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The Seville printer Juan de Cabrera (1623-1631): the production of serial news pamphlets in 17th century Spain

Abstract

In this paper, the production of the Seville printer Juan de Cabrera and his contemporaries (second and third decades of the 17th century) will be analysed to determine the strategies with which they managed to keep their readership supplied with news about international political developments (particularly about the War of Flanders): the use of the accounts of anonymous gazetteers – still unsubstantiated for this period – and the design innovations that allowed the serial nature of these publications to be recognised and which foreshadowed the elements typical of subsequent newspaper formats. To this end, old press collections, which have received scant attention hitherto, have been recovered in order to analyse the content and cover design of a corpus comprising 78 news publications printed by Juan de Cabrera in Seville during the first half of the 17th century.

Keywords

Serial news pamphlets, gazetteers, War of Flanders, Juan de Cabrera, printing, Seville, journalism

1. Introduction

Classical bibliography and, more recently, the history of books, both of which provide excellent insights into Spanish printing, pay precious little attention to the news production of 17th century printing presses; nonetheless, only a detailed knowledge of this production –that of printers dedicated to the publication of the first printed news sheets– can help us to understand the Iberian Peninsula's position in the news market of the Modern Age. The assertion that Spain was left on the margins of the information revolution occurring at the beginning of the 17th century –whose clearest exponent was the appearance of serial news pamphlets and gazettes– is still commonplace: “Elsewhere in Europe serial publication did not enjoy the same success. The early newspapers were a geographically circumscribed phenomenon. Spain was a latecomer to the market of serial news publications, and this was true also of two of the three largest markets for print, France and Italy” (Pettegree, 2014: 200).

We have maintained that this assertion is partially inaccurate, since it ignores the existence of “series” of printed news sheets in Spain since the end of the 16th century and during the first decades of the 17th century. These serial news pamphlets confirm the existence of a market very similar to that of the rest of Western Europe at around the same time. Therefore, the fallacy that denies the existence of a budding Spanish journalism in the first half of the 17th century, prior to the appearance of the *Gaceta Nueva* in 1661, is down to the scarcity of extant collections and their deficient cataloguing – and a certain degree of inflexibility shown by those historians who often define frequency with anachronistic criteria (Espejo & Baena, 2015).

In this paper, our intention is to address the news production of Juan de Cabrera, a printer plying his trade in Seville during the second decade of the 17th century, who, together with others, could be representative of the inception of Spanish journalism. We have recovered and analysed his work in order to gain insights into the strategies he employed to supply the market with a continuous string of serial news publications covering international current affairs.

The production of Juan de Cabrera in Seville was limited to a nine-year period, between 1623 and 1631¹, the year of his death, since from that moment on his signature was replaced by that of his widow. Therefore, the question arises whether he established himself in the city when he was already middle-aged, after having worked in another locality with a printing press, or if he learnt his trade in Seville, but, once having opened his own business, died young. This second hypothesis could be endorsed by the fact that apparently none of his children took over the business, as was usually the case².

Due to the fact that they share the same surname and to their similar approaches, Rodrigo de Cabrera (1594-1600) has been noted as one of the Juan de Cabrera’s possible predecessors in the art of printing, although Domínguez does concede that “the time separating both men rules out any family connection” (Domínguez, 1992: 32). Moreover, Aguilar has indicated that – after a brief stint by his widow – Juan de Cabrera’s printing press was taken over by Juan Gómez de Blas (1633-1667). This allegation is made on the basis of the description that Juan de Cabrera gives of his workshop, “*frontero de donde agora vive el Correo Mayor. En la calle de Martín Cerón, junto a la Escuela donde enseñan a leer niños* (in front of where the Head Courier now lives. In Martín Cerón Street, next to the school where children are taught to read),” whereas Juan Gómez de Blas first plied his trade “*junto al Colegio de San Acacio* (next to the school of St. Acacius),” which is more than likely one the same place. Hence, Aguilar deduces that “maybe it ought to be assumed that Juan Gómez was an apprentice at the workshop of Juan de Cabrera, his predecessor” (Aguilar, 1992: 18-19).

Without abandoning the field of conjecture, if the successive family and/or business connections between the printers Rodrigo de Cabrera, Juan de Cabrera, and Juan Gómez de Blas could be confirmed for the time frame covering the production of the Seville printing presses between 1595 and 1667, we would be looking at an important saga of printers/publishers bent on innovating with new publishing formats, the forerunners of the present-day newspaper (Espejo, 2008; Espejo, 2016b).

As occurred in other Spanish cities, such as Barcelona and Valencia, in Seville during the second and third decade of the 17th century there were several printers who

¹ Escudero and Perosso (1894) has the printer working from 1624-1630, but this is doubtlessly an error stemming from his unfamiliarity with part of the work.

² Although Domínguez notes that “Medina considers the possibility that Pedro de Cabrera y Valdés, who was to be found printing in Lima from 1638-1649, was somehow related to Juan de Cabrera on the strength of his surname and the current established among the Seville printers and the said city” (Domínguez, 1992, 32).

experimented with new journalistic formats³. Figuring among these were Juan Serrano de Vargas, Francisco de Lyra, Alonso Rodríguez Gamarra and Simón Fajardo, all of whom established a similar line of work – the printing of serial news pamphlets – between 1604 and 1656, a period embracing the joint production of all these men. Therefore, what is not involved is the ingenious and isolated production of one sole author, but that of a generation of printers who, with the opening of a promising new market, reinvented themselves as news editors, before the gazette supervised by the Crown and published as a tacitly exclusive concession put an end to these sporadic publications in 1660s.

2. The production of serial news pamphlets at the workshop of Juan de Cabrera⁴

How did a printer like Juan de Cabrera make his living in a still populous, but nevertheless rather rundown, city such as Seville in the second decade of the 17th century?⁵ Neither was he Seville's best printer, the one who monopolised the few literary or scientific editions published in the city⁶, nor was he the one who the local authorities commissioned to print the charters, statutes, proclamations, and other official documents that must have been a constant source of income for some of the local printers – although the post of *Impresor Mayor* (Head Printer), occupied by his possible apprentice Juan Gómez de Blas, would not be created until 1657. Much emphasis has been placed on the importance of the market for *ephemera* – song books, placards, almanacs, etc. – yet for the period under study it is impossible to confirm whether or not they were produced in large quantities in the city of Seville⁷; or, alternatively, precisely because of their ephemeral nature not enough of them have come down to us to allow us to gauge their importance in the market.

