

# MANAGING DUTCH ADVICES

## Abraham Casteleyn and the English Government, 1660–1681

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*This article examines late seventeenth-century news management through the lens of the Haarlem journalist, Abraham Casteleyn. Its aim is to challenge the idea that 'foreign' news was of minor importance in Restoration England, by examining how contemporaries responded to titles such as the Haarlem Courant, and to show that Dutch news was integral to domestic politics. It examines the demand for Dutch news by English readers, Whig activists and government officials; explores the ways in which Casteleyn's newspaper caused concern within the regime because of its potential to be exploited for nefarious political ends and explores how the Stuart regime responded by devising subtle methods for managing Dutch news.*

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Questions about how people in the early modern period 'managed' information have garnered considerable attention in recent years. Scholars have dealt with individuals—scholarly and otherwise—who devised reading and note-taking practices for coping with information overload, as well as with issues relating to the burgeoning news industry.<sup>1</sup> This has meant thinking about how contemporaries responded to the 'news revolution', although more commonly it has involved assessing government news management, albeit here analysis has generally focused somewhat narrowly on censorship and propaganda, in terms of the regulation of the news industry and the emergence of newspapers that were more or less obviously run by governments.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, such news management has tended to involve concentrating on domestic news and domestic contexts, and the significance of news from beyond Britain's shores remains poorly understood. Indeed, while it cannot be denied that more attention is gradually being paid to the European dimension of news culture, and to the transnational characteristics of news *networks*, this has yet to make a significant impact on our understanding of news management. Indeed, to the extent that *international* news management has been studied—at least by historians of English newspapers—attention has focused on efforts to influence flows of information *from* England to the Continent, in terms of attempts to export titles such as *Mercurius Politicus*, to devise foreign language newspapers such as *Nouvelles Ordinaires de Londres* and to translate official journals such as the *London Gazette*.<sup>3</sup> Much less attention has been paid to where exactly the European news that appeared in English newspapers came from, what contemporaries made of it and what political issues arose. For too long, indeed, it was assumed that European news was a poor substitute for English news, and that it tended to appear when domestic news was limited and proscribed, and arguments continue to be

made that English readers were likely to have struggled to make sense of the European news that appeared in English newspapers and gazettes. Far too little has been done to investigate the mechanisms, practices and personnel involved in getting European news into English gazettes, despite the now well-established links that existed between secretaries of state and official newspapers, and despite the well-known claim made by the republican intelligencer, Thomas Scott, that much of the intelligence he acquired was used to fill the official gazette.<sup>4</sup>

This paper aims to help rectify this situation, not least by focusing on the relationship between Dutch news and English public life, and on relations between the English government of Charles II and the period's pre-eminent Dutch journalist, Abraham Casteleyn. The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the emergence of what has been described as an Anglo-Dutch public sphere, contributors to which commented upon and intervened in affairs in both countries, not least through the medium of printed texts that were capable of traversing borders, and the reign of Charles II was of particular importance for the history of Anglo-Dutch relations, witnessing as it did both the second and third Anglo-Dutch wars (1665–1667 and 1672–1674), which occurred in the context of a secretive treaty between the king and Louis XIV of France, and in a situation where many English Whigs lived in exile and sought support from Dutch sympathisers, and where Dutch politicians were willing to conspire with them to meddle in English political affairs. This was emphatically a period when European affairs impinged upon domestic politics, and it was one which witnessed popular sentiment taking a decidedly anti-French turn, and growing support for the Dutch, particularly once the Prince of Orange and his party returned to power.<sup>5</sup>

In exploring the significance of Casteleyn's journalism for a history of European news culture in the late seventeenth century, of course, this article cannot profess to be systematic, but rather is intended to highlight specific aspects of contemporary political life. It would be possible, therefore, to use Casteleyn to examine how Restoration regimes influenced what appeared in Dutch newspapers, but the aim here will instead be to build upon what is already known about Casteleyn's connections to English political figures, and about his role in supplying news to England, including to secretaries of state such as Sir Joseph Williamson. The aim, indeed, is to use Casteleyn as a means of deepening our understanding of the issues relating to news management in the late seventeenth century. Thus, while for this post-1660 period we know something more about practices of news management than we do for earlier decades, in terms of stories being fed to the *London Gazette*, it remains true that this has not been explored very thoroughly, and certainly not in relation to continental news of the kind that Casteleyn supplied. Moreover, while we are also aware of the problems of news management, in terms of the dangers caused by inadequate intelligence, much more needs to be known about the problems which arose from the practices involved in feeding news to the *Gazette*.<sup>6</sup>

## I

Abraham Casteleyn began his journalistic career sometime before 1656, the year in which he established the *Weeckelycke Courant van Europa*. He claimed to have been motivated by 'the falseness of the corantos which nowadays inform us of the movements of this

troubled world', and he regarded himself as the heir to Jan van Hilten, the most significant Dutch journalist of the preceding age, for whom he had sometimes supplied the intelligence which 'made his corantos better than those of the others'. By the early 1660s, Casteleyn's paper had been renamed as the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* (or the *Haarlem Courant*) which appeared thrice weekly until his death in 1681, after which it remained under the control of his family into the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, although the *Haarlem Courant* was far from being the only Dutch newspaper in the decades after 1660, it was certainly pre-eminent, reflecting Casteleyn's aim of producing something that was concise and far from comprehensive—it usually consisted of two quarto sides of tightly packed intelligence from across Europe—but that was well-informed and authoritative. Casteleyn explained that he sought to 'write for special news from the most important towns in Europe', even though this involved 'some trouble and expense', and he clearly sought to develop a widespread network for the exchange of information across Europe, not least involving powerful individuals.<sup>8</sup> In 1677, for example, Casteleyn was supplying news to men such as Giovanni Salvetti, resident of the Duke of Tuscany in London, as well as to his colleague Carlo Antonio Gondi, in order that he might receive news from them in return.<sup>9</sup> His value to such men lay in the quality of the news that he could supply, and in 1675 it was alleged that the diplomat Abraham de Wicquefort paid Casteleyn ten or twelve hundred guilders a year for intelligence, 'supposing Casteleyn had as particular knowledge of the secretest affairs ... as any whatsoever within this whole land'.<sup>10</sup>

