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**Arranging reality: The editing mechanisms of the world's first Yiddish newspaper, the Kurant (Amsterdam, 1686-1687)**

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The *Kurant* came into being in the landscape of an extant Dutch press. The *Kurant* was itself part of the landscape, as a newspaper among the newspapers. It used other papers as a model and as a source. It may have been a source itself. It shows similarity to other newspapers, for example in the way it gathered or copied the news, or because it was published in a foreign language.

Most research on the Dutch press of the seventeenth century has been done in the nineteenth century and the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Although a comprehensive bibliography of Dutch newspapers is still absent, the pioneers of the Dutch press history provided us with a host of bibliographical, biographical and technical information. Their research is mainly descriptive, without theme or analysis. This often makes it hard to discern the differences in character between several seventeenth-century newspapers, the intentions of the

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<sup>1</sup> Fruin, 'Oudste couranten' and Stolp, *De eerste couranten* describe how the first printed newspapers in the seventeenth century originated from the sixteenth-century handwritten newsletters. In 1935 an important collection of Dutch newspapers from the first half of the seventeenth century was discovered in the Royal Library in Stockholm. The Swedish librarian Folke Dahl used his findings about these newspapers, and others that already were known, for several articles about the early Dutch press, and for his bibliography of the Dutch newspapers between 1618 and 1650: Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*; Dahl, *Dutch corantos*; Dahl, *Die Anfänge*. Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers* and Couvée, 'De nieuwsgaring', using Dahl's material, give an overview of the Dutch press in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and compare the first Dutch and Flemish newspapers with papers from Germany. W.P. Sautijn Kluit wrote several monographs about newspapers from the second half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century: Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', Sautijn Kluit, 'Leidsche Couranten'. Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant* wrote a history of the Dutch press. The *Centrale catalogus van dag- en weekbladen (Central Catalogue for Dailies and Weeklies)* is incomplete for the seventeenth century. Gabriëls, *Lijst van publikaties*, a bibliography of publications from before 1800, held by the Dutch Press Museum, contains only a few publications from the seventeenth century. Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, the standard work about the book trade in Amsterdam, is incomplete and contains several errors. More detailed and accurate is Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse boekhandel*, but it only deals with the period between 1680 and 1725. More recent research has been done by Hoftijzer & Lankhorst, *Drukkers*, who offer much information on printers, booksellers and readers in the Dutch Republic, and by Keblusek, 'Nieuwsvoorziening' and Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, which deal with news service and reading culture in the Dutch Republic, especially in The Hague. Information about the French press in the Netherlands is provided by Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande* and Rétat, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*. The English press in (and outside) the Netherlands is discussed by Dahl, *Cradle* and Dahl, *English Corantos*.

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publishers or the (intended) readership.<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.1. The origins of the Dutch press

In the sixteenth century merchants were eager to learn news of their trading fleets and what was going on in the regions where they sent their merchandise. So they organized a mailing service for letters written by commercial agents. In the late sixteenth century a highly developed news network of letters existed between cities like Hamburg, Venice, Antwerp and Amsterdam.<sup>3</sup> Except for commercial news, the news writers or *courantiers* added *courante nouvelles* – current news reports – the latest news from the regions where they were staying. This is where the Dutch word *courant* – in modern Dutch *krant*, ‘newspaper’ – came from, and this is the origin of the newspapers themselves.<sup>4</sup> These news reports were also of interest to local authorities.

In seventeenth-century Western Europe, the newsletter, meant for merchants and authorities, developed rapidly into a printed newspaper, meant for a broader audience. No doubt the publication of newspapers in the Netherlands and in Germany was stimulated by the outbreak and the developments of the Thirty Years’ War, and by the developments in the Eighty Years’ War in the Netherlands. These were wars in which freedom of religion was at stake, in which individual citizens had to take sides. But that was not the only reason. It was only in the seventeenth century that printing techniques had developed in a way that made it possible to print newspapers within a few hours.<sup>5</sup> This happened all over Western Europe.<sup>6</sup> The Dutch Republic, and Amsterdam in particular, was becoming an economic superpower in Europe and an international center of booksellers and publishers.<sup>7</sup> In surrounding countries governments considered newspapers as an instrument of power and

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<sup>2</sup> Keblusek, ‘Nieuwsvoorziening’ and Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, though limited in scope, offer useful views, as does Broersma, *Beschaafde vooruitgang*, although he deals with the period between the eighteenth and twentieth century.

<sup>3</sup> Dooley & Baron, *Politics of Information*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> See 3.7.

<sup>6</sup> Dooley & Baron, *Politics of Information*.

<sup>7</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 11; Lankhorst, ‘Newspapers’, 153.

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supported them in order to control them.<sup>8</sup> The Dutch local authorities and the national government, the States General, also played an encouraging role in the development of the press.<sup>9</sup> Generally, newspaper publishers needed to receive permission from the authorities to publish a newspaper. This was not always in favor of the freedom of the press, especially concerning internal Dutch political news. As for international news, the strong economic position of the Netherlands enabled the newspapers to ignore protests from foreign countries up to a point. This was also the reason why newspapers in foreign languages, especially in French and English, were published in the Netherlands.<sup>10</sup>

## 3.2 The first Dutch newspapers and their makers

### 3.2.1. Dutch-language newspapers

Abraham Verhoeven from Antwerp was the first courantier – as far as is known – to receive a governmental privilege for printing news reports, from archduke Albert and archduchess Isabella in 1605.<sup>11</sup> However, there is no proof that he printed newspapers in these early years. In 1609 he published engravings, woodcuts, and pamphlets about the Twelve Years' Truce. From 1615 he started printing occasional news pamphlets ever more frequently, at a rate of one in every ten days in 1619. In 1619 or 1620, shortly after the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, and shortly before the end of the Twelve Years' Truce, he applied for a license to print news, and remodeled his pamphlets as periodically published series: this became the first newspaper in the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>12</sup> The paper was called *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* (New Tidings, or Reports), although this was not its official name. Until 1627 the title page carried several different names, from 1627 onward it was called *Weeckelyke Tijdingh* (Weekly Tiding).

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<sup>8</sup> Schröder, 'The origins', 123.

<sup>9</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 153.

<sup>10</sup> Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande*; Dahl, *Cradle*; see 3.2.2.

<sup>11</sup> 'om te mogen drucken ende te snyden in hout ofte op copere Platen ende te vercoopen in alle de landen van hare gehoorsaemheydt alle de Nieuwe Tydingen, Victoriën, Belegeringhen ende Innemen van steden, die dselve Princen sulle doen oft becomen, soe in Vrieslandt oft omtrent den Rhyn' (to be allowed to print and cut in wood or on copper plates and to sell in all countries that belong to them, all new reports, victories, sieges and capturing of cities that this Prince will do or get, either in Friesland or near the Rhine): Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 39-40.

<sup>12</sup> Arblaster, 'Policy and publishing', 184.

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Pamphlets, like those published by Abraham Verhoeven, were quite popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>13</sup> Some pamphlets were published periodically, but more often than not they appeared irregularly, following an important event on which they commented. In most cases they treated only one subject. The most important difference between the pamphlet and the newspaper was the purpose: whereas the majority of the pamphlets were meant to persuade the reader, the main goal of the newspaper was to inform.<sup>14</sup> So it seems that the case of Abraham Verhoeven – the development of the newspaper from pamphlets – was quite atypical. Most newspapers in the Dutch Republic – like elsewhere in Europe – stem rather from the weekly newsletters for merchants or local authorities than from the pamphlet.

