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The ambassador and the press: printed diplomatic letters and the entanglement of public and private news provision in the late seventeenth-century Dutch Republic

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ABSTRACT

In 1669, the regents of the States General, the federal assembly of the Dutch Republic, instructed their printer (*Statendrukker*) henceforth to print all documents that they required in at least five copies. Amongst resolutions, placards and ordinances, this included the regular despatches from the Republic's diplomatic agents. This remarkable printed correspondence, which has never before been studied in depth, is the focus of our article. The practice of printing diplomatic despatches was unique to the Dutch Republic: by drawing attention to this neglected source, we shed light on the circulation of news amongst the political elite of the Dutch Republic, as well as broader diplomatic and news networks in Europe. By directly comparing the content of the news provided in the diplomatic despatches with that publicly available in the commercial newspapers of the Republic, we also challenge a dichotomy between public and private news provision and a perception of the regents as obsessed with secrecy. We suggest that the printed despatches were not valued by the States General because they contained exclusive information, but rather because they could be used to verify news already available to the regents through other sources, and to facilitate the circulation of information from the States General in The Hague to the provincial States and city councils. This article also presents evidence that the States General's printed despatches occasionally circulated among foreign agents and officials.

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In 1669, the regents of the States General, the highest body of federal government in the Dutch Republic, found themselves without a printer. Hillebrant van Wouw the younger had decided to retire from the extremely lucrative post of *Statendrukker* (printer to the States), having amassed a fortune in this office. When 'Their High Mightinesses' appointed Van Wouw's successor, a young man from The Hague named Jacobus Scheltus, they immediately took the opportunity to lower their rates of pay. Yet they also introduced new responsibilities for their printer, ensuring that Scheltus's firm would constantly be in employment. Henceforth, the

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Statendrukker would be responsible for printing any document, including ‘resolutions, letters, acts and other pieces’, that the regents of the States General required in five or more copies.¹ Even confidential documents marked ‘secret’ would be printed, and in these cases Scheltus was instructed that he should be present for the entire printing process, and deliver the copies to the secretary (*Griffier*) of the States General himself. The workshop of a *Statendrukker* was a busy place, with numerous pressmen, compositors and apprentices involved in the work, and vigilance was necessary to ensure that these confidential reports did not leak into the public domain.²

This extraordinary commitment by the Dutch regents to print over manuscript, unknown anywhere else in Europe in this period, ensured that a wide range of political and administrative documentation circulated in printed form in the late seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Naturally this included many placards, ordinances, treaties and forms; as well as copies of old resolutions, used by the delegates and the secretariat for consultation; and formal instructions, orders or letters sent to other Dutch political bodies and officers.³ Also included in Scheltus’s remit were diplomatic despatches, sent to the States General by their diplomats (ambassadors, envoys, residents, agents and consuls) abroad. Printing this regular diplomatic correspondence would ensure that the delegates at the States General could all easily peruse a copy. The letters were also circulated back through the diplomatic network, so that Dutch diplomats could be informed of the news supplied by their colleagues, as well as to foreign agents.⁴

The Republic’s diplomatic network grew rapidly, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century. In the early decades of the century, when the Republic’s foreign policy centred on a system of anti-Habsburg alliances, the Dutch state maintained only four resident ambassadors (in London, Paris, Venice and Istanbul) as well as other consuls. However, in the decades after the Treaties of Westphalia, and as France replaced Spain as the main threat to the Republic’s security, the number of resident ambassadors ballooned to twelve. By the 1680s and 1690s the diplomatic network stood at around forty-five representatives.⁵ The rapid expansion of the Dutch diplomatic network presented formidable challenges in terms of information management and provision. The decision to print the despatches was undoubtedly part of the broader reorganisation of the States General’s secretariat in the final decades of the seventeenth century, which involved the creation of a specific clerical office for the management of foreign news.⁶

The growth in the Dutch diplomatic service is all the more impressive considering the low standing Dutch statesmen attached to their diplomats. Diplomatic posts in the Republic were poorly remunerated and long in tenure, with little chance of upward

¹Maarten Schneider, *De Voorgeschiedenis van de ‘Algemeene Langsdrukkerij’* (The Hague: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1939), p. 60.

²*Ibid.*, p. 61.

³On this subject, see most comprehensively: Arthur der Weduwen, *State Communication and Public Politics in the Dutch Golden Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2023).

⁴A suggestion made by Theo Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht. De Staten-Generaal en hun archieven, 1576-1796* (The Hague: Huygens Instituut, 2015), pp. 724-725. See also idem, in J.C.M. Pennings and Theo H.P.M. Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls tot 1813* (The Hague: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1994), p. 60. On this issue, see also further below.

⁵Helmer Helmers and Nina Lamal, ‘Dutch Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century. An Introduction’, in Dorothee Goetze and Lena Oetzel (eds.) *Early Modern Diplomacy. A Handbook* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, forthcoming), pp. 7-8. We are very grateful to the authors for sharing a draft of their chapter with us. See the tables in our appendix for a list of diplomatic agents active in 1684 and 1695.

⁶See Thomassen’s Introduction in Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, pp. 57, 60.

promotion for the representatives: Jacob Colyer was secretary and then resident ambassador in Istanbul for forty-four years, from 1682 to 1725, while Hendrick van Bilderbeeck was stationed in Cologne from 1672 to 1715.⁷ By contrast, the post of ambassador to the Ottoman Empire was held by seven French and nine British individuals in the span of Colyer's tenure. The majority of Dutch diplomats belonged to the governing class of regents, and diplomatic service removed them from their power bases in the provincial assemblies and municipal councils. Johan Berck, pensionary of Dordrecht, only accepted the role of ambassador to Venice on the condition that his return to high office was guaranteed after his diplomatic posting came to an end.⁸ Diplomatic service may have been unpopular for some Dutch regents, but long postings made the Dutch diplomatic core specialists in their field to a much greater extent than their foreign counterparts.⁹

Although we can presume that Jacobus Scheltus began to print diplomatic despatches from his appointment in 1669 onwards, the survival of these despatches is very poor. The archive of the States General at the National Archives in The Hague has a very incomplete collection of the despatches for the first seventy years of their existence. The archive contains a near complete run of the printed despatches from 1744 onwards, but before then only very partial holdings are extant. The seventeenth century is represented only by limited holdings for 1679 and 1680, and more substantial, yet still incomplete collections for 1684 and 1695.¹⁰ The volume of correspondence for these two later years was significant. In 1684, Scheltus printed at least 832 letters; in 1695, when he was joined in the office by his son Paulus Scheltus, they printed at least 749 letters.

These printed despatches are a unique phenomenon for the seventeenth century, but they are thus far virtually unused as a source of diplomatic, news and book history.¹¹ This neglect reflects the fact that scholars have concentrated largely on the copious personal correspondence of the great Dutch ministers of state and the Stadtholders, the Princes of Orange-Nassau. This is not so surprising, given that the Grand Pensionaries of Holland were in practice the First Ministers of the Republic, and took the lead in foreign affairs.¹² Stadtholder William III also preferred to co-ordinate personally diplomatic efforts for specific foreign policy aims, using a trusted network of agents, rather than rely on the regular diplomatic corps of the Republic.¹³ Many critical decisions of policy would have been made outside the assembly room of the States General, and presented to the delegates as a *fait accompli*. In the wake of William III's death in 1702, Simon van Slingelandt expressed his wonder that in the absence of this late eminent leader, Dutch foreign policy could even function without

⁷O. Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in het buitenland, 1584-1810* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 309-10, 183.

⁸Jan Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat. Over de plaats der Verenigde Nederlanden in het diplomatieke leven van de zeventiende eeuw* (Groningen: Wolters, 1961), p. 68.

⁹On the Dutch diplomatic network in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see the Introduction by Theo Thomassen in Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, pp. 13-116.

¹⁰Comparing the printed despatches of 1684 and 1695 to the manuscript registers of incoming correspondence to the States General, there do not seem to be substantial gaps in the printed despatches of these years: see also note 34, below. The provenance of these volumes is uncertain: see Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht*, pp. 724-725.

¹¹To date, only three texts have commented in brief on the printed despatches. Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht*, pp. 724-725; Guido de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad. De geheimhouding van staatszaken ten tijde van de Republiek (1600-1750)* (The Hague: SDU, 1991), pp. 138, 150, 166, 172; Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, 'What was published in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic?', *Livre. Revue Historique* (2018), pp. 1-22, here pp. 7-8.

¹²Jaap de Haan, *De eerste minister van de Republiek. De Hollandse raadpensionaris in de zeventiende eeuw* (PhD thesis: University of Utrecht, 2022).

¹³D.J. Roorda, 'Le secret du Prince. Monarchale tendenties in de Republiek, 1672-1702', in idem, *Rond Prins en Patriciaat* (Weesp: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1984), pp. 172-189.

exposing the Republic to ‘misfortunes and risks infinitely greater than anything we can apprehend’.¹⁴

After the Great Assembly (*Grote Vergadering*) of 1651, Dutch diplomats were required in their despatches to distinguish between (public) news reported at their stations and (secret) business relating to their missions, with the *Griffier* of the States General reserving the right to decide whether or not to share secret despatches with the States General.¹⁵ Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt, in post between 1653 and 1672, further sidelined the States General by successfully encouraging diplomats to share their most secret news only with himself.¹⁶ In some years, a diplomat such as Gerard Hamel Bruyninx, in post in Vienna, wrote as many letters to De Witt as he did to the States General, reserving the most revealing news for the former.¹⁷

It is therefore not wrong to assume that the most important and confidential diplomatic information concerning the Republic is to be found in correspondence directed to the Grand Pensionaries, the Stadtholders or the *Griffier*, rather than the States General. It is possible too, that the printed nature of the despatches has rendered them, in the eyes of scholars used to manuscript letters, a less reliable, or original source compared with handwritten correspondence addressed to key ministers of state.¹⁸ In the 1920s, two scholars of Dutch diplomatic correspondence dismissed the content of the printed despatches as ‘in general unimportant’, a view that has been shared more recently.¹⁹ This view is at least partially inspired by the prolific seventeenth-century Dutch news writer, spy and diplomat Abraham de Wicquefort, who regarded the ordinary news despatches of the Dutch diplomatic network as worth less than the paper on which they were written.²⁰ This is a damning, but unfair characterisation, which has done much to harm the subsequent study of the foreign news supply to the States General.