More importantly, Casteleyn's news was highly sought after among a much wider community within England. By the late 1670s those who sought to secure regular supplies of his newsletters included dissidents such as Dr Edward Richardson, and the *Haarlem Courant* was evidently being read fairly widely across London.<sup>11</sup> Its information was incorporated into private correspondence, and it was also supplied to the proprietors of London's coffeehouses. A report from August 1677, therefore, provided a list of customers who sought regular supplies of the 'Harlemer', including Mr Knight, Mr Booker, Mr Bruen, Mr Gurney, Mr Yorcke, Mr Roberts, Mr Garroway, Mr Chillenden, Mr Scott, Mr Wallington, Mr Mason and Mr Cotton, each of whom sought between one and eight copies of every issue that appeared.<sup>12</sup> At least some of these men—such as Henry Wallington and Edmund Chillenden—are known to have been 'coffeemen', and indeed to have been on the regime's radar, and the government was concerned not just about the association between coffeehouses and news, but also about the particular way in which such establishments became associated with Dutch gazettes and pamphlets. In 1673, for example, the earl of Arlington's attention was drawn to Mrs Whitt's coffeehouse, at the sign of the Dove in Threadneedle Street, as well as to the shop—appropriately called the Amsterdam Coffeehouse—which was run by Mr Kid in Bartholemew Lane, 'who every post has the prints of Amsterdam'.<sup>13</sup>

What made such activity particularly troubling was that it involved dissidents who sought to circumvent the government monopoly on news. Edmund Chillenden, for example, who was accused of publishing 'false news', was a former associate of the Leveler, John Lilburne and an army agitator who had participated in the Putney debates in 1647.<sup>14</sup> As such, there seems to have been a fairly clear link between reading Dutch gazettes such as the *Haarlem Courant* and attempts to disperse Whig news, both at home and abroad.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in his account of the newsletter writers who were active in London in October 1683, William Cotton not only noted that some such individuals worked within

the Post Office (Mr Sauteil and Mr Leeson), or were involved in the coffee trade (Mr Coombes and Mr Monckreive), but also that newsmongers such as Robinson, Pike and Bill wrote *for*, and sent letters *to*, an 'abundance of coffeehouses', both within London and beyond. He also noted that, in addition to preparing accounts of parliamentary and court news, such men reported on European affairs, and even that one Mr Blackhall served coffeehouses and private customers 'with the *Haarlem Courant* translated'.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, by the early 1680s, Whig newspapers—of the kind that began to emerge after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1679—were also using Casteleyn's paper as one of their main sources. In May 1682, for example, the controversial Whig publisher, Richard Janeway, confessed that the editors of the *Impartial Protestant Mercury*—Thomas Vile and Henry Care—'procured commonly the Latin Cologne news, the *Haarlem Courant* and the Brussels gazette'.<sup>17</sup>

What also became clear, however, was that English newsmen sought not just to capitalise on the *Haarlem Courant*, but also to develop a working relationship with Casteleyn. In December 1683, therefore, one anonymous Londoner who sought to set up a newsletter service, and who already had regular access to the *Haarlem Courant*, as well as to other gazettes from Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris, explained that he would 'gladly correspond with Casteleyn', and that he would willingly 'leave off' these other suppliers 'if Casteleyn be punctual with me'. The aim was to develop an exchange of news, and to 'give him every post what occurs here for what is foreign', and this particular newsmonger added that 'if he approves the proposal we will try for a month or more'. That this was a Whig venture, moreover, seems clear from the fact that mention was made of getting Dutch material from notorious booksellers in the United Provinces such as Mrs Swart and the widow Browning, as well as from the fact that the intention was to conduct correspondence with Casteleyn surreptitiously—using a cover address of Mr Stephen Jackson at the Grafton's Head in Whitefriars—'for I am abused at the post house'.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it is possible that the news writer in question was Giles Hancock, the most significant intelligencer identified by Cotton, who had 'great intelligence both from court and council', who tended to get the best intelligence earliest, and who had 'a great many customers', each of whom paid £5 or £6 per year. Hancock, after all, already seems to have been involved in supplying Casteleyn with news from England.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, English fascination with Dutch news of the kind that Casteleyn supplied, as well as the association between Dutch news and English Whigs, resulted in attempts to *print* English translations of the *Haarlem Courant* and other Dutch gazettes. This process began in December 1679, with the *Haerlem Courant* (11 issues), and continued in early 1682 with *The Compleat Mercury or the Haerlem Courant*, published by Henry Rhodes (4 issues).<sup>20</sup> It also involved another short-lived venture, an English edition of *The Rotterdam's Courant*, which was the work of Benjamin Harris, one of the most prominent Whig newsmen to emerge after the lapse of licensing in 1679, and more famous as the editor of the *Domestick Intelligence*.<sup>21</sup> Such works highlight the popularity of Dutch news, and the editor of a later edition of *The Harlem's Courant* (1695) made clear that such a venture—to translate the Dutch news 'constantly, as fast as the post comes'—was 'very acceptable' because this particular gazette was 'so much approved by all inquisitive persons'.<sup>22</sup> But they also make it clear that the importation, exploitation and translation of Dutch news were more or less intimately associated with a Whig political agenda,

and with attempts both to subvert the government's monopoly on news and to capitalise on the lapse of licensing.

