

# Empire in Fragments: Transatlantic News and Print Media in the Iberian World, ca. 1600–40

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*This article shows how the rise of printed news media during the opening decades of the seventeenth century fomented and fragmented authority in the polycentric Spanish Habsburg empire. Analyzing the making, dissemination, and reception of transatlantic news from Madrid to Mexico and from Lisbon to Lima, the article explores how the influx of fragments of unverifiable information from overseas undermined the possibility of complete knowledge. While the Spanish Crown exploited news media to create a sense of a unified imperial space, the dynamics of distance resulted in uncertainty and the spread of conflicting narratives that fractured central control.*

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## INTRODUCTION: “THE *NUEVAS* SHOULD BE PRINTED”

WHAT IS THE authority of news that crosses the globe? On 13 March 1636, Luis Jerónimo de Cabrera, Count of Chinchón and viceroy of Peru (r. 1629–39), asked his secretary to formulate an answer to this pressing question. On his desk was a request from a local printer, Francisco Gómez Pastrana (active 1630–43), for a license to publish two reports full of European news that had recently reached Lima. The reports, previously published in Spain, gave a fragmentary overview of the latest developments in the Thirty Years’ War against Spain’s enemies. Gómez Pastrana requested a license to print them in Peru because the reports, he argued, “are of much pleasure for the entire kingdom.” The Crown’s officer responsible for checking the contents of the news agreed and advised “the *nuevas* should be printed” (fig. 1). Yet the viceroy had his doubts. Although he decided to grant the license, he made sure his secretary underlined that the news by itself came “without authority” and that “the printing of the

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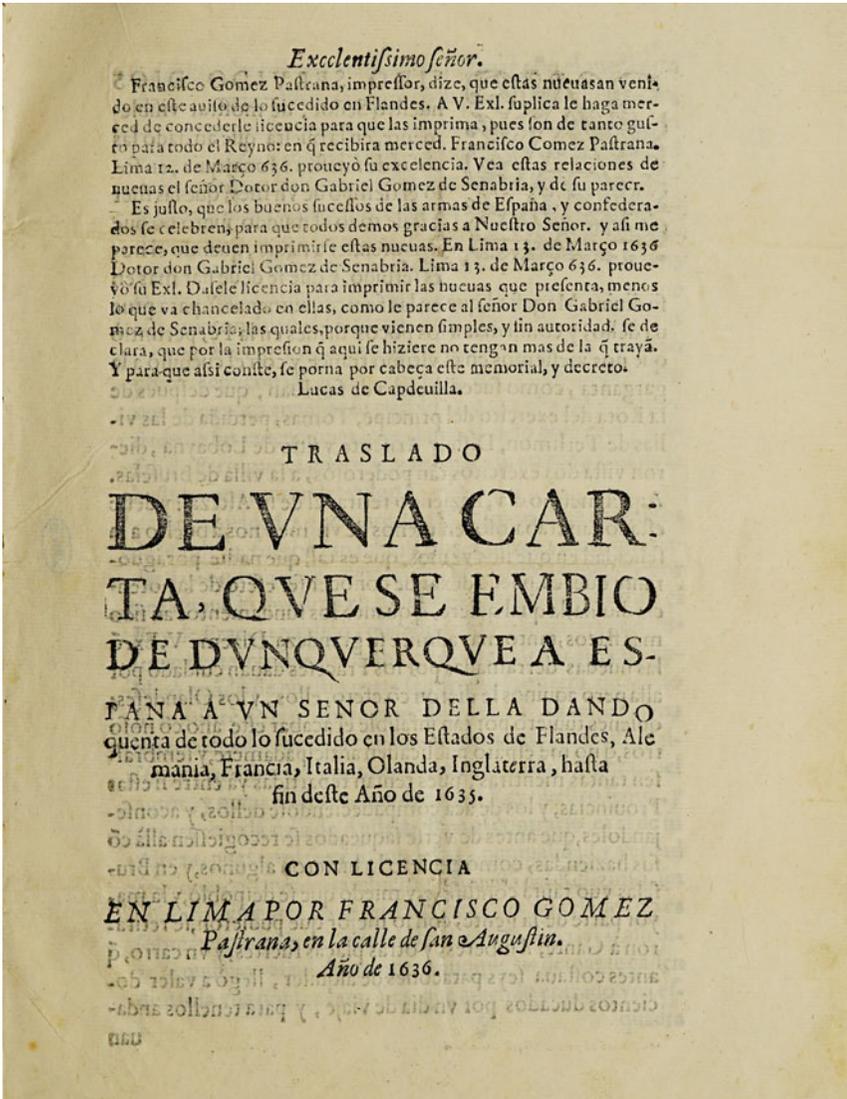


Figure 1. *Traslado de una carta*, title page, Lima, 1636. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI.

news does not give it more authority than it carried.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, the ultimate authority of the news was its accuracy, a quality that Crown, censor, or

<sup>1</sup> *Traslado de una carta*, title page. This report had previously been published in different editions in Madrid, Seville, Barcelona, and Valencia. See also *Copia de avisos*. The context of this pamphlet is discussed in Bouza Álvarez, 2018, 127n64. On Gómez Pastrana, see Medina, 1:xlili–xliv. On the representation of authority at the viceregal court in seventeenth-century Lima, see Osorio. All translations are my own except where otherwise noted.

publisher could not guarantee—especially when the news originated at the other side of the ocean.

The question of authority and accuracy in a transoceanic context was of particular relevance for the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, which had developed over the course of the sixteenth century into a global information network dominated by agents of the Crown who sought to obtain *entera noticia* (complete knowledge) about the different components of the empire.<sup>2</sup> The clearest example of this connection between empire and knowledge was the systematic collection of data through the *relaciones geográficas*, the surveys by which local officials throughout Spanish America assembled and periodically updated detailed information on their communities to be reported to Madrid.<sup>3</sup> This practice resulted in a “paper empire” held together by informants, correspondents, and officials who stockpiled extensive bodies of documentation to come to grips with the complexities of global imperial rule.<sup>4</sup> Yet, as Arndt Brendecke has shown, the Crown’s desire to obtain *entera noticia* on the Americas was obstructed by the resulting system of transatlantic political communication in which objective information conflated with personal interests. The Spanish Crown “was not sent information; instead, it was sent interests.”<sup>5</sup>

The problem of how to establish the accuracy and authority of information from across the Atlantic obtained an extra dimension with the development of news reporting around 1600, which increased the various interests at stake. While officials of the Spanish Crown generally tried to keep the information they handled restricted to a small group of insiders, the rise of printed news media in Europe progressively challenged the dominance of private networks and manuscript newsletters and turned transatlantic information into a commercial, public commodity available to wider audiences, gradually creating a “public Atlantic.”<sup>6</sup> In the polycentric Spanish Habsburg monarchy, the only imperial power in the first half of the seventeenth century with centers for print media on both sides of the Atlantic, this development had two-sided

<sup>2</sup> The existing scholarship focuses especially on the period of Philip II: see Brendecke; Parker; Borreguero Beltrán.

<sup>3</sup> Barrera.

<sup>4</sup> Gaudin.

<sup>5</sup> Brendecke, 288.

<sup>6</sup> On the dominance of manuscript news in sixteenth-century reporting on the Americas, see Pieper, 2000 and 2016. On the rise of printed news media and a “public Atlantic” in the seventeenth century, see Van Groesen, esp. 187–98. For a first exploration of printed transatlantic news in Spain and Spanish America, see Ettinghausen, 1994.

consequences.<sup>7</sup> From the perspective of the Crown, it implied new opportunities for propaganda, as print media could be employed to supply authoritative storylines from above. Yet as the case of March 1636 shows, enterprising printers such as Gómez Pastrana in Lima, operating like “middling men” of information and power between the Crown and consumers, also saw commercial opportunities to steer popular demand for news and to entice a wider audience, not just the Crown, with the prospect of *entera noticia*.<sup>8</sup>

The result, as the Peruvian viceroys realized, was that the authority of transoceanic information was further destabilized. Scholarship on the history of news has explored in detail how the rise of news media around 1600 instigated notions of contemporaneity but also of doubt, as information on current political events became a commercial commodity easily manipulated by those who made, sold, or controlled the news.<sup>9</sup> The complexities of transatlantic communication further increased this problem. Crossing the Atlantic took time, and because of the distances involved, reports traveling between Europe and the Americas and vice versa could not easily be verified or falsified.<sup>10</sup> The perceived unreliability of transatlantic news continuously challenged the ability of the Crown and consumers of news to obtain complete knowledge: all new information had to be included for completeness, but the influx of fragments of unverifiable information undermined the possibility of certainty and the sense of totality. In short, *nuevas* threatened to fragment the notion of *entera noticia*.

This fragmentary potential of transatlantic news became increasingly pertinent in the decades after 1600, when the Spanish Habsburg monarchy (which comprised Portugal and its empire since the Iberian Union of 1580) lost its monopoly on information from the Americas together with its control over key areas in the Atlantic due to the incursions of colonial competitors. The culmination of this development took place in May 1624 with the Dutch capture of Salvador da Bahia, the first major encroachment on Habsburg hegemony in the Americas that turned the Atlantic world into front-page news throughout Europe.<sup>11</sup> To counteract this intrusion of its imperial space, the Spanish Crown interacted with printers and brokers of information to reclaim a unified, integral narrative of Habsburg power once Salvador was reconquered in 1625. The

<sup>7</sup> Guibovich; Chocano Mena, 1997. On the globalization of information in the Spanish Habsburg empire at the start of the seventeenth century, see Gruzinski.

<sup>8</sup> On the notion of “middling men” in colonial Peru, see Burns, 13.

<sup>9</sup> See especially Dooley, 1999; and the collective scholarship in Dooley, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> See Aram; and, specifically on Dutch reporting on the Spanish treasure fleets, see Morineau. The theme of distance is explored from various angles in the dossier edited by Gaudin et al. See also, for the eighteenth century, Sellers-García.

<sup>11</sup> Van Groesen, 44–71; Bousard; Müller.

printing of news, however, paradoxically resulted in the circulation of conflicting narratives that instigated skepticism about the official story and thereby undermined and fragmented the Crown's central authority. This dynamic between integration and fragmentation increased when the Iberian Atlantic was further infringed throughout the 1630s, prompting repeated attempts in Spain, Portugal, and the Americas to control and manipulate the unpredictable flow of transatlantic information.<sup>12</sup> Throughout this process, news could be published to create a sense of imperial unity, but print media also operated as a "factory of fragments," not least because of the presence of different centers for printing throughout the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish America.<sup>13</sup> The fragmented nature of transatlantic news fragmented the nature of empire.