The printed despatches nevertheless contain a valuable trove of information for the study of diplomacy, news and printing in early modern Europe. They offer a helpful opportunity to assess the provision of news to the political elite of seventeenth-century Europe’s best-informed and most literate state. As many recent studies have shown, the importance of information and printed media to the politics of the Dutch Republic cannot be overstated.²¹

¹⁴Quoted in David Onnekink, ‘Anglo-Dutch Diplomatic Cooperation during the Opening Years of the War of Spanish Succession, 1702–1704’, in Jan A.F. de Jongste and Augustus J. Veenendaal, Jr. (eds.), *Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688–1720: Politics, War and Finance* (The Hague: Institute of Netherlands History, 2002), pp. 49–50.

¹⁵Helmers and Lamal, ‘Dutch Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century’, p.25.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Janneke Groen, ‘Een sotte ende onbedachte daedt’, in Ineke Huysman and Roosje Peeters (eds.), *Johan de Witt en het Rampjaar: een bloemlezing uit zijn correspondentie* (Soest: Catullus, 2022), p. 145. G. von Antal and J.C.H. de Pater, *Weensche gezantschapsberichten van 1670 tot 1720* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1929–1934). On De Witt see more generally the *Briefwisseling van Johan de Witt* project, <https://resources.huuygens.knaw.nl/BriefwisselingJohandeWitt/bronnen/toelichting>.

¹⁸Cf. Charles-Édouard Levillain, ‘French Diplomacy and the Run-up to the Glorious Revolution (1688): A Critical Reading of Jean-Antoine d’Avaux’s Correspondence as Ambassador to the States General’, *Journal of Modern History*, 88 (2016), pp. 130–150, on the issues and importance of distinguishing manuscript from printed correspondence.

¹⁹Von Antal and De Pater, *Weensche gezantschapsberichten*, p. xxviii. Roorda, ‘Le secret du Prince’, p. 172.

²⁰Cited in Thomassen’s Introduction in Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, p. 49.

²¹Der Weduwen, *State Communication*; Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World. Making and Trading Books in the Dutch Golden Age* (London: Yale University Press, 2019); Arthur der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers of the Seventeenth Century, 1618–1700* (2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 2017); Donald Haks, *Vaderland en Vrede: Publiciteit over de Nederlandse Republiek in oorlog* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2013); Jan Haverkate, *Spindoctors van de Gouden Eeuw. Een vergeten pamfletoorlog (1654–1675)*. (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2020); Helmer Helmerts, *The Royalist Republic. Literature, Politics and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

The decentralised nature of the Dutch state required a steady flow of information between and within the seven provinces. With hundreds of regents across the country formally involved in the political decision-making process, there was a natural demand for high-quality news, which stimulated the growth of a commercial news market. From the early seventeenth century onwards, the Republic was home to a competitive and diverse market for printed news, and its publishers pioneered the development of newspapers and newspaper advertising.²²

While print did not revolutionise the consumption of news by the Dutch political elite, who continued to rely also on manuscript correspondence and commercial manuscript news services, the mechanical reproduction of handwritten letters did ease the dissemination of foreign news and lowered costs of production. We can certainly interpret the decision of the regents to print their diplomatic despatches in this light. A close study of the form, function and content of the printed despatches is also encouraged by diplomatic history, not least the admirable emphasis on ‘Public Diplomacy’.²³ Recent work by Helmer Helmers, Nina Lamal and others associated with the ‘Inventing Public Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe’ project highlights that the study of diplomatic correspondence is critical to understanding the role that diplomatic agents played in disseminating and manipulating news, to foreign and domestic audiences.²⁴ Yet as Jason Peacey has argued, traditionally most studies of ‘news management’ have focused on the export of news, rather than on how incoming news was managed.²⁵

This article seeks to bring the Dutch printed diplomatic despatches to attention as another source in what Peacey has described as the ‘diplomacy of printed news and printed gazettes in the seventeenth century’.²⁶ Here we focus on a close description and analysis of the extant despatches from 1684 and 1695, providing a sense of their production, content and dissemination. This article also explores the relationship between the supposedly private diplomatic correspondence of the States General, and the public commercial information provided by the Dutch periodical press. In doing so, we raise questions about the role of print in Dutch government, the supply of news to Dutch regents and diplomats, and the burgeoning commercial news sector in the seventeenth century.

What emerges from our study is a picture that reinforces much recent work on early modern diplomacy, one which sees many entanglements between ‘private’ and ‘public’ news provision, emphasising that the early modern envoy and the professional news seller had more similarities than differences.²⁷ We also challenge the idealisation of

²²Annie Stolp, *De eerste couranten in Holland: bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der geschreven nieuwstijdingen* (Amsterdam: Universiteit Amsterdam, 1938); Arthur der Weduwen and Andrew Pettegree, *The Dutch Republic and the Birth of Modern Advertising* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

²³Helmer Helmers, ‘Public diplomacy in early modern Europe. Towards a new history of news’, *Media History*, 22 (2016), pp. 401–420.

²⁴See e.g. the themed issue of *The Seventeenth Century*, vol. 36, issue 3 (2021), ‘Cultural and Public Diplomacy in Seventeenth-Century Europe’, including Helmer Helmers, ‘English public diplomacy in the Dutch Republic, 1609–1619’, pp. 413–437 and Nina Lamal and Klaas Van Gelder, ‘Addressing audiences abroad: cultural and public diplomacy in seventeenth-century Europe’, pp. 367–387.

²⁵Jason Peacey, ‘Managing Dutch Advices. Abraham Casteleyn and the English Government, 1660–1681’, *Media History*, 22 (2016), pp. 421–437, here pp. 421–422.

²⁶Jason Peacey, ‘“My Friend the Gazetier”: Diplomacy and News in Seventeenth-Century Europe’, in Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 420–442, here p. 420.

²⁷Heiko Droste, *The Business of News* (Leiden: Brill, 2021). Maurits A. Ebben and Louis Sicking (eds.), *Beyond Ambassadors. Consuls, Missionaries, and Spies in Premodern Diplomacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2020). Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Vera Noldus, *Double agents: cultural and political brokerage in early modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

‘secrecy’ in the politics of the Dutch Republic, which has long informed perceptions of its regents as intrinsically opposed to the liberal circulation of political information.²⁸ The printed diplomatic despatches, in contrast, reveal that a substantial portion of the information received by the States General was of very similar quality as that available commercially in the bookshops of Dutch towns.

Printing the despatches

The printed diplomatic despatches can be found in neatly arranged folders in the archive of the States General, where they are separated out under their own heading in the archival inventory.²⁹ The provenance of the despatches is unknown, though they appear to have made their way into the archive of the States General from a private collection, possibly from a former diplomat or regent of the States General.³⁰ Systematic archiving of the printed despatches seems to have begun only in the second half of the eighteenth century.

We know that the volumes for 1684 and 1695 present in the archives of the States General are incomplete, because a comparison with the manuscript register of incoming correspondence to the regents has revealed certain gaps.³¹ These gaps are random rather than systematic, and there is no indication that certain letters were not printed because they contained more sensitive political information. The gaps are more substantial for some diplomatic agents than others: in 1684, for instance, 32 of the 48 letters sent by Cornelis Moeringh in Copenhagen survive in print, but only 9 of the 66 letters sent by Christian Rumpf in Stockholm. On average, the two volumes seem to represent around two thirds of the likely total collection of printed despatches for 1684 and 1695. It is of course possible that the pressures of printing the significant number of despatches occasionally overwhelmed Scheltus’s workshop or the States General’s secretariat, and that some letters were therefore never printed at all. It is more likely, however, that the collector of the letters did not receive all the printed despatches, or did not archive them systematically. We can say for certain that the volumes of letters were organised contemporaneously, and are bound tightly together in a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century white vellum binding. The internal organisation of the 1684 and 1695 volumes differs slightly: both are ordered chronologically by the date of receipt of the letters, but the 1684 volume is less rigorous in this regard, and frequently groups letters of the same writer and place of despatch in fortnightly or monthly batches.

The letters were always printed in a folio format. This mimicked the common paper size for handwritten letters, and was similar to other administrative print produced by the Scheltus firm, such as copies of resolutions and forms. The letters were similarly always printed with the same roman and cursive typefaces that Scheltus used for resolutions and

²⁸See De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*. Cf. Der Weduwen, *State Communication*, for a similar challenge.

²⁹The States General archive is found in The National Archives in The Hague (henceforth NA) under the archival entry 1.01.02 (henceforth ASG); the despatches are found at inventory numbers 12083-12145, with the seventeenth-century volumes discussed here at 12084 (1684) and 12085 (1695). From the autumn of 2023 onwards, the extant seventeenth-century items will also be available to view on the *Universal Short Title Catalogue*, www.ustc.ac.uk.

³⁰On the personal archives of Dutch diplomats from the early modern period, see Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, esp. pp. 153-378.

³¹For the manuscript registers covering incoming diplomatic correspondence for 1684 and 1695, see NA, ASG, inv. 11174, 11175, 11207 and 11208.

forms, in contrast to the black letter that continued to be the norm for the publication of placards and ordinances. The diplomatic despatches all followed a standard structure, one that mimics as best as possible the handwritten original (see [Figure 1](#)). Our textual comparisons with the manuscript exemplars reveal that in essence the printed despatches were copied verbatim from the manuscript copy, with only minor variations in content.

One obvious manner in which the printed despatches did differ from the original letters was the fact that multiple despatches were very frequently printed together on one sheet. This means that the secretariat of the States General, or possibly the *Statendrukker*, had considerable agency in arranging how the correspondence was presented to and read by the delegates and other diplomats. It might also indicate that letters that were printed together were often read or discussed together, given that they were physically attached to one another.