Such evidence reveals that Dutch news, and Casteleyn's *Haarlem Courant*, lay at the heart of official concerns regarding Restoration news culture, most particularly in the years surrounding the Exclusion Crisis of 1679–1682. Thus, while it is well known that Charles II's government became increasingly worried about the rise of coffeehouses, the development of newsletter services and the emergence of unlicensed newspapers, and about the extent to which 'the itch of news' had become 'a disease', much less attention has been paid to the fact that Casteleyn's news was central to such phenomena, and thus to the problem of news management.<sup>23</sup>

## II

A second way of thinking about the contemporary significance of Casteleyn's Dutch news involves demonstrating the degree to which it attracted the attention of the English government, the ways in which its content was monitored and the reasons why this gave cause for concern.

First, Casteleyn's newspaper was read enthusiastically by English diplomats in the Low Countries. During the 1660s and 1670s, therefore, stories from 'the Harlomer' were frequently cited by Sir George Downing and Roger Meredith, the latter of whom often referred to being able to relay little more than what had appeared in local gazettes, and to being particularly reliant upon Casteleyn's material.<sup>24</sup> This is not to say that Casteleyn was their only source; Downing occasionally read the Amsterdam gazette, while Sir William Temple purchased and read gazettes from Brussels, Paris and Nuremberg, spending over £2 on such material in a three-month period in 1667.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, William Carr read gazettes 'from all parts', and claimed to have spent no less than £100 on such material between 1672 and 1680.<sup>26</sup> Neither is it to say that the *Haarlem Courant* was necessarily thought to be reliable, although men such as Blathwaite could certainly be observed explaining that the 'ordinary Dutch gazettes give you so good an account' of many stories 'that there remains nothing for me to add to it'. However, it is certainly to say that Casteleyn's paper was taken seriously, and treated as something with which it was necessary to engage.<sup>27</sup>

As such, secondly, it is noticeable that the attention of prominent figures in London, such as Williamson, was also drawn to the *Haarlem Courant* by a range of correspondents, who sought to ensure that copies reached government officials. This was true, for example, of consuls and ambassadors in the Dutch republic, including William Davidson, Sir Richard Bulstrode, Henry Sydney and William Blathwaite, who frequently mentioned that they sent regular supplies of Dutch gazettes to London.<sup>28</sup> But copies were also sent by men such as Silas Taylor, keeper of the naval stores at Harwich, whose regular letters to Williamson during the 1670s detailed the searches he made of packet boats and described the kinds of people who were travelling between England and the Low Countries, and who frequently intercepted copies of Dutch gazettes, most often the *Haarlem Courant*. Indeed, Taylor often noted the stories that such papers contained, and compared their accounts with stories from other sources, including the *London Gazette*, before forwarding his copies to Whitehall.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, that such supplies were regular, rather than haphazard,

seems perfectly clear. Blathwaite certainly assumed that Williamson had a steady supply of gazettes, noting in January 1670 that 'I have always sent you the printed papers which come out here, except the gazettes which you told me you had from other parts'.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, so reliable was Williamson's supply-line that, at least for the years 1665–1679, he was able to acquire two complete runs of Casteleyn's paper, as well as substantial quantities of other Dutch titles.<sup>31</sup>

Thirdly, the government showed real signs of being worried about Casteleyn's newspaper (and others), not just in terms of the way in which it reported on European affairs, but also in terms of the stories that it printed about English political events.<sup>32</sup> This can sometimes be seen from the existence within official archives of extracted passages from specific issues. In July 1667, for example, notes were made on issues 58 and 59 of the Rotterdam gazette, including a report from London that affairs were growing 'worse and worse, so that ... all will be in confusion'; that 'they begin here to cry out for a commonwealth government' and that 'England was happier under Cromwell'.<sup>33</sup> At other times, complaints about European newspapers were expressed to the Dutch ambassadors in England. In April 1671, for example, Johannes Boreel referred to a complaint made to him about a story from Rome which had appeared in Amsterdam's French gazette, and which claimed that an ambassador was expected from England, 'to acknowledge the supremacy of the papal chair'. On this occasion, Boreel—who advocated punishing 'this freedom of writing', and who seemed amazed that 'gazeteers should be permitted to insert such extravagancies and illations'—noted that Casteleyn had written about the story 'with more prudence', and 'without entering into particulars'.<sup>34</sup> On other occasions, however, Boreel reflected that Casteleyn too was guilty of writing things 'very ungrateful to princes' ears', and there is certainly evidence that Casteleyn was also criticised by English politicians and diplomats.<sup>35</sup>

In terms of the *Haarlem Courant*, therefore, Downing complained in November 1663 that Casteleyn's paper 'always prints all vile news against His Majesty', and in the following month he cited a 'sorry, gross and filthy mistake' in a story regarding the Duke of York, adding that even a printed correction (solicited by a complaint to De Witt) proved unacceptable, because 'this gazetier still puts in one thing or another to the disreputation of His Majesty and his affairs'. Downing noted, therefore, that 'in this very last Tuesday's book wherein he made his recantation he put that the phanaticks had another design on foot in the north'.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, in November 1664, Downing explained that

the Haarlem gazeteer very often takes the liberty of decrying very infamously His Majesty and his affairs; the last week he printed that whereas Cromwell could in a week have gotten 1200 seamen in the town of Yarmouth that His Majesty could not in much more time get above 200.<sup>37</sup>

The problem raised by such stories was not just that Casteleyn's own views might be problematic, but also that he was too obviously able to gain access to material that unsettled the English government. Sometimes this was thought to involve leaks from within the English government, and Downing repeatedly complained that newsletters he received from men such as Williamson appeared 'word for word' in Casteleyn's gazette.<sup>38</sup> Another troubling scenario, however, involved Casteleyn forging contacts with, and coming under the influence of, English Whigs. In December 1683, for example,