Accordingly, a fresh focus on transatlantic news in the Iberian world can throw new light on the dynamics of interdependence, hierarchy, and rupture within the early modern Iberian Atlantic. Scholarship on Habsburg Spain and its empire, in line with John Elliott's thesis of the composite monarchy, has predominantly taken an institutional and legal approach to analyze processes of political integration and fragmentation in the polycentric Spanish monarchy.<sup>14</sup> This article adopts a different perspective by combining insights on political culture in colonial Spanish America, transatlantic communication in the Spanish empire, and the connected histories of the Iberian Union.<sup>15</sup> Foregrounding the interactions and tensions between brokers of information, printers, and officials of the Spanish monarchy at either side of the Atlantic, this article shows how transatlantic news and print media fomented as well as fragmented imperial authority in the early seventeenth-century Iberian world.

## THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF TRANSATLANTIC NEWS

Information needed time to travel between the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas. The voyage from Spain to Central America, regulated through the convoy system of two annual fleets (one to New Spain that generally left Cádiz in summer for the Caribbean and hence Veracruz, the other to Tierra Firme, leaving in spring for Cartagena de Indias and the isthmus of Panama), could take anything between 50 and 190 days. Sheltering in the Caribbean during winter, the two fleets generally joined forces in spring and sailed back to Spain together in the summer, a trip that lasted even longer, from 90 up to

<sup>12</sup> For a concrete example, see Rault.

<sup>13</sup> On print culture as a "factory of fragments," see Loughran.

<sup>14</sup> See Elliott, 1992. Authoritative interpretations include Fernández Albaladejo; Hespánha; Herzog. On the notion of polycentric monarchy, see Cardim et al.

<sup>15</sup> Schwartz, 1991; Subrahmanyam; Cañeque, 2013; Ballone.

259 days.<sup>16</sup> The combination of irregularity and annual frequency meant that each fleet aroused great expectations, not only for the goods it carried but also for its fresh supply of transatlantic news, either shared orally by the members of the crew or in private correspondence, managed by the general postmasters of the Spanish Crown, the *correos mayores*.<sup>17</sup> Travel between Lisbon and Brazil was less regulated than the Spanish fleets, more frequent, and faster—but the crossing of the Atlantic remained an unpredictable affair.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of this unpredictability, transatlantic news was always something to look out for, on both sides of the Iberian Atlantic. In Spain and Portugal, local authorities, merchants, and foreign agents closely watched the influx of official and unofficial news about the movements of the treasure fleets, which held immense importance for the international economy and the European balance of power. In the harbor of Seville, the coming and going of the fleets gave rise to a continuous news cycle in which confirmed updates on the latest departure or arrival alternated with unverified rumors on what might have happened in and across the Atlantic. On 19 June 1612, for example, an agent of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany reported directly from Seville to Florence that the outgoing fleet to New Spain had just departed, and that from now on people would spend the entire summer waiting for the arrival of the incoming fleet, allegedly “bringing large quantities of silver,” which could be expected to happen anytime until October.<sup>19</sup> The uncertainties of crossing the Atlantic meant that such expectations could be corroborated only by the fleet’s actual arrival: breaking news that often merited a special report. Thus, on 18 February 1634, the Florentine ambassador in Madrid immediately sent a message home with the news, brought early that night by a special courier to the delight of everyone at the court, that the fleet had safely arrived at Cádiz, “quicker than people expected.”<sup>20</sup>

Spanish America, especially the viceregal courts of Mexico and Lima, knew a similar climate of expectation for fresh transatlantic news. Every arrival of a dispatch from Spain was an event in itself noted by diarists and chroniclers, as officials at the court would immediately go through the dispatch to find out the latest news from Europe. For example, when six boxes of letters from Spain arrived in Lima at eight o’clock in the evening of 19 September 1633,

<sup>16</sup> Pieper, 2000, 50–55; Philips, 11–14.

<sup>17</sup> Fernando González.

<sup>18</sup> The trip from Lisbon to Salvador da Bahia took about seventy days, the return eighty-four: Russell-Wood, 34–35.

<sup>19</sup> Archivio di Stato, Florence (hereafter ASF), Mediceo del Principato, 5080, fol. 960<sup>r</sup> (Raffaello Romena to Belisario di Francesco Vinta, 19 June 1612).

<sup>20</sup> ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4960, fol. 90<sup>r</sup>, 18 February 1634.

people “were reading them until midnight.”<sup>21</sup> This dispatch was an example of the Spanish Crown’s strategy to control the flow of news and to speed up the process of transatlantic communication by sending specific *navíos de aviso*, small and agile dispatch ships, which delivered official correspondence in the Americas and returned with the latest information to Seville. As a result, official information of the Crown traveled faster than the fleets, although the relative swiftness of the dispatch ships could not be taken for granted. Even significant news such as the death of Philip II (r. 1556–98) on 13 September 1598 took months to cross the ocean and became known in Mexico only on 10 February 1599. Yet although transatlantic news could be slow, this did not diminish its impact. As the Nahua chronicler Chimalpahin (1579–1660) noted on that day: “When the news had come, pealing of the bells began everywhere, and the Spaniards were all notified to fast and wear mourning clothes.”<sup>22</sup>

Important news such as the appointment of a new viceroy or the birth of a new heir to the Spanish throne was often celebrated with similar public notifications in Mexico and Lima, where the coming and going of official dispatches formed the lifeline of empire, constituting an important aspect of the rituals of imperial authority.<sup>23</sup> News from Madrid sent to the viceregal courts in Spanish America trickled down into colonial society near the centers of power—for example, in the vicinity of Mexico’s cathedral, where people usually gathered to discuss recent rumors and read broadsheets or clandestine texts attached on the walls.<sup>24</sup> Crucial for the dissemination of the news in Mexico and Lima was the presence of a local printing press, employed by officials of the Crown and printers to steer the process of supply and demand. Particularly in Lima, where the printing press was established in 1584 and news reporting took off in 1594, printers competed with each other to offer their services to the viceroy and circulate the news from Europe among local readers, especially members of the colonial elite.<sup>25</sup> Thus, after officials at the viceregal court had spent the night reading the correspondence that arrived in Lima on 19 September 1633, the important news was subsequently “printed in this city,” as the court chronicler noted.<sup>26</sup> One of the published reports told of the Battle of Lützen (presented as a

<sup>21</sup> Suardo, 1:299. For the constant expectation of transatlantic news in Mexico, see the numerous mentions of freshly arrived *avisos* in Martín de Guijo.

<sup>22</sup> Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, 65.

<sup>23</sup> Osorio; Cañeque, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> For an example from 1650, see Castillo Gómez, 2017, 88.

<sup>25</sup> On the printing press and the circulation of news in Lima, see Guibovich; Mendoza Michilot; Firbas and Rodríguez Garrido, 9–39; and, for a wider perspective, see González Sánchez.

<sup>26</sup> Suardo, 1:300.

“great victory” for the Habsburg Crown) and the death of the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus (r. 1611–32) in November 1632. On the moment of publication in Lima, this news was almost a year old, but as the printer Bernardino de Guzmán (active 1613–33) claimed in an opening editorial statement, “the people want to see it printed.”<sup>27</sup> Enterprising publishers thus assumed and thereby steered popular demand by supplying the news in print, catering specifically to the literate colonial elite that sought to be updated about the situation in Europe.

This interaction between supply and demand of printed news in Spanish America mirrored the situation on the Iberian Peninsula. Recent scholarship has shown the growing importance of news media in Spain and Portugal during the first decades of the seventeenth century, when texts and rumors increasingly pervaded the streets of Seville, Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, and other cities.<sup>28</sup> The news that circulated included a transatlantic and global dimension, especially in Seville and Lisbon where news from overseas first spread through dense urban communication networks before reaching the court in Madrid.<sup>29</sup> But transatlantic news also penetrated the Iberian interior, for example in Évora, where Manuel Severim de Faria (1584–1655), chanter of the local cathedral, frequently received information from a global network of correspondents in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Compiling and disseminating this information in annual manuscript newsletters, Severim de Faria kept his contacts up to date on what happened in Brazil, Angola, and elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> News, moreover, infiltrated urban spaces through the spoken word, as texts were frequently read aloud or sung in public, noticeably by blind peddlers who performed broadsheet ballads.<sup>31</sup> In Madrid, in particular, the *mentidero* or speaker’s corner of San Felipe, popular among soldiers, became known as the place to pick up the latest rumors from the court or from one of Spain’s foreign battlefields. Here, word of mouth made news travel fast: “the news comes out before anything has happened,” the writer Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579–1644) remarked sarcastically.<sup>32</sup>

The growing demand for news implied growing commercial interests, as enterprising printers published short, cheap news pamphlets and gazettes in

<sup>27</sup> *Relacion de la gran vitoria*, title page.

<sup>28</sup> See especially Bouza Álvarez, 2008; Díaz Noci; Olivari.

<sup>29</sup> On the making and consumption of news in Seville and Lisbon, see Redondo; Espejo, 2008; Alías Bergel.

<sup>30</sup> Megjani; Brockey. Severim de Faria’s thirty-one annual newsletters are collected in Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisbon, Reservados, cod. 241. A selection from the newsletters of reports on Brazil was published in Severim de Faria, 1903.

<sup>31</sup> See Castillo Gómez, 2006, 203–50.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Martínez, 185. See also Castro Ibaseta.

high print runs to cater to a wide public.<sup>33</sup> These publications circulated especially in urban centers like Madrid, where the level of literacy was relatively high and comparable to Northern European cities such as Amsterdam: the available data show that in mid-seventeenth-century Madrid, 69 percent of men and 26 percent of women could write their names. These percentages probably indicate higher numbers of people that were able to read.<sup>34</sup> Hence, a large part of the urban population could be enticed to purchase news publications, which generally had a print run between 500 and 1,500 copies.<sup>35</sup> The “common people,” as a publisher from Madrid noted in 1619, “are so keen to buy, read, and even collect in an archive all the *relaciones* that are being issued, even on Sundays and on holidays.”<sup>36</sup>

The publication of these *relaciones*, generally consisting of a single folio folded into four densely printed pages, grew exponentially in the opening decades of the seventeenth century, concurrently with the rise of printed news media in other European countries.<sup>37</sup> While most *relaciones* focused on one particular storyline of national or foreign news, generally based on manuscript letters, occasional attempts were made as well to publish serial newsletters to keep the public informed with some frequency.<sup>38</sup> This increase in printed news included publications that reported specifically on what happened in the Atlantic, instigated by the increasing colonial competition in the Atlantic world since the late sixteenth century. Given the ephemeral character of these publications and the loss of much source material, it is impossible to establish definitive numbers, but it is clear that a small yet significant part of the printed news output in Spain and Portugal was specifically dedicated to recent events in and across the Atlantic.<sup>39</sup>

Iberian printers who wanted to publish such transatlantic news had to walk a tightrope because of the strong control the Crown aimed to exercise over the

<sup>33</sup> Ettinghausen, 1984.