Although occasionally publishing all these printed products – which, however, were not apparently the staple of his business – Juan de Cabrera devoted most of his time to publishing current affairs in the form of serial news publications. Despite having pursued his trade in the city for little under a decade, his production in this regard is vast. Referring to his work as a whole, Domínguez declares that “approximately 100 pieces” can be attributed to him (Domínguez, 1992: 32). Nonetheless, after taking into account only his news publications and on the strength of a rapid enquiry, we have managed to compile 78, so, consequently, it is safe to say that his global production way exceeded the 100 mark. If we consider only those 78 new publications recovered here, and his nine years of production in the city, this implies that Cabrera would have published on average no less than eight a year, discounting all the others about which we have no information. As will be seen, nonetheless, the extant news publications were all printed over a period of a few years, judging by the dates: at least 16 in 1624, 22 in 1625, and 20 in 1626; to wit, around two publications a month. Henceforth, his production fell sharply⁸, or, as luck would have it, only a fraction of his work

³ For an excellent compilation of these products, half way between relations and gazettes, from all over Europe, see Appendix II “From Relations to Corantos and Gazettes”, in Ettinghausen (2015), pp. 259-265.

⁴ The following analysis was conducted on a corpus of 78 news pamphlets produced by Juan de Cabrera which we were able to recover. The bibliographic references to the publications of Cabrera and other printers mentioned here include the title, followed by the entry number of the edition in brackets in the *Universal Short Title Catalogue* of St. Andrews University (<http://www.ustc.ac.uk/>). We have observed the spelling of the originals whenever we have been able to transcribe them *de visu*.

⁵ For further information on the book and printing market during the Early Modern period, see Peña Díaz (2003); on the position that Seville occupied in these markets, see González Sánchez and Maillard (2003).

⁶ This task was doubtlessly undertaken by Francisco de Lyra. The only long work published by Juan de Cabrera that we know of is the *Segunda parte de la historia y grandeza de la gran ciudad de Sevilla* (*Second part of the history and grandeur of the city of Seville*) by Espinosa de los Monteros – according to Aurora Domínguez, the only one that contains over 25 sheets (Domínguez, 1992, 33).

⁷ With the possible exception of Christmas carols of which there are many extant collections. But their production, bearing in mind their nature, was surely concentrated in certain times of the year.

⁸ Only 19 news sheets published by Cabrera between 1627 and 1631 have come down to us.

has survived for that period. Doubtlessly, Philip IV's Pragmatic Sanction of 1627, which prohibited the printing of relations, gazettes, news, or any other kind of paper on affairs of state, without the prior approval of the Royal Council or other authorities with similar powers, must have had a huge impact. Hence, we can assume that the sale of a couple of relations or serial news pamphlets a month generated enough income to maintain a medium-sized printing press such as that of Cabrera in Seville.

What is still open to question is how these printers, working far from the capital of the kingdom, sustained such a high news production rate; Juan de Cabrera generally copied the sheets of other printers, above all those of his Madrid counterparts Bernardino de Guzmán, Juan Delgado, Diego Flamenco, Andrés de la Parra, Luis Sánchez, etc., whose names – particularly the first three – appear in his work as authors of the “originals”. Even when there is no such mention, we have discovered that in many other cases the publications of Cabrera are reproductions of sheets printed by his colleagues in Madrid. These copies are also frequently detected on the basis of an original from Barcelona, in this case nearly always coming off the printing press of Esteban Liberós or that of Mathevad, with or without an intermediate Madrid publication.

As a matter of fact, the first relation printed by Juan de Cabrera that we know of was an original by Diego Flamenco, the *Relacion verissima, de el grandioso acompañamiento, y Bautismo, de la Serenissima Princesa, Doña Margarita Maria, Catalina* (*Absolutely veracious account of the grand entourage and baptism of Her Serene Highness Princess Margarita Maria*) (USTC 5011209), though Cabrera altered a word in the original title, insofar as for Diego Flamenco the account is “*verdadera* (true),” instead of “*verísima* (absolutely veracious),” and copied the Madrid text with a number of small language variants (USTC 5004712). Incidentally, the original authorship is not mentioned in the publication. This first relation serves as well to establish when Cabrera arrived in Seville – or when he started to work as a printer – which must have been at the end of the year, since the ceremony described in the account was held in December and it is his only extant publication from that year.

In the following years, Cabrera used texts by Flamenco and other Madrid printers on numerous occasions, but as he neither copied them word for word, nor intended to avail himself of someone else's work without further ado, we believe that it was more a case of reissue than of plagiarism. As in the aforementioned example, the reissue only involved the modification of a number of words, but on other occasions the texts were more thoroughly reworked. For instance, Cabrera published the *Prodigioso svceso qve en Ostraviza tierra de el Turco a svcedido este presente año de 1624. de qve estan los Tvrcos muy atemorizados...* (*Prodigious event that has taken place in Ostravice in the year 1624, and that the Turks are much alarmed...*) (USTC 5012399), one of his few works devoted to extraordinary events or those related to popular superstition/religiosity, probably based on the *Verdadera, y notable relacion, en la qual se contienen los mas notables, y espantosos sucessos q[ue] hasta oy se han visto, sucedidos en Turquia...* (*True and noteworthy relation that contains the very remarkable and terrible events that have occurred in Turkey to date...*) by the Alcalá printer Juan García (USTC 5012552), who in turn declared it to be a copy of the work of Ludovico Grignani, a famous Roman printer specialising in *avvisi*. The awful event turns out to be the birth of a child with three eyes, three horns, donkey's ears, one sole nasal orifice, and legs and feet the wrong way round, yet what is especially striking is that Cabrera exploited the original source twice by publishing the only *placard* or picture card that we know of, with an engraving depicting the child, also copied from Juan García, and announcing a future relation that has not survived.

What is of particular interest to us here is the series that Cabrera began to produce in 1624, covering King Philip IV's trip to Andalusia during the spring months. Dealing with the King's departure from Madrid and his successive progress through the cities of Andalusia, this was undoubtedly a piece of news with far-reaching implications that kept printers all

over Spain occupied; although those from Madrid got to publish the news firsthand, followed by their counterparts in Seville⁹.

After a fashion, these printers apparently distributed amongst themselves the work that this appetising piece of news generated, and Juan de Cabrera's scoop seems to have been the coverage of the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the fabulous welcome given to the King, first on the ducal estates of Doñana, and then in Sanlúcar de Barrameda and Cadiz. Cabrera published what is now his best known work entitled, *Bosque de Doña Ana...* (*Forest of Lady Ana...*), a long, 16-page news pamphlet probably written by Pedro de Espinosa, the Duke's official eulogist (USTC 5011978)¹⁰, and another shorter one summarising it, both bearing the Duke's crest on the cover (USTC 5012558). What is even more remarkable is that Cabrera used a printed news sheet devoted to another matter to inform his readership about the latest developments as regards the royal progress, his *Verissima relacion de la partida de Londres que hizo don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza...* (*Absolutely veracious account of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's departure for London...*) (USTC 5037699), a copy of the Madrid printer Luis Sánchez's *Las fiestas y singulares favores que a Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza... se le hizieron en la jornada que de España hizo...* (*The celebrations and great favours done to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza... on the journey he made from Spain*) (USTC 5006292), as stated in the imprint. But Cabrera compressed the text so as to be able to include a section in italics with breaking news about the King's arrival in Granada and his subsequent departure for Jaen.