Sir Roger L'Estrange expressed concern about the popularity of the 'last paper' (i.e. scaffold speech) by the republican martyr, Algernon Sidney, noting not just that 'abundance of manuscript copies of it are up and down the town', but also that the text was reported to have appeared 'at length' in the *Haarlem Courant*.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in early 1678, the government claimed to have identified an extract from Casteleyn's paper—reporting a 'private order' of the Privy Council to raise an army under the Duke of York—that was sent to him by Charles Vassaire and Giles Hancock, notorious Whigs who had contravened official orders for the suppression of coffeehouses and the suppression of illicit news mongering.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, while it is no longer possible to support the idea that European gazettes were treated with 'contempt' by contemporary politicians, it is certainly true that, in a situation where the government sought to control the press, enforce a news monopoly and prevent the circulation of Whig news, Casteleyn's newspaper represented a genuine threat.<sup>41</sup> What made the popularity of the *Haarlem Courant* particularly troubling, indeed, was the possibility not just that it would provide an alternative source of news, but also that it might become a potent means by which English Whigs could communicate with *domestic* as well as *European* audiences.

### III

The popularity and potency of gazettes such as the *Haarlem Courant* thus posed real problems for the English government, but what is interesting is that the response involved attempts to *manage* Casteleyn's news in subtle and creative ways. Such methods deserve to be scrutinised much more closely, and they reveal the sophisticated political practices of contemporary politicians such as Williamson, even if they also reveal the challenges involved in successful news management.<sup>42</sup>

One way of managing Casteleyn involved complaining about his coverage, sometimes fairly directly. In the spring of 1681, therefore, consul William Carr explained that

I have been with Abraham Casteleyn who prints the *Haarlem Courant*, to let him know that if he continues printing such lies as he hath lately done of His Majesty's affairs in England, that the States General will silence him if not get him punished.

This had been prompted by a report the previous week that 'the lord chancellor of England had advised the king to make a war somewhere, and that would unite the nation'. In part, of course, Carr worried about the impact of such stories within the Dutch republic, and he noted that this particular report 'afrighted *these people*, believing it might be with them' (my emphasis). However, he was probably also concerned about how such news might be received in England. As such, he elicited from Casteleyn a promise 'never to commit such a fault more'.<sup>43</sup> This seems to have had some effect, and in August 1682 Thomas Chudleigh reassured Secretary Jenkins that he had not 'met with anything worthy of complaint' in recent issues of the *Haarlem Courant*, whose editor 'had changed his note and was become one of the kindest relators of our affairs by means of a sharp rebuke that he received some time ago'.<sup>44</sup>

Generally, however, attempts to 'manage' Casteleyn and Dutch news involved more subtle methods. There is some evidence, for example, that the government sought to control the availability of continental newspapers, and to recognise demand for such

material while also regulating its flow. Writing from Dublin in August 1667, Sir Nicholas Armorer assumed that Williamson would be able to supply him with German gazettes, while in 1668 Robert Manley asked one of Williamson's officials, Robert Francis, to send him copies of an unspecified Dutch gazette.<sup>45</sup> More obviously, this management of Dutch news involved more proactive attempts to secure and massage the Dutch news that reached English readers. In part, this involved attempting to secure supplies of news from Dutch sources. In 1670, therefore, Temple referred to having retained the services of an unnamed Dutch intelligencer—'a knowing but a discrete man'—while his colleague, William Blathwaite, referred to the 'fruits of our new intelligencer', which he promised to send 'once a week'.<sup>46</sup> Temple claimed that this 'paper of intelligence which I transmit weekly is so exact that I can add little to it in my letters', although it seems evident that such intelligence came at a price, and diplomats in the Low Countries certainly acknowledged that this informer would need to be paid a substantial allowance.<sup>47</sup>

More intriguing, however, is evidence that Casteleyn too became an important supplier of intelligence for the English government. Indeed, within the extensive government archive of newsletters from the Low Countries, Casteleyn's letters are amongst the most numerous. For example, in a volume covering 1667–1668—a crucial year following the decisive Dutch raid on the Medway which brought an ignominious end to the second Anglo-Dutch war—there are no fewer than 119 (unsigned) letters to Williamson in Casteleyn's distinctive hand, many of which have annotations naming him as the author.<sup>48</sup> That Williamson took these letters very seriously is clear not just from the fact that they sometimes informed policy discussions, but also from the care taken to translate them, and on 35 of the letters from 1667 to 1668 key passages have been added by Williamson's clerks in English.<sup>49</sup> What also emerges, moreover, is that Casteleyn's often weekly letters, which were sometimes very brief—anywhere between a few lines and a single side of elegant and not very compressed handwriting—and which were very different from the richly descriptive commercial newsletters that were produced by Englishmen like Henry Muddiman, nevertheless contained extremely high-grade intelligence and comment. Casteleyn was able to offer Williamson material relating to debates and resolutions within the States General, diplomatic discussions and disputes between different provinces, based on 'talk' within the elite political circles to which Casteleyn had access.<sup>50</sup> In other words, Williamson not only became one of those people to whom Casteleyn was prepared to send news, but also one of those *sources* from which English government newsletters were constructed, and this explains the similarity between Williamson's official letters and the text of the *Haarlem Courant*. This relationship, in other words, involved an *exchange* of material, with Williamson seeking not just to receive useful intelligence but also the ability to influence the content of a Dutch gazette that was clearly integral to news management strategies in England.