The first newspaper in the Dutch Republic was – as far as is known – the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.*, published in Amsterdam by Caspar van Hilten, printed by Joris Veseler (or Veselaer), appearing for the first time on June 14, 1618,<sup>15</sup> a month after the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War. In the first issues Van Hilten's name is not mentioned at all. In 1619, the paper was printed '*Voor den Courantier in 't Leger van den Prince van Oraignen*' (For the Courantier in the Army of the Prince of Orange).<sup>16</sup> It is unclear whether *courantier* means 'war correspondent' or rather 'news writer', but apparently Van Hilten was serving in some capacity or other in the army of Stadholder Prince Maurits, probably in the service of the States General. Caspar van Hilten probably came from Germany, although he was originally from the Low Countries. He was a member of the Bookseller's Guild on July 17th, 1621. In the Guild Book he was called *courantier*, the only member entered under this title.<sup>17</sup> Kleerkooper & Van Stockum do not mention any other publications by Caspar van Hilten in newspapers or otherwise. They do mention two historical prints that were apparently sold by Caspar in his bookshop. So possibly he was a bookseller, rather than a

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<sup>13</sup> Harline, *Pamphlets*, 44.

<sup>14</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 153.

<sup>15</sup> During 1618 the papers bore no imprints. Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 36 gives the day after the date of the most recent news report (Amsterdam, June 13, 1618) as the date of publication.

<sup>16</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, facsimile f. 11 v., newspapers of Augustus 28 and September 18, 1620; Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 33, 36.

<sup>17</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 33; Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 259.

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publisher.<sup>18</sup> After Caspar's death in 1622 or 1623 his son Jan succeeded him. In 1646 Jan started to print the paper as well.<sup>19</sup> He also published and printed many non-periodical news accounts in different languages, as well as works of various types, and maps. He advertised them in newspapers.<sup>20</sup>

From 1618 till 1623, the *Courante* had appeared once a week, but not on a fixed day. Jan van Hilten apparently changed this: from 1624 the paper appeared every Saturday, and from 1629 it was numbered.<sup>21</sup>

Only a few months after the *Courante*, in February 1619, Broer Jansz. started to print and publish a newspaper as well.<sup>22</sup> It was not before 1629 that it got its name *Tydinghen uit Verscheyde Quartieren* (*Tidings from Different Regions*), or sometimes *Tydinghen uit Vele Quartieren* (*Tidings from Many Regions*).

Broer Jansz.'s first known publication dates from 1603, *Cort verhael uyt seeckere tydinghe gecomen uyt Engelant* (*Short story from a certain report arrived from England*), a news item about the coronation of King James and Queen Anne, translated from English. The next year he published several texts, one of them a news-account he wrote himself, followed by many more news accounts in later years. Before 1619 he apparently served as a *courantier* to the Prince of Orange, Stadholder Prince Maurits. He announced himself as '*Oudt Courantier in het Legher van Sijne Princelijcke Excellentie*' (Former Courantier in the Army of His Princely

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<sup>18</sup> Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 259.

<sup>19</sup> Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 1293 mention newspapers from 1649, printed by Jan van Hilten, 'boeckverkooper in de Beursstraet, in de geborduerde Handtschoen' (bookseller in the Exchange Street, in the embroidered glove)

<sup>20</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 36; Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 1293 mention only two publications, both announced in Van Hilten's own newspaper: on November 18, 1634: '*Bij Jan van Hilten wort uijtgegeven een boecxken, geintituleert: Welriekende Bloeme, beschreven door Jacob Boehme*' (At Jan van Hilten's will be published a small book, entitled *Fragrant Flower*, described by Jacob Boehme), and on August 18, 1635: '*Bij Jacob van Biesen ende Jan van Hilten, sal toecomende weke uijtgehegheven werden een perfecte Caerte van 't Beleg van Schencken-Schants, met alle sijn Approchien ende nieuwe Wercken*' (At Jacob van Biesen's and Jan van Hilten's will be published next week a perfect map of the Siege of Schenkenschans (Schenk's entrenchment), with all its trenches and new works).

<sup>21</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 36.

<sup>22</sup> During 1619 most papers have no date. Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 57 gives the day after the date of the most recent news report (Amsterdam, February 9, 1619) as the date of publication.

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Excellency).<sup>23</sup> This could mean he was the predecessor of Van Hilten. But it is impossible to know, as no additional information is known about the 'courantiership' of either publisher.

From 1619 till 1623 the *Tydinghen* appeared in Amsterdam during irregular intervals, but mostly on Fridays. From 1624 they appeared, like the *Courante*, almost always on Saturdays.<sup>24</sup>

In Amsterdam, several newspapers came into being between 1620 and 1650, but only a few survived.<sup>25</sup> Jan van Hilten's *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* and Broer Jansz.'s *Tydinghen uit Verscheyde Quartieren* were among the survivors.

Sometime before or in 1672, the *Courante*, and possibly also the *Tydinghen*, were renamed *Amsterdamsche Courant*. A collection of copies of this newspaper from between 1672 and 1677, and from 1684 onward has been preserved in the Amsterdam City Archives. Sautijn Kluit has pointed out that the collection consists of three independent newspapers, published and printed by four men, all of them officially appointed by the Amsterdam government.<sup>26</sup>

On October 3, 1682, the Amsterdam government appointed one new publisher, Adriaen van Gaesbeeck, for the Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday issues, although they stayed separate newspapers.<sup>27</sup> Van Gaesbeeck was born in Leyden around 1641 and was mainly known as a bookseller. It is unknown whether he was active as a book publisher or printer as well.<sup>28</sup> After Van Gaesbeeck's death in February 1686, the Amsterdam government decided to grant the right of printing and publishing a newspaper solely to Casparus Commelin, formerly one of the two publishers of the *Zaturdagsche (Saturday) Amsterdamse Courant*,<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Couvée *Couranten en courantiers*, 10-11; Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 55-56.

<sup>24</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*; Couvée *Couranten en courantiers*, 13-14; Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', 23.

<sup>27</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', 29; the first issue kept in the City Archives dates from November 18, 1684.

<sup>28</sup> Klerkoooper & Van Stockum, 231-232.

<sup>29</sup> Klerkoooper & Van Stockum, 146; C.P. Burger jr., 'De boekverkoopers Commelin', in: *Tijdschrift voor Boek- en Bibliotheekwezen* IX, p. 145 e.v. (cited in Klerkoooper & Van Stockum, 146); Commelin published at least *Aeloude en hedendaagsche Scheepsbouw en Bestier*, by Nicolaes Witsen (1671), and several maps of Asia, also by Nicolaes Witsen (1685): Klerkoooper & Van Stockum, 1233-1234.

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who stayed in charge of the *Amsterdamse Courant* until his death in 1693.<sup>30</sup> The *Amsterdamse Courant*, as we shall see in Chapter 7, is one of the main sources of the *Kurant*.