<sup>34</sup> Nalle, 68–69. In seventeenth-century Amsterdam, the literacy rate of the male population was comparable to that of Madrid, but considerably higher among women: Van Groesen, 23. Evidence from the Castilian village Villarrubia de los Ojos suggests that about a third of the rural population in seventeenth-century Spain was literate: see Dadson.

<sup>35</sup> Ettinghausen, 2004, 1061.

<sup>36</sup> *Memorial Histórico Español*, 13:xi.

<sup>37</sup> Ettinghausen, 2017; and see the collective scholarship in the series of volumes published by the Sociedad Internacional para el Estudio de las Relaciones de Sucesos, available online at <http://www.siers.es>.

<sup>38</sup> Espejo and Baena, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> See Domínguez Guzmán; and Espejo, 2019, who calculates ca. 2 percent of the printed news in seventeenth-century Spain was explicitly dedicated to American topics. This estimation is corroborated by the datasets of Iberian Books, <https://iberian.ucd.ie>.

publication of information from the Americas. A royal decree first issued in 1560 expressly prohibited the printing and selling of any book on an American topic without prior examination by the Council of the Indies.<sup>40</sup> For printers, this meant that freshly arrived news from overseas could officially be published only after a lengthy process of control by the Crown—after which the news was not really news anymore. Moreover, the need to obtain a license meant that only positive news was deemed fit for the press. Bad news—of a Spanish defeat, for example—or opinions critical of the monarchy generally remained confined to word of mouth or manuscript letters that circulated privately.<sup>41</sup> From the Crown's perspective, the proliferation of pamphleteering needed to be kept in check in service of the monarchy.<sup>42</sup> But this did not imply that the Crown always obstructed the publication of news. On the contrary: the Crown's interest to disseminate a particular story could very well coincide with the commercial interests of printers to sell as many copies as possible—on both sides of the Atlantic.

The dynamics between publishers and the Spanish Crown, and between printed, manuscript, and oral news, entered a decisive phase around 1620. The crisis of government at the end of the reign of Philip III (r. 1598–1621) led to an increasing politicization of public debate, and the king's sudden death in March 1621 ushered in a transition in which room for maneuver increased and the publication of news exploded.<sup>43</sup> This development is most clearly illustrated by the immense popularity of a series of newsletters modeled after private manuscript letters and attributed to the writer Andrés de Almansa y Mendoza. Reporting the period from March 1621 until November 1624, the newsletters offered an insider's account of the court in Madrid, interspersed with snippets of news from abroad.<sup>44</sup> Published in a total of possibly some 26,000 copies, they proved an enormous success and also crossed the Atlantic. Indeed, Almansa's success could not only be exploited by publishers to open up new markets, but also by the Crown to foster its authority overseas: one of Almansa's newsletters, most likely printed in Spain in time for the fleet's departure to Peru and Mexico, contained the list of the Crown's new appointments for the colonial government of Spanish America.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Reyes Gómez, 1:329–30. The text of the decree is reproduced on 2:804–05.

<sup>41</sup> On the connections between printed and manuscript news, see Bouza Álvarez, 2001, 137–70.

<sup>42</sup> Castillo Gómez, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Pena Sueiro.

<sup>44</sup> Almansa y Mendoza; Ettinghausen, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> *Nuevas generales*. On the export and reception of books from Spain to the Americas, see González Sánchez.

The embodiment of this transatlantic print culture in which the interests of the Crown and those of the upcoming news industry coalesced, was the printer Jerónimo de Contreras (active 1618–39). Having started his career as a publisher of news in Seville, the city that dominated both Spanish news media and Atlantic interaction at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Contreras crossed the ocean together with his type and set up shop in Lima in 1621.<sup>46</sup> That year, he began publishing serial newsletters based upon publications brought from Spain. The first newsletter, from October 1621, was a reprint of Almansa's bestselling account of the death of Philip III more than six months before (to enhance the sense of transatlantic contemporaneity, Contreras omitted the date of Almansa's original text).<sup>47</sup> The second newsletter, published shortly later, told the public in Lima of the new king, Philip IV (r. 1621–65), of what happened at the court in Madrid, of the election of Pope Gregory XV (r. 1621–23), and of the renewed war with the Dutch Republic.<sup>48</sup> Over the next years, Contreras continued his series, alternating single-event news pamphlets with Almansa's insider accounts and other snippets of news from Europe.<sup>49</sup>

Contreras was a clear example of a middleman operating between the Crown and its subjects in Spanish America. For Contreras, support from the Crown meant a regular supply of European news he could sell in Lima; he also sought to capitalize on the Crown's authority in order to enhance the status of his own news publications, such as the overview of international news from 1624 that he introduced with a lofty front page embellished with the coat of arms of the Spanish monarchy—a publication strategy shared by many publishers of the time (fig. 2).<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, the Crown used Contreras's press to spread information in Peru that enhanced the monarchy's reach and reputation, thus strengthening its own authority through print media. For example, when letters from Spain arrived in Lima on 17 January 1630, the news was “published straightaway” by Contreras together with a list of the Crown's new appointments for Spanish America.<sup>51</sup> The way the authorities and the press collaborated for each other's mutual benefit is demonstrated by Contreras's printing of two reports that told the story of the martyrdom of Juan de Prado

<sup>46</sup> See Medina, 1:xli–xliv; Woodbridge and Thompson, 46; Cruickshank, 49–51.

<sup>47</sup> *Nuevas de Castilla, venidas este presente año 1621*. Cf. Almansa y Mendoza, 167–76.

<sup>48</sup> *Sumario de las nuevas de la corte*.

<sup>49</sup> The available data listed in Iberian Books show Contreras's production until 1639 included some forty news publications, with a clear peak between 1624 and 1626.

<sup>50</sup> *Verdadera relacion de las admirables victorias*. See Espejo, 2016.

<sup>51</sup> *Nuevas de Castilla que llegaron en diez y siete de enero deste presente año de 630*. On the arrival and immediate publication of the news in Lima, see Suardo, 1:49.

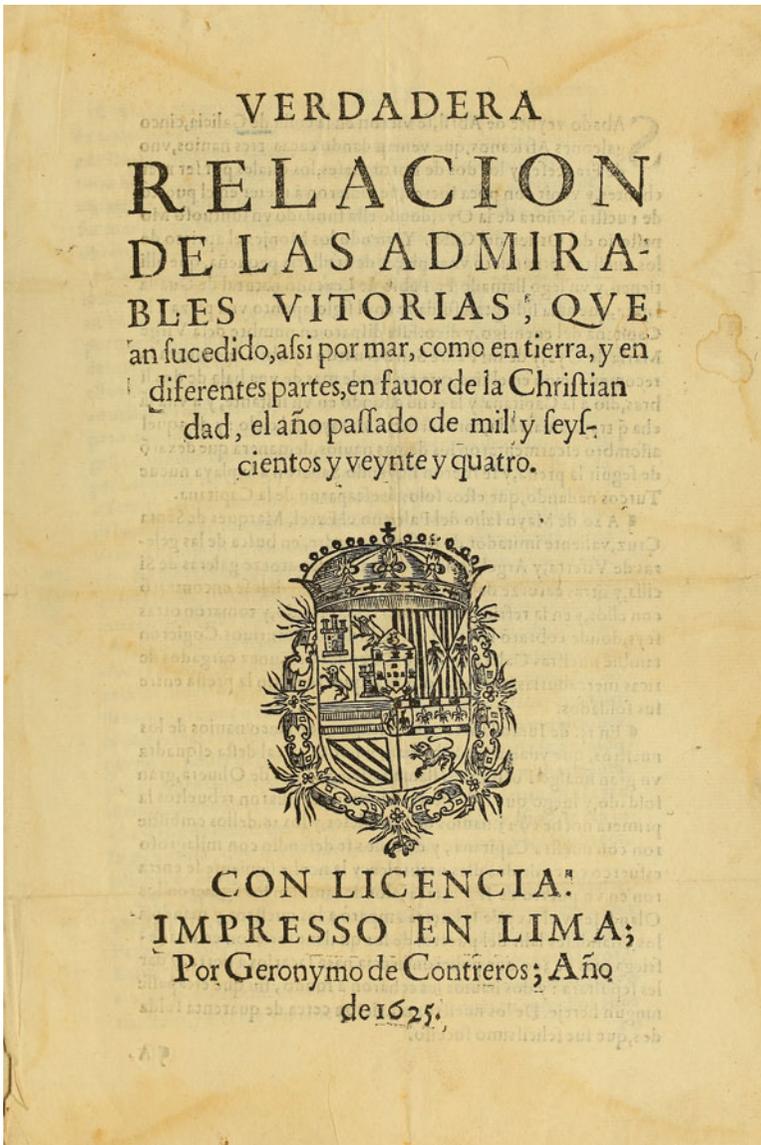


Figure 2. *Verdadera relacion de las admirables vitorias*, title page, Lima, 1625. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI.

(ca. 1563–1631), a Franciscan missionary in Morocco who tried to convert the ruler of Marrakesh and was executed in 1631. The *calificador*, the officer of the Inquisition responsible for examining books and writings in Lima, argued that “it will be convenient to give the reports to the press so that the news will be

circulated and brought to everyone's notice."<sup>52</sup> The viceroy agreed, and Contreras, whose shop was by then handily situated on Lima's central square in front of the viceregal palace, published the reports. It had taken two years for the news of Prado's death in Marrakesh to reach Lima, but the authorities and the press in Lima needed only four days to turn the news into a public commodity.