Understanding precisely how the English government sought to exploit Casteleyn's intelligence involves recognising the mechanisms involved in the production of official news, and the important role that European news played within it. What is fairly well known, therefore, is that after 1660 the government's news strategy revolved around both newspapers such as the *London Gazette* and scribal newsletters, and that in addition to being available for sale (including by subscription), such texts were also sent to individuals across the country in return for information. It is also recognised that tensions existed



between those responsible for producing government news, not least between the newsletter writer Henry Muddiman and Williamson. Thus, while Williamson was able to control the *Gazette*, he was only able to produce inferior scribal newsletters, which struggled to compete with the letters that Muddiman supplied—with the backing of secretaries of state such as Sir William Morice and their assistants such as John Cook—for a fee of £5 per year.<sup>51</sup> What is less well understood, however, is the role of European news within this system, and there are grounds for challenging the conventional argument that the superiority and popularity of scribal newsletters involved their ability to report on Parliament, the Privy Council and the court, while the *London Gazette* was hamstrung by merely reporting European news. This is not to deny that concerns were expressed that the popularity of Muddiman's newsletters reflected his ability to report on domestic affairs, or that some contemporaries advocated making the *Gazette* the only form of official news.<sup>52</sup> However, it would be a mistake to overlook the importance of European news within Muddiman's newsletters, or to dismiss the *Gazette* because of its European coverage.

What seems clear, therefore, is that European news was central to both Muddiman's newsletters and Williamson's *Gazette*. Muddiman's newsletters frequently reported on affairs in the United Provinces, and regularly referred to what had been gleaned from 'Dutch letters' and Dutch newspapers, as well as from the French *Gazette* and the *Haarlem Courant*,<sup>53</sup> and it is likely that some of this material came via official channels, not least from the men, such as Cook, to whom ambassadors such as Temple forwarded intelligence.<sup>54</sup> With Williamson, meanwhile, it is possible to document the process of managing both domestic and European news in some detail. Contemporaries certainly recognised that he ran the *Gazette*, even if it was written by Charles Perrot, which is why both men were sent news items and solicited about the inclusion of adverts, and why Williamson sometimes received complaints about its coverage, although it also seems clear that Secretary Arlington had the power to decide which stories to include and which to leave out.<sup>55</sup> More importantly, it also seems clear not just that Williamson's team read, annotated and made extracts from ambassadorial letters, but also that men such as Sir Philip Frowde, Robert Francis, James Hicckes and Robin Yard managed the postal system so as to facilitate the 'extracting, copying, translating ... of all matters of correspondence', and the presentation of evidence to Williamson and Arlington so that it could be 'communicated to ministers abroad as well as to country friends at home'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, it seems perfectly clear that these extracts—from both letters and printed gazettes—were explicitly intended to 'frame ... what is fit for the *Gazette*'.<sup>57</sup> As such, it is possible to note the frequency with which Williamson's newspaper drew upon evidence from Dutch letters, and the similarities between passages in the *Gazette* and in European newspapers, and to reconstruct the paper trail of such operations fairly precisely. This involves copies of Dutch letters that Robert Yard made for the *London Gazette*, extracts from letters that were endorsed 'gazette' and orders from the Privy Council about stories which were to be included, as well as the reports which Williamson's correspondents explicitly hoped to see in print.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, such official management of both the newsletters and the *Gazette* also involved Casteleyn. On the basis of a close reading of the *Haarlem Courant*, therefore, Williamson was fairly confident that Muddiman must have been supplying him with

information in the mid-1660s, presumably in return for at least some of the 'Dutch letters' than informed his newsletters.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, Williamson also took great care to make detailed notes on Dutch affairs in his personal notebooks.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, both Muddiman and Williamson recorded precisely the kind of information and analysis that Casteleyn's letters provided, in terms of the mood of the Dutch people, divisions between different Dutch provinces over political and diplomatic strategies and the Prince of Orange, and the attitudes and tactics of men such as Johann De Witt, not least during the Treaty of Breda which formally ended the second Anglo-Dutch war in 1667.<sup>61</sup> It is striking, therefore, that Muddiman's newsletters and Williamson's notebooks often contained precisely the same reports, in exactly the same words. Both men cited the letter which referred to the fact that 'De Witt talks big, tells the people all our offers are but arts and tricks and so prepares vigorously for the war', and both men added that De Witt had

lost a great point in the business of the treaty, the provinces having declared they will each send one or two apiece as their plenipotentiaries to Breda, which shall not be of the States General, most of whom its supposed Dr Witt had already gained to be his.

Both men also noted that 'Zeeland and Gelderland continue extremely zealous for the peace and Zeeland desires much that our ambassadors may in their way to Breda pass by Middleburg'.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, both Muddiman and Williamson picked up on the story that De Witt had turned 'Spaniard', in order to quash the idea that he was too close to the French.<sup>63</sup> Finally, both men noted the letter from May 1667 which claimed that De Witt had 'prevailed' over his rivals by suggesting that the English and French would 'force' the Dutch to 'a disadvantageous peace at Breda'; that he had been 'tampering' with the Prince of Orange's friends, to ensure that he would 'disown forever all his pretensions or claims to the office of stadtholder' and that 'this trick will not take'.<sup>64</sup> Given that the two men very clearly did not collaborate, such similarities either suggest that Williamson was taking notes from Muddiman's newsletters, or that both men were drawing their intelligence from the same pool of Dutch newsletters.<sup>65</sup>