The first newspaper known to be published outside of Amsterdam appeared in Arnhem on May 17, 1621. The early appearance may be explained by the fact that Arnhem was close to Cologne, where the news reports from Central Europe were collected.<sup>31</sup> The publisher was probably Jan Janssen.<sup>32</sup> From the beginning of 1623 it was published in numbered series, which makes it the earliest known paper to do this. Until the last known issue, of October 21, 1636, it bears no title, but probably it was called the *Arnhemsche Courante*.<sup>33</sup>

Another early newspaper was published in Delft. The first issue that we know of appeared on May 10, 1623, the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytsland ende Nederland*. The Delft *Courante* was published by Ian Andriesz. [Cloeting], who worked between 1594 and 1632. After his death it was continued by his widow, and later probably by his son. The last known issue dates from October 5, 1643.<sup>34</sup>

In The Hague the first known newspaper was published in 1635, in Utrecht in 1658, in Rotterdam in 1666.<sup>35</sup> Some of these were short-lived, like the one in The Hague (although a new attempt in the 1650s was more successful).<sup>36</sup>

After the death of Jan van Hilten in 1656, Abraham Casteleyn, one of the major contributors to the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c*, decided to publish a newspaper all his own, printed by his father Vincent Casteleyn who had been the town printer of Haarlem since 1642.<sup>37</sup> Casteleyn received and collected news reports from all over Europe and, according to a contemporary source, had more knowledge than anybody else about secret state affairs. Sautijn Kluit calls him 'the Reuter's of the seventeenth century'. He asserts it was mainly thanks to Casteleyn that Van Hilten's *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c* was

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<sup>30</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', 31-32.

<sup>31</sup> Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 84; Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*, 192-194; Stolp, *De eerste couranten*, 45.

<sup>33</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 84-85; according to Dahl, we know that the paper was called *Arnhemsche Courante* because an extra issue has the title 'Ampliatie van de Arnhemsche Courante'.

<sup>34</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 14-15; Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 46-54; Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 151-159; Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 186-193

<sup>36</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', 5-6.

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valued higher than Broer Jansz.'s *Tydinghen uit Verscheyde Quartieren*.<sup>38</sup>

In January 1656 Casteleyn published a letter, probably meant for the booksellers that sold Van Hilten's newspaper. In this letter, which probably accompanied a batch of his new newspapers, he wrote that he did not intend to continue providing his news reports to Van Hilten's successors, *om geen Slaef van een ander te blyven* (so as not to remain someone else's slave). Instead he announced his plans to publish a newspaper of his own. He also tried to convince the booksellers to sell his newspaper instead of other newspapers and that is why he sent them the same number of his new newspaper as they formerly received of Van Hilten's newspaper.<sup>39</sup> On January 8, 1656, the *Weeckelycke Courante van Europa No. 1* appeared. In 1658 or 1659<sup>40</sup> it was called the *Haerlemse Courant*, and in 1662 it became the *Oprechte [= Real] Haerlemse Courant*, in an attempt to prove to his competitors (his own brothers among them) and his readers that his newspaper was the only real Haarlem newspaper. He received a privilege from the Haarlem municipality, which granted him the exclusive right to print a newspaper in the city. Meanwhile (since 1658) he had succeeded his father as the official town printer.<sup>41</sup>

Abraham Casteleyn died in January 1681. His family carried on his work.<sup>42</sup> In 1738 the Enschedé family took over the newspaper and made it one of the best Dutch newspapers.<sup>43</sup> In the eighteenth century ninety percent of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* was sold outside of Haarlem.<sup>44</sup> Like the *Amsterdamse Courant*, The *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* is one of the main sources of the *Kurant*.

After the death of Adriaen van Gaesbeeck, publisher of the *Amsterdamse Courant*, in 1686, his relative Daniël van Gaesbeeck started to publish a newspaper of his own, the *Ordinaire Leydse Courant*. As far as is known it was the first newspaper to be published in Leiden. A volume has been preserved with issues of the *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* from

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<sup>38</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', 14-16.

<sup>39</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> It is unknown when exactly, the last issue of the *Weeckelycke Courante van Europa* in the digital collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library) in The Hague is dated October 10, 1658; the first issue of the *Haerlemse Courant* January 14, 1659.

<sup>41</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 14; Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', 6.

<sup>42</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Haarlemsche Courant', 21, 25, 28-29.

<sup>43</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 14

<sup>44</sup> Van Eeghen, 'De Amsterdamse Courant', 45, 49.

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March 30, 1686 till January 2, 1687.<sup>45</sup> Of the probable successor, the *Opregte Leydse Courant*, also published by Daniël van Gaesbeeck, two issues are extant, from September 10 and September 17, 1687.<sup>46</sup> The *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* is a minor source of the *Kurant*.

#### 3.2.2. Newspapers in foreign languages

The *Kurant* and the Spanish-language *Gazeta de Amsterdam* were by no means the only foreign-language newspapers published in the Netherlands. David de Castro Tartas, the second publisher of the *Kurant* and publisher of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*, also published the Italian *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*.<sup>47</sup> And at least one other Italian newspaper existed, according to an advertisement in the May 31, 1668 issue of *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, published by Corneille Jansz. Zwol (see below), announcing that an Italian *Gazete* can be obtained for the same price. But Amsterdam was especially famous for its French *gazettes*.<sup>48</sup>

It seems Caspar van Hilten was the first publisher of French newspapers in the Netherlands: the *Courant d'Italie & d'Almaigne, &c.* Four issues from 1620 and 1621 have survived, but there were probably many more. They were printed by Jacob Jacobsz. The paper was probably published one day after the Dutch *Courante*.<sup>49</sup> The two issues of the French *Courant* that can be compared to their Dutch counterparts show that they are, as Dahl asserts, almost literal translations of the Dutch *Courante*.

Van Hilten's son Jan published a French newspaper before his death in 1655. No copies of this paper have survived. It is unclear whether this was a direct continuation. Probably Jan's newspaper was continued by Otto Barentsz Smient as *Nouvelles ordinaires* or *La Gazette ordinaire* (or sometimes *extraordinaire*) d'Amsterdam.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Together with a few issues of the *Amsterdamse*, the *Oprechte Haerlemse* and the *Utrechtse Courant* from 1685 and 1686, and two French newspapers, printed in Amsterdam from 1691. The volume is kept in the Leiden University Library.

<sup>46</sup> Kept in the Regional Archives in Leiden.

<sup>47</sup> In 3.9 I will elaborate on the *Gazeta* and the *Gazzetta*. See also Ch. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande*.

<sup>49</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 34, 53-54.

<sup>50</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 34; on December 10, 1655, the government of Amsterdam granted Otto Barentsz. Smient permission to print the *Saturdaghe Courante* (Saturday Newspaper) and the *Fransche Courant* (French Newspaper) on Monday, as the successor of Jan van Hilten: Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 727.

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Broer Jansz. published the *Nouvelles de divers quartiers*.<sup>51</sup> The earliest known issue dates from July 11, 1639. It was published two days after the Dutch issue, on Mondays. Dahl states that ninety percent was translated out of the Dutch edition, but according to him they were meant for export to France. It is unclear what makes him think so. Perhaps it is the fact that 216 copies were found in Bibliothèque Mazarine Paris, and not a single copy elsewhere. The last edition found dates from December 28, 1643.<sup>52</sup>

Between 1663 and 1677 Corneille (Cornelis) Jansz. Zwol published *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*. I was unable to find out whether this newspaper was originally published in French or was a translation from a Dutch newspaper.