### PRINTED NEWS AND THE LIMITS OF PROPAGANDA

The coalescence between the interests of the Crown and those of the authors and publishers of news in a transatlantic context was clearly related to the increasing significance of the Atlantic in European news culture in general. The transition in the Spanish monarchy in 1621 after the death of Philip III coincided with the establishment of the Dutch West India Company (WIC), which turned the Atlantic into a primary stage of international politics, progressively making headlines in the European press. In Spain, this process took off with the news of a punitive strike against French, English, and Dutch pirates off the Santo Domingo coast in early January 1621. The news was dispatched directly from Cartagena and by late April arrived in Seville with the *navio de aviso*.<sup>53</sup> Soon afterward, printers in Seville, Madrid, Valencia, and Barcelona published the news with a license from the Crown, reporting the strike in intricate detail and celebrating how all members of the expedition "showed the valor, blood, and habits of Spaniards, whose bodies are made for toil and labor, and whose souls are disposed for death."<sup>54</sup> The transitional period between the passing of Philip III and the new government of Philip IV had opened a window of opportunity for publishers to inform readers throughout Spain on what happened in the Atlantic from an obvious pro-Spanish perspective.

The propagandistic potential of print gained weight during the opening years of the reign of Philip IV, when the king's *valido* (favorite), the Count-Duke of Olivares (1587–1645), instigated an ambitious project to regenerate the "esteem and reputation" of the Spanish Crown.<sup>55</sup> As John Elliott has shown in detail, this agenda combined foreign policy with domestic reform, especially

<sup>52</sup> *Dos relaciones verdaderas del martyrio*. The text is headed by a short description of the publication process in March 1633. The two reports had been published before in Seville in 1631.

<sup>53</sup> Chaunu, 18, 22n9.

<sup>54</sup> *Verdadera relacion del viage y suceso de los caravelones; Viage, y suceso de los caravelones*. This text was reprinted the same year in Valencia by Juan Crisóstomo Garriz and in Barcelona by Esteban Liberós.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Elliott, 1989, 123. See also Elliott, 1986.

directed at creating loyalty to the monarchy and bonds of belonging among Spain's subjects. To reach this goal, the recent breakthrough of printed news media in Spain offered a momentous opportunity. Thus, when news arrived in Madrid in 1623 of a successful Spanish defense against a Dutch naval force at the saltpans near Punta de Araya, off the coast of Venezuela, the Crown's official happily granted a license to print the news, since its contents were "certain" and told of "a victory for the glory of God and of our Spaniards."<sup>56</sup>

The printing of news, then, could be used by the Crown as a means to circulate Spanish propaganda through an official story of professed certainty. Yet this expressed need to claim certainty reveals that news, especially in an Atlantic context, was often not certain at all, as the distance between Europe and the Americas meant that rumors proliferated until concrete evidence could remove the doubt. A clear example is other news that arrived in 1623: the shipwreck of two galleons of the Spanish treasure fleet near the coast of Florida. Unlike the battle near Punta de Araya, this was bad news that the Crown may have wanted to suppress, as it evidently cast a shadow over the monarchy. Yet it could not be kept silent for the simple reason that it was impossible to deny the physical disappearance of two galleons. Eventually, after months of waiting, rumors, and uncertainty, the public in Spain and the bereaved families knew what had happened when an official list of all survivors and casualties, drafted in Havana, was published in Madrid.<sup>57</sup> This publication did not serve as propaganda for the monarchy but rather to dissolve uncertainty in the public sphere, turning *nuevas* into *noticia* through print.

The tension between the Crown's efforts to control transatlantic news and the conflicting narratives that potentially undermined the official story became particularly manifest in the years 1624–25, when political developments in the Atlantic world shook the foundations of the Spanish monarchy. First, on 12 May 1624, news arrived in Madrid of a "rebellion and *guerrilla*" in Mexico, as a diarist at court noted.<sup>58</sup> A conflict between the Mexican archbishop and the viceroy had resulted in a riot on January 15 of that year, when the viceregal palace was set on fire by an angry mob and the viceroy escaped in the night.

<sup>56</sup> *Relacion de las victorias*. The same text was published in a different type in Zaragoza by Juan de Lanaja y Quartanet and in Barcelona by Esteban Liberós.

<sup>57</sup> *Relacion de la gente de mar*. The list of survivors and casualties had been drafted in Havana on 12 December 1622, more than three months after the shipwreck on 5 September 1622. The remaining fleet finally arrived in Spain at the end of May 1623: Chaunu, 84.

<sup>58</sup> Gascón de Torquemada, 195. The news of "a great revolution" in Mexico was also reported by the Florentine ambassador in Madrid: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4952, 28 May 1624.

This unprecedented news caused much consternation and speculation at court because it remained unclear for some time what had happened exactly: the information sent from Mexico to Madrid was highly partisan, and streams of conflicting narratives on the affair would define transatlantic communication for years to come.<sup>59</sup> To take control over the situation, the Crown swiftly appointed a new viceroy, but a few weeks after he had left Spain for Mexico, more disturbing transatlantic news made its way to the Iberian Peninsula: the loss of Salvador da Bahia to the Dutch. The news first reached Lisbon on July 28 and, according to a chronicler, it “was greatly felt” throughout Portugal, especially among merchants trading with Brazil.<sup>60</sup> In Évora, the cleric Severim de Faria noted in his manuscript newsletter: “The news of the loss of Bahia brought the entire kingdom [of Portugal] in great confusion and turmoil.”<sup>61</sup>

It took three days for the news to travel from Lisbon to Madrid, where it also caused much dismay at court, although the Crown had been informed of an upcoming Dutch offensive in the Americas.<sup>62</sup> But once again, the king’s ministers remained in the dark about what had happened precisely, as a report with extensive information on the seizure of Salvador only arrived in Madrid on October 7—almost five months after the event. Two days later, Lisbon merchants were shocked once more when they heard a rumor that the Dutch had also tried to seize Luanda.<sup>63</sup> Once all the details had become clear, the Crown again acted swiftly and started preparations for a large Portuguese-Spanish fleet to be sent across the Atlantic to retake Salvador. The fleet, however, had not yet departed in full when, in late December, yet another disturbing report arrived, this time with the *navío de aviso* that brought dispatches from Peru: a Dutch naval force had also entered the Pacific that year, trying to capture the Peruvian silver fleet and waging war along the coast.<sup>64</sup>

The 1624 reports from Mexico, Brazil, Angola, and Peru reveal, first of all, the practical problems of transatlantic communication in the Spanish Habsburg empire: for months on end, it was impossible to follow events in the Americas and Africa because of the time it took for news to cross the Atlantic. Yet once the news arrived, another problem arose: should the news be trusted and publicized? In the case of the dispatch from Peru, the answer to this question

<sup>59</sup> Ballone. On the arrival of the news in Madrid, see also Israel, 163.

<sup>60</sup> Soares, 465. On the reactions to the Dutch seizure of Salvador, see Schwartz, 1991.

<sup>61</sup> Severim de Faria, 1903, 24.

<sup>62</sup> Gascón de Torquemada, 199. Cf. Van Groesen, 44–71, on the Dutch reception of the news one month later.

<sup>63</sup> Gascón de Torquemada, 203; Soares, 466.

<sup>64</sup> The attack is discussed in detail in Bradley, 49–71.

appeared to be relatively simple since it brought good news, corroborated by the authority of the viceroy, that the Dutch attack had been successfully fended off. Accordingly, printers in Seville and Madrid received permission to publish the “noteworthy events” that had taken place in the Pacific.<sup>65</sup>

The publication of this transatlantic news, however, had an unforeseen outcome. Despite the propagandistic efforts of printers and the Crown, the mere fact that the news was made widely available in print meant that everybody could exploit it for a specific agenda—even if that agenda contradicted that of the Crown. This is precisely what happened with the report on the Dutch attack at Peru published in Seville. A copy of the text, probably bought by a member of the Flemish merchant community in Seville, was sent north and quickly published in Amsterdam in a Dutch translation, together with an eyewitness account of the rumors that circulated in Seville.<sup>66</sup> This Dutch edition, although a literal translation of the Spanish text, turned the report of a Spanish victory into a “truthful story of the success of the fleet” of Dutch intruders, a version of events that in turn informed an English news publication later that year.<sup>67</sup> In Antwerp, newspaperman Abraham Verhoeven (1575–1652) published another Dutch edition of the Spanish report in his newspaper in February 1625, which was subsequently translated into French and printed in Paris as an account of “the furious defeat of the Spaniards.”<sup>68</sup> In short, the publication of the news in Spain opened the door for international appropriations that could spin the news into alternative storylines that directly contradicted Spanish propaganda. Iberian news culture, which has often been seen as isolated from (as well as lagging behind) the rest of Europe, was clearly connected to important centers for news production abroad.<sup>69</sup> Crucial in this regard were the Southern Netherlands, where Spanish attempts to control the news supply from above were confronted with the less one-directional publication strategies of urban printers in Brussels or Antwerp, who were open to news and audiences from England, France, and the Dutch Republic. The Southern Netherlands thus operated as a permeable intermediate space between the Spanish monarchy and its international competitors, leaking rumors and information from the Iberian Peninsula to abroad and vice versa.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Casos notables*, reprinted the same year in Madrid in two slightly different versions by Juan González and by Bernardino de Guzmán.

<sup>66</sup> *Waerachtigh verbael*.

<sup>67</sup> *A true relation of the fleete*.

<sup>68</sup> *La furieuse defaite des Espagnols*, based on *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* 9 (21 February 1625), 2–16.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Pettegree; Díaz Noci. On the Atlantic context, see McCusker, who underlines the centrality of Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London, bypassing the Iberian world entirely.

<sup>70</sup> See Arblaster; Dupré et al.; Bousard.

Indeed, the Dutch version of the Spanish account on Peru included an extra report with details given by a Flemish eyewitness of the uncertainty that reigned in Seville at the start of 1625. The news from Peru had sown “fear that there will not be any silver coming from Peru this summer,” the report said; “it is an anxious time, and people are afraid it will not become much better.” Meanwhile, “daily tidings” told of the departure of a large fleet from Lisbon, “as is being said to retake Bahia,” although “many think it will not go to Brazil,” as another Spanish fleet still moored off the coast.<sup>71</sup> This report of the rumors that circulated in Seville shows what happened when the authorities decided not to go public: the absence of official news gave rise to uncertainty and speculation. Accordingly, the Spanish monarchy henceforth faced a recurring dilemma: either publicize news that could be presented with an anti-Spanish spin abroad, or remain silent and thereby create room for conflicting narratives at home. The rise in printed news media inside and outside of Spain in the opening decades of the seventeenth century, which turned the Atlantic into a public space, made this dilemma ever more pressing.