Such evidence indicates that Casteleyn's correspondence would repay very close scrutiny, but in the meantime it can be shown with certainty that material from his letters to Williamson was incorporated into the *London Gazette*. In 1668, therefore, Williamson's clerk translated and highlighted a passage from Casteleyn's letter of 31 July (new style), regarding an episode in which French forces had been overpowered by the inhabitants of Madagascar, leaving the survivors to limp back to the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>66</sup> Subsequently, the same story appeared almost word for word in the *Gazette* on 27 July (old style).<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the *Gazette* subsequently published another story—relating to a decision by the States General to enhance De Witt's salary and provide him with a 'present' of 60,000 guilders—which had appeared with almost the same phrasing in another of Casteleyn's letters.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, while it is likely that Muddiman and Williamson both drew upon a range of sources for news from the United Provinces, it also seems perfectly clear that both men valued Casteleyn's newsletters and gazettes particularly highly, and were willing to incorporate their evidence into their own news texts. At the same time, however, such attempts to exploit Dutch intelligence, and Casteleyn's material in particular, were also somewhat problematic. What seems evident, therefore, is that English diplomats became worried

about how Dutch intelligence was being used in London. In 1670, for example, Temple advised that the 'particular advices' that were supplied by his intelligencer should be carefully controlled, 'least the publishing of them there may occasion an inquiry here into their source'. Blathwaite likewise emphasised the need for 'secrecy' relating to 'the papers of intelligence you receive from hence', citing 'great difficulties of late in persuading the person from whom it comes to continue it, since the severity used by the States in the sentences of others in the like occasion'.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, when Temple urged Williamson not to let the intelligencer's letters 'fall into the hands of the ordinary intelligencer' in June 1670, and 'to use his own discretion in drawing what he will out of them for furnishing his gazette', he highlighted a specific story 'in the last but one', where the editor had 'set down the particular business and instruction of Mons van der Tockt upon his return to Brussels'.<sup>70</sup> This referred to a story regarding a Dutch envoy to the Spanish Netherlands, who had 'given the States an account of the many difficulties in his negotiation at Brussels', which reported how he was ordered to return and 'declare the resolution of the States, to put into execution the marine treaty made with Spain in the year 1650'.<sup>71</sup> According to Temple, indeed,

some such particulars before in your gazette had very near broke off my intelligence, and I should be very sorry to lose it, because he gives me what passes in the States of Holland as well as General, which is not usual, and besides it would be very hard getting another at this time, upon the late rout among the clerks.<sup>72</sup>

This problem of how best to manage and utilise Dutch intelligence can also be shown to have applied to Casteleyn himself. In July 1671, Blathwaite apologised for not sending 'the ordinary paper of intelligence' by noting that 'several things have been lately printed in the English diurnall ... which have so highly offended the States General in whose assembly that *Gazette* was read'.<sup>73</sup> On this occasion he cited the issue of the *Gazette* that had appeared on 22 May, where the offending item discussed support for the Prince of Orange within Gelderland, as well as the hostility that this had elicited from the deputies of Holland, who threatened to register an official protest.<sup>74</sup> What makes this story particularly intriguing, however, is that it was said to have come from a Haarlem letter dated 26 May, and that it relayed precisely the same story as Casteleyn's letter to Williamson of the same date.<sup>75</sup> The upshot on this occasion was 'that the person that furnishes us with the intelligence has declared that he dares not venture any further, especially now his quarter is at an end', and although Blathwaite was sanguine that the intelligencer could be 'induced to continue his intelligence', he also noted that this would be dependent on 'an assurance of a better management for the future of his advices'.<sup>76</sup>

#### IV

In assessing the attitude of English officials to the work of men such as Abraham Casteleyn, this article makes no claims to being definitive. This has not been the place to discuss English concerns about, and attempts to exploit, the impact of the *Haarlem Courant* within the United Provinces and across mainland Europe, even though contemporaries were acutely conscious of, and nervous about, its reach and influence.<sup>77</sup> Similarly,

while it has highlighted the contemporary importance of Dutch newsletters and newspapers to English officials, there would certainly be scope to compare Casteleyn's letters with the texts of English newsletters and newspapers in a much more thorough fashion, even if only to gain a greater sense of the intensity with which his intelligence was incorporated into official news from Whitehall. Nevertheless, enough has hopefully been done to demonstrate the range of ways in which it is possible to develop much further recent attempts to improve our understanding about contemporary interest in European news, and to move beyond simplistic and outdated arguments about how the prevalence of European news attests to the poverty of Restoration news culture, and of the *London Gazette* in particular.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, what has become clear is not just the importance that was attached to Dutch news by contemporary readers, but also the central role that such news played in *English* political affairs after 1660. What contemporary politicians faced was a situation in which the availability of Dutch intelligence was hugely important to those who sought to break the government's news monopoly, and in which Anglo-Dutch affairs were integral to political divisions between Whigs and Tories. Moreover, this exploration of contemporary responses to Dutch news in general, and to Casteleyn in particular, makes it clear that the importance of Casteleyn's newspaper, his potential influence over a range of audiences and the prevalence of his news within the English public sphere helped to provide the impetus for news management of unprecedented sophistication. English officials recognised, in other words, that newspapers such as the *Haarlem Courant* could play a vital role in influencing public opinion; that there was a serious risk that they might be exploited by English Whigs in order to engage with audiences both at home and on the Continent; and that English newsletters and newspapers could be used to undermine support for, and enflame people against, the Dutch as well as the Whigs.<sup>79</sup> As such, officials in Whitehall and the Hague understood very clearly that Casteleyn was someone who needed to be managed, in ways which not only involved threats and intimidation, but also collaboration and co-option, as news was exchanged through back channels and private correspondence, and then fed into discussions, newsletters and newspapers. At a time when the management of news and opinion was taken very seriously, when Anglo-Dutch relations were more or less tense, and when English Whigs at home and abroad were engaged in plotting and in mobilising support from sympathisers in the Low Countries, Casteleyn's newsletters and gazettes were not only highly valued but also exploited, by news-hungry readers, by Whig journalists and by government officials. Ultimately, this meant that Casteleyn's scribal and printed texts became more or less integral to the English government's strategies for grappling with news culture, even if scrutiny of the ways in which Dutch intelligence was integrated into English newsletters and newspapers also brings into focus some of the pitfalls of late seventeenth-century news management.