Apart from these French-language newspapers, which were in most cases translations of Dutch newspapers by the same publishers, independent French-language newspapers existed, published mainly by Huguenots who had been expelled from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by King Louis XIV in 1685. *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* was published from 1692 until well into the eighteenth century.<sup>53</sup> But the most important and influential French newspaper was the *Nouvelles Extraordinaires de divers Endroits*, commonly called the *Gazette de Leide*, published by the Luzac family.<sup>54</sup>

The first newspaper in English was probably the *Courant out of Italy and Germany &c* (December 2, 1620), published by Pieter van der Keere from Ghent, a well-known map and print engraver who worked in Amsterdam.<sup>55</sup> This paper, which appeared at least until September 1621, was printed by Joris (or, for this occasion, George) Veseler, who also printed Van Hilten's *Courante*.<sup>56</sup> Probably all issues were translations from Dutch newspapers, but as not all matching Dutch newspapers can be found, in some cases it is impossible to tell. Some of the papers are literal translations of Van Hilten's *Courante*, but other issues are literal translations of Broer Jansz.'s *Tydinghen*. It is unknown whether one or both of the printers had anything to do with these publications. Broer Jansz. himself also

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<sup>51</sup> Neither Dahl nor Kleerkooper & Van Stockum tell whether he also printed them.

<sup>52</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 65-66.

<sup>53</sup> Rétat, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*; this *Gazette d'Amsterdam* should not be confused with the newspaper of the same name published by Corneille Jansz. Zwol, mentioned above.

<sup>54</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 15; Popkin, *News and Politics*.

<sup>55</sup> Dahl, *Cradle*, 2-5; Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 1201-1209.

<sup>56</sup> Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 865-866.

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published and printed translations of his newspapers into English in 1621.<sup>57</sup> According to Dahl all English newspapers were meant for export to England. In his opinion this is evident from the fact that they left out news items from England, because at the time the publication of local news in England was prohibited.<sup>58</sup>

Two papers from 'Altmore' (= Alkmaar?), printed by 'M H', and one from The Hague, printed by Adrian Clarke, were published in July and August 1621. Nothing is known about their printers.<sup>59</sup>

After 1621 English publishers started to publish their own newspapers, mostly in the form of news books (see below), but for many years the majority of the news originated from the Netherlands, particularly from Amsterdam.<sup>60</sup>

#### 3.2.3. The publishers of the Dutch newspapers

The first publisher and printer of the *Kurant*, Uri Faybesh Halevi, was not a typical 'newspaper man'. He was a book publisher, who for some reason decided to publish a newspaper as well.<sup>61</sup> In this respect he was unlike most publishers of Dutch newspapers. The first publishers, Jan van Hilten and Broer Jansz., both specialized in newspapers and other 'newsy' publications like accounts of topical or historical events, and maps. Abraham Casteleyn started his career as a news collector and was a typical newspaper man, and an ambitious one at that. Most publishers were booksellers and printers. When they were active as book publishers, like Casparus Commelin, they mostly published non-fiction works. David de Castro Tartas, the second publisher and printer of the *Kurant*, can be compared to them.<sup>62</sup>

### 3.3. The gathering of the news

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<sup>57</sup> Dahl, *English Corantos*, 42-46.

<sup>58</sup> Dahl, *Cradle*, 4. Couvée *Couranten en courantiers*, 17 asserts that English printers were not allowed to publish *foreign* news, and this was the reason that English-language newspapers were printed outside England. I have not found evidence for this, but if it was true, then it was only for a short time, because on September 24, 1621 the first newspaper was printed in London: Dahl, *English Corantos*, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Dahl, *English Corantos*, 47-48.

<sup>60</sup> Dahl, *Cradle*, 6-8.

<sup>61</sup> See 6.1.

<sup>62</sup> See 6.2.

### 3. The Dutch press

As explained earlier, the origin of newspapers lies in letters correspondents wrote for governments or merchants. Later these correspondents still played an important role in the newsgathering by newspapers.

As mentioned above, Caspar van Hilten and Broer Jansz., the first newspaper makers in the Netherlands, had probably been correspondents in the army of Prince Maurits. The newspapers generally do not mention the names of correspondents, but it is clear that most newspapers made use of them.<sup>63</sup>

Couvée compared issues from 1624 of the *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren* by Broer Jansz., of the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* by Van Hilten, the *Nieuwe Tijdingen* by Abraham Verhoeven and the *Postzeitungen*, which were published anonymously in Frankfurt, Berlin and Hamburg.<sup>64</sup> The two Dutch newspapers had a section 'above the line' and a section 'under the line'. Whereas the reports above the line were taken from German newspapers, as Couvée concluded from the wording and the dating of the messages, the reports under the line apparently came from correspondents. They are undated and do not mention a place-name. They often start with phrases like: 'From... is written', 'With letters from...', etcetera, which indicates they were taken from written sources, sent to the *courantiers*. The reports from above the line are generally similar in both Dutch papers, under the line they differ, which may mean they made use of different correspondents or news collectors. Both report from all over Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

Abraham Verhoeven made use of German and Dutch newspapers, but also had correspondents.<sup>65</sup> German newspapers, in turn, sometimes took news from 'under the line' from Dutch papers.<sup>66</sup> So apparently German publishers read Dutch newspapers, and Dutch publishers read papers from Germany.

Later newspapers lack 'the line' and do not differentiate between news from correspondents and from other newspapers.

Not all Dutch newspapers made use of correspondents, including the first known Delft newspaper, the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytsland ende Nederland* from 1623, published by Jan Andriesz. Although the title is almost identical with Van Hilten's *Courante uyt Italien*,

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<sup>63</sup> Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*, 171.

<sup>64</sup> Couvée, 'De nieuwsgaring', 26-40.

<sup>65</sup> Sautijn Kluit, 'De Amsterdamsche Courant', 14-16.

<sup>66</sup> Couvée, 'De nieuwsgaring', 34.

### 3. The Dutch press

*Duytslandt, &c.*, the Delft paper copied both from this newspaper and from Broer Jansz.' *Tydinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren*.<sup>67</sup>

Broersma found that the eighteenth-century *Leeuwarder Courant*, which probably did not have correspondents, copied at least 25 percent from other Dutch newspapers in the period between 1753 and 1803. Reports were copied literally or paraphrased. The source was never mentioned. Because the *Leeuwarder Courant* initially appeared once a week, it could make a selection from two issues of four or five newspapers and thus show its own character.<sup>68</sup>

The reports from – real and pretended – correspondents are often called 'letters' in most papers, which is what they were, in fact. Generally, the correspondents write from their own perspective, so when a correspondent from the Turkish army writes 'we', he means the Turks, whereas the 'we' of a correspondent from the Habsburg army means the Habsburgs.<sup>69</sup>

#### 3.4. Form

The newspapers printed between 1618 and 1650 listed in Dahl's bibliography consist of a half-sheet folio, printed on both sides, or occasionally on one side.<sup>70</sup> The Dutch-language papers are all printed in Gothic type, the French in Roman letters.<sup>71</sup> It was only at the end of the seventeenth century that Dutch-language newspapers were printed in Roman type.<sup>72</sup> For the titles of the Dutch newspapers different types were used, Roman, italics, Gothic, or the

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<sup>67</sup> Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*, 191 claims that the Delft paper copied ninety percent of the reports from Broer Jansz.' *Tydinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren*. Yet a comparison of the August 13, 1624 issue of the *Courante* from Delft with Van Hilten's *Courante* and Broer Jansz.' newspaper (that at the time still lacked a title) from August 10, 1624 (the only matching issues I have been able to find; facsimiles in Dahl, *Dutch corantos*) reveals that the Delft paper copied about half of its reports from Van Hilten and half from Broer Jansz. Three reports 'From Emmerich, August 4', 'From Doesburg, 6 dito', and 'From Arnhem, 7 dito' may have been copied from the *Arnhemsche Courante*. Unfortunately no copies have been found of the *Arnhemsche Courante* from 1624, so that it is impossible to compare.