While foreign publications undermined the Spanish storyline of success in the Pacific, domestic publications could equally threaten the Crown’s control over the news cycle. This indeed happened when the armada was sent to reconquer Salvador. The Crown initially opted for silence until victory was certain, but the popular demand for news nonetheless motivated printers to go their own way. In May 1625, after months of anticipation in which the patience of his regular customers had been tested to the limit, the printer Juan de Cabrera from Seville (active 1623–31) went public with the story of an Amsterdam captain whose ship had been seized before the coast of Cádiz. Being duly interrogated, the captain reported rumors from his hometown that Salvador had been taken by the Spanish fleet and that eight hundred Dutchmen “had been put to the sword.”<sup>72</sup> This news, allegedly “certain and truthful,” was largely fabricated: the captain had purportedly left Amsterdam around April 25, when the siege of Salvador was still well under way, and the first rumors of Dutch defeat would reach Amsterdam only in the summer.<sup>73</sup> But the printer Cabrera, who stated there were many “curious people who desire to hear news,” realized a good story would sell, even if it was fabricated and held no explicit license from the Crown. He was not the only one to steer the demand for news from Brazil by going public before the Crown had authorized an official story: in Valladolid, the widow of Francisco Fernández de

<sup>71</sup> *Waerachtigh verhael*, B3 (anonymous report from Seville dated 4 January 1625).

<sup>72</sup> *Carta cierta y verdadera*. On Cabrera, see Espejo and Baena, 2016.

<sup>73</sup> On the rumors and uncertainty about the loss of Salvador in Amsterdam, see Van Groesen, 68.

Córdoba, who had taken over her husband's shop, republished Cabrera's text under a different title.<sup>74</sup> While publishers such as Cabrera in Seville and Córdoba's widow in Valladolid generally printed news pamphlets that were officially licensed by the Crown, their initiative in the late spring of 1625 shows they could also follow their own course and work around the control of the Castilian authorities.

It took until June 23 before a first reliable report from Brazil arrived, in Lisbon, where people "had been waiting together for news of the armada" for months.<sup>75</sup> The report, sent from Salvador via Pernambuco two months earlier, in the midst of the siege and before the final offensive, gave a day-to-day overview of the progress of the Spanish-Portuguese assault. It was printed straight-away by Pedro Craesbeeck (1572–1632), the Flemish-born printer who was the Crown's official publisher in Lisbon and who played an important role, as Rachel Stein has argued, in making Lisbon into a global publishing hub that could compete with Seville and Madrid over publications on the Americas.<sup>76</sup> Craesbeeck's case can be considered the opposite of Cabrera's in Seville, as his very position as the Crown's official publisher in Lisbon gave him the opportunity to publish this first reliable report on Salvador. The polycentric nature of the Spanish monarchy, then, enabled publishers to follow various editorial strategies and to exploit or sidestep the limitations set by the Crown on news publications: while Cabrera chose to break the story on Brazil for his readers in Seville without the Crown's explicit authorization, Craesbeeck used his authority as the Crown's publisher to claim the reliability of the account he published in Lisbon. In both cases, the center of monarchical authority in Madrid was not central to the making of the news. Only two weeks later, on July 6, rumors of victory could be confirmed officially in Madrid when Enrique de Alagón, an envoy who had participated in the siege of Salvador and come back to Spain "with one finger less and a broken arm," reported in person to the king. His report was "very good news for His Majesty and the entire kingdom": Salvador da Bahia had been retaken on May 1.<sup>77</sup>

This definitive news of victory prompted large celebrations, especially in Lisbon, where cannons were fired from the castle and a solemn procession went through the city, accompanied by fireworks.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, now that the good news was certain, a massive media campaign was launched to circulate

<sup>74</sup> *Carta segunda que vino a un cavallero de esta ciudad.*

<sup>75</sup> Soares, 475.

<sup>76</sup> *Relaçam do dia.* See Stein.

<sup>77</sup> Gascón de Torquemada, 221. The arrival of the news was also reported by the Florentine ambassador in Madrid: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4953, 17 July 1625.

<sup>78</sup> Soares, 478.

the news among as many people as possible throughout the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. The original report written to the king by Don Fadrique de Toledo (1580–1634), the armada’s commander, was published first by the Royal Press in Madrid and subsequently in Seville by the printer Simón Fajardo (active 1622–50).<sup>79</sup> Editions of the report reached audiences as far away as Naples and Antwerp, where Verhoeven included a complete Dutch translation in his newspaper that summer.<sup>80</sup> Another eyewitness account of a participant in the siege of Salvador, first published in Seville by the printer Francisco de Lyra (active 1611–50), was sent north to the Southern Netherlands and published in Italian translation in Milan and Rome.<sup>81</sup> The news of the recapture of Salvador thus resonated in all the constituent parts of the Spanish Habsburg empire. In Naples, the Brazilian campaign had specific relevance because the Neapolitan viceroy Antonio Álvarez de Toledo (r. 1622–29), a direct relative of Don Fadrique, had sent a large contingent of soldiers to fight in Brazil. The victory in Salvador therefore became an important element of the public celebrations of Naples’s position within the polycentric Spanish monarchy: one of the *apparati* erected for the viceroy in the streets of Naples in 1629 showed a large display of a seminude Brazilian warrior, armed with bow and arrow, symbolizing “the defeat of the Dutch fleet in the ocean” and “Brazil’s restoration to the Portuguese, to the King, and to God.”<sup>82</sup>

Meanwhile, local printers throughout Spain and Portugal tried to find their own niche in the market to capitalize on the good news from Brazil in the summer of 1625. In Valladolid, the widow of Córdoba kept her customers up to date with a dry, day-to-day narrative of the siege, based upon an account sent from Salvador on May 4.<sup>83</sup> In Cádiz, Juan de Borja opted for the account of the armada’s official scribe and for a “truthful” narrative of “the grandiose victory of the armies of Spain,” allegedly based upon a letter to the king that had been sent from Brazil to Lagos in Portugal. The pompous text was subsequently reprinted by a Portuguese publisher in the small town of Montilla near Córdoba.<sup>84</sup> The Matevat

<sup>79</sup> *Relacion que embio Diego Ruyz; Relacion de la carta*. The same text is printed in *Relacion del sucesso del armada*.

<sup>80</sup> *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* 84 (22 August 1625), 2–16. The Naples pamphlet, no copies of which survive, was published by Secondino Roncagliolo.

<sup>81</sup> Avedaño y Vilela, 1625a, translated as 1625b and 1625c. A copy of the text was sent to Brussels on 11 July 1625: Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels, Secretarie van Staat en Oorlog, nr. 193, fols. 83<sup>r</sup>–86<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> Orilla, 70–72. On the position of Naples in the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, see Paquette; Guarino.

<sup>83</sup> *La quarta carta*.

<sup>84</sup> Rodríguez de Burgos; *Verdadera relacion de la grandiosa vitoria*, reprinted in Montilla by Manuel Botello de Paiva.

brothers in Barcelona issued the text of the negotiations held between Don Fadrique and the Dutch before their final surrender.<sup>85</sup> Finally, on 12 July 1625, the most comprehensive report was published by Pedro Craesbeeck in Lisbon, and subsequently in Évora and Porto.<sup>86</sup> In Évora, Severim de Faria had already been informed of the news by his contacts in Lisbon, who also sent him copies of the latest publications.<sup>87</sup> Within a week after the news had arrived at the court in Madrid, all corners of the Iberian Peninsula had been brought up to date about what had happened in Salvador. Transatlantic news had made a definitive breakthrough in Spain and Portugal, fueled by the propaganda of the Crown and the competition between printers and correspondents for the best, most detailed and trustworthy account from overseas.

The widespread media campaign on Salvador during the summer of 1625 included not only printed text but also imagery. In Madrid, the Flemish-born engraver Alardo de Popma (active 1617–41) made a broadsheet map of the siege of Salvador that offered a general, schematic overview of the battle at sea and on land, clarified with a legend and a caption with key phrases taken from Don Fadrique's letter to the king (fig. 3).<sup>88</sup> The news map was clearly meant to accompany the texts that circulated about Salvador and to give consumers a better idea of the locations mentioned in the news; Popma, aware he could make a profit, expressly stated that the map was for sale in his shop in Madrid's Calle de Toledo. The news map, however, served not only Popma's commercial interests, but also the propagandistic interests of the Crown, prominently mentioning Philip IV as "monarch of the Spaniards and the New World" and celebrating his victories "in the West and the North"—a reference to the concurrent Spanish conquest of Breda, news of which had recently arrived in Madrid. The victory at Salvador thus became part of a multimedia story told in text, image, and eventually, for a more exclusive audience, on the stage: by the end of October 1625, a day before the victorious fleet from Brazil returned to Spain, Lope de Vega (1562–1635) had finalized his play *El Brasil restituído*, which premiered on November 6 at the court in Madrid.<sup>89</sup> The same day, in Lisbon, the printer Geraldo da Vinha published the text of the sermon that had been given on May 5 in the Cathedral of Salvador to celebrate the victory and the spirit of Spanish-Portuguese collaboration. "We are all one in our zeal in the service of the church and in obedience to the same king," the

<sup>85</sup> *Copia de las cartas y respuestas*.

<sup>86</sup> Corrêa, reprinted in Évora by Manuel Carvalho and in Porto by João Rodriguez.

<sup>87</sup> See Marques, 131–32.

<sup>88</sup> On Popma, see Santiago Páez.

<sup>89</sup> See Curto, 245–57. On the connection between Lope's play and the printed news pamphlets, see Shannon, 163–87.

