, and in the same way as gradually occurred with other symbolic or material powers,

the *prince* also gained power over the public word, and wherever his hegemony was clearer, total—*absolute*—control was gained over journalism. The paradigmatic case is undoubtedly the monopoly exercised by Renaudot's *Gazette* over political information in France, from the time of Louis XIII until the end of the Ancient Regime. The foundation of this official gazette through the deeds of Richelieu in 1631 is not an isolated gesture but rather another movement of appropriation of all spaces in which the power of the prince could be *represented*. According to this possible reading of events, therefore, the French *Gazette* marks the start of a parallel history of journalism, that of *official journalism*, often superior in resources and distribution success but a far cry from the 'true' spirit of journalism.

Raymond ('Introduction: Networks') warned about the possible anachronism of using the term *propaganda* in relation to the issue examined here. The political determination hidden behind the editorial launch of a newspaper is not as clear for all European journalisms of the Early Modern period as it is in France. But the historic bibliography has no difficulty accepting taglines such as 'war of words', 'paper bullets' and others that highlight the main function fulfilled by journalism in the consolidation of the authoritarian monarchy throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

All the explanatory models reviewed above share the dual consideration of the phenomena analysed: either the caesura between one term and another of the explanation is established according to sociohistoric criteria—journalism understood as a champion of public liberties in contrast to journalism contemplated as a tool for the imposition of a new public bourgeois sphere, in the liberal thesis and Marxist thesis, respectively; or on the basis of arguments taken from political history—the journalism of parliamentary Europe in contrast to the journalism of courtly Europe, in the English and French models, respectively. However, in light of our current knowledge regarding the historic scenarios described, it does not seem that such a categorical reading can be maintained any longer, which also places the emphasis on the particularities of each national model and impedes, therefore, a global understanding of the phenomenon. The following pages focus on recovering the common features shared by both sides of European journalism and revising the historiographical validity of these explanatory models that have become commonplace in research into the history of the press.

Starting with the latter of the two extremes of interpretation, reasonable doubt can be cast on the validity of the English model/French model division that has proved so useful at other times when explaining the history of journalism in Europe. This interpretation diminishes the pan-European character possessed *de facto* by many of the phenomena associated with the appearance of journalism and its consolidation throughout the seventeenth century.

Various studies have been published in recent decades that diminish the impact traditionally attributed to censorship and other forms of control in states that were closest to the absolutist ideal. The success of the continental model of the monarchical communication monopoly was called into question by isolated moments of political revolt that were also invariably expressed through the press (such as the *Mazarinades* of the Fronde war in France or the anti-Castilian publications in Catalonia in the *war of Els Segadors*). But in an even more transcendental way, numerous historians tend to question the efficacy of censorship coupled with this monopoly.

In the specific case of Spain, the inefficacy of censorship is questioned, letting more inconvenient products slip through the net that one might have initially thought.<sup>12</sup> This ineptitude was inherent in a political system where the centripetal tendencies of the modern state did not manage to put an end to the specific legal regime, feudal in origins, of each territory until the end of the eighteenth century, so that, for example, in the Kingdom of Aragon (which at that time included the historic territory of Catalonia), newspapers were, along with other printed documents, exempt from the requirement of possessing a pre-publication licence, the latter being a fundamental tool for a *defensive* policy of printing (Guillamet). When talking about the French case, Labrosse expressed himself in similar terms: 'fonctionnement aléatoire de la censure' (Labrosse 32).

In both the Spanish and French case, the state ownership of newspapers was not legally recognised until the eighteenth century; so throughout the whole of the previous century they moved within the ambiguous context of semi-official status. Consequently, until the eighteenth century, there was no legislation in Spain that attempted to enforce the monopoly entailed by this recognition as official media (De los Reyes).

Feyel has recovered abundant information that enables us to outline a new scenario for the French press in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: far from being a communicative desert, staked out by the single presence of three major official newspapers in Paris, the French scene was enriched by numerous authorised reprintings of regime newspapers in the provinces, as well as a significant clandestine circulation of foreign gazettes, particularly from Holland, plus the reprintings and re-editions—authorised or clandestine—of Dutch gazettes published in French for the people of France. Rétat explains that not only did the Bourbons not prohibit but also tolerated and even protected the circulation of certain foreign newspapers that ran parallel to the official publications.