<sup>68</sup> Broersma, *Beschaafde vooruitgang*, 71.

<sup>69</sup> As I will show in Ch. 8, the *Kurant* does not follow this example; it never uses 'we' and reports from a more neutral perspective.

<sup>70</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*.

<sup>71</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Couvée *Couranten en courantiers*, 20.

### 3. The Dutch press

French *lettre de civilité*. The pages are usually divided in two columns. The imprint is at the bottom of the verso side.<sup>73</sup> The English newspapers printed in the Netherlands in 1620 and 1621 look exactly like the Dutch papers from the same period.<sup>74</sup>

Abraham Verhoeven's paper, published in Antwerp, was for a long time the only Dutch-language newspaper to appear in quarto; it had eight pages and unlike all other newspapers it always came with at least one woodcut, a remnant of its predecessor, the pamphlet.<sup>75</sup> In this respect it resembles the English news books which contain woodcuts and printed a survey of the most important news on the front page.<sup>76</sup>

Surprisingly, from November 18, 1684 till February 12, 1686, the *Amsterdamse Courant* appeared in quarto and had four pages. This had probably to do with the fact that on October 3, 1682 a new publisher was appointed, Adriaen van Gaesbeeck, for the Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday issues, although they remained separate newspapers. As the first post-1677 issue present in the Amsterdam City Archives is dated November 18, 1684, one might suppose that Van Gaesbeeck changed the format shortly after his appointment. After his death in February 1686, the first issue present in the City Archives, dating from March 30, was printed by Casparus Commelin and appeared again in folio with two pages. The *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* (March 30, 1686 till January 2, 1687) also appeared in quarto and had four pages, whereas the *Opregte Leydse Courant* (September 1687) had two folio pages. None of the extant newspapers had the smaller octavo format of the *Kurant*.

#### 3.5. Content

Folke Dahl compared Dutch newspapers from the first half of the seventeenth century, especially the oldest and most prominent: the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* by Van Hilten, and the *Tydinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren* by Broer Jansz.<sup>77</sup> He found that most reports had to do with wars in different parts of the world. In general there were many reports from foreign countries that might be of interest to businessmen. This emphasis on foreign news was not new. The handwritten newsletters from the end of the sixteenth

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<sup>73</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 56.

<sup>74</sup> Dahl, *English Corantos*.

<sup>75</sup> Fruin, 'Oudste couranten', 95; Arblaster, 'Policy and publishing', 184.

<sup>76</sup> Dahl, *English Corantos*, 20-21.

<sup>77</sup> Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*, 175-76.

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century also contained mainly foreign politics and topical matters, like the outburst of a pest epidemic.<sup>78</sup> Dahl found several other topics: reports about merchants' ships that had returned to the Netherlands, stories about monstrosities and miracles, 'acts of God', sensational accidents and executions, high society news, obituaries, but only rarely, advertisements, official announcements by city councils or other governmental institutions.<sup>79</sup> Although the newspapers are rather uniform in the subjects they mentioned, there are some differences. The Amsterdam newspapers carry more reports on commerce and shipping news, whereas the *Leydse Courant* reports more extensively on academic news.<sup>80</sup> In general topics in Dutch newspapers do not differ much from those in the German press, although these printed more news about sovereign courts and the Catholic church and religion, focusing on processions, pilgrimages, and the occupation of a bishopric.<sup>81</sup>

In most cases reports in Dutch newspapers are arranged according to country, just like most foreign newspaper reports, and within the country, according to town. News from the most distant places, like Italy or Spain, and occasionally America or East Asia, came first. This is usually the oldest news, whereas the local, more recent news appeared last.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, most newspapers have a more or less fixed geographical order. This may have to do with the moment of postal delivery of the letters on which the reports were based.<sup>83</sup>

Under the heading 'Amsterdam' (or 'The Hague', or 'Leiden', depending on where the newspaper was based) was also published 'last minute news' that could come from all over the world. As mentioned above, the two Amsterdam newspapers had a section 'under the line', with often undated news from different countries by their own correspondents. At the very end, or sometimes also in the margins, came advertisements and proclamations.

Dutch newspapers generally followed the foreign and domestic policy of the government, but they were rarely outspoken about politics.<sup>84</sup> As with foreign newspapers, the informative

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<sup>78</sup> Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 25-30.

<sup>79</sup> Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*, 176-183.

<sup>80</sup> Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 69.

<sup>81</sup> Schröder, 'The origins', 124-126.

<sup>82</sup> Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*; 184, Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 18-19.

<sup>83</sup> Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 69-70.

<sup>84</sup> Dahl, *Earliest newspaper centre*, 185.

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function was far more important than the judgmental function.<sup>85</sup> On the whole they wrote a great deal more about foreign than domestic politics.

#### 3.6. Government control

As mentioned above, most papers were published under municipal control and the authorities did not appreciate criticism. Preventive censorship hardly existed, yet sometimes publishers were punished after publication. This was not too effective, mainly because the States General were not a powerful central authority and because the Reformed Church did not have a dominant position.<sup>86</sup> Nonetheless, the States General were opposed to distributing news concerning state affairs. They were also concerned about the publication of negative reports from foreign countries, because these might harm relations with these countries.<sup>87</sup> The States General and the States of the Provinces issued acts, and sometimes enforced them. In fact the municipal authorities were the ones that had to take action. However, cities remained autonomous and often refused to follow the government.<sup>88</sup> The founder of the *Haerlemse Courant*, Abraham Casteleyn, frequently published resolutions by the States of Holland and the States General without consent. In 1670, the Court of Holland summoned him to appear for interrogation, but he did not show up. The municipal authorities of Haarlem offered protection to him as a citizen of Haarlem. Subsequently, the States of Holland urged the municipalities of Haarlem and Amsterdam to watch the *courantiers* closely. Yet Casteleyn went on publishing secret state news and the Haarlem authorities allowed him to do so. In the end the Court of Holland was unable to convict him.<sup>89</sup>

This shows that the relative freedom of the press was not due so much to tolerance based on principle, but rather to the incapability of the national authorities to take legal action and the cities' quest for autonomy.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Schröder, 'The origins', 126.

<sup>86</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 153.

<sup>87</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 155; Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 155-156; Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 55-66.