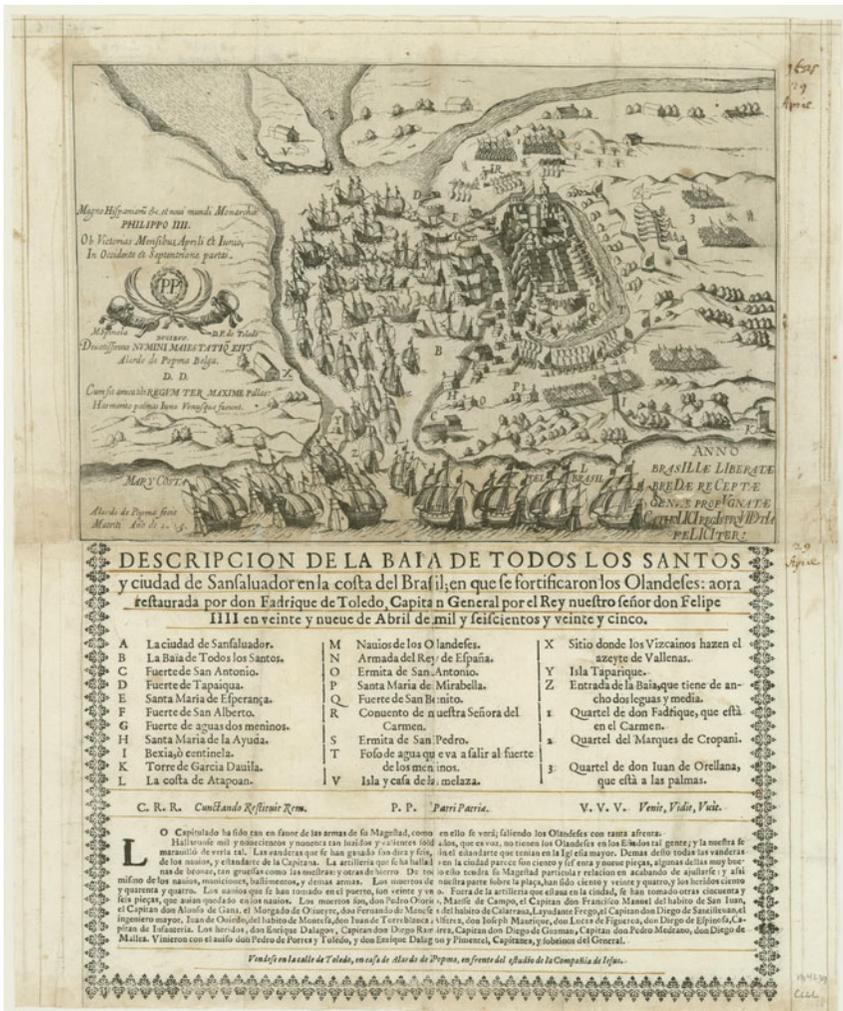


Figure 3. Alardo de Popma. View of the reconquest of Salvador da Bahia. Madrid, 1625. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI.

Dominican priest had preached on the occasion: “Merit is due to His Catholic Majesty, because on his command the power of Portugal and Castile was joined.”<sup>90</sup>

Yet before long, the first cracks started to appear in this official story of harmonious Iberian partnership and unity. With the return of the fleet at the end of October, the news cycle on Salvador entered a second phase, in which the

<sup>90</sup> *Serman que pregou o padre frey Gaspar d'Ascençao*, unpaginated.

earlier printed accounts were set against the personal experiences of participants.<sup>91</sup> In Lisbon, the Jesuit Bartolomeu Guerreiro (1564–1642) made a first attempt to give a complete story of the enterprise, titled *Jornada dos vassallos* (Voyage of the vassals), for which he received permission from the Crown on November 7 as it demonstrated “the singular beneficence of His Catholic Majesty toward the Portuguese Crown and the corresponding willingness of that Crown for any great service of His Majesty.”<sup>92</sup> But because of his efforts at completeness in the service of the monarchy, Guerreiro explicitly criticized the interpretation of earlier Spanish reports on Salvador published in Seville and Cádiz, which, he highlighted, could not be trusted.<sup>93</sup> This doubt about what had actually happened in Salvador increased once rumors of Castilian misbehavior started to circulate in Lisbon, spread by Portuguese participants in the fleet who had returned from Brazil. On November 8, one of Severim de Faria’s contacts heard from a soldier how the Castilians had sacked Salvador’s churches and monasteries upon their victorious entrance into the city; a week later, he reported they “destroyed Bahia more than the Dutch themselves had done.”<sup>94</sup> By the end of the month, it became known that a text that discussed this delicate issue of Spanish plunder did not receive permission to be printed.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, the official account of the enterprise written by Manuel de Meneses (ca. 1565–1628), the Portuguese commander of the fleet, mentioned the sack of the city but would not be published, unlike Spanish narratives that stuck to the official story and were printed with a license from the Crown.<sup>96</sup> In Pamplona, for example, the printer of the Kingdom of Navarra published an exalting narrative of the “famous and brave journey to Brazil,” honoring the heroism of the fallen who had fought and died in the service of “our great mother Spain.”<sup>97</sup>

The awareness that critical sources were not published and printed texts did not tell the entire story, steadily undermined people’s trust in the publications licensed by the Crown, especially in Portugal. For months, the correspondents

<sup>91</sup> This second phase has been explored in detail in the historiography: see esp. Schwartz, 1991; Marques; Camenietzki and Pastore.

<sup>92</sup> Guerreiro, license 7 November 1625, cited after Schwartz, 1991, 756.

<sup>93</sup> Guerreiro, 59<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> Luis Leitão Tavares to Manuel Severim de Faria, 8 and 15 November 1625, quoted in Megiani, 34. The sack had already been reported to the court in Madrid in a manuscript account from 5 May 1625: “Relacion breve del sucesso del Brasil,” Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 2356, fols. 414<sup>r</sup>–415<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>95</sup> Marques, 136.

<sup>96</sup> The account was eventually published in 1859: Meneses.

<sup>97</sup> Aguilar y Prado, 81. See also the official account written by the royal chronicler, Tamayo de Vargas.

of Severim de Faria kept on looking for new information on Salvador, aiming to get a detailed overview that presented the whole story. To satisfy this ongoing demand for a reliable, integral account, Severim de Faria eventually published excerpts of his own manuscript newsletter for the year 1625–26 under a pseudonym in October 1626.<sup>98</sup> The publication was licensed by the Crown, but the story remained inconclusive, as even Severim de Faria, with his large network of correspondents overseas, could not reconstruct the entire picture of what had happened in Brazil. And while the storyline on Salvador fragmented in Europe, the proliferation of conflicting narratives crossed the Atlantic and reached Salvador. António Vieira (1608–97), a promising novice of the Jesuit order in Brazil who had personally witnessed the seizure and reconquest of Salvador, noted: “It is necessary to tell with certainty what happened in reality so that the truth appears and people will not believe the falsehoods that are told about the issue.”<sup>99</sup> Vieira accordingly penned his own version of events in the annual letter from the Jesuit order sent from Salvador to Rome in September 1626. His was a truly comprehensive, firsthand narrative of what had happened in Salvador, but his professed aim to spread “certainty and truth” remained confined to the inner circles of the Jesuits, and the “falsehoods” he sought to challenge continued to haunt the Iberian Atlantic.

#### IN SEARCH OF *ENTERA NOTICIA*: CENSORING, MANIPULATING, AND COMPILING THE NEWS

The media campaign on Salvador, which had started in 1624 with silence, embraced extensive publicity in 1625, and ended in confusion in 1626, showed that transatlantic news was difficult to control: no matter which publication strategy was chosen, uncertainty reigned. The Crown opted for several additional strategies to challenge this uncertainty and regain some control over the dissemination of news. The first tactic became manifest in late 1625, when, after a long period of anticipation and increasing unrest, the Spanish treasure fleet finally arrived in Seville. To record this good news in the public sphere on both sides of the Atlantic, the Crown issued a decree that the day of safe arrival, November 29, should from then on be celebrated every year throughout the empire.<sup>100</sup> The text of the decree was subsequently published in Seville by Cabrera, and once it was divulged in Spanish America, a first celebration was held in Mexico’s cathedral in 1627, organized by the local clergy to show their

<sup>98</sup> Severim de Faria, 1626.

<sup>99</sup> Vieira, 1:11. On Jesuit information management, see Friedrich. On the Jesuits in Salvador in 1624–25, see Leite, 5:25–60.

<sup>100</sup> *Decreto que el rey don Felipe Quarto nuestro señor hizo.*

loyalty to the Crown in the wake of the tumult three years earlier.<sup>101</sup> The annual celebration also took place in Lima to foster transatlantic bonds of belonging: in 1635, for example, the text of the sermon from the celebration in Lima's cathedral was published by Contreras at the order of the viceroy and sent overseas, "so that the press will bring the spoken word as we heard it here to the ears of Spain."<sup>102</sup> Ritual and print were thus employed to strengthen the ties between either side of the Atlantic in an attempt to master the uncertainty that defined transatlantic communication.

Yet the annual celebration of the fleet's safe arrival was soon overtaken by new events, as the treasure fleet of 1628 was captured by the Dutch off the Cuban coast on September 8. It took months before the news of disaster arrived in Spain. In December, incoming correspondence from the Southern Netherlands instigated the circulation of rumors at the court in Madrid that something had gone awry, although there was still hope that the return of the fleet had merely been postponed until the next year.<sup>103</sup> Finally, two days before Christmas, confirmation from the Low Countries reached Madrid that the fleet was lost.<sup>104</sup> This news could not be silenced, no matter what the authorities attempted, because of the clear physical evidence that the fleet, for the first time in history, did not return. Morale sank throughout Spain and Spanish America, especially in Mexico, where the loss of the fleet fueled ongoing discussions about the repercussions of the tumult of 1624. In the months following the capture of the fleet, the notary Bernardino de Urrutia, a prominent partisan of the former viceroy, wrote a series of manuscript *gazetas* (gazettes) in which he accused his opponents in the Mexican government of maladministration.<sup>105</sup> A disastrous flood of the city in September 1629 added to the highly politicized climate of despair. A few weeks later, an anonymous printed letter sent from Mexico deplored the loss of the treasure fleet and an earlier *navío de aviso* to the "impatient sea and the vigilant enemy," and ended with a telling lament: "Oh good king of Spain, what sad news reaches your royal ears: a kingdom unsettled, a fleet lost, a city destroyed!"<sup>106</sup>

<sup>101</sup> *Sermon predicado en la Santa Yglesia Cathedral de Mexico*. See Chocano Mena, 2000, 292–93.

<sup>102</sup> *Sermon a la fiesta real del segundo corpus de España*.

<sup>103</sup> ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4956, fols. 321<sup>r</sup>–324<sup>f</sup>, 11 and 20 December 1628.

<sup>104</sup> Gascón de Torquemada, 284. For the reaction at court, see Elliott, 1986, 362–65.

<sup>105</sup> Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereafter AGI), Patronato 225, R.4, fols. 3<sup>r</sup>–7<sup>v</sup>, "Gaseta de los sucesos de Mexico de la partida de la flota rovada del corsario asta el aviso de 28 de octubre de 1628"; AGI, Patronato 225, R.4, fols. 12<sup>v</sup>–14<sup>f</sup>, "Gaseta desde octubre de Ventiocho hasta quince de henero de 1629." On the context, see Ballone, 256–66.

<sup>106</sup> *Despues que sali de esse reyno*, 7.