French journalism has traditionally been understood as an example of *absolutism* also attained in the sphere of communication, but some contemporary academics prefer to talk about 'contained opinion' rather than an absence of public opinion. Vittu says in this regard that the *Gazette* and other official media in Bourbon France responded to a genuine demand for information by readers, although admits that this information was restricted in many spheres. 'And we now see that the "secret of the prince" could be sacrificed in order to gain public confidence. Political information was thus part of a complex pattern of negotiation between the king and the people of France, which created a specific field for the expression of opinion' (Vittu 160). An example of this could be the relative freedom of criteria with which Renaudot reported on news in the field of experimental science, at which he was personally adept, in spite of the mistrust felt by the Catholic monarchy (Tolbert).

An even greater number of studies in recent years have tended to moderate the supposed climate of freedom of expression in which the press in northern protestant states moved, those comprising the *English model* as opposed to the model reviewed above. It was at the very least a supervised freedom in the case of small volume journalism such as Sweden and Denmark. Both news businesses were clearly dependent on Germanic sources, which arrived via Hamburg, but the situation was slightly different depending on whether we are looking at Sweden—where throughout the seventeenth century only one official newspaper was permitted, the *Ordinari Post-Tijnder* (1645)—or Denmark, where

the concept of official press did not exist, but newspapers had to vie for political favour to ensure their survival (Ries).

However, the scenario in which more vigorous and influential national presses existed such as Germany, Holland and England have also been reviewed. Schröder attributes government support to the success of journalism in seventeenth-century Germany: the imperial authorities were the beneficiaries, first and foremost, whilst protecting information through the double game of censorship and privileges<sup>13</sup>; hence, the *propagandistic* function of the German press should not be ignored, even if Schröder concludes from his analysis that the 'emancipation of information' was already under way (Schröder 126).

Even more significant is the review of Dutch Baroque journalism carried out by authors such as Lankhorst ('Les premiers', 'Newspapers'), who admits that the government of the United Provinces had its reservations about pre-publication censorship, but replies that it did, however, seek to control the press by means of partial censorship laws in certain areas. An act passed in 1587 prohibited in the new Republic—founded in 1581—the distribution of news that could affect the State. Another act from 1651 also prohibited the publication of scandalous news about other foreign princes or their ministers, whereas a new act in 1652 referred specifically to political news from England in an attempt to control its circulation. Speaking of the Dutch press regime in the Modern Age, this author concludes: 'It had not been liberal under the Habsburg regime, nor had it been liberal since the Seven Provinces had declared their Independence and joined together in the Republic of the United Provinces in the Act of Abjuration in 1581' (Lankhorst, 'Newspapers' 154). Furthermore, it is also true that the regime of privileges, which encouraged newspaper editors to remain on good terms with the authorities, existed alongside the more 'liberal' system of the payment of taxes in exchange for newspaper printing licences.

The wealth of publications coming off the Dutch presses in the seventeenth century, which is sometimes referred to as 'the Dutch miracle', certainly also included newspapers. However, one needs to be cautious of painting a picture of a 'tolerant Republic'. To an extent, freedom of the press did exist in the Dutch Republic, and it was certainly the envy of neighboring countries. But it should not be forgotten that printers and publishers, 'courantiers' and booksellers in the Dutch Republic also had to deal with authorities who supervised, took censorial measures every now and then, and were always present. (Lankhorst, 'Newspapers' 156)

Vittu made identical assertions as regards the Dutch gazettes produced for exportation to France discussed earlier: even though they undeniably constituted a kind of parallel market in the French press—the kingdom's official gazettes focused on foreign news, whereas those produced in Holland revealed to the French the events and facts of internal politics—it should also not be ignored that at least part of this production was eventually authorised in France and distributed through importations with official approbation, which inevitably led Dutch journalists to 'observe a certain moderation' in their reports (Vittu 272).