Therefore, Juan de Cabrera possessed his own information sources or those to which he had privileged access: Seville's local authorities¹¹, members of the city's religious orders – whose private correspondence provided the printer with information for several relations dealing with the martyrdom of missionaries¹²– and, most importantly, informants at the court of the Duke of Medina Sidonia¹³, whose merits he trumpets and whose coat of arms appears in several publications, as we have already noted¹⁴. In the publication entitled, *Copia de la carta que el señor Don Fernando Giron capitan general de la Infanteria de Cadiz, embio al Excelentissimo señor Duque de Medina...* (*Copy of the letter that Fernando Giron, Captain General of the Infantry of Cadiz, sent to His Grace The Duke of Medina...*) (USTC 5023106), he

⁹ For a better understanding of the complex processes and intercessions by which the reputation of the Monarch and his most prominent subjects was managed, see García Bernal (2007).

¹⁰ The great Baroque poet Pedro de Espinosa, who maintained close ties with the Andalusian aristocratic milieu of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia and the Counts of Niebla, is a good example of a literary author responding to the demands of the moment as a *relacionero* (news writer).

¹¹ For instance, in the *Relacion famosa en que se da aviso de la infanteria que el señor don Fernando Remirez Fariña asistente desta ciudad de Sevilla mando levantar para embiar a presidio y socorro a la ciudad de Cadiz...* (*Famous account in which notice is given of the infantry raised on the orders of Fernando Remirez Fariña, resident of this city of Seville, to be sent to succour the city of Cadiz...*) (USTC 5012464).

¹² This can be seen in the following title, *Refriega admirable que tuvieron cinco navios dunquerque contra veynte y tres Naos de guerra, de Olandeses Rebeldes: traslado, sacado de una Carta escrita de Flandes a un Religioso de la Compañia de Jesus, de esta Ciudad de Sevilla* (*Admirable skirmish between five ships from Dunkirk and 23 Dutch rebel warships: copy of a letter sent from Flanders to a priest of the Company of Jesus of this city of Seville*) (USTC 5012054), written by Father Flemingo Arnaldo, who was, in fact, a Jesuit residing in Antwerp.

¹³ The Ducal House of Medina Sidonia was, undoubtedly, the centre of gravity of Andalusian politics during the 17th century. For a recent evaluation of the conflictive relationship between the Court and the Ducal House, and its impact on the Andalusian economy and politics, see Salas Almela (2006 y 2013).

¹⁴ Cabrera also used informants in the Duke of Medina Sidonia's entourage in his *Carta cierta y verdadera que vino a un cavallero desta ciudad, desde la Ciudad de San Lucar...* (*True and accurate letter that was sent by a gentleman of this city from the town of San Lucar...*) (USTC 5013616), which ends on an enigmatic note: "Estos dos avisos se añaden a esta relacion para algunos curiosos que desean saber nuevas. Y adviértase que en este papel no se añade palabra de como se escribio (These two notices are added to this account for those interested in receiving the latest news. And be aware that not a single word has been added to this sheet about how it was written)". Could this mean that Cabrera was not sure about the integrity of his sources?

explicitly acknowledges his position as eulogist, or propagandist, of the Andalusian nobleman and his circle of courtiers:

Aunque ha salido otra Relacion de lo sucedido en Cadiz, por ser esta mas amplia, y a la letra como sucedió, y estar recopilada con diferentes capítulos que en la pasada no salierô, se a tornado a imprimir, y assi el curioso lector, suplira las faltas del impresor, pues solo es su intent se clarifiquê los valerosos desseos con que algunos Principes acudierô en esta ocasion¹⁵.

It is important to note that in this quote it is the printer Cabrera, as he calls himself, who undertakes the task of compiling information and editing it for his readership. This allows us to reach a provisional conclusion: in the middling cities where the news market was not sufficiently large to lead to the emergence of the professional figure of newspaper “editor”, it was the printer who assumed this role, compiling news items from other printers and his own sources, editing them to his own convenience – which occasionally involved the partial rewriting of texts – and presenting himself before his readers as the author of the information.

It would be interesting to verify whether the circulation of news was unidirectional – from Madrid to the rest of the kingdom – or, alternatively, if the most active printing presses of other Spanish cities became a source for the printers of the capital. In the extant production of Juan de Cabrera there are few examples where there is chance that the printer supplied the original information: in this respect, for instance, a relation by Cabrera dealing with an auto-da-fé held in Seville was copied in Madrid, Barcelona, and Montilla (Cordova). In the rest of his work it is possible to detect an especially strong influence of the Madrid printers, no doubt due to their proximity to the Imperial Court of the Habsburgs: they supplied the majority of the political, national and international news, which was then replicated in the rest of the kingdom. So we could say that the process of officialdom of Spanish journalism, a point to which we will return further on, started then, in the 1620s, four decades before the appearance of the kingdom’s first official gazette.

This last affirmation could possibly contradict a very widespread belief, according to which 17th-century Seville was the port of entry of international news, more so than any other Spanish city, hence its weight in the evolution of journalism that the country experienced at the time. In his study of publications covering the War of Flanders, Bernardo García states:

“In the selected sample, the printers producing the greatest number of relations plied their trade in Seville; namely, Simón Fajardo, Luis Estupiñán, Juan de Cabrera, Francisco de Lira, Andrés Grande, Juan Gómez de Blas, and Nicolás Rodríguez. This should come as no surprise bearing in mind that it was one of the most important capitals as regards the system of fleets and communication of the monarchy, which maintained close contacts with Northern Europe, driven by the intense flow of merchandise and capital passing through the city. Furthermore, it had large Flemish, French, English, German, Italian, and Portuguese communities, among other nationalities. Thus, the news found in these relations not only covered the wars of Flanders, but above all their implications for the West Indies, the privateers in the North Sea and the English Channel, and other naval combats” (García, 2006: 259).