To make sure such bad news would not reach the public eye, the Crown had already decided on an additional tactic to control the news: stricter control of the press. After the media campaign on Salvador, the Crown's initial willingness to employ the printed news industry for propagandistic means gave way to a policy that sought to restrict the publication of news throughout the Iberian world. A law introduced in Castile in 1627 expressly prohibited the printing without license of popular literature, including "letters and *relaciones*, gazettes and newssheets";<sup>107</sup> a royal charter promulgated the same year in Lisbon ordained similar measures for printed news in Portugal, "because some publications speak with little certainty and less consideration, which results in large inconveniences";<sup>108</sup> in Mexico, a royal ban from December 1627 prohibited all discussion of the tumult of 1624 in any form.<sup>109</sup> Yet the Crown's censorship could not silence what was out in the open, such as an absent fleet, nor ease the resulting uncertainty and doubt that haunted audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. In the summer of 1629 in Lima, for example, the viceregal court heard after months of expectation that the fleet had left Spain in February, "but the news was not certain and we are waiting for a brief dispatch that can remove all our thousand doubts."<sup>110</sup>

The combination of increased censorship and persistent uncertainty resulted in a fragmented transatlantic mediascape, characterized by long silences, protracted rumors, and sudden outbursts of printed news on Habsburg successes, which did little to conceal the progressive encroachment by Spain's colonial competitors in the Caribbean and Brazil. When there was good news to tell, such as the long-anticipated naval campaign beginning in 1629 in which Don Fadrique de Toledo seized the Leeward islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis from the English and French, publishers throughout Spain and Spanish America did not waste the opportunity to sell a good story—even when details were still unclear.<sup>111</sup> In December 1629, the Barcelona printer Esteban Liberós (active 1602–33) was the first to go public with "certain and reliable news" (reportedly based on correspondence from England sent to Jesuits in Seville) that Don Fadrique had routed a Dutch armada near Saint Kitts.<sup>112</sup> The statement that the defeated enemy was Dutch doubtless served to claim revenge for the seized treasure fleet of 1628, and this interpretation of events was elaborated further in another largely fabricated account of Don Fadrique's victory

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Elliott, 1989, 182.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Tengarrinha, 30.

<sup>109</sup> Ballone, 248.

<sup>110</sup> Suardo, 1:12.

<sup>111</sup> The 1629 campaign of Don Fadrique is discussed in detail in Philips, 181–86.

<sup>112</sup> *Nuevas ciertas y fidedignas*.

published in Seville and Valladolid.<sup>113</sup> News that a “Dutch enemy” had been defeated at Saint Kitts also reached Lima on 13 January 1630 with a dispatch sent overland via Cartagena and Quito;<sup>114</sup> Contreras subsequently printed a short report together with a selection of European news, but, apparently aware of the uncertainties, he omitted the nationality of the defeated.<sup>115</sup> Only in Mexico was a full account available, as the official report sent by Don Fadrique to the viceroy of New Spain was published in Mexico in late 1629, before it was sent to Seville for republication the next year.<sup>116</sup> The decision of the authorities and printers in Lima and Mexico to publish the news before it had reached the Iberian Peninsula meant that readers in Spanish America knew earlier than the king of Spain what had happened in the Caribbean.

Moreover, the court in Madrid had little time to enjoy the good news of Don Fadrique’s victory: on 2 May 1630, it became known that Dutch forces had taken Pernambuco two months earlier.<sup>117</sup> In this case, the complicated logistics of intra-American communication meant that it took much longer before this news also reached the highest authorities in Spanish America. On June 13, in Lima, an extraordinary dispatch sent overland from Buenos Aires warned that a Dutch armada was on its way to the Pacific, “although the certainty of the news is not known.” A month later, news from Spain reached Lima “that it might be the case” that more than eighty Dutch ships sailed toward South America. Finally, on July 29, a report sent from the audiencia in Sucre, which in turn forwarded news from Buenos Aires, told that sixty-nine Dutch ships had seized Pernambuco some five months before. As the viceroy’s chronicler in Lima noted, “this news was heavily felt at the court.”<sup>118</sup>

In Spain, the bad news of a second Dutch incursion into Brazil could at least momentarily be eclipsed by published reports on Don Fadrique’s successes in the Caribbean and the eventual arrival of the treasure fleet in Cádiz in early August 1630. The fleet, the first to return safely after the disaster of 1628, was met “with such joy and gladness that there is no pen that can describe the scene,” as a printed newsheet on the event stated.<sup>119</sup> Reports on what happened in Brazil were published only two years later, obviously not to tell the

<sup>113</sup> *Feliz vitoria que ha tenido D. Fadrique de Toledo*. The same text was published the same year in Valladolid by Juan Lasso de las Peñas.

<sup>114</sup> Suardo, 1:48.

<sup>115</sup> *Relacion breve de la victoria*.

<sup>116</sup> *Relacion embiada por Don Fadrique de Toledo*.

<sup>117</sup> Gascón de Torquemada, 314.

<sup>118</sup> Suardo, 1:81, 1:87, 1:89.

<sup>119</sup> *Relacion verdadera y cierta*.

news of another foreign encroachment in the Americas but to sing the praises of the combined Spanish-Portuguese armada under Admiral Antonio de Oquendo (1577–1640), which had been sent to Brazil after protracted debate in Madrid and Lisbon to engage the Dutch.<sup>120</sup> The resulting battle off the coast of Salvador in September 1631, though essentially inconclusive, was celebrated as a decisive Habsburg victory in publications in Seville, Madrid, and Barcelona from early 1632.<sup>121</sup> The Seville pamphlet was subsequently sent to Lima and republished there in 1633, although the news it contained was somewhat disappointing since an earlier report, bringing “news that was not considered very certain” from Cartagena via Bogotá and Quito, had announced that Oquendo had retaken Pernambuco.<sup>122</sup> Yet in times of mounting Spanish setbacks in the Atlantic, even an inconclusive naval battle could count as a major victory: a medal was cast to commemorate Oquendo’s exploits, depicting him as Samson fighting the Dutch lion, while Oquendo commissioned a series of four large paintings of the battle as a gift to Philip IV.<sup>123</sup>

This multimedia campaign was intended to restore some sense of Habsburg pride and order in the Atlantic, but it did not succeed in establishing a common narrative shared throughout the Iberian Peninsula. News published in Lisbon gave primacy to the heroic resistance of Portuguese troops in Brazil against the Dutch invasion, such as a first report sent from Recife in April 1630,<sup>124</sup> or the 1632 eyewitness account from Paraíba, which, concluding with a long list of Portuguese colonial casualties, essentially undermined the storyline of a successful Iberian partnership.<sup>125</sup> Not only the Dutch invasion of Brazil but also the reporting on that invasion deepened the steadily extending fractures in the union of Spain and Portugal.

Still, printed news attempted to create bonds of belonging and a sense of unity and shared destiny among the different components of the Spanish Habsburg empire on either side of the Atlantic. In the early 1630s, an initiative

<sup>120</sup> See Philips, 188–90.

<sup>121</sup> *Relacion de la iornada que la armada de su Magestad à hecho al socorro del Brasil*, reprinted in Lima by Francisco Gómez Pastrana in 1633; *Relacion de la iornada que la armada de su Magestad, cuyo capitan general es don Antonio de Oquendo, hizo al Brasil*, reprinted in Barcelona by Esteban Liberós in 1632.

<sup>122</sup> Suardo, 1:223.

<sup>123</sup> The medal, cast in 1631, is in the collection of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich: <https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/37525.html>. The paintings, done by Juan de la Corte around 1632, are in different private collections and in the Museo Naval, Madrid. See the short analysis in Zamora. Cf. Van Groesen, 77–84, on the Dutch reception of the news from Brazil in 1630–31.

<sup>124</sup> *Relaçam verdadeira, e breve da tomada villa de Olinda*.

<sup>125</sup> Rosario.

was launched to publish a yearly overview of European news for the American market, printed in time for the departure of the fleet for Tierra Firme in spring. The first extant example of such an annual newsletter, surveying the period of April 1633–April 1634, consisted of ten pages densely printed with news from Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, France, Italy, and the Low Countries, introduced under the header of “Spain invincible to so many strokes of fate and victorious in so many accidents of time.”<sup>126</sup> The next issues continued in this vein, mixing Baroque praise for the “marvelous accomplishments of the Catholic and Imperial armies everywhere this year” with short, more or less factual reports, including updates on the ongoing war with the Dutch in Brazil.<sup>127</sup> The series had success, for by 1637, printers produced a variety of annual newsletters in Spain under different titles.<sup>128</sup> Before long, the genre also crossed the Atlantic to be adopted in Spanish America: in May 1641, José de Contreras (active 1641–88), heir to the press of his father Jerónimo, published his own annual newsletter with European news, followed by competing printers in Lima throughout the 1640s.<sup>129</sup>

The success of these annual compendia of news reveals how publishers on either side of the Iberian Atlantic could steer and capitalize on the demand for comprehensive overviews of important events, turning the variety of international *nuevas* into *entera noticia*. Nonetheless, their attempts at compilation and totality could not conceal the fundamental problem that it remained impossible to verify whether such transatlantic news really offered the whole story. The Peruvian viceroy, Luis Jerónimo de Cabrera, realized this was essentially a problem of authority: how to control the news and to guarantee its accuracy and completeness? While the compendia of news crossed the Atlantic and became fashionable among printers in Lima, the viceroy provided a caveat with the publications he licensed, as in March 1636: “the printing of the news does

<sup>126</sup> *Compendio de las cosas sucedidas*, A<sup>v</sup>. The two final pages of the newsletter are dedicated to the Crown’s appointments for the viceroalties of Peru and New Spain.

<sup>127</sup> *Relacion de las cosas mas particulares*. This newsheet is printed in the same type as the one from 1634 and a second issue covering the period April 1635–February 1636.

<sup>128</sup> In 1637, a second newsletter was published, in a different type and with a different content: *Sumario y compendio de lo sucedido*, followed by a similar newsletter on February 1637–February 1638. In 1639, the widow of Juan González in Madrid published yet another newsletter on the years 1637–38: *Breve, y ajustada relacion*. This newsletter was also published in Barcelona by Jaume Romeu. Other extant newsletters cover the years March 1639–March 1640, March 1640–May 1641, and March 1643–March 1644.

<sup>129</sup> *Relacion y compendio de lo sucedido*. Comparable newsheets, published after the arrival of dispatches sent from Spain, were printed in Lima in 1643 by Jorge López de Herrera and Luis de Lira, in 1644 by José de Contreras, and in 1647 by Julián Santos de Saldaña for Jorge López de Herrera.

not give it more authority than it carried.”<sup>130</sup> The distance that separated Europe from the Americas meant it was impossible to establish the authority of transatlantic news. Yet this problem of unstable authority was not simply a matter of being far removed from the center of imperial power in Spain. It was rather an aspect of transatlantic news as such. Indeed, the authority of news from across the ocean was not only unstable in Lima, but also, if not especially, near the very heart of monarchical authority in Madrid.