In England, discussion about whether it is pertinent to continue talking about 'historic exceptionality' when referring to the scenario of widespread political freedom in which its early journalism developed always revolves around the evaluation made about

the nature and efficacy of the *Stationers' Company*, the only professional, and therefore *not political*, body in Europe controlling publications. In contrast to classic historians who understood that the booksellers' guild exercised effective coercion on the freedom of the press, the dominant stance among experts in recent decades has questioned the success of this powerful minority allied with the monarchy, and has even cast doubt on the intention of the monarchy to effectively control the information market.<sup>14</sup> The most recent contributions to this historiographical debate, however, seek to move away from both visions, which are overly categorical:

It is clear that the traditional model of an all-pervasive, draconian censorship needs to be replaced with an account which accommodates the ad hoc, reactive and sometimes chaotic nature of early modern censorship. It is less clear, however, that this necessarily involves ignoring the dangers faced by transgressive authors, printers and publishers, and discounting the ability of the state to impose its will upon the press when it chose to do so. (McElligott, 'A Couple' 98)

The same exceptionality is displayed by English journalism as regards the a priori control mechanism of newspapers. The Civil War deprived The Star Chamber of the privileges granted by the Tudors and the first Stuarts; hence, *The Licensing Act*, comparable to other European legal ordinances that required a licence prior to publishing any printed product, was not passed until 1662, during the reign of Charles II, and even then this act suffered a curious lapse of 6 years, between 1679 and 1685, which has been used by some historians to support their vision of a liberal political class that championed freedom of expression, even in the midst of a reign that was closer to the absolutist ideal than any other in English history. And, once again, the opposite opinion has been expressed by those who understand this lapse as tacit recognition of the inefficacy with which control was exercised in England and—as we have seen—in the rest of Europe (Conboy, *Journalism* 54).

According to the most habitually found interpretations, the relative tolerance of the *Stationers' Company* in the control of publications and the delay and discontinuity with which the licensing act was applied lay at the heart of the successful assimilation of the newspaper product by English printers and editors, in spite of the delay with which this cultural novelty reached the Isles. The history of English journalism would have developed, therefore, from the start of the Early Modern period, in the market and separately from State politics. However, in relation to this point, it is worth recovering the interpretation about the origin of English journalism put forward by Raymond (*Pamphlets*). Without disparaging the definitive boost provided by the Dutch model of the *coranto*, introduced in England in 1618, Raymond considers that the genesis of English journalism is largely nourished by the national tradition of the religious pamphlet, which had been thriving for decades. This interpretation is interesting as it emphasises the importance of religious—and therefore political—polemic in the origin of the English press. Far from being a casual connection, the invasion of Dutch *corantos* on English soil can be viewed as part of a propagandistic strategy of one of the two leading actors in the English political turmoil of the seventeenth century, the *parliamentary faction*.

Coinciding with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, a broad sector of English politics launched a propaganda campaign that took the side of the English king in favour



of German protestant princes and, therefore, in favour of a religious—protestant—revitalisation of the English state. It was the same political faction that was behind the religious crisis in the 1580s and which would subsequently be behind the Great Remonstrance of the English Parliament against the King, the Civil War of the 1640s and even the subsequent political-religious process throughout the seventeenth century in England. The success of this ideological faction, which eventually turned England into the first parliamentary monarchy in the world at the end of the century, was due, according to Raymond, to a ground-breaking and intelligent use of social communication through the printed pamphlet and newspaper.

According to this new interpretation, in spite of the apparent innocuousness of *corantos* and gazettes, all these early manifestations of the newspaper press in England were 'implicitly critical' of the foreign policy of English monarchs, reluctant to intervene in continental conflict. 'Corantos offered foreign news not just because of apprehensions over publishing home news, but because the wars in Europe were compelling to a British readership' (Raymond, *Pamphlets* 136). This new framework of interpretation provides a better understanding of why the English crown was, until after *The Glorious Revolution*, in the late seventeenth century, repeatedly hostile to the British press. There is, therefore, constant confirmation of the close links between political strategies and journalism, even in contexts such as England in which historiographical tradition usually refers almost exclusively to commercial motives when explaining the development of the press, although the scarce representation of the English monarchy in the newspapers of the time is indeed exceptional within the European context.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, the author finds that the Habermassian model of the public bourgeois sphere is more useful to explain early English journalism than the other classic model of propaganda proposed by Ellul, which contemplates a single direction from the State down to the subjects: 'While the old narrative of the newspaper as a champion of the free speech over a hostile state no longer holds, it is not tenable to dismiss the pressures of the news media exerted by the state' (Raymond, 'Introduction' 15).