Without denying the historical validity of the aforementioned state of affairs – in this work, we believe to have revealed the existence of a gazetteer whose task it was to keep his

¹⁵ “Although another relation of the events occurring in Cadiz has been published, on this being more comprehensive, a word-for-word account, and compiled from different episodes that have not been published previously, it has been printed, and thus the curious reader will compensate for the printer’s errors, insofar as he only intends to clarify the valiant aspirations with which some princes attended on this occasion” (Our translation).

Seville readership duly informed, as will be seen below – we consider, however, that the most important contribution made by the Seville printers was in the field of news production and editing, inasmuch as the items were, to a great extent, previously selected by those moving in the court circles of Madrid.

Lastly, we should remember that plagiarism was prevalent at the time; that pervasive strategy of incessantly copying the same news allowed journalism to develop in many European cities that did not have access to their own information sources.

3. The serial news publications covering the War of Flanders

Printers specialising in current affairs acted at the time as precursors of the newspaper editor, selecting and editing news that they received by post. As we know, these relations were composed by secretaries, courtiers, military personnel, or other impromptu writers who took up pen and paper to proclaim their desire to do service to or honour a superior. Therefore, neither of these two figures came close to the contemporary concept of journalism, not even to the other professional profile – this indeed being characteristic of the Modern Age – of the gazetteer, already present in some European countries during the first decades of the 17th century.

In Juan de Cabrera's work we have detected the existence of a particularly interesting series devoted to political and military conflicts in Europe, above all in Germany, Flanders, and Northern Italy. As in the cases already discussed, these are accounts that, in turn, partly draw on information published by the Madrid printers; yet, in this instance, the editing is much more thorough and allows us to guess the existence of one or more anonymous gazetteers who performed this task with the strict purpose of informing. In this regard, we should explain that studies of journalism in the Modern Age do not usually avail themselves of the "serial news pamphlet" concept; nonetheless, what we understand by this are those printed news sheets that covered current affairs by temporarily following up on different developments in consecutive instalments. As will be seen in the last section of this paper, it was precisely printers like Juan de Cabrera who, at the time, began to make this publishing format distinguishable through its own design.

It was in the summer of 1624, once the news about the royal progress in Andalusia had petered out, that Juan de Cabrera launched his series covering political current affairs, publishing news about the campaigns of the Spanish Navy against the "Moors" in Bizerte, Algiers, and North Africa, and – what interests us for the moment – about the encounters of the Spanish armies with the Protestants in Central Europe. The information was primarily sourced from correspondence, written in the private letter style, sent from the different fronts to the Court at Madrid. Thus, the *Traslado de vna carta en que declara todo lo que à sucedido en los Estados de Flandes...* (*Copy of a letter that gives an account of everything that has transpired in the States of Flanders...*) is, as its title indicates, the "word for word" rendering of a letter that a certain Rodrigo de Lara, who must have been accompanying the troops as a secretary or in some such role, sent to an unnamed "Your Grace." As before, it was a copy of a Madrid original, published under a practically identical title by Juan Delgado, and also copied in Barcelona by the Mathevads¹⁶, although the Seville printer included in the title a popular expression with which he surely intended to "captivate" his readership in the city, so far-removed from the narrated events: "Tambien se da aviso del famoso desafio de cinco, del Campo del Rey, contra otros cinco de el Campo de Mauricio, y tambien de los quatro Baxeles de Dunquerque, y como la gente de Mauricio, intentò tomar el Castillo de Amberes, y como dize el refrán, viniendo por lana, bolvieron trasquilados (Notice is also given of the famous challenge laid down by five from the King's camp to another five from the camp of

¹⁶ USTC 5012922, USTC 5023741, and USTC 5023742, respectively.

Mauricio, and also from the four ships from Dunkirk, and the people from Mauricio tried to storm the Castle of Antwerp, *and, as the saying goes, got more than they bargained for*)¹⁷.

As the letter begins by referring to previous remittances in the framework of this same private correspondence (“los días pasados avise a v. m. como el Principe de Polonia, llegó a la Corte de Bruselas... (the other day I notified Your Grace about the Prince of Poland’s arrival at the Court at Brussels)”, there is a chance that another letter might have previously been delivered to the printers in Madrid. And we believe that this could be the case of the *Avisos mvy verdaderos, que ha traydo el vltimo Correo extraordinario de Flandes...* (*Most genuine news arriving in the last extraordinary post from Flanders...*)¹⁸ which Diego Flamenco published in 1624 on the basis of letters sent from Antwerp and Dunkirk in February of the same year, as the title of the news pamphlet proclaims. If they really were the letters sent to Madrid by the aforementioned soldier, or secretary, Rodrigo de Lara, what is noteworthy is that at least two Madrid printers – Juan Delgado and Diego Flamenco – had access to them, whether in a spirit of collaboration or competition.

Such an exceptional source, due to his position as an eyewitness of the events¹⁹, would continue to supply information in the coming years: despite the fact that the signature of Rodrigo de Lara does not appear in any of the subsequent news sheets, it is highly likely that it was he who wrote the letter reproduced in Juan de Cabrera’s news pamphlets *La famosa y deseada vitoria que la armada de Vnquerqve y gente de la señora infanta Ysabel an tenido en los Estados de Flandes...* (*The famous and much-awaited victory that the armada of Dunkirk and people of Princess Isabel have won in the States of Flanders...*) (USTC 5012572), published in 1625, and *Relacion en qve se da qventa de las grandiosas presas que los Navios de Dumquerque...* (*Relation that offers an account of the great captures that the ships of Dunkirk...*) (USTC 5001973), published in 1626. Incidentally, he might also have been the author of a sheet published in 1625 by Simón Fajardo, another Seville printer, namely, the *Relacion cierta, y verdadera de la vitoria qve ha tenido el Marques de Espinola estando sobre el cerco de Breda...* (*Correct and true account of the victory that the Marquis of Spinola has gained at the Siege of Breda...*) (USTC 5025960). Thus, as we have already noted, it is possible that two Seville printers – Juan de Cabrera and Simón Fajardo – also competed for access to such an enticing information source, which they did by copying the Madrid news sheets that were the first to reproduce this correspondence. Other letters penned by military eyewitnesses in Flanders were also rapidly disseminated via the Madrid printing presses, such as the correspondence of the Count of Tilly – General-in-Chief of the Imperial Army – or that of the clergy keeping their superiors abreast of developments²⁰.

This abundance of sources and constant intertwining of news pamphlets should come as no surprise, since the armed conflict in Flanders was, as is common knowledge, that to which the Spanish Crown had committed the largest number of troops and on which its reputation largely hung. Bernardo García has recovered around 50 Spanish relations devoted entirely to this war (García, 2006). During the mid-years of the conflict, between 1621 and 1648, the Spanish Crown did not yet have an official newspaper or journalist. In

¹⁷ The emphasis is ours and corresponds to the addition by Juan de Cabrera.