<sup>89</sup> Sautijn Kluit 1873, 19; Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 73-78.

<sup>90</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 66.

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Casteleyn was not the only one to publish secret news from the government. Papers from Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Leiden and Delft did the same. They made use of sources in government circles in The Hague, whom they protected, because they were vital for their existence as newspapers.<sup>91</sup>

Most newspapers, though, were less free to publish news about their own city. Municipal authorities were willing to grant newspapers privileges or patents, thus offering them protection against pirate editions. But at the same time this provided the authorities with a means of supervision and censorship. This may account for the fact that newspapers rarely reported about politics in their own city.<sup>92</sup>

As for the foreign news, Dutch newspapers published freely about abuses in foreign countries. Ambassadors from these countries frequently filed complaints with the States General against the newspapers. In the first decades they complained mainly about subverting libels and pamphlets, between 1660 and 1680 increasingly about biased reporting in newspapers.<sup>93</sup> The States General feared for their reputation and sent out warnings, especially against the French newspapers published in Leiden and Amsterdam at the end of the seventeenth century. The majority of these papers were probably exported to France, where they were widely read. It seems they had readers as far away as in Scandinavia, Russia and the Levant. They published news that newspapers in France were not allowed to print.<sup>94</sup> In times of impending war and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, when the Huguenots were driven out of France, both French and Dutch newspapers were especially active, and the States General tried to curb the newspapers by placing them under state supervision. They failed, mainly because the cities protested.<sup>95</sup> In 1679 and in 1686 the States General prohibited French newspapers and ordered Dutch newspapers 'not to give offence'. Neither French nor Dutch newspapers were allowed to publish about the Huguenots who escaped France and fled to Switzerland in 1686 and 1687.<sup>96</sup> These orders

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<sup>91</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 80-81.

<sup>92</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 79; Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 156.

<sup>93</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 55.

<sup>94</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 81; Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande*; Sgard, *Dictionnaire des journaux*.

<sup>95</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 55.

<sup>96</sup> Weekhout, *Boekcensuur*, 56, 82.

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were unsuccessful, because, as we will see later, the newspapers, including the *Kurant*, reported extensively about ‘the plight of the Protestants.’<sup>97</sup>

#### 3.7. Circulation, distribution and the readers

No reliable data exist about newspaper circulation in the seventeenth century. Couvée estimates based on limited technical means that Abraham Verhoeven’s *Nieuwe Tydinghen* had a circulation of five hundred at most, but every issue was reprinted several times, both by himself and by other printers. So in total his newspaper may have had a circulation of several thousand.<sup>98</sup> According to Couvée, Dutch newspapers had a circulation of about six hundred at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and – for the important newspapers – about six to seven thousand after 1750, but it is unclear how he reaches this conclusion.<sup>99</sup> Schneider & Hemels mention the same numbers, also without explication.<sup>100</sup>

Dahl estimates that an edition of a newspaper in the seventeenth century may have had a total issue of four hundred copies.<sup>101</sup> He did trials with an eighteenth-century press, which showed that it was possible to print about fifty copies in an hour. This means that it took eight hours to print the whole edition on one press. However, Dahl found out that the Amsterdam printer Jan van Hilten, at least from about 1632 until his death in 1655, used two printing presses, which halved the printing time. He emphasizes the innovative aspects of using two presses. Thus, if news arrived after the printing had started, Van Hilten was able to delete older and less interesting news and to insert the latest reports. Later findings suggest that Broer Jansz. also used duplicate printing, and was even the first to do so.<sup>102</sup>

Schröders findings for the German press in the seventeenth century are in line with those of Couvée and Dahl. He mentions an average newspaper circulation of between three

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<sup>97</sup> See Ch. 9.

<sup>98</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 20.

<sup>100</sup> Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 63. As the wording of Schneider & Hemels is very similar to that of Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 20, this is probably the source.

<sup>101</sup> Dahl, *Dutch corantos*, 22-24.

<sup>102</sup> In 1949 98 Dutch newspapers from before 1651 were found in the Uppsala University Library, all of them seemingly duplicates of copies in the Royal Library in Stockholm. However, several copies belonged to different editions. The Uppsala copy of Broer Jansz.’s newspaper from October 9, 1621 was clearly printed on another press than the Stockholm issue: Dahl, *Cradle*, 5.

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hundred and fifty and four hundred copies per issue and for certain newspapers as many as 1500. According to Schröder, up to six hundred copies could be printed on a printing press in one day.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately Schröder does not differentiate between the several periods of the century.

Only rarely did seventeenth-century publishers and printers give information about how their newspapers found readers and how much readers paid for them. Abraham Verhoeven from Antwerp may have been the only one who described how his newspapers were distributed: the 'newspaper boys' waited in front of the printing shop until the newspapers arrived, then ran into town, shouting the most important news items. They sold the copies for 'two *blanken*', about seven cents.<sup>104</sup>

According to Lankhorst, newspapers found their way to the general public in Amsterdam, Holland and other provinces through booksellers and peddlers. Rare correspondence shows that Jan van Hilten sent twelve copies of *Courante uyt Italien* etc. to his Leeuwarden colleague Tjerk Claessen every week, and twenty-six copies on average to his Nijmegen colleague Abraham Leyniers.<sup>105</sup> Newspapers in the Netherlands were also probably sold in inns<sup>106</sup> and market places. Harline found that the latter was the case for pamphlets: 'The market place was the best place to hear the latest news, and full of people trying to learn it. [...] Booksellers and writers assumed their audiences' knowledge of current affairs.'<sup>107</sup>

The announcement in the June 9th, 1674 *Amsterdamse Courant* of the public auction of Otto Barentsz. Smient's printing shop read: '*De Proeven van de Letteren sijn in alle Steden te bekomen bij de Boeckverkoopers daer de Couranten aen ghesonden worden.*' ('Proofs of the typefaces are available in every town at booksellers to whom the newspaper is sent.')<sup>108</sup> 'The newspaper' probably means the *Amsterdamse Courant* which was published by Smient and others (see above) at that time. This announcement makes clear that newspapers were sent to booksellers in several towns.

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<sup>103</sup> Schröder, 'The origins', 133.

<sup>104</sup> Couvée, *Couranten en courantiers*, 10.

<sup>105</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 152.

<sup>106</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, 79.

<sup>107</sup> Harline, *Pamphlets*, 67.

<sup>108</sup> Kleerkooper & Van Stockum, 730.