Most letters were printed on a single folio sheet of four pages: given that the vast majority of letters occupied less than a full sheet, it was common for Scheltus to print two or three letters to a sheet; less frequently, he printed four, or only one. In some cases, he produced editions of more than one sheet, with six, eight, ten or even twelve pages: these could carry even more letters, or just a single lengthy despatch. Half-sheet editions, of two folio pages, also feature in the volumes, but in these instances it seems reasonable to presume that many are the cut remnant of a full sheet edition that had two or more letters.

In 1684, the 832 letters were printed on 340 typographically distinct editions, whereas in 1695, the 749 letters appeared on 217 editions. Printing multiple letters to a sheet was, from a perspective of printing, a cost saving mechanism. Given that the States General was clearly conscious of the expense of printing so many administrative documents, it is understandable that the practice of printing multiple letters to a sheet was happily accepted by the regents. Often, Scheltus was clearly handed letters by the secretariat that had arrived at the same time from different locations: thus a letter from Cologne of 21 March 1684 and a letter from Istanbul of 3 January 1684 which both arrived in The Hague on 24 March were printed together. The printer did not adopt a habit of grouping letters geographically, unless there happened to be two or more letters from the same region that arrived coincidentally at the same time.

It was also very common for Scheltus to print together multiple letters that arrived on different days. Thus one printed sheet from 1684 featured four letters, despatched from Linz (1 April), Danzig (1 April), Copenhagen (4 April) and Brussels (9 April). The letter from Linz arrived on 10 April, but the other three on 11 April. Although we cannot be certain, one can presume that in general Scheltus printed the letters on the latest date of arrival, or possibly early on the day after. This means that many despatches were only read by the delegates of the States General, who were in session on most days, one or two days after the letter arrived in The Hague.³²

Sometimes, the delegates had to wait even longer. In September 1684, Scheltus printed three letters together, from Tripoli (sent 25 July, arrived 1 September), Algiers (sent 1 August, arrived 4 September) and Vienna (sent 23 August, arrived 4 September). The first two concerned the activities of Barbary corsairs and political affairs in Northern Africa, while the despatch from Vienna contained a pressing update on the siege of Buda. On this occasion,

³²On the States General and its daily practices, see most recently Lauren Lauret, *Regentenwerk. Vergaderen in de Staten-Generaal en de Tweede Kamer, 1750-1850* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2020). Sessions of the foreign affairs committee were less regular than the plenary sessions of the States General.

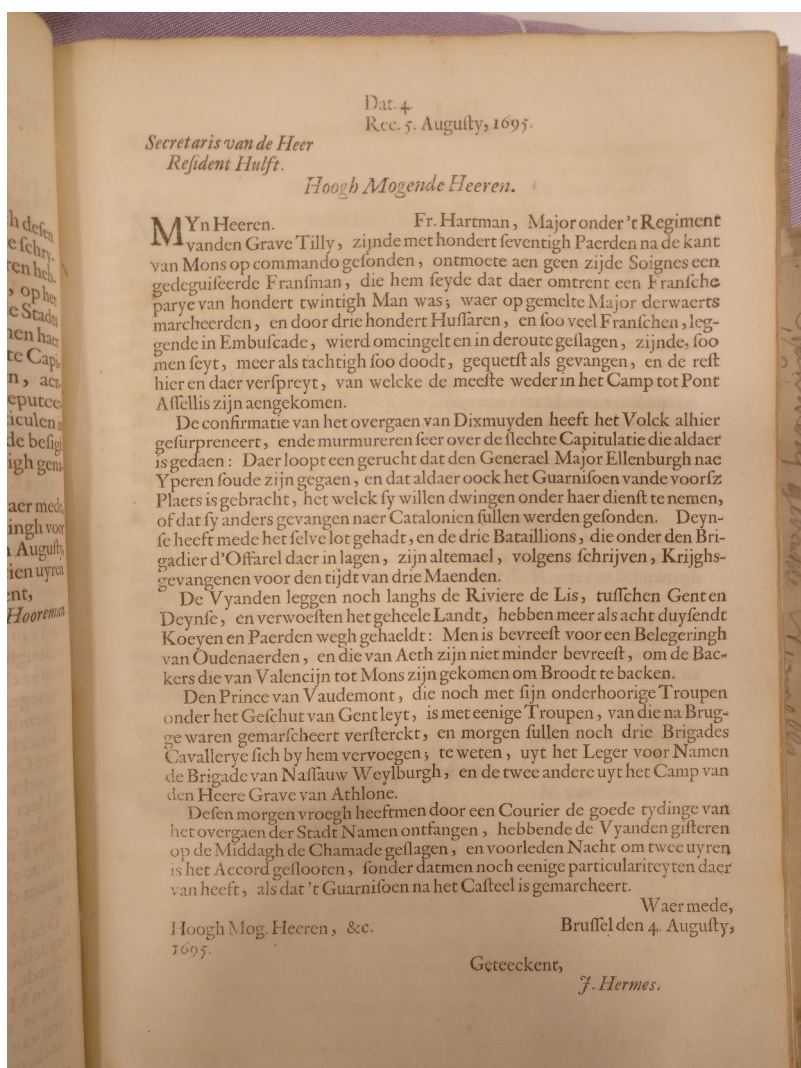


Figure 1. A typical printed despatch, sent to the States General by the secretary of Johan Hulft in Brussels on 4 August 1695. Nationaal Archief, the Hague.

one can presume that when the first letter from Tripoli arrived, either the secretariat or Scheltus waited to print it until the second expected letter from North Africa came in. When this arrived at the same time as the news from Vienna, the three were then immediately printed. To the regents in The Hague, a fresh update from a dynamic siege conducted by their Habsburg allies was probably crucial to read as soon as it arrived. This was in contrast to diplomatic news from a consular outpost on the Barbary coast, which, as Erica Heinsen-Roach has recently demonstrated, was not always at the top of the agenda of the States General, no matter how important the business seemed to the poor consul.³³

³³Erica Heinsen-Roach, *Consuls and captives. Dutch-North African Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Rochester, NY/Woodbridge: University of Rochester Press/Boydell & Brewer, 2019).

Further clues about the production process can be gleaned from the number of blank pages. Of the 340 editions in 1684, 101 contained blank pages, while of the 217 editions in 1695, 61 contained blank pages. These indicate that Scheltus did not always receive enough letters from the secretariat to fill an entire sheet of paper, and that he was conscious of the time-sensitive nature of the despatches. As a rule, Scheltus never printed letters that were marked 'secret' with other despatches, even if this left two or three blank pages on a sheet, an indication that the instruction from 1669 on secrecy was followed closely.

A diplomatic network and its correspondence

The size and activity of the Dutch diplomatic network ensured that Scheltus would be required to print diplomatic despatches on most days of the year. In 1684, he produced at minimum almost one edition per day; in 1695, he did so on average four days per week. There was variety within the corpus of letter writers, as the Dutch diplomatic corps consisted of diplomats with different ranks and responsibilities: ambassadors (ordinary and extraordinary), envoys, residents, agents and consuls. Ambassadors and envoys carried the most political weight: they represented the state abroad, and were often despatched on specific diplomatic missions. Yet they were also expected to gather intelligence. As Charles-Édouard Levillain has succinctly put it, 'a good ambassador was primarily intended to be a good spy'.³⁴ Residents and agents were appointed mostly for news gathering rather than representation, while consuls were mercantile agents, points of contact for the Dutch merchant communities, chiefly in the Mediterranean ports.

Thanks to Otto Schutte's repertory of Dutch diplomatic agents abroad, we know that the States General had forty-six active diplomats in 1684 (of whom twenty-nine were consuls), and forty-three in 1695 (of whom twenty-four were consuls).³⁵ The despatches of 1684 contain letters from only eighteen of these diplomats, and those of 1695 contain letters from twenty-three. These numbers look unimpressive, but when one removes from the corpus the mercantile consuls, the picture changes considerably.³⁶ Excluding the consuls, for 1684, fifteen out of seventeen diplomatic representatives are found in the despatches, and for 1695, seventeen out of nineteen.³⁷

The discrepancy in the presence of consuls in the corpus indicates that the rank of diplomats influenced the expectation of the regularity of their correspondence to the States General (for a complete list, see the [Appendix](#)).³⁸ This is fairly unsurprising. Receiving regular reports from a consul, such as Giacomo Callenburgh in the Bay of

³⁴Levillain, 'French Diplomacy and the Run-up to the Glorious Revolution (1688)', pp. 138-9.

³⁵Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in het buitenland*.

³⁶Cf. Maurits Ebben, 'Your High and Mighty Lordships' Most Humble Servants: Dutch Consuls and the States General's Diplomacy in Spain, 1648-1661', in Ebben and Sicking (eds.), *Beyond Ambassadors*, pp. 89-116, which argues that consuls could be very important for the news supply to the States General.

³⁷The manuscript registers of incoming correspondence to the States General confirm that the absences for 1684 were genuine, as no correspondence was registered from diplomats in Aachen or Frankfurt: see NA, ASG, inv. 11174. For 1695, there were two letters registered from the Moscow resident, Johan Willem van Keller, and two letters from the Aachen agent, Gotthard Schadrinel, which were not found in the volume of printed despatches: see NA, ASG, inv. 11207, ff. 325, 357, 359.

³⁸For a general characterisation of diplomatic correspondence of the period, see Thomassen's Introduction in Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, pp. 47-66.

Cadiz, was less pressing than news from a senior ambassador in a major political centre, such as London or Vienna. In general, the further a diplomat was located from the Dutch Republic, the less frequent and regular their correspondence would be. An extraordinary ambassador sent to a peace congress, such as Pieter Valckenier at Regensburg, or an envoy close to an important military front, such as Hulft in Brussels, would be expected to provide a running commentary on fast-moving developments. In 1684 and 1695, these diplomats wrote on average more than once a week. A resident or agent in Istanbul or Moscow was evidently not required to keep up a similar stream of correspondence, and provided more occasional observations on local politics. It is noteworthy that the more active diplomats also wrote longer letters. Many of the despatches by the less frequent correspondents are brief, and regularly include statements such as ‘There is no news here’.³⁹ In these instances, the diplomat wrote to maintain their profile as an observant, if not necessarily loquacious, agent abroad.