¹⁸ This news pamphlet by the Madrid printer Diego Flamenco reproduces, in effect, a text that seems to form part of the same correspondence: “De aquí puedo dar a V.m. las mejores nuevas que ha auido, desde el principio de la guerra... (Hence, I can offer Your Grace the best news since the beginning of the war...)” (USTC 5003077).

¹⁹ In the news sheet by Juan Delgado entitled, *Traslado de una carta...* (*Copy of a letter...*), Rodrigo de Lara states at a given moment, “yo fui a verlo todo (I went to see it all)”, relying on his status as a bona fide eyewitness who undertakes to keep his mysterious correspondent duly informed: “De lo demas que sucediere yrè siempre avisando a v.m (I will always keep Your Grace informed about any new developments).” The first phrase has disappeared in Juan de Cabrera’s version, probably to save space.

²⁰ An essential task still pending is to compare the news pamphlets with the chronicles dealing with the wars of Flanders during the same time span.

spite of this, it is possible that the Court closely scrutinised the information reaching its subjects from the Netherlands; the news pamphlets by the Madrid printer Juan Delgado, reproducing the above-mentioned letter sent by the Count of Tilly, has an elegant presentation and includes a solemn declaration, both of which attest to the interest of the typographer in highlighting the official nature of its content: “*Con licencia de los Señores del Real Consejo, y los demas recaudos para que constasse de su certeza y verdad*” (“With the permission of the Lords of the Royal Council and all other provisions to proclaim its certitude and truth”)²¹.

What is involved, therefore, is a series covering current affairs in Flanders, news that was disseminated with the Crown’s consent, and which kept the presses of several typographers busy in different cities of the kingdom²². It drew on official, or at least officious, personal sources like the soldier Rodrigo de Lara, who was presumably the author of many of the texts. But, as we have already mentioned above, a careful reading of the news pamphlets allows us to glimpse the intervention of another author, an anonymous gazetteer who offers his own account on the basis of these direct sources.

4. An anonymous gazetteer in the Madrid of Philip IV

On the first occasion that Juan de Cabrera had access to information from Flanders, he printed a copy of a letter penned by Rodrigo de Lara in October 1624, as already seen. The next publication that the Seville printer devoted to news from the same front was now already written by an anonymous narrator who summarised the information arriving from Flanders by ordinary post, with an eye to informing a new unnamed “Your Grace,” surely not the same person to whom the agent in Flanders addressed the letters that have already been discussed. We are referring to a news pamphlet with a long but significant title, because it already combines the “relation” and “*avvisi*” concepts, and twice mentions the ordinary post as an information source; its title begins as follows: *Relacion de la dichosa nveva qve vino en este ordinario passado de Flandes, avisando que la Ciudad de Breda que el Marques de Espindola tiene cercada, queda para entregarse, respeto de la falta de mantenimientos, y comen los cavallos ya por no tener otro remedio. Y assi se espera con favor de Dios a otro ordinario estarà por nuestro Rey...* (Account of the happy news that arrived in the last ordinary post from Flanders, notifying that the city of Breda which the Marquis of Spinola is besieging is about to surrender, due to the lack of sustenance, for they are now eating their horses being left with no alternative. And so, God willing, it is hoped that by the next ordinary post it will be in the hands of our King...) (USTC 5023501).

This anonymous writer plying his trade in Madrid did not play down the propagandistic aspect, but undertook his task guided solely by news values, in accordance with which he selected the information and arranged it in the text; the news pamphlet begins by stating, “Despves de las demas nuevas que desta Villa de Madrid tengo avisado à V.m. de algunas que ay de presente podrè avisar, particularmente algunos capitulos q son decentes de saber... (After the news from this city of Madrid about which I have already notified Your Grace, there have been several new developments I will acquaint you with, particularly some events there are worth knowing about...)”

This new mode of discourse, in which short news items are compiled in an orderly fashion, is perceptible in the page presentation, because each new item is preceded by a

²¹ *Relacion verdadera del Conde de Tilly General del Exercito de la Liga Catolica...* (True account of the Count of Tilly, General of the Armies of the Catholic League...) (USTC 5023610).

²² Crediting Habsburg policy with a concern for controlling public opinion may seem like an anachronism, but important studies, such as that of Olivari (2015), have demonstrated that, since the reign of Philip III, the Spanish monarchy was sensitive to opinions voiced in the “world square”, “*plaza del mundo*”.

paragraph, or section, mark and a word that acts as a connector (“Dize se (It is claimed)”) or subheading: “Agora en esta ultima Carta de Enero (Now, in this last letter of January).”

On the basis of this news pamphlet of 1625, Juan de Cabrera continued to publish similar sheets constituting a series whose information was most likely drawn from texts penned by the same anonymous gazetteer. At the beginning of the letter transcribed above, he claimed to know much more than it was “decent” to tell, and, sure enough, in the following instalments he proved himself to be a well notified, or informed, man who had access to the ordinary and extraordinary post arriving from Flanders, Genoa, Milan, etc., in addition to other very diverse sources, such as dispatches to private citizens, letters, private conversations, and even street rumours. Of special interest are the allusions to the first of these sources, the Flanders post, inasmuch as the gazetteer typically refers to it as “the sheet” from Flanders, perhaps demonstrating that the news circulating via the international postal system had already been subject to prior editing that not only affected its content, but also its length and presentation²³.

Although the references to the “Your Grace” to whom the correspondence was addressed persist until the end of the series, allusions to the general interest of the public, and even to plans to print the news for its subsequent dissemination, are also frequent:

Con los grandissimos desseos que siempre tenemos de saber nuevas de todas las cosas, particularmente, en las de los Exercitos del Emperador de Alemania y de los Estados de Flandes [...], de que estamos pendientes, si bien desseosos, y assi ya que de presente no se ofrecen otras cosas de que poder avisar, sino es desta, porque no passe en silêcio se à mandado imprimir, porque destas victorias, y de la persecución que por nuestros pecados embiè el Señor sobre la Ciudad de Salamanca, le demos las gracias a su divina Magestad por esto (With the enormous desire that we always have to receive news about everything, particularly about the armies of the Emperor of Germany and the States of Flanders [...], which we desire, or rather are anxious, to hear about, and since there is at present nothing more about which to notify, but this, and so that it does not go unheeded, it has been printed, because for these victories and the punishment for our sins that the Lord has brought upon the city of Salamanca, we thank His Divine Majesty)²⁴.