Rereading the phenomena associated with the historic appearance of journalism in Europe in the direction outlined above would even lead therefore to the dissolution of the controversy between the liberal thesis and the Marxist thesis. In view of the analysis, there was not a *Europe of Merchants*—in the North—and another Europe of Propagandists, in the South, as regards the instigators of early journalism. On both sides of the boundary drawn by religions, an identical need is observed for political factions in power and in opposition, which require the services of this new and powerful weapon, and an identical presence of journalists, editors or printers that bend to the requirement of politicians and benefit from the service they provide. Conboy has spoken of an 'unwritten pact' to explain the necessary connivance between politics and the market, without which the prodigious development of journalistic activity throughout the Modern Age would be incomprehensible (Conboy, *Journalism* 46).<sup>16</sup>

Journalism, always and throughout Europe, was 'profoundly involved in the creation of political structures', but, in turn, its nature as public discourse is designed in accordance with market conditions. In this respect, all the characteristics of the type of newspapers destined to crystallise in Europe can be understood as a requirement of their existence in the market: the periodicity, the recurrent conjunction of information and opinion,

instruction and entertainment, cultivated and popular moulds (Conboy *The Press*); even the disappointment felt by the reader who right from the beginning has lamented the lack of veracity implicit in the nature of new journalistic discourse (Nevitt) . . .

According to the proposal outlined here, it is not pertinent to continue talking about Europe as being split into two regarding the historic function of early journalism; a model that is expressed in the image of a European-wide network, crossed by countless meeting and seepage points, even if we maintain that England and France can continue to occupy opposite poles within it, we believe it is more explanatory.<sup>17</sup> Following on this path, already explored by major names in the History of Journalism, one must bear in mind that the birth of journalism occurred in times of turmoil, with political, religious and communicative tensions. Being so, it is no wonder that this first outcome of modern social communication—journalism—reflects these very same tensions. This new approach also helps overcome the historicist stage in the study of the histories of national journalism. For all that concerns Western Europe, journalism emerges as a result of similar conditions and in concurrent times, whether in different forms and shapes—handwritten or printed, periodical or not. It is a moot point to keep searching for its birthplace or its exact date of birth since the main purpose of journalism at the time was mainly representing the network of micro-powers that Europe was becoming.

In this regard, we adhere to the defence offered by B. Dooley regarding the pertinence of overcoming pre-existing categories to the benefit of a new *complex* model of explanation.<sup>18</sup> Each era and each political space manifested identical agility in terms of taking advantage of the versatility of the newspaper product, which therefore adapted to the specific needs of its promoters and readerships, here and there, conserving in turn a common identity that means that we can, without falling into a reductive generalisation, talk about a single European journalism in the Early Modern period.

This capacity to adapt to the political and environmental medium has been highlighted as one of the historic constants of journalism and in turn as a cause of its success in overcoming the historic boundaries of the age in which it was born—the Modern Age—and entering the contemporary age taking on new historic functions.<sup>19</sup> However, beyond the national peculiarities, journalism emerges in the Modern Age as a powerful agent in the construction of a new *community*, one based on curiosity, shared by rulers, subjects and citizens here and there throughout Europe in relation to public affairs. The framework through which historians over the next few decades interpret such versatility must be capable of drawing, above and beyond specific details, the lines of this commercial, geopolitical and identitarian network that is overlaid on the map of early European journalism.

### Notes

1. The most significant recent contributions to our knowledge of early national journalisms have been made in Italy (Infelise), England (Raymond *Pamphlets*), the Netherlands (Arblaster), France (Rétat) and Spain (Guillamet; Díaz Noci and Hoyo; Espejo 'El Impresor', 'Las relaciones'; Espejo and Alías).
2. This is the interpretation of Keith Michael Baker, in the Introduction of the edited volume *Gazettes et information politique sous l'Ancien Régime*: 'Le journalisme politique

internationale est apparu avec le système de l'État moderne après 1648 et a eu pour but de fournir, au public international, cosmopolite, formé par les élites engagées dans le développement du système, l'information qu'il désirait' (11).