The origin of the despatches reflected closely the location of the high-ranking diplomats in the Dutch network (Table 1). In 1684 and 1695, the States General received many letters from their diplomats in the Holy Roman Empire and Southern Netherlands, but also regular correspondence from Britain and Iberia. There were several notable differences between the two years: in 1684, the States General maintained an ambassador in Paris, but not in 1695, when the Republic was at war with France. The Nine Years’ War (1688–1697) also explains the receipt of many letters from Turin in 1695, as Savoy was a leading ally in the conflict. The Habsburg Netherlands also became more important as a theatre of war, with the States General receiving letters from multiple correspondents in the region.

The diplomatic correspondence reached the States General through a well-established international postal network. A comparison of the median delivery times of the surviving printed letters in 1684 and 1695 (Tables 2 and 3) demonstrates that there was little

Table 1. Overall breakdown by region of the printed diplomatic despatches, 1684 and 1695, ranked by total number of letters.

Region of despatch	1684 extant no. letters	1684 no. locations	1695 extant no. letters	1695 no. of locations	Total no. letters
Holy Roman Empire	343 (41.22%)	9	280 (37.38%)	8	623
Habsburg Netherlands	112 (13.46%)	2	148 (19.75%)	8	260
Britain & Ireland	79 (9.49%)	4	60 (8.01%)	8	139
Spain & Portugal	72 (8.65%)	5	47 (6.27%)	8	119
Denmark	67 (8.05%)	3	12 (1.6%)	1	79
Italy	3 (0.36%)	2	71 (9.47%)	5	74
Poland	29 (3.48%)	1	36 (3.87%)	1	65
Sweden	19 (2.28%)	1	45 (6%)	1	64
Dutch Republic	17 (2.04%)	8	42 (5.6%)	3	59
France	52 (6.25%)	4	0	0	52
Ottoman Empire	25 (3%)	3	7 (0.93%)	3	32
Russia	13 (1.56%)	1	0	0	13
Caribbean	1 (0.12%)	1	0	0	1
Swiss Confederacy	0	0	1 (0.13%)	1	1
Total	832	44	749	47	1,581

³⁹NA, ASG, inv. 12084, G. Calckberner and Jacob de Pas to the States General, 6 November 1684. ‘Nieuws is hier gantsch niets’.

Table 2. The speed of despatch of diplomatic letters to the States General from the most prominent places of correspondence, 1684.

Location (no. letters)	Median Delivery Time (in days)	Shortest Delivery Time (in days)	Longest Delivery Time (in days)
Brussels (111)	2	2	8
Cologne (91)	3	2	7
Hamburg (80)	4	3	8
Regensburg (70)	8	6	35
Copenhagen (48)	10	7	31
Linz (48)	10	9	19
Paris (47)	4	4	11
London (47)	5	3	30
Madrid (36)	18	11	30
Danzig (29)	10	9	14
Windsor (26)	4	4	7
Vienna (24)	12	8	15
Lisbon (21)	34	24	40
Stockholm (19)	13	13	21
Istanbul (18)	79	55	107
Moscow (13)	46	37	52
Berlin (10)	7	7	9

Table 3. The speed of despatch of diplomatic letters to the States General from the most prominent places of correspondence, 1695.

Location (no. letters)	Median Delivery Time (in days)	Shortest Delivery Time (in days)	Longest Delivery Time (in days)
Brussels (114)	2	1	4
Cologne (106)	3	2	6
Frankfurt (104)	5	3	8
Turin (64)	15	11	22
London (48)	6	4	14
Stockholm (45)	17	13	22
Vienna (42)	12	11	13
Den Helder (37)	2	1	4
Danzig (36)	10	8	14
Namur (22)	2	2	3
Cadiz (19)	29	25	33
Berlin (13)	6	6	9
Copenhagen (12)	10	7	13
Madrid (12)	18	15	21
Hamburg (10)	4	4	8
Lisbon (10)	34	32	46

fluctuation over time in the numbers of days that the letters took to arrive in The Hague. Letters sent in the winter months were often slightly delayed, while despatches that had to travel by sea (those from Iberia, Britain and the Baltic), were also occasionally victim to adverse winds: for these we see the greatest range between the shortest and longest delivery times. In general, the further away the location was from the Republic, the more irregular the delivery time: two letters from Jacob Colyer in Istanbul arrived in The Hague on 17 November 1684, but they were written on 29 August and 17 September.

As one would expect, the content of the printed despatches was dominated by high political information. War featured very prominently. While the Republic was not at war in 1684, its diplomatic network was nevertheless mostly occupied with the progress of the Franco-Spanish War of the Reunions (1683–1684) and the resumption of the Habsburg-Ottoman conflict. In 1695, the Republic was deeply embroiled in the Nine Years' War against France, and naturally much of the correspondence concerned its military affairs,

which were spread around Europe. The content of the despatches did vary depending on the location of the diplomat. Correspondents in Spain, especially Cadiz, included much information on the passage of ships in and out of the Mediterranean, more general maritime news, and news from the Americas. Correspondents in Vienna or Paris were expected to concentrate on the movements of the Emperor or King, and report on courtly ceremonies, audiences, arrivals and departures. Commercial news, closely tied to political affairs, was also habitually inserted in many despatches: on 26 November 1684 Thomas van Sasburgh commented from Brussels that ‘The merchants who deal in fish here, are complaining greatly of the high and exorbitant taxes . . . The wine merchants do not complain less either’.⁴⁰

As was common to all diplomatic correspondents, the envoys of the Republic were expected to gather and collate news from multiple locations in their region of residence. A letter from Arnout van Citters of 10 March 1684 from Westminster included news of the arrival of an East-Indiaman in London, and reports from Newmarket, Plymouth, Ireland and the City of London.⁴¹ The letters reveal that many of the diplomats maintained their own network of correspondents.⁴² In a letter of 25 May 1684, Pieter Valckenier wrote from Regensburg that: ‘Yesterday evening I received from my correspondent a letter from Munich’, and that ‘My correspondent adds to this, that the Elector had meetings with Lord Waldeck and his secret council’.⁴³ Five days later, Hendrick van Bilderbeek wrote from Cologne that his correspondent in Trier had passed on two news reports from the French Camp before Luxembourg, in French, which Van Bilderbeek did not bother to summarise or translate for Their High Mightinesses: he simply copied the two reports verbatim at the end of his letter. Occasionally, diplomats would attach additional documentation with their despatch, such as extracts of official declarations or memoranda. On 9 May 1684, the resident in Copenhagen, Johan Hotton, attached to his letter ‘two copies of memoranda submitted by myself to the King’, as well as extracts from the latest Danish legislation on shipping.⁴⁴

The States General expected its diplomats to judge the validity of the news that came their way, but also to keep them informed of rumour. Comments on such gossip were ubiquitous: a single letter from Gerard Hamel Bruyninx from Linz of 29 January 1684 included the following remarks:

That the Republic of Venice has committed itself to the Polish and Imperial Alliance, is regarded by many at court as a certainty. . . . From Hungary, there are many notable, but suspect reports. . . . (I have heard some rumblings at court) that they are placing themselves, or are considering placing themselves, under the protection of Poland.⁴⁵

⁴⁰NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Thomas van Sasburgh to the States General, 26 November 1684. ‘De kooplyuden alhier handelende in visch, klagen seer weghens de groote ende exorbitante lasten’ and ‘De kooplyuden van wynen klagen niet minder over de groote lasten.’

⁴¹NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Arnout van Citters to the States General, 10 March 1684.

⁴²A point also made by Peacey: ‘“My Friend the Gazetier”’, p. 424.

⁴³NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Pieter Valckenier to the States General, 25 May 1684. ‘Gisteren avondt ontfingh ick van mynen Correspondent een Brief uyt Munchen . . . Myn Correspondent voecht daer by, dat den Keurvorst met den Vorst van Waldeck en sijn geheyme Raedt eenighe conferentien gehouden hadde’.

⁴⁴NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Johan Hotton to the States General, 9 May 1684. ‘twee copyelijcke memorialen van mijn aen den Koningh’.

⁴⁵NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Gerard Hamel Bruyninx to the States General, 29 January 1684. ‘Dat de Republijcq van Venetien sigh in de Poolsche en Keyzersche Alliantie heeft begeven, wordt als een seeckere saeck by veele alhier te Hove gedebiteert. . . . Uyt Ongaren komen considerable, maer by veele suspecte, advisen in. . . . soo is het apparent, dat sy haer onder de protectie van Polen (daer ick te Hove van hebbe hooren mompelen) hebben, of van sinsts zyn te begeven’.