In another of the pamphlets belonging to the series, a section is opened with the subheading, “*Algunos avisos particulares, bien dignos de saberse para el curioso Letor [sic]* (Some specific news worthy of being brought to the attention of the curious reader)²⁵”. In this case, as in others, therefore, without being exactly a fiction – we will indeed point to several possible recipients of this correspondence – the newsletter was the form in which the journalistic discourse, due to be disseminated among an incipient audience, took its first steps in the 17th century market.

As has been noted, there were at least two Seville printers who published the numbers of this series: Juan de Cabrera, to whom we have devoted most of our attention until now, and Simón Fajardo. In one of the first printed sheets of the series, published by Simón Fajardo, our gazetteer proclaims, “*Dias ha, que estauamos esperando en esta Corte algunas dichosas nuevas, ganadas con alguna facción valerosa de algún Catolico Exercito* (At this Court,

²³ As Slauter has demonstrated, each *avviso* or news item contained at least one paragraph – the minimum unit – and this brevity and concretion allowed for its rapid translation, copying, and circulation among newspapers in different countries in the journalism of the Modern Age (Slauter, 2012); “Vino nueva en el Ordinario passado por la via de Flandes, en que por su pliego avisa... (News arrived in the last ordinary post from Flanders, notifying about...)”, in *Rota que el Emperador de Alemania tuvo con el general del enemigo llamado Albestad...* (Confrontation that the Emperor of Germany had with the enemy general called Albestad...) (USTC 5001519).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Vitoria famosa que el gobernador de la Mamora tuvo con el Morabito General de los Moros de Salè...* (Famous victory that the Governor of Mamora won against the Mohammedan Hermit General of the Moors of Salè...) (USTC 5012562).

we have been waiting for days for some joyful news, thanks to some valiant faction of the Catholic army)²⁶. Both printers had access to the same correspondence arriving from Madrid, and apparently this led to a certain degree of rivalry between them²⁷, which might possibly be reflected in this title by Simón Fajardo:

Relacion verdadera de las victorias y felices sucesos que ha tenido el señor Duque de Feria con los exercitos del Duque de Saboya, en los estados de Italia. Dase cuenta de cómo rindieron los Franceses, y Saboyanos al dicho señor Duque de Feria la villa de Ayqui, plaça de armas del Duque de Saboya. Refieren los pactos y conciertos con que salieron, y las riquezas que hallaron en ella los nuestros. Es la mas copiosa y nueua que se ha impresso este año de mil y seyscientos y veynte y cinco (True account of the victories and fortunate events befalling the Duke of Feria as regards the armies of the Duke of Savoy in the Italian States. It tells of how the French and Savoyards surrendered the town of Ayqui, a fortress of the Duke of Savoy, to the said Duke of Feria. It refers to the pacts and accords resulting from this, and the riches found by our men in the town. It is the newest and most comprehensive account that has been printed in the year 1625)²⁸.

After reading the whole series, it is possible to detect a certain evolution in the tone of these letters. Although the voice of the gazetteer who edited and interpreted the narrated events is present from the start, in the first numbers of the series mimesis prevails over diegesis and many pages are full of very brief news items in which the empire's military and diplomatic achievements are listed, one after the other, without the need for further comment:

El Duque de Alva està con grande exercito de soldados a los Confines de la Yglesia (The Duke of Alba is to be found on the church limits with a great army).

El Marques de Santa Cruz dizen que se hallaba con setenta Galeras (It is held that the Marquis of Santa Cruz had seventy galleys with him).

Tambien se dize que a Santander an llegado vnos galeones de Inglaterra, cõ cartas para el Cõde de Gundimar muy regaladas del Rey, embiandole a llamar (It is also held that some galleons have arrived at Santander from England, with very flattering letters for the Count of Gundimar from the King, summoning him)²⁹.

But, as is generally known, following the *annus mirabilis* of 1625 military gains were few and far between (Martín, 1998). The sheets of our gazetteer seemingly maintain the same tone and structure, yet it is easy to see that some of the alleged news items separated by paragraph marks are now not anything of the kind, but observations on the facts or, what is even more distressing, forecasts and wishful thinking about future victories: “*Tienese muy grandissima esperança de que no querran venir a rompimiento, y que las cosas se compondran (con el favor de Dios nuestro Señor) de suerte que venga a aver una paz universal, que se sirva su divina Magestad de ponerla* (There is great hope that there will be no rift and that things can be put right (by the grace of God, Our Lord) so that a universal peace can be reached, that

²⁶ *Victoria insigne que la Cesarea Magestad de el Emperador de Alemania ha tenido contra el Rey de Dinamarca... (Prestigious victory that His Caesarean Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, has won against the King of Denmark...)* (USTC 5012560).

²⁷ Juan de Cabrera and Simón Fajardo also competed for other scoops, such as that of the famous “Nun Lieutenant”. The latter published, as indicated by the title, a *Segunda relacion la mas copiosa, y verdadera que ha salido, impressa por Simon Faxardo, que es el mesmo que imprimio la primera (Second most prolific and true account that has been printed by Simon Faxardo, who also printed the first)* (USTC 5037586).

²⁸ *Relacion verdadera de las vitorias y felices sucessos que ha tenido el señor Duque de Feria con los exercitos del Duque de Saboya... (True account of the victories and fortunate events befalling the Duke of Feria as regards the armies of the Duke of Savoy...)* (USTC 5012476). Our emphasis added.

²⁹ *Vitoria que tuvo el Duque de Feria general del Rey Don Felipe... (Victory that the Duke of Feria, General of King Philip, gained...)* (USTC 5016443).

His Divine Majesty will impose it)”³⁰. In the last numbers, the news pamphlets are steeped in melancholy: “*Animense los Principes Christianos, pues claramente se ve como nuestro Señor favorece su causa, y en particular en este año...* (Take heart, Christian Princes, since it is clear that Our Lord is well-inclined to your cause and especially this year...)”³¹. As far as we know, the series ended in 1630, since, despite the printer’s death the following year, in his last year of life and production – very scanty, by the bye – he does not seem to have resumed the publication of current affairs.

So, we could be dealing with a Madrid gazetteer who had been requested to send his news sheets to Seville, anticipating that these would reach the city’s printing presses swiftly. We admit that this could be, yet again, a literary device, since the narrative ruse of the resident at the Court who relates the latest news “to a friend” living in Seville had already been popular quite a few years before, in the letters of Almansa y Mendoza which were reissued in Seville (Almansa & Mendoza 2001). Nonetheless, we believe that there really could have been a person, or collective, in the Andalusian city interested in receiving a credible summary of court news, because we have not found evidence that this series of news pamphlets – based, however, as has been said, on handwritten or printed texts that had circulated previously in Madrid – was published in other localities, as was commonplace at the time.