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About the cost and the affordability of newspapers in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century not much is known with certainty. Thanks to Harline's study, we know somewhat more about pamphlets. Harline assumes that pamphlets were a luxury item for many, given the fact that the price of a pamphlet varied from one to five stivers a piece, while craftsmen earned roughly fourteen stivers a day around 1600, and perhaps twenty in 1650.<sup>109</sup> Yet Harline thinks 'there was no small amount of interest among the Dutch in political affairs and pamphlets. People of "middling" rank are often shown reading about and discussing the latest controversy. Evidence about literacy and the cost of pamphlets suggests that this picture of widespread interest was at least a possibility. Perhaps the best evidence of interest, however, lies in the book and pamphlet trade itself.'<sup>110</sup>

As for newspapers, the only readers explicitly mentioned are the authorities. The States of Holland, for instance, ordered the *Amsterdamse Courant*, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* and the *Leydse Courant*.<sup>111</sup> Keblusek thinks that newspapers in the middle of the century were less expensive than pamphlets and were affordable for a fairly large readership. Remarks in pamphlets make clear that the average citizen read newspapers.<sup>112</sup> According to Spufford literacy was comparatively high in the Dutch Republic, especially in the cities: in order to survive economically one had to be able to read.<sup>113</sup>

From these data it is impossible to know the number of readers in the 1680s. We can suppose a circulation of 2000 for the *Amsterdamse Courant* and the same for the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* in Amsterdam, which had a population of 200,000 in 1688.<sup>114</sup> This would mean an adult population of around 100,000,<sup>115</sup> and assuming that each issue was read by five to ten people, this would yield a readership of between 20,000 and 40,000 Amsterdam residents, which is twenty to forty percent of the adult population. As some readers may have read both newspapers, the percentage may be rather twenty than forty.

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<sup>109</sup> Harline, *Pamphlets*, 63-65; wages based on Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, Ch. 2.

<sup>110</sup> Harline, *Pamphlets*, 71.

<sup>111</sup> Lankhorst, 'Newspapers', 154

<sup>112</sup> Keblusek, 'Nieuwsvoorziening', 6; Knuttel, *Pamfletten 1682*.

<sup>113</sup> Spufford, 'Literacy', 232.

<sup>114</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 621.

<sup>115</sup> The average family in the cities of Holland in the seventeenth and eighteenth century existed of around four persons: Haks, *Huwelijk en gezin*, 143.

#### 3.8. Which newspapers appeared in the Netherlands in 1686 and 1687?

This chapter provides an overview of the Dutch press in the seventeenth century. Part 3 takes a closer look at Dutch newspapers from 1686 and 1687, not only as a model, but also as the main sources for the *Kurant*.

Which newspapers were being published between August 1686 and December 1687? For this we have an interesting source of information: the volume mentioned in 3.2.1, containing the issues of the *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* from March 30, 1686 to January 2, 1687, as well as a few issues of the *Amsterdamse Courant* and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* from 1685 and 1686, the *Utrechtse Maendaegse Courant* of October 29, 1685, the *Utrechtse Vrydaegse Courant* of July 19, 1686, and two French newspapers, printed in Amsterdam from 1691. On the end paper of the book a – apparently contemporary – handwritten note can be found, stating that in the year 1687 one could read a newspaper every day, except Sunday: on Monday the *Utrechtse Courant*, on Tuesday the *Haerlemse* and the *Amsterdamse*, on Wednesday the *Leydse*, on Thursday the *Haerlemse* and the *Amsterdamse*, on Friday the *Utrechtse*, and on Saturday the *Haerlemse*, the *Amsterdamse* and the *Leydse*.<sup>116</sup>

Of these newspapers I have been able to find nearly all issues of the *Oprechte Haerlemse* and the *Amsterdamse Courant*, the *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* from March 30, 1686 to January 2, 1687, and two issues of the *Oprechte Leydse Courant*, from September 10 and September 17, 1687.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> '1687. N.B. Behalven de Sondagen kanmen alle daegen van het geheele Jaer een Courant leesen als op Maendag de Utrechtse, Dingsdag de Haerlemse & Amsterdamse, Woensdag de Leijdse, Donderdag de Haerlemse & Amsterdamse, Vrijdag de Utrechtse, Saturdag de Haerlemse & Amsterdamse & Leijdse'. According to Sautijn Kluit, 'Leidsche Couranten', 6 this cannot be right, because the *Leydse Courant* was published on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and not on Wednesday. This is, indeed, the case for the *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* in the volume, published in 1686. However, two issues have been preserved of its successor, the *Oprechte Leydse Courant*, from September 10 and September 17, 1687, both Wednesdays. Sautijn Kluit, 'Leidsche Couranten', 6 states that this note was written in 1687, which seems unlikely, though, as the volume contains two French newspapers from 1691.

<sup>117</sup> The years 1686 and 1687 of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* and the *Amsterdamse Courant* have been preserved almost completely, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* in the library of the Press Museum in the International Institute for Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam, the *Amsterdamse Courant* in the Amsterdam City Archives. Almost all issues from 1686 and 1687 of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* and some of the

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During this period it is likely that other newspapers were published, like the aforementioned *Utrechtse Courant*. In earlier years there had also been newspapers in The Hague, Rotterdam, Arnhem and Delft,<sup>118</sup> but I was unable to find issues from the time in which the *Kurant* appeared.

#### 3.9. The *Gazeta de Amsterdam* and the *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*

Although it is unlikely that the Spanish *Gazeta de Amsterdam* and the Italian *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam* served as sources for the *Kurant*,<sup>119</sup> I take a closer look at them here because they may well have been sources of inspiration for the first publisher Uri Faybesh Halevi and the editor, Moshe bar Avraham Avinu, and it may be interesting to compare the use of the sources and the editing mechanisms.

Both the *Gazeta* and the *Gazzetta* were published by David de Castro Tartas, the second publisher of the *Kurant*. The *Gazeta de Amsterdam* certainly existed between 1672 and 1702. Of the years 1686 and 1687 one copy has been preserved, but it dates from January 21, 1686, which means that it cannot be compared to a matching issue of the *Kurant*.<sup>120</sup> Of the *Gazzetta* only copies of Monday, January 30 and Thursday, September 14, 1673 have been preserved, so it is unclear whether it still existed in the 1680s. In any case, Halevi must have been familiar with the publications of his fellow printer David de Castro Tartas.

The outward appearance of both newspapers is similar to that of the *Kurant*. They are of similar size, the *Gazeta* being slightly smaller than the *Kurant*.<sup>121</sup> The reports are arranged in the same way. The *Gazeta* was published once a week, on Mondays. About the *Gazzetta* we do not have additional information. Judging from the two extant issues it might have appeared on Mondays and Thursdays.

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*Amsterdamse Courant* are available in the digital newspaper library of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague: [kranten.delpher.nl](http://kranten.delpher.nl). The *Ordinaire Leydse Courant* from March 30, 1686 until January 2, 1687 can be found in the University Library in Leiden, and the two issues of the *Oprechte Leydse Courant* have been preserved in the Regional Archives in Leiden.

<sup>118</sup> Schneider & Hemels, *De Nederlandse krant*, 46-54.

<sup>119</sup> See Ch. 1, n. 14.

<sup>120</sup> Written communication by Prof. Harm den Boer, August 5, 2013; see also: Den Boer 'Spanish and Portuguese editions', 121-122.

<sup>121</sup> See 5.2.