It was another important diplomatic obligation to keep Their High Mightinesses informed of foreign opinion about them. Arnout van Citters reported on 25 August 1684 from England that ‘The cargo of the East-India [fleet] that arrived in the Netherlands is judged to be of excellent value, which means that many here are less pleased with it’.⁴⁶ A month later, on 28 September, Gerard Hamel Bruyninx wrote from Vienna to state that he had seen ‘a newspaper printed here’ that included two reports from The Hague about Dutch troop movements and the ongoing debate concerning the financing of the Dutch army. Bruyninx commented that the report ‘in my opinion comments too liberally in regards to matters of interest to the [Dutch] state’. He then appended the two reports, in a Dutch translation, below his despatch.⁴⁷

The printed diplomatic despatches granted the regents of the States General the means to collate information from multiple sources. On 4 June 1684, Johan Hulft wrote from Brussels with news of the storming of a part of the defences of Luxembourg by the French army, which he ended with the statement ‘I trust that you in Holland will already have the same news via Liège’.⁴⁸ Once the despatches had been printed in The Hague, they could allow the rest of the diplomatic network to be informed of the information supplied by their peers. This is reinforced by one striking printed despatch in the collection of 1684, which concerns a letter sent by one diplomat, Johannes Bruyninx in Madrid, to Arnout van Citters in England. Although this was addressed directly to Van Citters, the letter was first sent to The Hague, printed as a despatch, and then sent onwards.⁴⁹ Informing the States General was clearly a priority, even if the content of a despatch was meant for another diplomat in the network.⁵⁰

It is noteworthy that we identified very few despatches in the collections of 1684 and 1695 that were marked ‘secret’. In 1684, there were four examples, one sent by Arnout van Citters in Westminster, one by Willem van Wassenaar in Paris and two by Johannes Bruyninx in Madrid. These cases all concerned the diplomatic positions of Spain, France and England with regards to the War of Devolution, and the pursuit by Van Citters, Van Wassenaar and Bruyninx of the brief given to them by the States General in resolving the conflict. In these instances, we can be fairly sure that their circulation was much more restricted, and that their contents was guarded closely by the regents.

It is uncertain how many copies of the diplomatic despatches were printed on a regular basis. One may presume at least one copy for every delegate at the States General: these could number over forty, but usually less than a dozen were in attendance. If the letters were distributed through the entire diplomatic network, at least to those diplomats who were responsible for regular despatches, then a habitual print run of thirty to forty copies seems likely. What is certain is that some letters were deemed important or useful enough to distribute in greater quantities. We have identified loose copies of printed despatches for the years 1672, 1688, 1689, 1690, 1692, 1695 and 1696 in multiple

⁴⁶NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Arnout van Citters to the States General, 25 August 1684. ‘Het Oost-Indisch Retour in de Nederlanden werdt gheoordeeld van seer uytsteekende waerde, waerom het by velen hier des te min aengenermer schijnd’.

⁴⁷NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Gerard Hamel Bruyninx to the States General, 28 September 1684. ‘een Courant hier gedrukt . . . die mijns oordeels wat te licentieus werden gedebiteert, ten aensien van het interest dat den Staet daer by heeft’.

⁴⁸NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Johan Hulft to the States General, 4 June 1684. ‘Ick vertrouwe dat men in Hollandt selve over Luyck de tydingh van desen reets sal hebben’.

⁴⁹NA, ASG, inv. 12084, Johannes Bruyninx to Arnout van Citters, 20 July 1684.

⁵⁰A point also made by Theo Thomassen in his Introduction in Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, pp. 63-64.

libraries, most prominently in the Royal Library in The Hague, where some are classified as part of the Knuttel pamphlet collection, but also in Amsterdam, Groningen, Leiden, Utrecht and the Fagel Collection in Trinity College, Dublin.⁵¹

Most of these despatches concern affairs in England after the Dutch invasion of November 1688, or news from the frontline in the Habsburg Netherlands during the Nine Years' War. Many of them are identical in format and appearance to those found in the collections in the National Archives, but some carry the address of Jacobus Scheltus on the imprint, a clear sign that these were intended for dissemination beyond the offices of state, as Scheltus never printed his name on documents meant for routine administration. The publication of letters ostensibly meant only for the eyes of the States General was a strategy that has also been confirmed by other scholarship on the seventeenth-century Republic, and indicates that the regents were finely attuned to the benefits of political publicity.⁵² Given that Scheltus was not permitted to distribute printed placards or other documentation on his own accord, it is certain that the regents played a decisive role in the wider distribution of the diplomatic despatches.⁵³

There is also evidence that the printed despatches made their way to foreign agents in the Dutch Republic, or that they were circulated by Dutch agents abroad to their counterparts. A printed letter from 1672, written by Johan de Witt and sent to Dutch diplomats abroad, made its way into the hands of Swedish administrators.⁵⁴ A printed despatch from 1686 with two routine diplomatic letters found its way to the English Secretary of State Charles Middleton, while a printed despatch from 1707 was sent by James Dayrolle, English resident minister in The Hague, to Robert Harley.⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that these two English examples date from periods in which the Anglo-Dutch political climate differed greatly: in 1686 relations were deteriorating fast, while in 1707 the two powers were close allies. These examples, as much as the unknown private provenance of the volumes of correspondence in The Hague, hint at a broader circulation of the despatches than has previously been presumed.

The despatches and the periodical press

It is important to reflect on the degree of exclusivity of the information sent to the States General by their diplomatic agents. Jason Peacey has demonstrated that early modern English diplomats were expected to keep themselves informed through commercial pamphlets and newspapers, and to forward these to their superiors if they contained material of interest. Statesmen would themselves also seek to subscribe to a range of printed matter to supplement their incoming correspondence: in 1618, the English Secretary of State Dudley Carleton complained that the letters from the English ambassador in Venice, 'have nothing more than the gazettes pricked to a new tune'.⁵⁶ By the

⁵¹Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague: 3195 B 26 and Pft 13160, 13183, 13385, 13387, 13392, 13771, 14026, 14216. Universiteitsbibliotheek, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: pamflet 13354. Universiteitsbibliotheek, Groningen: UBG VhB II 2937. Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden: THYSPF 12049, THYSPF 12640. Universiteitsbibliotheek, Utrecht: Knuttel 13354. Trinity College, Dublin: Fagel Collection, H.2.91.

⁵²Haks, *Vaderland & Vrede*, pp. 151, 197-198, 206; Der Weduwen, *State Communication*, ch. 9.

⁵³Schneider, *Voorgeschiedenis*, p. 66.

⁵⁴Riksarkivet, Stockholm, *Diplomatica Hollandica* 1024 (Holländska beskickningars memorial och noter), unfoliated. We are grateful to Helmer Helmers for sharing this find with us.

⁵⁵British Library Add MS 41819; The National Archives, SP84/229, f. 346.

⁵⁶Peacey, "My Friend the Gazetier", pp. 420-442, here p. 423.

end of the seventeenth century, the proliferation of printed newspapers made the task of the diplomatic agent both simpler and more difficult: in 1675, William Carr excused himself to his superiors for failing to write anything more than ‘common news, such as stands this day in the gazette’.⁵⁷ A shrewder colleague, Roger Meredith, knew that his taskmasters in London read the tri-weekly *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, the leading Dutch newspaper, so he ensured that he did not repeat its contents.⁵⁸ Experienced diplomats, such as Sir William Temple, also received the Haarlem newspaper, in addition to titles from Brussels, Paris and Nuremberg.⁵⁹

In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic had a high reputation for the quality of its periodical news. One English diplomat reflected that ‘ordinary Dutch gazettes give you so good an account [that] there remains nothing for me to add to it’.⁶⁰ By the 1680s, the competitive Dutch newspaper market had stabilised, with three tri-weeklies and one bi-weekly title published in Haarlem, Amsterdam, Leiden and Utrecht, in addition to several French, Italian and Spanish-language titles.⁶¹ The Dutch-language newspapers served a national market and found a wide readership: the French ambassador once reported to Paris that ‘everyone reads them here’.⁶² While foreign observers frequently marvelled at the extent to which Dutch citizens engaged in political discussion and consumed printed news and political literature, the most loyal clients of the printed newspapers were undoubtedly members of the regent class.⁶³ Aside from their duties as *Statendrukkers*, the Scheltus family was also responsible for delivering newspapers to the States of Holland and the States General. In 1700, Paulus Scheltus delivered each week 39 copies of the Haarlem newspaper, 28 of the Amsterdam newspaper and 31 copies of the Leiden newspaper.⁶⁴ These the regents read avidly, to supplement their own news provision, and to ensure that the newspapermen did not publish reports that commented on domestic political affairs.⁶⁵

All of this raises the question of what function the printed despatches served. The regents habitually read at least three tri-weekly newspapers, the issues of which were printed across six days of the week: what, if anything, did the despatches add to this rich diet of news? Did the information they contain have an advantage in terms of quality or contemporaneity to that in the public commercial newspapers that the regents consulted so voraciously? Only a partial comparison is possible: for the year 1684, there exists only a complete run of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, whilst for 1695 we have complete runs of both the Haarlem and Amsterdam tri-weekly papers. The survival of the *Oprechte Leydse Courant* and the *Utrechtse Courant* is far too patchy to allow for any systematic comparison.

Analysing the origin and speed of news provided by the despatches and that by the Haarlem and Amsterdam newspapers, the quality of the newspapers is striking (Tables 4 and 5). For every diplomatic despatch from the most regular places of correspondence, there was at least one corresponding report in the newspapers, and often more.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 425.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Peacey, ‘Managing Dutch Advices’, pp. 421–437, here p. 421.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 425.

⁶¹Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 79–80.

⁶²Michiel van Groesen, ‘Reading Newspapers in the Dutch Golden Age’, *Media History*, 22 (2016), pp. 334–352, here p. 342.

⁶³Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 85–87.

⁶⁴Schneider, *Voorgeschiedenis*, p. 71.

⁶⁵Haks, *Vaderland & Vrede*, p. 207. For a case study, see Joop Koopmans, ‘De vergadering van de Staten-Generaal in de Republiek voor 1795 en de publiciteit’, *BMGN*, 120 (2005), pp. 379–396.

Table 4. The three most common places of despatch in the printed diplomatic letters, and their occurrence in the Haarlem newspaper in 1684.

1684	Despatches	Haarlem Courant
Brussels	111 letters	237 reports in 114 issues
Cologne	91 letters	128 reports in 112 issues
Hamburg	80 letters	108 reports in 99 issues

Table 5. The three most common places of despatch in the printed diplomatic letters, and their occurrence in the Haarlem and Amsterdam newspapers in 1695.