Therefore, was this correspondence addressed to a particular recipient? Excluding the already noted fact that rhetorical fiction was habitual among the authors of relations and gazettes, in the case of this series covering the latest news in Central Europe, several indications suggest the possible existence of a particular correspondent in Seville. One of the printed sheets is entitled, *Relacion embiada a un personaje de esta ciudad...* (Account sent to a person of this city...) (USTC 5037511), and another, *Copia de la carta que vino a la corte de Madrid, y de alli a esta ciudad de Sevilla, a personas fidedignas...* (Copy of the letter that arrived at the Court at Madrid, and was conveyed from there to this city of Seville, to reliable people...) (USTC 5012316); yet another ends by declaring, “*Estas an sido las Capitulaciones que el señor Marques Ambrosio de Espindola en nombre de su Magestad tiene assentadas en la Ciudad de Breda, las quales venidas a la Corte de su Magestad, del qual original se sacò este traslado, que vino a un Cavallero bien nombrado, y conocido en esta Ciudad* (These are the terms of surrender that the Marquis of Spinola has imposed on the city of Breda in His Majesty’s name, which have been sent to the Court of His Majesty and from which this copy has been made, courtesy of a gentleman of good standing in this city) ”³².

Thus, it is a simple task to deduce that the series was addressed to a gentleman from Seville, who was also used as a guarantor of the stories’ authenticity. In several sheets, special attention is paid to events in Genoa and Savoy, and this is justified by the special relationship that the recipient has with these Italian states, like, for instance, in one printed by Cabrera’s competitor Simón Fajardo³³: “*He tenido particular cuydado desde que se mouierò*

³⁰ *Vitoria que el exercito de el Emperador de Alemania trvo en la entrada de la Bartolina...* (Victory that the army of the Emperor of Germany clinched at the entrance of the Bartolina...) (USTC 5027786).

³¹ *Vitoria muy cierta que an tenido las galeras de Florencia, contra las de Viserta...* (Very clear victory obtained by the Florentine galleys over those of Bizerte...) (USTC 5028158).

³² *Condiciones con que se entrego la ciudad de Breda...* (The terms under which the city of Breda was surrendered...) (USTC 5012314).

³³ We have discovered the same penchant for news from Genoa in the relations printed by Cabrera: “*Las alegres nvevas que por aca se dizen, son tan buenas y tantas, que me an obligado a escrevir a V.m. Yo me uviaa alegrado hallarme en la Ciudad de Genova, para gozar de la celebracion desta dichosa vitoria que la cavalleria de Milan an alcançado contra los Saboyanos contrarios, y aunque todo es de sentir, avisarè de lo que traxo el Ordinario passado...* (The joyful news abounding here is so good and plentiful that I feel obliged to write to Your Grace. I would have loved to be in Genoa to enjoy the celebration of this joyous victory that the cavalry of Milan has won against the rival Savoyards, and although everything concerns us, I will acquaint you with what arrived in the ordinary post...)” *Famosa relacion en que se avisa de cómo en vna grande refriega que uvo entre la cavalleria de Milan,*

estas guerras de Genoua, y Saboya, de auisar a v.m. de todo lo que de nuevo se ofrece en estos estados, y por que se recibe v.m. particular gusto (como hijo desta Ciudad) de oyrlas, y mas por auerlas guiado nuestro Señor en fauor de su patria, se las remito a v.m. (Since the outbreak of the wars in Genoa and Savoy, I have been particularly diligent in keeping Your Grace informed about all new developments in these states, and since it gives Your Grace such pleasure to receive them and hear about them (as a son of this city), and more so for our Lord having guided them in favour of your homeland, I am sending them to Your Grace.)”

Could this then be some gentleman of Genoese extraction residing in Seville? The Genoese colony in the Andalusian city was made up of powerful merchants and bankers, such as the famous Centurión family, who were probably accustomed to reading *avvisi*, like their relatives in Italy³⁴. An indication of this is the inclusion of the Vera y Zúñiga family crest in several numbers of the series published by Juan de Cabrera. Unlike Simón Fajardo who always used the Crown’s emblem, Cabrera used other coats of arms in the cover design of his publications: that of the city of Seville, that of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and that which now interests us, the crest of Juan Antonio de Vera y Zúñiga, 1st Count of La Roca (1583-1658), which appears in the printed relations entitled, *Verissima relacion en qve se da qventa...* (*Very truthful account that relates...*) (USTC 5012554), and *Feliz Vitoria qve a tenido el Christianissimo Rey de Francia...* (*Joyous victory that the Very Christian King of France has won...*) (USTC 5028136).

Originally from Extremadura, the Vera y Zúñiga family had established themselves in Seville, specifically in the town of Estepa, belonging to the Marquisate of Estepa held at the time by the Centurións. This Count of La Roca had studied in Seville and was a regular at the social gatherings that the Count-Duke of Olivares organised there, before the latter moved to Madrid as the all-powerful favourite of Philip IV. In Seville he commissioned the printer Francisco de Lyra to publish in 1620 his most well-known work, a treatise on the art of diplomacy entitled, *El Embaxador* (The Ambassador). Thanks to his friendship with Olivares and to the success of his work, he received the royal summons in 1621, being appointed Ambassador to or Governor of Savoy, Venice and Milan in the 1630s and 1640s; Richelieu distrusted him for his ability to get his hands on the newest and most compromising *avvisi*. The years in which the numbers of this possible series appear most regularly – viz. 1625 and 1626 – were when the Count of La Roca was precisely in Savoy, on an extraordinary diplomatic mission involving the affairs of this dukedom, Rome, and Genoa³⁵.

A possible explication could therefore be that the anonymous Madrid gazetteer had been tasked with writing his gazette by a member of the Centurión family or that of the Count of La Roca, or by someone frequenting similar circles; of Genoese extraction or related to Genoa in some way or another; and that the general interest in current affairs went hand in hand with a desire to gain firsthand insights into the complex world stage at the time.

5. The editor Juan de Cabrera

Access to a series of news sheets penned by a potentially anonymous gazetteer allowed the Seville printer Juan de Cabrera – as with his colleague Simón Fajardo, though to a lesser extent – to keep his business afloat in a city where several other typographers competed in the emerging market of current news. But his task was not only limited to the formality of printing. As has already been noted at the beginning of this paper, he intervened directly in

y Ginoveses... (*Famous account that relates how in a great skirmish between the cavalry of Milan and the Genovese...*) (USTC 5006218).

³⁴ For further information on the Centurión family and other similar 17th century banking dynasties, see Sanz (2015).