### Disclosure statement

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### Notes

1. Blair, *Too Much to Know*; Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 92–124.

2. Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers*, chs. 4–6; Walker, “The Censorship of the Press”; Kemp, “L’Estrange and the Publishing Sphere”; Peacey, “Cromwellian England”; Peacey, “The Management of Civil War Newspapers”; Raymond, “A Mercury with a Winged Conscience”; Sutherland, *Restoration Newspaper*; Raymond, *Invention of the Newspaper*; Peacey, “The Struggle for *Mercurius Britannicus*”.
3. Koopmans, *News and Politics*; Dooley Baron, *Politics of Information*; Dooley, *Dissemination of News*; Raymond, *News Networks*; Arblaster, “Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers”; Childs, “The Sales of Government Gazettes”.
4. Raymond, “Newspapers”; Claydon, “Daily News”; Firth, “Thomas Scott’s Account”, 122.
5. Helmers, *Royalist Republic*; Haley, *William of Orange*; Pincus, “Butterboxes”; Pincus, *Protestantism*.
6. Fraser, *Intelligence*, 50, 73, 78–113.
7. Dahl, *Dutch Corantos*, 18; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 43–4; Couvee, “The Administration”. For the Early History of Dutch Gazettes, see: Dahl, *Amsterdam*; Lankhorst, “Newspapers in the Netherlands,” 151–9.
8. Dahl, *Corantos*, 18.
9. *CSPD 1677-8*, 319; TNA, SP 29/396, fo. 59.
10. TNA, SP 84/199, fos. 215, 219v–20. See also: Lankhorst, “Newspapers,” 155.
11. *CSPD 1677-8*, 321; TNA, SP 29/396, fo. 59.
12. *CSPD 1667*, 349; *CSPD 1677-8*, 307; TNA, SP 29/395, fos. 292–5, 300.
13. *CSPD 1677-8*, 642; TNA, SP 29/401, fo. 85; SP 84/195, fo. 218; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 119–20, 130. It should be noted, of course, that contemporaries also read other news, including the *Paris Gazette*: *CSPD 1671-2*, 394.
14. *CSPD 1677-8*, 338. For Chillenden, see: *ODNB*.
15. *CSPD 1672*, 173; TNA, SP 29/311, fo. 20.
16. *CSPD 1683-4*, 53; TNA, SP 29/433, fo. 323b; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 128; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, 175–7.
17. *CSPD 1682*, 200; TNA, SP 29/419, fo. 11. For Janeway, see: *CSPD 1680-1*, 370, 444, 479; *CSPD 1682*, 199, 209; *ODNB*. For Care, see: Schwoerer, *Henry Care*.
18. *CSPD 1683-4*, 30; TNA, SP 29/433, fo. 51.
19. *CSPD 1683-4*, 53; TNA, SP 29/433, fo. 323b; *CSPD 1677-8*, 642; TNA, SP 29/401, fo. 85.
20. *Haerlem Courant* (N&S 176); *Compleat Mercury, or the Haerlem Courant* (1681-2, N&S 177). For Rhodes see: Plomer, *A Dictionary*, 252.
21. *Rotterdam’s Courant* (1680, R2005B).
22. *Harlem’s Courant* (1695, N&S 179). See also: *Harlem Currant*, 2 (14–19 Feb. 1689, N&S 178), as well as the *Paris Gazette* (Edinburgh, 1706–8), which occasionally included a reprint of the *Haerlem Courant*.
23. *CSPD 1667*, 333, 415; TNA, SP 29/214, fo. 158.
24. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Clarendon 107, fos. 18, 34, 127, 211; TNA, SP 84/168, fos. 104-v; SP 84/169, fo. 233; SP 84/173, fos. 60, 72; SP 84/175, fo. 98; SP 84/176, fo. 77v; SP 84/199, fo. 11; SP 84/203, fo. 149; SP 84/204, fo. 177; SP 84/205, fos. 52, 121, 129v; SP 84/206, fo. 44v; SP 84/208, fos. 67v, 90, 102, 145.
25. Bodl. MS Clarendon 104, fo. 220; TNA, SP 84/183, fo. 215; SP 84/200, fo. 420.
26. TNA, SP 84/216, fo. 162.
27. TNA, SP 84/200, fo. 158; SP 84/200, fo. 271; SP 84/187, fo. 77.
28. TNA, SP 84/183, fo. 214; SP 84/193, fo. 177v; SP 84/216, fo. 87; *CSPD 1683 (Jan.–June)*, 124.