This became fully clear in December 1638. While people in Spain waited anxiously for news on the return of the treasure fleet, a short pamphlet was published in Madrid. The news it brought was reportedly based upon the interrogation of a Dutch captain, whose battered ship had anchored in the harbor of Sanlúcar de Barrameda a few weeks before. The captain told his interrogators he had been a crewmember under Cornelis Jol (1597–1641), otherwise known as “Pegleg,” the notorious Dutch privateer with a prosthetic wooden leg who raided the Caribbean in the service of the WIC. According to the report, Pegleg had decided to attack the Spanish treasure fleet under the command of Carlos de Ibarra (d. 1639), but was killed in the resulting battle. This was remarkable news, announced in a big, bold headline.<sup>131</sup> Shortly before, however, another “truthful” pamphlet had been published in Madrid, also based on a report from Sanlúcar but mentioning an English source, which gave different information on the Spanish-Dutch battle and did not mention the alleged death of Pegleg.<sup>132</sup> The conflicting reports immediately gave cause for suspicion: Sebastián González, a Jesuit priest with good contacts at the court who sent weekly reports on incoming news to a Jesuit contact in Seville, wrote that “lies circulate” about the battle with Pegleg that were not worthy of further mention.<sup>133</sup>

Padre González was right: a naval battle between Ibarra and Pegleg had indeed taken place early September off the coast of Cuba, but Pegleg had survived it unscathed. Yet in Spain, it was impossible to know this for sure because different accounts of the battle continued to circulate in Madrid, Seville, Cádiz, and Barcelona, some of which echoed the rumor of Pegleg’s death.<sup>134</sup> According to Didier Rault, who has analyzed two of these accounts in detail,

<sup>130</sup> *Traslado de una carta*, title page.

<sup>131</sup> *Muerte de Pie de Palo*.

<sup>132</sup> *Relacion verdadera de la refriega*. This text was reprinted the same year in Seville by Francisco de Lyra.

<sup>133</sup> *Memorial histórico español*, 15:118.

<sup>134</sup> *Relacion verdadera del viaje de los galeones; Verdadera relacion de la refriega*. This pamphlet, reportedly a reprint of a publication from Cádiz, is largely similar to the one published in Madrid and Seville. The death of Pegleg was reported in the annual newsletter on 1638 published in Madrid and Barcelona: *Breve, y ajustada relacion*, A7<sup>v</sup>.

it may be argued that this confusion was the result of a “direct intervention” of agents of the Crown: the circulation of conflicting narratives put readers on the wrong track, diverting attention from the troublesome absence of the treasure fleet, which had not yet returned by the end of 1638.<sup>135</sup> There is no direct evidence that supports this hypothesis, and it seems at least as likely that the initiative to publish was taken by printers themselves, who had picked up rumors about incoming reports and decided to fabricate a story to satisfy the public demand for information. In any case, the result was that readers of the news in Spain had few clues as to which story could be trusted on the basis of which authority. The circulation of conflicting accounts essentially undermined the idea that anybody was in control, thereby also undermining the central authority of the Crown.

The reality of transatlantic communication further complicated the exercise of this central authority, because in Mexico, readers of the news already knew in detail what had happened in the Spanish-Dutch naval battle. In the autumn of 1638, the viceroy of New Spain, the Marquis of Cadereita (r. 1635–40), had ordered for his private correspondence to the king, in which he gave extensive information on the battle, to be published in Mexico even before it reached Madrid.<sup>136</sup> Cadereita, the first American-born viceroy, clearly wanted to capitalize on the news that the Spanish treasure fleet had been defended successfully against a Dutch attack—news he could exploit to boost his own authority in Mexico and to legitimize his decision, against the expressed orders of the king, to let the fleet stay in Veracruz during the winter. According to Cadereita, the news that the fleet was safe had caused immense joy in Mexico, where all the authorities joined in a *Te Deum* in the cathedral, followed by a procession through the city that ended in three days and nights of partying, enlivened by fireworks and bullfighting. “It was the most festive day America ever saw,” the viceroy exclaimed.<sup>137</sup> But in Spain, there was as yet little reason to celebrate as the Crown remained in the dark for months about what had happened to the treasure fleet. José Pellicer (1602–79), a scholar with close court connections, had recently started a weekly manuscript news service in which he sent his contacts updates on what was discussed in Madrid; he wrote at the end of June 1639 that people still did not know the whereabouts of the fleet, fearing there may have been another battle with

<sup>135</sup> Rault, 111.

<sup>136</sup> *Señor: Con orden que he tenido*. The untitled correspondence, dated 6 October 1638, was eventually also published in Madrid by Diego Díaz in 1639. On the political background of Cadereita’s tenure as viceroy, see Israel, 190–99.

<sup>137</sup> *Señor: Con orden que he tenido*, 9<sup>v</sup>.

Pegleg. “But one can only guess about this,” he added, “and come up with stories about what might have happened.”<sup>138</sup>

Certainty only arrived with the eventual return of the fleet to Cádiz some weeks later, “the work of God’s hands,” according to Pellicer, which resulted in “incredible joy of the people.”<sup>139</sup> Finally it became fully known what had happened in the Caribbean, but not all the news brought by the fleet was good: the naval battle with the Dutch had resulted in many Spanish casualties, a full list of which was published to dissolve all uncertainty.<sup>140</sup> Pegleg, it turned out, was still alive. The physical arrival of the fleet was the only transatlantic evidence that could be considered authoritative; all conflicting *relaciones* published before the fleet was in sight merely undermined the notion of a shared, integral truth. As the sharpest pen in seventeenth-century Spain, that of Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), summarized in 1639: “*relaciones* fall like rain, and so do lies.”<sup>141</sup> Even those working in the publishing industry called into question the authority of printed news.

#### CONCLUSION: FRAGMENTS OF NEWS AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE IBERIAN ATLANTIC

On 20 February 1641, a carvel from Lisbon reached Salvador da Bahia with an exceptional dispatch, delivered in person by the captain to the viceroy of Brazil: a revolt in Portugal had restored the Braganza dynasty to declare independence from Spain, and the new king, João IV (r. 1640–56), requested the viceroy’s adherence. The Portuguese revolt had already sent shockwaves through the Iberian Peninsula, and now all eyes were set on the Portuguese possessions overseas. Would they side with the new dynasty, or remain loyal to Philip IV? The answer arrived in Madrid six months later, when Pellicer opened his weekly newsletter with “the certain news of how we lost Brazil.”<sup>142</sup> In Barcelona, where another revolt against the Spanish Crown had broken out earlier in 1640, reports were published in Catalan of the “fortunate news” that the Azores also sided with João IV, which seemed to confirm the impending disintegration of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy.<sup>143</sup> In Lisbon, in November, consumers of the news could read in detail how the new king had been acclaimed in Rio de Janeiro;<sup>144</sup> a few weeks later, the first issue of a monthly Portuguese

<sup>138</sup> Pellicer de Tovar, 1:27 (1639-06-28-12). On Pellicer, see Ettinghausen, 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Pellicer de Tovar, 1:31 (1639-07-19-01).

<sup>140</sup> *Relacion de los muertos*.

<sup>141</sup> Quoted in Díaz Noci, 223.

<sup>142</sup> Pellicer de Tovar, 1:270 (1641-08-20-01).

<sup>143</sup> *Relacio verdadera dels sucesos*, A<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>144</sup> *Relaçam do aclamação*. See also Curto, 259–74.

gazette appeared with national and international news that was no longer controlled by the Spanish authorities.<sup>145</sup> In Lima, readers of the news were left in the dark about what had happened in Portugal,<sup>146</sup> while in Mexico, rumors circulated that the Portuguese in Brazil had massacred thousands of Spaniards.<sup>147</sup> With the disintegration of the Iberian Union, the mediascape of the Iberian Atlantic fragmented even further.

Since the late sixteenth century, and particularly since the breakthrough of printed news in the early 1620s, colonial competition in the Atlantic world had led to increased reporting on Atlantic events in European news media, giving rise, as Michiel van Groesen has argued, to a “public Atlantic” that was shaped and debated in the discussion centers of early modern Europe, especially in the Dutch Republic, where an incessant stream of news publications fueled popular participation in political debate over Brazil between the 1620s and 1650s.<sup>148</sup> The Iberian world, which thus far has been largely unexplored from this perspective, was an integral element of this public Atlantic. Although the control by the authorities was more restrictive in the Spanish monarchy than in the Dutch Republic, a comparable process took place in the Iberian world as news on what happened in and across the Atlantic became increasingly available for a wide public on either side of the ocean. The plurality of centers for printing and disseminating the news on the Iberian Peninsula and in Spanish America created a truly transatlantic phenomenon in which the Atlantic developed into a public space open not only to European but also to American audiences.

This transatlantic dimension to printed news culture in the Iberian world could be exploited to integrate the different components of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, as the Crown attempted to use news media to create the sense of a unified imperial space on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet print did not only manufacture unity and consent. As in the Dutch Republic, where the proliferation of printed news on Brazil led to public friction and increasing division of opinions, transatlantic news proved difficult to control, even by the Spanish Crown: the dynamics of distance and the resulting uncertainty meant that it was impossible, for the authorities as well as the consumers of the news, to attain the whole story about what happened overseas. Attempts to manipulate the unpredictable flow of information from overseas often

<sup>145</sup> *Gazeta, em que se relatam as novas todas*. This gazette, the first printed serial newspaper in the Iberian world, ran in two phases until 1648. See the edition by Dias, and the extensive analysis in Sousa.

<sup>146</sup> See *Relacion y compendio de lo sucedido*, which does not mention the Portuguese revolt.

<sup>147</sup> Israel, 210. See also Schwartz, 1993.

<sup>148</sup> Van Groesen, 187–98.

resulted in the spread of conflicting narratives and disbelief in the official story, while the existence of different centers for printing on both sides of the Atlantic meant room for maneuver for local publishers and authorities. As a result, printers and readers from Madrid to Mexico and from Lisbon to Lima had to deal with fragments of news, snippets of information that fractured any sense of control. While the paper empire amassed by officials of the Spanish Crown expanded, the development of a public Atlantic progressively fragmented the Crown's central authority.

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