³⁵ Olivares sent him to Savoy to offer his condolences to the Duke, Charles Emmanuel the Great, on the death of Prince Filiberto.

many of the stories, including news items on the last page when this was not used or when he could provide important news obtained from his own sources: in the printed sheet entitled, *Relacion de la dichosa nueva que vino en este ordinario pasado de Flandes...* (*Account of the joyful news that arrived in the last ordinary post from Flanders...*) (USTC 5023501), after transcribing the news imaginably supplied by the aforementioned Madrid gazetteer, he included on the last page “[Algun]os capítulos que [...] pliego del Correo Mayor don Juan Tapia de Vargas le vinieron, que por ser dignos de saber y curiosidad, se pusieron en esta Relacion (Some episodes that [...] arrived in the sheet of the head courier Juan Tapia de Vargas, which, being newsworthy and deserving curiosity, were included in this account...),” this being in effect followed by five brief national and international news items separated by paragraph marks. If we remember that Juan Tapia de Vargas was Head Courier of the city of Seville, it is safe to say that these *avvisi* were delivered directly to the printer, who then summarised them for their last-minute inclusion in the sheet.

By the same token, the *Famosa relacion en que se avisa de cómo en vna grande refriega que uvo entre la cavalleria de Milan, y Ginoveses...* (*Famous account that relates how in a great skirmish between the cavalry of Milan and the Genoese...*) (USTC 5006218) ends on the following note:

Ya que se à dado cuenta de las cosas de los Estados de Italia, y de los avisos de la Corte de Madrid, pues en tantas Relaciones que an salido de la Ciudad de Breda no se à dado cuenta de los pertrechos que dentro se hallaron, se pondran en esta ultima plana, que no es justo se quede en silencio todo lo que dentro avia, que los curiosos lo desseà saber, y a instancia de algunos que los an pedido se ponen aquí, que son los siguientes (Since the affairs of the Italian States and the announcements from the Court at Madrid have been addressed, and inasmuch as in all the accounts about the city of Breda no mention has been made of the supplies that were found therein, they will be included on this last page, because it is not proper that all that was found there should be kept secret, that the curious want to know, and upon request of some that have asked for them to be included here, they are as follows).

What follows is an inventory of the matériel seized from the enemy occupying the whole back page. If, as we believe, it is an addition by Cabrera himself, it is important to note that he undertakes the task of informing his readership in this respect. Despite its title, the first three pages of the relation *Pazes entre España y Francia, y otros Potentados...* (*Peace between Spain, France and other potentates...*) are devoted to the transcription of a sheet produced by the Madrid printer Bernardino de Guzmán, where he relates one of the stages of Philip IV's progress through Aragon and Catalonia in 1626, along with a large number of short international news items, although, as before, its back page is given over to news received directly by the Seville printer, and the coat of arms of the city is indeed displayed on the cover, perhaps in an attempt to make it more recognisable to his public as a “local edition” of news arriving from the capital of the kingdom. Likewise, on 24 March 1626 Cabrera was issued a license to print two new relations with miscellaneous current news copied from a text published in Madrid by Bernardino de Guzmán, on whose back page he once again included his own news; the two relations have different titles and cover designs, in spite of their content being practically identical; the cover of one of these displays the coat of arms of Seville³⁶. We would be bold enough to conjecture that, in this last case, what

³⁶ The relations in question are *Pazes entre España, Francia, y otros Potentados, y mercedes que hizo su Magestad en las Cortes, en Balvastro, tierra de Aragon* (*Peace between Spain, France, and other potentates, and the favours granted by His Majesty at the courts of Barbastro, in the territory of Aragon*) (USTC 5038042), and *Relación verdadera entre España y Francia, y otros potentados y mercedes que hizo su M en las Cortes de Monçon* (*True account between Spain and France, and other potentates, and the favours granted by His Majesty at the courts of Monzon*) (USTC 5013722).

is involved is a special edition for the city chapter or other local authorities, whereas the first is keyed to the general public.

All considered, we initially stated that Juan de Cabrera, as with many other typographers of his generation, was heading towards the contemporary concept of newspaper editor. As a matter of fact, Cabrera took full responsibility for a basic element of the series: the design of the pamphlets. In this field, the Seville printer seems to have sensed, better than many of his contemporaries, that the new product offered by printing presses – the serial news pamphlet, the immediate forerunner of the periodical gazette – called for a new presentation that allowed the general public to recognise the format at a glimpse (Espejo, 2016a).

The growing design standardisation of serial news pamphlets might possibly have been a phenomenon emerging in parallel to the progressive official status of journalistic practices of the time, as we have already stressed above. The printed sheets of Cabrera not only included the coat of arms of the Habsburgs, but also other noble family crests or allusive stereotyped engravings such as naval scenes, armoured horsemen, or medallions bearing the portraits of leading personalities of the period. The engraving of a naval scene that Cabrera used was also employed by Juan Serrano de Vargas in Seville, and Bartolomé Lorenzana in Granada. At any rate, the reiteration of these same engravings and the very similar cover design of the majority of his publications must have served to make them immediately recognisable as part of a series.

However, Cabrera's most significant design innovation was, to our mind, the presentation of news on the three pages following the cover. So far as we have been able to judge, Cabrera was the only printer of his generation who systematically identified each news item or *avviso* with a paragraph, or section, mark, thus breaking with the design conventions of literary texts and foreshadowing a design more in keeping with future journalistic standards, in which priority is given to the ease with which readers can find the information they are looking for. On many occasions, Cabrera started "chapters" or sections with a title indicating the provenance of the news.

6. Conclusions

The printer of the first decades of the 17th century embodied a professional figure close to our concept of a newspaper reporter or editor: he was responsible for editing news pamphlets, which involved deciding on the design and writing notes or short news reports based on information to which he had direct access. Although private correspondence was still an essential source for spreading news, it is possible to detect, already in the first three decades of the century, the existence of agents dedicated to compiling and editing news arriving from multiple sources, especially via the international postal system. These were anonymous gazetteers who were probably commissioned by leading figures to write news items, while attentive to the effect that these would have on public opinion, insofar as their accounts were predictably destined to be printed.

The sum of all these possibilities, and the rivalry between a large number of typographers established in some of Spain's most populous cities, led to the appearance of a new editorial format, the serial news pamphlet, which continuously supplied news to readers residing in cities such as Seville and in the rest of the country's capitals, where the periodical gazette would not appear until the second half of the 17th century. The assertion that Spain and Southern Europe were left on the margins of the journalistic revolution occurring in Central Europe at the beginning of the century needs, therefore, qualifying in our opinion. News circulated in a similar proportion and the formats and designs with which it was distributed were also analogous, so reading habits and the consolidation of a news market could not have differed much in any part of Europe.

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