1695	Despatches	Haarlem Courant	Amsterdam Courant
Brussels	103 letters	131 reports in 105 issues	114 reports in 110 issues
Cologne	106 letters	154 reports in 132 issues	143 reports in 140 issues
Frankfurt	104 letters	124 reports in 104 issues	118 reports in 112 issues

The reports also overlapped significantly in their speed and dating: reports from Brussels were always published in the Haarlem and Amsterdam newspapers on Thursdays and Saturdays, while the diplomatic despatches from Brussels generally arrived in The Hague on Wednesdays and Fridays. Similarly, reports from Hamburg and Frankfurt tended to be printed in the Tuesday and Saturday issues, and arrived in The Hague on Mondays and Fridays. This makes it clear that the postal routes used by the diplomatic agents of the States General were the exact same as those used by the newspaper publishers, and that the couriers of the regents were also possibly identical.⁶⁶ When we consider that the printed despatches may not have been received by the regents until the day after their manuscript original arrived, it is no stretch of the imagination to picture Scheltus delivering the newspapers and the despatches alongside each other to Their High Mightinesses.

Overlap in content between the newspapers and the printed despatches was also substantial. On 1 November 1695, the *Amsterdamsche Courant* reported news from Cologne of 28 October:

Yesterday two deputies departed from here [Cologne] to Cleves, to petition the Elector of Brandenburg that instead of four only three regiments of horse will be quartered in this land, because the subjects will struggle to supply so many horses with feed this winter. Whether this will be agreed to is doubted greatly. . . . The advance forces of Münster arrived yesterday at Hochsterbach in the Westerwalt.⁶⁷

On 28 October, resident Hendrick van Bilderbeeck also wrote a letter from Cologne, which arrived in The Hague on 31 October, and was therefore most likely presented to

⁶⁶For general context, see Nikolaus Schobesberger, et al., 'European Postal Networks', in Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 17-63. For a good eighteenth-century comparison, see Joop W. Koopmans, 'Supply and Speed of Foreign News to the Netherlands during the Eighteenth Century: a Comparison of Newspapers in Haarlem and Groningen', in his *Early Modern Media and the News in Europe. Perspectives from the Dutch Angle* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 189-207.

⁶⁷Ao. 1695. No. 131 *Amsterdamsche Dingsdaagse Courant* (Amsterdam: Willem Arnold and widow A.D. Oosaaan, 1 November 1695). '... en zyn gisteren 2 Gedeputeerden van hier [Cologne] na Cleef vertrokken, om den Keurvorst van Brandenburg te versoeken, dat in plaets van 4 maer 3 regimenten te paert in dit lant mogten geinquartert worden, om dat de onderdanen swaerlyk soo veele paerden gedurende desen winter met vouragie sullen kunnen voorsien. Doch of sulks sal toegestaen worden, word seer getwyfelt. ... De voortroepen van de Munstersche zyn gisteren tot Hochsterbach in 't Westerwalt gearriveert'.

the delegates no earlier than 1 November, the same day as the publication of the *Amsterdamsche Courant*. Van Bilderbeeck's despatch opened with the statement that:

At the instruction of the government of the Elector of Cologne and the representatives of this Archbishopric, yesterday two deputies departed from here [Cologne] to Cleves, to petition his Illustriousness the Elector of Brandenburg, that if it pleases [him] to quarter instead of four, only three regiments of horse in their land, because the subjects are struggling, and it is possible that it will be impossible for them to supply so much cavalry with the necessary feed this winter, or to help remedy the same, to remove two battalions of infantry from the land, although whether this request will be permitted by his Illustriousness the Elector is doubted greatly. . . . The troops of Münster that are travelling home march slowly, and are now at the river Lohn at Limburgh in the Westerwald.⁶⁸

It is notable that Van Bilderbeeck's despatch is almost identical to the newspaper report, but that it conveys this same information in more words (120 rather than 70). This is appropriate, given that the diplomat was addressing Their High Mightinesses directly, but it also indicates that, in general, the despatches were padded a great deal in comparison to the newspapers, which prioritised condensing information to pack as much as possible into their two-sided sheets. Van Bilderbeeck's verbosity is also noticeable in other letters of his that are virtually identical in content to the more concise reports of the *Amsterdamsche Courant* and the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*.⁶⁹

A comparison between Van Bilderbeeck's correspondence and the newspapers also reveals much about the newspaper practice of heading reports by 'places of correspondence'. A letter by Van Bilderbeeck of 7 October 1695 from Cologne contained six paragraphs: the first two contained content clearly reported from Cologne, the third from 'the Upper Rhine, with the latest letters', the fourth from Strasbourg, the fifth from Frankfurt and the final once more from Cologne.⁷⁰ The content of this despatch could also be found in the issues of the Haarlem and Amsterdam papers on 11 October, the day after the letter arrive in The Hague. Yet the newspapers placed the news from Strasbourg and Frankfurt under individual headers, while the rest was printed under the heading of Cologne. This shrewd practice presented to the newspaper reader far broader news networks than the newspapermen actually subscribed to, and highlights the hazard of using the places of correspondence as a means to compare directly the content of different types of news provision.

Cologne was a crucial transit point for news to the Dutch Republic, and given the Van Bilderbeeck family's strong connection to the commercial newsletter market, it is perhaps not so surprising that there was regular overlap between his despatches and the content of Dutch newspapers.⁷¹ Yet there is every indication that such overlap was not restricted

⁶⁸NA, ASG, inv. 12085, Hendrick van Bilderbeeck to the States General, 28 October 1695. 'Van wegens de Chur-Ceulsche Regeeringe ende de Landtstenden deses Aerts-Bisdom zijn gisteren twee Gedeputeerden van hier nae Cleef vertrocken, om syne Churfurstelijcke Doorluchtigheydt van Brandenburg te versoecken, dat gelieven moge in plaetse van vier, alleene drie Regimenten te Paerdt in hun Landt te logeren, overmits het de Onderdanen al te swaer, ende by kans onmogelijck soude vallen soo veel Ruyterye met noodige voeragie, geduyrende den winter-tijdt, te voorsien, of nu daer twee Battaillons van het Landt, om het selve te soulageren, reedts zijn wegh genomen, noch dit versoeck by syne Churfurstelijcke Doorluchtigheydt sal werden toegestaen, daer aen werdt geensints getwijffelt. . . . De Munstersche Volckeren welcke naer Huys gaen, marcheren met langhsame dagh-reysen, ende staen nu aen de Riviere Lohn by Limburgh op de Westerwald'.

⁶⁹See for instance NA, ASG, inv. 12085, Hendrick van Bilderbeeck to the States General, 7 October 1695. *Ao. 1695. No. 122 Amsterdamsche Dingsdaagse Courant* (Amsterdam: Willem Arnold and widow A.D. Oossaan, 11 October 1695). *No. 41 Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant* (Haarlem: [heirs of] Abraham Casteleyn, 11 October 1695).

⁷⁰Ibid. 'den Boven-Rhijn, met de huidige brieven'.

⁷¹On the Van Bilderbeecs, see Stolp, *De eerste couranten in Holland*.

to Van Bilderbeeck, or the most common places of despatch, such as Cologne, Brussels or Frankfurt. On 25 July 1695, the States General received a letter from resident Johan Wolfsen in Lisbon, sent on 21 June. While the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* of 26 July did not include any Lisbon news, the *Amsterdamsche Courant* did, opening its issue with a Lisbon report dated 21 June.⁷² The news, focussed on local salt pans and salt production, was identical to the printed despatch, except for one revealing line. Wolfsen wrote towards the end that ‘Since the last post, there has not been the slightest change in the public affairs [of Portugal]’.⁷³ The *Amsterdamsche Courant* did not include this, but replaced it with: ‘The Lord Resident Wolfsen has received permission from Their High Mightinesses to return to Holland’.⁷⁴

This hints strongly that Wolfsen or his secretary wrote directly to Willem Arnold, the editor of the *Amsterdamsche Courant*, with the exact same news that was sent to the States General, barring the most revealing political news, that the crown of Portugal had indicated no changes in policy. That Wolfsen had a close relationship with Arnold is also confirmed by other issues of the *Amsterdamsche Courant*. His despatch of 10 May 1695, which arrived on 13 June, was a relatively short letter concerning preparations for a Portuguese punitive expedition against corsairs from Salé, and the poor harvest and scarcity of grain in Portugal. This letter was copied verbatim in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* of 14 June, as Table 6 indicates.

Aside from minor changes in spelling, a shift from the first to the third person, and the addition of one final sentence in the newspaper, the two accounts were indistinguishable.

Table 6. Comparison of the text of Wolfsen’s Lisbon despatch of 10 May 1695 and the corresponding report as published in the *Amsterdamsche Courant*.

Wolfsen Despatch, 10 May 1695	<i>Amsterdamsche Courant</i> , Lisbon report, 10 May 1695
Twee Kroons Fregatten leggen genoegsaem klaer om eerstdaeghs zee te kunnen kiezen, en werdt continuelijck aen een derde met grooten yver gearbeyt, men wil dat de selve, als voorlede somer, wel weder na de kust van Barbaryen tot het inteugelen vande Zalésche Rovers mochten gaen; en sprecken veele dat men selfs wel een bombarderingh tegens Zalée ondernemen mocht, daer toe ick nochtans de nodige preparatie niet kan bemercken. De schaersheynt van granen neemt dagelijcx meer en meer toe, zynde onder de vreemde kooplyuden weynigh meer te vinden, soo dat het hier vry slecht uytzien soude, byaldien daer van binnen korten geen toevoer van buyten komen mochte; het nieuw gewas belooft voor als noch wel wat goedts, maer daer ontrent kan noch veel veranderingh voorvallen, en heeft men om den menighvuldigen regen de lage vruchtbare landen van de Lisirias, die andersints een groote quantiteyt koom uytleveren, van dit jaer, immers tot heden niet kunnen bezayen.	Twee kroons fregatten leggen genoegzaem klaer om eerstdaegs zee te kunnen kiezen, en werd continueerlyk aen een derde met grooten yver gearbeit; men wil dat deselve, als voorleden somer, wel weder na de kust van Barbaryen tot het inteugelen van de Zaleesche Rovers mochten gaen, en spreken veele dat men selfs wel een bombardeeringe tegens Zalee ondernemen mochte, daer toe egter de noodige preparatie in 't minst niet bespeurt worden. De schaersheid van granen neemt dagelyks meer en meer toe, zynde onder de vreemde kooplieden weynigh meer te vinden, soo dat het hier vry slecht uitsien soude, by aldien daer van binnenkorten geen toevoer van buiten komen mochte. Het nieuwe gewas belooft voor als noch wel wat goeds, maer daer ontrent kan noch veele veranderinge voorvallen; en heeft men om de menigvuldigen regen de lage vruchtbare landen van de Lisirias, die andersinds een groote quantiteit koom uitleveren, van dit jaer, immers tot heden, niet kunnen besayen. De koning heeft hem op sijn geboorte dag naer gewoonte niet in het publyk vertoont, soo dat men de ordinaris complimenten daer over aen de koninginne afgeleyt heeft.