### 3. The Dutch press

As for content, Nelleke van Wendel de Joode analyzed the year 1675 of the *Gazeta*, which has been preserved almost completely in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana.<sup>122</sup> She compared form and content of the *Gazeta* to fourteen issues of the *Amsterdams(ch)e Courant* (between 1673 and 1690, but not from 1675) and seven issues of the French-language *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, published by Corneille van Zwol, all from 1673.<sup>123</sup> She concludes that the content of the *Gazeta* is comparable to that of the other two newspapers: mainly international news, especially about wars, followed by economic news reports. Comparatively little attention is paid to local and court news. News from Spain is scarce in the *Gazeta*, and news about Jews is absent. As in most Dutch newspapers, the point of view is dependent on the place where the news comes from.<sup>124</sup> Several authors argue that the *Gazeta* is the oldest Jewish newspaper.<sup>125</sup> Although the *Gazeta* is not Jewish in character, its readership in the Dutch Republic was probably mainly Jewish, because the average Spanish-speaker in the Netherlands was Jewish. But it is quite likely that the paper was also exported to Spain for a non-Jewish readership. An indication for this is the fact that several copies of the *Gazeta* have been found in Spanish libraries.<sup>126</sup> Despite earlier persecutions, Sephardic Jews still maintained relations with Spain and an important part of the trade between the Dutch Republic and Spain was conducted by Sephardic Jews.<sup>127</sup>

#### 3.9.1. The *Gazeta de Amsterdam* of January 7, 1675

Van Wendel de Joode was unable to find other newspapers from the same period as the surviving issues of the *Gazeta*, and in fact she seems to think that the *Gazeta* might have had its own journalists and correspondents.<sup>128</sup> Thanks to the digital newspaper archives of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague I was able to compare the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* of

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<sup>122</sup> Van Wendel de Joode, *Spaanse krant*.

<sup>123</sup> According to Van Wendel de Joode, *Spaanse krant*, 43, these were the only issues available in the Dutch archives.

<sup>124</sup> Van Wendel de Joode, *Spaanse krant*, 47-51.

<sup>125</sup> Notably Schnitzer, 'Habekhora'.

<sup>126</sup> Den Boer 'Spanish and Portuguese editions', 122.

<sup>127</sup> Schnitzer, 'Habekhora', 4-5; Israel, 'De republiek', 116; Israel, *Mercantilism*, 109. One of the most influential ones, the 'agent of the Spanish crown' Manuel de Belmonte, is mentioned in the *Kurant* of May 9, 1687; see also 9.5.4.

<sup>128</sup> Van Wendel de Joode, *Spaanse krant*, 29-31.

### 3. The Dutch press

January 7, 1675<sup>129</sup> to two newspapers, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* and *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* by Corneille Jansz. Zwol.<sup>130</sup> Thus I was able to compare the selection and editing mechanisms of the *Gazeta* with those of the *Kurant*.<sup>131</sup> It turns out that the source of the majority of the reports is the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* of January 5, 1675, one report can be traced back to *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* of January 3, 1675, and a few reports apparently have another source. Although more issues of the two newspapers are available (of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* January 1 and 3, 1675, of *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* January 1, 1675), these have not been used. About seventy percent of the news in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* seems to have been used as a source for the *Gazeta*.<sup>132</sup> Only fourteen lines from *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* were used.

In most cases the translation is fairly literal, both in style and content. However, some editing was done. Where the Protestant *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* shuns the word 'Catholic' and speaks of '*het Spaensse Hof*' ('the Spanish court') and '*den Coning*' ('the King'), the *Gazeta* translates this as, respectively, '*La Corte Catholica*' ('the Catholic Court')<sup>133</sup> and '*S.M. Catholica*' ('His Catholic Majesty'),<sup>134</sup> the expressions commonly used in Spain. The fact that the newspaper does not copy the neutral Dutch expression may indicate that it explicitly adapts its text for a Spanish, Roman Catholic audience, rather than for the Spanish speaking Sephardim of Amsterdam.

Another form of editing can be seen in the dates of the reports. 'Naples, December 12' in the *Haerlemse Courant* becomes 'Naples, December 14' in the *Gazeta*; reports from 'Vienna, December 20' and 'Vienna, December 23' are merged into one report, dated 'Vienna, December 24', etcetera. The report from *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, dated The Hague, January 2, becomes The Hague, January 4, In short, the *Gazeta* always postdates, with one, two or three days, apparently to look more up-to-date.

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<sup>129</sup> This issue was also published and translated into Dutch, English and French in *NIW* 1975. The fact that I could make use of these translations is the main reason that I chose for this specific issue.

<sup>130</sup> As mentioned in 3.2.2, I was unable to find out whether *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* was originally published in French or was a translation from a Dutch newspaper. So it is unclear whether the editor of the *Gazeta* (and the editor of the *Gazzetta*) translated from French or from Dutch.

<sup>131</sup> See Ch. 8.

<sup>132</sup> Based on a counting of the lines in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*.

<sup>133</sup> Page 1, under Venice.

<sup>134</sup> Page 4, under Brussels.

### 3. The Dutch press

As for the geographical order of the reports, the *Gazeta* starts with Italy – as do almost all issues of the year 1675 – followed by Germany, Flanders and Holland. By doing so it more or less follows the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, with a few exceptions. The order of *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* is completely different.<sup>135</sup>

#### 3.9.2. The *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam* of September 14, 1673

Although I was unable to compare the Italian *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam* of September 14, 1673 to a matching *Gazeta*, the two papers seem to be very similar, both in form and content. I did compare the *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam* of September 14, 1673 to three newspapers of September 12, 1673, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, the *Amsterdamsche Courant*, and *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* by Corneille Janz. Zwol.<sup>136</sup> It turns out that over one-third of the *Gazzetta* was probably taken from the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, almost one-third from *La Gazette d'Amsterdam*, while almost one-third cannot be traced. It seems the *Amsterdamsche Courant* was not used at all. Interestingly, the *Gazzetta* ignores all reports from Italy. About twenty percent of the news in both the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* and *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* seem to have been used as sources for the *Gazzetta*.

The translation is quite literal in most cases. Like the *Gazeta*, the *Gazzetta* postdates, between one and four days (with one exception, Basle, August 31).

The geographical order in the *Gazzetta* differs from both the *Haerlemse Courant* and *La Gazette*, but is more similar to the former.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> The order of the cities is somewhat different, the *Gazeta* merges some reports from different cities and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* does not distinguish between Flanders and Holland and only mentions The Netherlands. This is the order of the *Gazeta*: Italy: Venice, Naples, Milan, Rome; Germany: Vienna, Strasbourg; Flanders: Brussels; Holland: The Hague. Amsterdam. The *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* has: Italy: Naples, Genua, Milan, Rome, Venice; Germany: Vienna, Colmar, Strasbourg, ?, Cologne, Liège; England: London; Netherlands: Oostende, Brussels, Gorcum, The Hague, Amsterdam, Amsterdam. *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* has: Paris, London, Hamburg, Cologne, Brussels, The Hague, Amsterdam.

<sup>136</sup> The spelling of his name varies.

<sup>137</sup> *Gazzetta*: France: Paris; England: London; Poland : Warsaw; Germany: Basle, Frankfurt, Cologne; Holland: The Hague, Amsterdam. *Haerlemse Courant*: Italy: Genua, Milan, Rome, Venice; Poland, Prussia: Warsaw; Switzerland: Basle; Germany: Vienna, Nurnberg, Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Cologne, Cologne, Liège, Cologne; France: Paris; England: London; Netherlands: Brussels, Utrecht, Kampen, Den Helder, Utrecht, The Hague, Muiden, Amsterdam. *La Gazette*: Milan, Rome, Venice, Paris, Cologne, The Hague, Camp Naarden, Amsterdam.