3. In correlation with this added value, veracity, the price of handwritten news reports is considerably higher than that of printed news sheets (Infelise).
4. Not in Italy, however; as pointed out by Infelise, close to a century went by before this conversion took place in a generalised way in Italian cities. In the two cities considered specialist centres in the production of handwritten news reports, Venice and Rome, their definitive printing did not occur until right at the end of the seventeenth century and even the early eighteenth century.
5. The oldest corantos or gazettes conserved appear in German lands: the *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien* ('Collection of all distinguished and memorable news') in Strasbourg is documented from 1605 onwards, and the *Relation oder Zeitung* in Wolfenbüttel from 1609 onwards. Before long, gazettes appeared in Frankfurt (1615), Berlin (1617) and Hamburg (1618). Towards the middle of the century, there were already at least 30 cities in which gazettes were published in German (Schröder 123).

The data referring to Dutch lands reflect identical success for the gazette. There are copies of the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, & c.* dated 14th June 1618 and the *Tydinghen uyt verscheyde quartieren* ('News from diverse places', also from 1618), both printed in Amsterdam. In 1645, nine gazettes are documented in Amsterdam, published twice a week. Other Dutch cities also soon had their own weekly newspaper: Arnhem (1621), Delft (1623), The Hague (1635) ... (Lankhorst 'Newspapers').

6. Joad Raymond in a conference titled 'De panfletos y otros papeles' delivered as part of a course on 'Barroco y Comunicación' (Seville, 16–19 November 2009).
7. The Dutch *Courante* from 1618 mentioned in the previous note was published in 1620 in English (*Courant out of Italy, Germany ...*, 1620). There are also records of French translations of the two Dutch newspapers described, *Courant d'Italie et d'Almaigne* and *Nouvelles de divers quartiers* both in 1620.
8. Much less well known and probably isolated is the pioneering attempt of the gazette printed in Seville in 1618, by the printer Serrano de Vargas, of which only one issue is known: *Gazeta romana, y relación general, de relaciones de todos los Reynos y Provincias del mundo*. Also in Valencia there are records of a publication entered in the catalogues as *La Gaceta de Roma* (Espejo and Alías).
9. The relative tolerance of the Dutch political authorities, in the case of the latter city, if not incentivised at least did nothing to put a stop to the European-wide business of its inhabitants (Rétat).
10. For a review of the genesis and evolution of the *liberal thesis* and the *Marxist thesis* in the history of journalism, see Dooley.
11. For example, in the volume coordinated by Dooley and Baron, where there are chapters dedicated to 'The English model' and 'The Continent'.
12. In this regard, see De los Reyes.
13. Pre-publication censorship, in effect, considered one of the classic elements of the absolutist control of information, was reflected in German imperial legislation as early as 1521, although it was applied with greater zeal to religious works. Newspapers are included as being open to censorship as of the *Erfurt Diet* of 1567 (Schröder 135–6).

14. For further information regarding the commonplace approach to the repressive nature of *Stationers' Company*, and the revisionist stance of recent studies, see McElligott ('A Couple', *Royalism*).
15. Raymond also explains the historic scope of this circumstance: Charles was unaware of the 'the possibilities of modern newspapers', and therefore the hallmark of the early English press is that it is printed by his opponents, it is protesting in its nature and leads directly to the development of the freedom of expression, as the century wore on (Raymond *Pamphlets*).
16. He also explains the emergence of journalistic activity as a 'combination of profit, politics and curiosity' (Conboy, *Journalism* 23).
17. The image of the network has also been used by Raymond ('Introduction: Networks') and Arblaster.
18. Dooley turns to General Systems Theory and Edgar Morin's *paradigm of complexity* to explain the theoretical foundation on which his historiographical proposal is based (Dooley).
19. One of the most recent books by Martin Conboy also emphasises this *complex* or *comprehensive* interpretation: 'This book will argue that there is not and never has been a single unifying activity to be thought to as journalism. On the contrary, journalism has always been associated with dispute—dispute about its value, its role, its direction, even its definition—and journalism has always been constructed as a diverse and multiple set of textual strategies, differing practices attempting to champion or challenge whatever has been the dominant version. Even though in its earliest manifestation, politics was very much to the fore, journalism has always been broader than the specifically political and its indeed needed to be to survive' (Conboy, *Journalism* 2).

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