⁷²Ao. 1695. No. 74 *Amsterdamse Dingsdaagse Courant* (Amsterdam: Willem Arnold and widow A.D. Oossaan, 21 June 1695).

⁷³NA, ASG, inv. 12085, Johan Wolfsen to the States General, 21 June 1695. ‘Inde publicque affaires is hier zedert de jonghst voorgaende Post de minste veranderingh niet voorgevallen’.

⁷⁴‘De Heer Resident Wolfsen heeft permissie van haer Hoog Mog: ontfangen om een keer na Holland te doen’.

Once again, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* did not include any news from Lisbon; it is possible that Wolfsen did not have a relationship with Gerard Casteleyn, the publisher of that paper, or that Casteleyn preferred to source his news from Portugal elsewhere.⁷⁵ What does seem probable is that the transmission of the report was made directly between Wolfsen and Arnold: it is unlikely that there would have been enough time for the report to arrive in The Hague on the 13 June, be copied or printed, and sent to Arnold in Amsterdam in time for inclusion in the issue of 14 June, which would already have been typeset in the evening of 13 June. Recent scholarship has emphasised the relationships diplomats forged with gazetteers in their place of residence: Wolfsen and Arnold's relationship highlights that they were no less eager to develop and maintain relations with the press back home.⁷⁶

Given that newspapermen were able to gather similar diplomatic news in the same timeframe as the States General, it seems difficult to identify a reason for the purposeful leaking of information from the secretariat of the States to the newspaper publishers on a regular basis. The leaking of highly confidential or secretive information from the States General would also not have been useful to the newspapermen for filling the content of their papers. The publication of reports deemed to 'comment too liberally in regards to matters of interest of the state' led very swiftly to investigations, fines and suspensions.⁷⁷ We have not found any evidence of content from the small number of 'secret' despatches printed in 1684 appearing in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* of the same year. Rather than gleaning their knowledge of foreign affairs second-hand from leaks in the Binnenhof, Dutch gazetteers could be directly informed by the Republic's diplomats or their secretaries. More systematic work on the relationship between Dutch diplomats and gazetteers will need to be undertaken to enhance our understanding of this dynamic, but our initial investigation suggests that direct contact between diplomats, such as Wolfsen, and newspaper publishers was not exceptional.

Why did Dutch representatives, such as Van Bilderbeek and Wolfsen, seek out these relationships with newspapermen? Supplying copies of their correspondence to newspaper publishers might have allowed the diplomats to pad their income, but it is more likely that the diplomats engaged in these relationships for their own sake. News exchange often took place on the basis of mutual benefit, and it is not unreasonable to presume that diplomats and news publishers sought out relationships with one another based on their specific need for information. Rank seems to have played little role in this. We found little evidence of overlap between the despatches and newspapers for some lower-ranking diplomats, further removed from the Republic, similar to Johan Wolfsen, such as Coenraat Scholten in Danzig or Christiaan Rumpf in Stockholm; while there was clear overlap between the despatches of the higher-ranking Coenraad van Heemskerck in Vienna and the Dutch press. Personal preferences and needs will have played a larger role: Rumpf, for instance, did exchange newsletters with the Dutch news-seller and diplomat Abraham de Wicquefort in The Hague.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, esp. pp. 671-676, 1160-1164, on the similarities and differences between the Amsterdam and Haarlem newspapers.

⁷⁶See Peacey, "My Friend the Gazetteer", pp. 420-421, on the emphasis diplomats attached to forging relationships with foreign gazetteers.

⁷⁷Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, esp. pp. 85-86.

⁷⁸Many newsletters by him can be found among the confiscated papers of De Wicquefort. See NA, Archief Hof van Holland, inv. 5309.

A comparison between the despatches and newspapers also demonstrates that the newspapermen of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic were clearly able to establish their own connections with the diplomatic agents of the Republic, rather than rely on the offices of state in The Hague. This was in contrast to the operation of the Parisian *Gazette*, which was famously supplied with foreign news by the crown, or indeed the *London Gazette*, managed by the Secretaries of State.⁷⁹ It is nevertheless important to note that Dutch newspapers, although they existed in a more competitive commercial market, were still tied very closely to government.⁸⁰ They were widely read by Dutch statesmen, for whom they were a useful resource, and they received much of their information from a diplomatic network that was in pay of the authorities. The history of the periodical press has frequently been written from a perspective that highlights natural tension and conflict between newspapermen and government, but this case study helps demonstrate that co-operation was overwhelmingly the norm.⁸¹ There was little need for repressive censorship of the Dutch press when the interests of government and the newspaper publishers aligned so comfortably.

Conclusion

An analysis of the seventeenth-century printed diplomatic despatches suggests that there was a clear overlap between the supposedly private provision of diplomatic news to the States General and the commercially available newspapers in the Dutch Republic. The diplomats of Their High Mightinesses offered useful information to their paymasters, but aside from limited quantities of despatches from special envoys with classified assignments, their news was exclusive in terms of the status of their recipients, rather than its content. The bulk of diplomatic news travelled at the same speeds as that printed in the periodical press; the printed despatches contained largely the same information as in the newspapers, albeit expressed in a more deferential tone and at greater length.

Although printing the despatches was cheaper than having them copied by hand, in comparison to the newspapers, the printed diplomatic despatches were an expensive service to maintain.⁸² In general, the Amsterdam and Haarlem papers crammed some 3,500 words into a half-sheet issue of the 1680s and 1690s, which meant that a subscriber to their tri-weekly issues would on average receive 546,000 words of news per year. For the sum of eight to nine guilders, this was a highly expedient and economical service.

⁷⁹Howard M. Solomon, *Public Welfare, Science, and Propaganda in Seventeenth Century France: The Innovations of Théophraste Renaudot* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972). Gilles Feyel, *L'Annonce et la nouvelle: La presse d'information en France sous l'Ancien Régime (1630-1788)* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000). Peter Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State and their monopoly of Licensed News, 1660-1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

⁸⁰A point also made for the seventeenth-century Holy Roman Empire: Jan Hillgärtner, 'Newspapers and Authorities in Seventeenth-Century Germany', in Nina Lamal, Jamie Cumby and Helmer J. Helmers (eds.), *Print and Power in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 134-147.

⁸¹A good recent example of this more traditional approach is offered by Matthew J. Shaw, *An Inky Business: A History of Newspapers from the English Civil Wars to the American Civil War* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021). For a similar argument on the importance of co-operation between authorities and the press, see Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the world came to know about itself* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), esp. pp. 266-8, 284-5, 314, 326-45, 358, 368-9, Hillgärtner, 'Newspapers and Authorities', Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 46-47, 61-62, 75, 85-87, and Steven Van Impe, 'Mediamagnaten in de Oostenrijkse Nederlanden? De uitgevers en redacteurs van de *Gazette van Antwerpen* in de achttiende eeuw', *De Gulden Passer*, 91 (2013), pp. 127-158.

⁸²Thomassen also noted that the printing of the despatches was ultimately a very expensive endeavour. See his Introduction in Pennings and Thomassen, *Archieven van Nederlandse Gezanten en Consuls*, p. 61.

Even when Scheltus printed four full letters on a sheet, which he rarely did, that sheet of paper would only contain some 2,500 words compared to the 3,500 on the half-sheet of a newspaper issue. In 1684, the corpus of printed diplomatic despatches contained approximately 493,000 words, and in 1695 some 346,000 words; much less than one of the tri-weeklies, while in both instances the amount of paper used would be around double compared to one of the newspapers.

Why did the States General insist on this expensive service? In terms of the novelty of the information that they contained, printing the despatches may appear to have been a poor investment. Yet this was not the only criterion for assessing the importance of information. News verification was at the heart of early modern business and government.⁸³ Isolated reports may or may not have been accurate and had to be verified with subsequent accounts. The presence of a daily stream of printed despatches, nominally reserved for the eyes of the delegates at the States General, could give a reassuring impression of access to up-to-date information. The decentralised nature of Dutch government forced the delegates to report back to their colleagues in the provincial States and numerous city councils on a continuous basis, and here the despatches could serve a useful role. The printed letters might also have aided the diplomats themselves. The expansion of the Dutch diplomatic network presented acute difficulties when it came to keeping Dutch diplomats abreast of developments in foreign affairs and coordinating the foreign policy of the Republic. Some Dutch diplomats complained of receiving little news or instructions from their paymasters in The Hague. Gerard Hamel Bruyninx grumbled to Adriaan Godard van Reede van Amerongen in 1672 that ‘I cannot understand that . . . the various ministers of state, do not receive the same instructions, so that they, each in his post, may negotiate towards the same end and provide each other with pertinent information’.⁸⁴

The printed despatches could plausibly have redressed this inconsistency and served to coordinate the information available to, and the activities of, the Republic’s diplomatic network. Moreover, the discovery of some printed despatches in foreign state papers indicates that they were occasionally passed on to foreign diplomats, intended to keep the Republic’s allies abreast of particular developments. Access to printed despatches, even if they were limited in their originality compared to other sources of information, still aided the circulation of news, and helped to verify incoming reports. The multiplication of the same information in the printed despatches and the newspapers was precarious, however, as it could lure the regents into a false notion of verification if a diplomat provided the same content to the regents as to the newspapers. Those who profited most from the regular efforts of Dutch agents to compile the latest news reports, were professional sellers of news.