29. CSPD 1671-2, 536, 596; CSPD 1672, 113; CSPD 1672-3, 35; CSPD 1673, 10; CSPD 1675-6, 244, 255, 282, 357; CSPD 1676-7, 248; TNA, SP 29/310, fo. 89; SP 29/372, fo. 190; SP 29/384, fo. 29. For Taylor, see: *ODNB*.
30. TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 11.
31. TNA, SP 119/56-80. For other Dutch newspapers, see: SP 119/2-55, 81-95.
32. This was particularly important for readers in the United Provinces, since the *Haarlem Courant* was often their 'first informer' on English affairs: TNA, SP 84/206, fo. 107.
33. CSPD 1667, 297, 312; TNA, SP 29/209, fo. 126.
34. British Library, Additional MS 35852, fos. 51v-2.
35. BL, Add. 35852, fo. 82v.
36. TNA, SP 84/168, fos. 86v, 181; Bodl. MS Clarendon 107, fos. 34, 38.
37. TNA, SP 84/173, fo. 34v.
38. TNA, SP 84/168, fo. 86v; SP 84/173, fo. 34v. Writing from Stockholm, Thomas Thynne made the same point: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 68-9.
39. CSPD 1683-4, 150; TNA, SP 29/435, fo. 98.
40. CSPD 1677-8, 642; TNA, SP 29/401, fo. 85; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 120-1.
41. Fraser, *Intelligence*, 41.
42. See: Marshall, "Sir Joseph Williamson," 18-41.
43. BL, Add. 37981, fo. 9.
44. TNA, SP 84/217, fo. 84.
45. CSPD 1667, 411; CSPD 1667-8, 552; TNA, SP 29/245, fo. 65. See also: CSPD 1668-9, 201, 475.
46. TNA, SP 84/185, fos. 210-11. See also: SP 84/186, fo. 47v.
47. TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 62v; SP 84/187, fo. 89.
48. TNA, SP 101/51; SP 101/54. References were also made to sending copies of the *Haarlem Courant*: SP 101/51 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 9/19 Aug. 1667). Casteleyn appeared in Williamson's address book: SP 9/32, fos. 211-30; See: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 44. Casteleyn stopped sending letters during the third Anglo-Dutch war: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 102-3; SP 101/55 (22 March, 26 March, 2 April, 30 April 1673). Other archives reveal that similar newsletters were sent to men such as William Blathwaite: BL, RP 3189.
49. Fraser, *Intelligence*, 46, 91-2.
50. TNA, SP 101/51, unfol. See: Fraser, *Intelligence*, 45-6, 91-2.
51. CSPD 1665-6, 17; CSPD 1670, 188; Williams, "The Newsbooks"; Muddiman, *King's Journalist*, 165-6, 172, 174-8, 181-95; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 28-34, 147-52; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, 175-6. For evidence of *Gazettes* being distributed as well as purchased, see: CSPD 1667, 260. For subscription lists for newsletters, see: CSPD 1666-7, 386; CSPD 1667, 499. For Sir Nathaniel Powell's receipt for money paid to Muddiman for a year's intelligence, see: East Sussex Record Office, NOR/17/17. For Williamson's newsletter service, see: CSPD 1666-7, 459. For Muddiman's newsletters, see: CSPD 1666-7, 514; BL, Sloane 3929.
52. CSPD 1666-7, 16, 282; CSPD 1667, 333, 415; CSPD 1667-8, 102; CSPD 1670, 704.
53. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, L.c.90; L.c.1454; Longleat House, Thynne 41, fos. 23, 28, 45, 51, 52v, 56, 69, 69v, 161, 171, 195v, 440; TNA, SP 29/191, fo. 188; SP 29/192, fo. 47; SP 29/193, fos. 74, 146; SP 29/195, fo. 111; SP 29/203, fo. 177; CSPD 1670, 392; CSPD 1679-80, 569, 609-10; CSPD 1680-1, 446-7, 460, 525-6; CSPD 1682, 193.
54. TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 47v.

55. CSPD 1666-7, 16; CSPD 1667, 351; CSPD 1670, 106; CSPD 1671-2, 201, 236; CSPD 1672, 156, 665, 669, 672; CSPD 1672-3, 8, 530, 570, 591.
56. TNA, SP 84/200, fos. 378, 399; CSPD 1660-85, 403; TNA, SP 29/441, fos. 305-6; CSPD 1665-6, 246; CSPD 1666-7, 193; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 59.
57. CSPD 1667, 16; CSPD 1668-9, 452, 474, 488, 494, 544; CSPD 1672-3, 569; CSPD 1673, 251; TNA, SP 29/264, fo. 83.
58. CSPD 1666-7, 16; CSPD 1667, 89; CSPD 1668-9, 265; TNA, SP 29/258, fo. 160; CSPD 1672, 84, 270, 370; CSPD 1673, 312, 338; CSPD 1673-5, 304; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 52.
59. CSPD 1665-6, 246; TNA, SP 29/148, fos. 8-v; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 44; CSPD 1671-2, 269.
60. TNA, SP 29/231, fos. 4-v, 6v, 7v-8v, 10-11, 16, 17v-18, 20v, 21v-22, 23v-24v, 26, 31v, 33, 39, 43v, 45, 46v, 51, 56-9, 63-4, 67-v, 82v.
61. Longleat, Thynne 41, fos. 10, 23, 28, 34v, 43, 45, 75, 156v, 161.
62. Longleat, Thynne 41, fos. 52v, 55, 56; TNA, SP 29/231, fos. 7v, 10-11.
63. Longleat, Thynne 41, fo. 63; TNA, SP 29/231, fo. 17v.
64. Longleat, Thynne 41, fo. 70; TNA, SP 29/231, fo. 24v.
65. CSPD 1665-6, 246; TNA, SP 29/148, fos. 8-v; Fraser, *Intelligence*, 44; Muddiman, "Newsbooks", 275.
66. TNA, SP 101/51 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 31 July 1667).
67. *London Gazette*, 281 (23-27 July 1668).
68. *London Gazette*, 283 (30 July-3 Aug. 1668); TNA, SP 101/51 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 7 Aug. 1668).
69. TNA, SP 84/185, fo. 210; SP 84/186, fo. 88.
70. TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 104.
71. *London Gazette*, 470 (16-19 May 1670).
72. TNA, SP 84/186, fo. 104.
73. TNA, SP 84/187, fo. 79.
74. *London Gazette*, 575 (18-22 May 1671).
75. TNA, SP 101/54 (Casteleyn to Williamson, 26 May 1671).
76. TNA, SP 84/187, fo. 79.
77. CSPD 1671-2, 360.
78. Muddiman, *King's Journalist*, 195.
79. CSPD 1671-2, 388.

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