Disclosure statement

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⁸³Paul Dover, *The Information Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

⁸⁴Helmens and Lamal, ‘Dutch Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century’, pp. 22–3. See also Von Antal and De Pater, *Weensche gezantschapsberichten*, pp. xxix, 33.

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Appendix

In this appendix we have listed all the correspondents who feature in the extant printed diplomatic despatches in 1684 and 1695, with separate indications where each correspondent wrote from, how frequently a printed letter has survived, and how long their letters took to arrive in The Hague. We have also provided an indication of the diplomat's tenure, where available in O. Schutte's *Repertorium*.

1684						
Author	Location	Tenure	No. Letters	Median Delivery Time (in days)	Shortest Delivery Time (in days)	Longest Delivery Time (in days)
Amia, Gillis	Cadiz	1680–1720	8	28.5	28	29
Bilderbeeck, Hendrick van	Cologne	1672–1715	90	3	2	7
Bruyninx, Gerard Hamel	Linz	1664–1690	48	10	9	19
Bruyninx, Gerard Hamel	Vienna	1664–1690	24	12	8	15
Calckberner, Giacomo	Livorno	1680–1706	3	19	18	19
Citters, Arnout van	London	1680–1695	47	5	3	30
Citters, Arnout van	Newmarket	1680–1695	2	4	3	5
Citters, Arnout van	Winchester	1680–1695	4	5	4	7
Citters, Arnout van	Windsor	1680–1695	26	4	4	7
Colyer, Jacob	Istanbul	1682–1725	18	79	55	107
Cousart, Zacharias	Tripoli		2	23	7	39
Dinear, O.			1			
Dussen, G. Vander	Cadiz		1	43	43	43
Fabritius, Werner; Winssen, P. V. van; Cuper	Leeuwarden		1	3	3	3
Goes, Robert	Stockholm	1685–1718	1	13	13	13
Groulaert, S.	Maastricht		4	2.5	2	3
Haersolte, Johan van	Cologne		1	4	4	4
Haren, Willem van	Elsinore		2	13	13	13
Haren, Willem van	Hamburg		1	6	6	6
Haren, Willem van	Stockholm		8	13	13	17
Hattorff, J.	Brunswick		1	22	22	22
Heemskerck, Coenraad van	Cadiz	1680–1686	1	19	19	19
Heemskerck, Coenraad van	Madrid	1680–1686	36	18	11	30
Heppendorp, Johannes Smits	Marmora	1669–1695	1	46	46	46

(Continued)

(Continued).

1684						
Author	Location	Tenure	No. Letters	Median Delivery Time (in days)	Shortest Delivery Time (in days)	Longest Delivery Time (in days)
Hersere, Arnolfo	La Rochelle	1679–1688	1	13	13	13
Hotton, Johan	Copenhagen	1680–1684	14	10	7	13
Hotton, Johan	Elsinore	1680–1684	2	9	7	11
Hulft, Johan	Brussels		48	2	2	3
Hulft, Johan	Hamburg		1	3	3	3
Hutten, Abraham van der	Alicante	1669–1688	1	26	26	26
Jonghstal, G.W. van & Pallant, E.A.	Maastricht		5	2	2	3
Juel, Jens			1			
Keller, Johan Willem van	Moscow	1676–1698	13	46	37	52
Knyf, H.	Den Helder		1	3	3	3
Kuisten, Gerard	Hamburg	1675–1708	78	4	3	8
Matthias, Christoffel	Algiers	1684–1686	5	50	29	85
Matthias, Christoffel	Alicante	1684–1686	1	34	34	34
Matthias, Christoffel	Cadiz	1684–1686	1	32	32	32
Matthias, Christoffel	Cornelia	1684–1686	1	42	42	42
Moeringh, Cornelis	Copenhagen	1680–1686	48	10	7	31
Muys van Holy, Philipota	Dordrecht		1	1	1	1
Paauw, J.; Haersolte, Johan; Gockinga, Scato	Brussels		1	1	1	1
Piccardt, H.	Groningen		1	2	2	2
Plettenbergh, F.C.			1			
Poel, Jacob Vander	Brielle		1	3	3	3
Reede, Godard Adriaan Baron van	Berlin	1679–1685	13	7	7	9
Reede, Godard Adriaan Baron van	Dresden	1679–1685	8	8	7	10
Reede, Godard Adriaan Baron van	Potsdam	1679–1685	7	7	7	10
Rumpf, Christiaan Constantijn	Stockholm	1674–1706	10	14	13	21
Sasburgh, Thomas van	Berlin	1656–1689	1	2	2	2
Sasburg, Thomas van	Brussels	1656–1689	62	2	2	8
Scholten, Coenraat	Danzig	1682–1697	29	10	9	14
Tourlon, A. de	Bilbao		1	19	19	19
Valckenier, Petrus	Regensburg	1683–1690	70	8	6	35
Verheye, J.			1			
Waldeck, V.	Heltborg		1	13	13	13
Wassenaar, Willem van	Blois	1680–1688	1	13	13	13
Wassenaar, Willem van	Fontainebleau	1680–1688	3	5	5	5
Wassenaar, Willem van	Paris	1680–1688	47	4	4	11
Prince William III of Orange	Dieren		1	2	2	2
Prince William III of Orange	Haren		1	2	2	2
Wolfsen, Johan	Lisbon	1675–1695	21	34	4 (mistake?)	40
Zobel	Maastricht		1	2	2	2

1695

Author	Location	Tenure	No. Letters	Median Delivery Time (in days)	Shortest Delivery Time (in days)	Longest Delivery Time (in days)
Almonde, P. van	St Helen's Bay		4	6.5	6	7
Almonde, P. van	Jersey		1	8	8	8
Almonde, P. van	Spithead		1	6	6	6
Amia, Gillis	Cadiz	1680–1720	14	29	25	33
Bagelaer, Jacobus	Genoa		1	17	17	17
Bilderbeek, Hendrick van	Cologne	1672–1715	106	3	2	6
Brande, Johan Pieter van den	London	1695–1699	1	9	9	9
Heemskerck, Coenraad van	Neustadt	1690–1697	3	12	12	12
Heemskerck, Coenraad van	Vienna	1690–1697	42	12	11	13
Calckberner, Giacomo	Livorno	1680–1706	3	17	17	18
Callenburgh, Giacomo	Alicante	1680–1706	1	38	38	38
Callenburgh, Giacomo	Barcelona	1680–1706	1	40	40	40
Callenburgh, Giacomo	Bay of Altea	1680–1706	1	37	37	37
Callenburgh, Giacomo	Bay of Cadiz	1680–1706	4	29.5	26	34
Callenburgh, Giacomo	Cagliari	1680–1706	1	40	40	40
King Charles II of Spain	Madrid		1	18	18	18
Citters, Arnout van	Bay of Cadiz	1695	1	29	29	29
Citters, Arnout van	Isle of Wight	1680–1695	2	9	7	11
Citters, Arnout van	London	1680–1695	5	6	4	7
Citters, Arnout van	Portsmouth	1680–1695	4	10.5	9	12
Cleverskercke, J.B.V.	London		40	5.5	14	2
Colyer, Jacob	Adrianople	1682–1725	1	54	54	54
Colyer, Jacob	Istanbul	1682–1725	1	86	86	86
Coppenol, A. van	Den Helder		37	2	1	4
Son of the Duke of Savoy	Casale		1	12	12	12
Duvelaer, D.	Genoa		1	31	31	31
Esweiler, Abraham van	Lisbon	1695–1697	1	35	35	35
Goes, Robert	Copenhagen	1685–1718	12	10	7	13
Ham, Johan	Berlin	1683–1699	13	6	6	9
Ham, Johan	Cleve	1683–1699	1	3	3	3
Heeckeren	Stockholm		1	14	14	14
Hermes, J.	Brussels		1	2	2	2
Hill, Robbert	Kingsale	1686–1711	1	25	25	25
Hochepeid, Daniel Jean de	Smyrna	1688–1723	5	68	44	108
Hooreman, Wouter	Lembeek		1	4	4	4
Hooreman, Wouter	Namur	1695	9	2	2	3
Hop, Jacob; Beeker, J.; Domburgh, Cornelis van	Leeuwarden		1	3	3	3
Hulft, Johan	Brussels	1688–1709	106	2	1	3
Hulft, Johan	Mechelen	1688–1709	1	1	1	1
Kuisten, Gerard	Hamburg	1675–1708	10	4	4	8
Laures, Durand	Alicante	1687–1702	2	26.5	25	28
Meer, Albert van der	Turin	1690–1697	64	15	11	22
Mortaigne, Mozes de	Frankfurt	1683–1701	104	5	3	8
Rumpf, Christiaan Constantijn	Stockholm	1674–1706	45	17	13	22
Scholten, Coenraat	Danzig	1682–1697	36	10	8	14

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1695						
Author	Location	Tenure	No. Letters	Median Delivery Time (in days)	Shortest Delivery Time (in days)	Longest Delivery Time (in days)
Schoonenberg, Francisco de	Madrid	1690–1695	11	18	15	21
Valckenier, Petrus	The Hague	1695–1700	4	0	0	0
Valckenier, Petrus	Stuttgart	1695–1700	1	11	11	11
Valckenier, Petrus	Zurich	1695–1700	1	9	9	9
Weede, Everhard van	Brussels		7	1	1	2
Weede, Everhard van	Ghent		1	2	2	2
Weede, Everhard van	Lembeek		6	2	2	4
Weede, Everhard van	Mazy		1	4	4	4
Weede, Everhard van	Namur		13	2	2	3
Weede, Everhard van	Sombrefte		1	2	2	2
Weede, Everhard van	St Martin Leer		1	1	1	1
King William III of England	London		1	11	11	11
Wolfsen, Johan	Lisbon	1675–1695	9	34	32	46