

—— Heiko Droste, »Degrees of Publicity. Handwritten Newspapers in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries«

—— A B S T R A C T ———

My paper concerns the handwritten newspaper in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The genre appeared in late sixteenth century as part of a growing public news market, which from the early seventeenth century onwards expanded rapidly with the introduction of the printed newspapers. The latter in parts replaced the handwritten one. However, at about 1700 the handwritten newspaper is still there, fulfilling specific functions alongside its printed twin.

The question must therefore be what these functions were and why costumers were willing to pay for a medium that was much more expensive, although subject to the governments' censorship in the same way as printed newspapers. The paper argues for different degrees of publicity, which shaped the public news market as well as private news correspondences. In consequence, there were different news genres, tailor-made for a general public or more specific groups of recipients. This argument relies on contemporary tracts on the printed newspaper as well as Swedish and Northern German collections of handwritten newspapers.

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■ DEGREES OF PUBLICITY. Handwritten

Newspapers in the Seventeenth and

Eighteenth Centuries ■

■ INTRODUCTION ■

On November 1, 1619, Hamburg-based news correspondent Peter Topsen alerted Chancellor of the Realm Axel Oxenstierna about a change in his news service: »Henceforth, the ordinary newspapers are printed.«¹ Topsen had met Oxenstierna in 1606, when they agreed on a regular news correspondence. Since then, Topsen had sent news to Oxenstierna from Hamburg, the main news node in Northern Germany.² Only some of this correspondence has survived in the Royal Archive in Stockholm, especially those letters that discuss the terms of Topsen's services.³ However, it is safe to assume that the »ordinary« newspaper, mentioned by Topsen, was released regularly, most likely once a week. It was copied for Topsen's news service with the help of a scribe that Topsen paid for himself. Oxenstierna only learned about the printed newspaper when the scribe's contract ran out. At that time, the printed newspaper had already existed in Hamburg for about a year. In other words, the fact that the »ordinary newspaper« henceforth was printed obviously did not make much of a difference for Topsen. He did not perceive a new medium, just a different way to publish an already existing regular news form.⁴

It would be interesting to discuss with Topsen why he did not perceive the printed newspaper as something completely different. He did not give any further explanation and died only two years later, long before the printed newspaper became the prevailing news form. In fact, it took contemporaries some decades to understand the change that printed newspapers entailed for the news culture in the Holy Roman Empire, where printed newspapers appeared first. From the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, a public debate about this new medium occurred.⁵ Especially interesting in this respect are several more elaborate tracts from the end of the seventeenth century, most prominent of these being the bulky tract by Kaspar Stieler on the delight and use of newspapers, which came in 1695.⁶ From our perspective, his and other tracts are important for the understanding of printed newspapers in the wider context of printed and manuscript news forms. The tracts themselves, however, are mostly interested in the newspapers' public availability.

My intention is to discuss the public availability of news in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in particular the specific role of handwritten newspapers. This investigation meets with several obstacles. For one, the concepts of the public and publicity are problematic, as they clearly do not match our modern-day understanding. Jürgen Habermas' influential work on the public sphere and the printed newspaper's role in it⁷ has failed to convince historians working on early modern history, because his definition of the public sphere cannot be applied to early modern history.⁸ Esther-Beate Körber discusses a variety of different forms of public and publicity in early modern times. They were embedded in specific situations and social contexts, which did not constitute one singular public sphere in the modern sense.⁹

Another obstacle lies in the fact that most historians working on handwritten newspapers do not define the genre in itself.¹⁰ Instead, the terms »handwritten newspaper« and »manuscript newsletter« are used indistinctively for every kind of handwritten news form.¹¹ This is not convincing, as the handwritten newspapers – according to my understanding – fulfilled specific functions in a rather well defined segment of the public news market. Contemporaries seem to have had a clear understanding of the different news genres. In the following, handwritten newspapers are defined in a similar way to printed newspapers by their universal scope, publicity, regularity and actuality.¹² Both the handwritten and the printed newspaper were produced for a news market, which determined what its readers could expect to find. Only a narrow definition of the specific features of the handwritten newspaper allows for a comparison with other news forms.

Unfortunately, and this is the third obstacle, it is not easy to ascertain if manuscript news forms, which can be found in larger numbers in early modern archives, had been part of a public newspaper. In Sweden, we therefore only have few archive collections, which clearly contain handwritten newspapers according to the above mentioned definition.¹³

My article will first analyze the situation at about 1600, when the first printed newspapers appeared as part of an already established market for newspapers. I will then examine the discourse on printed and handwritten newspapers at about 1700, in particular by Kaspar Stieler and Johann Peter von Ludewig. Finally, I will discuss the Swedish material from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the only known collections of Swedish handwritten newspapers that have survived to this day. All three parts concern the question of the specific terms of the handwritten newspaper as well as their public availability. In that way, I hope to demonstrate the need for a distinct definition of the genre.

— THE PUBLIC NEWS MARKET AT ABOUT 1600 —

The advent of printed newspapers opened the public news market up for ever larger groups. All newspaper tracts perceived this fact as a major problem, because they did not think about the public in terms of a society, but a conglomerate of god-given estates. In consequence, all tracts agreed on the lamentable fact that newspapers published news, which clearly should not be accessible to anybody, but which now could be read even by members of the lower estates.¹⁴ Closely linked to complaints about the newspapers' public availability were concerns about the reliability and value of the news they contained. In this discussion, moral judgments about the undesirable curiosity on behalf of the newspaper readers met with the concern that sensitive news could be spread unrestricted. The tracts considered a major part of the political sphere as belonging to the prince's *arcantum*, his secret councils. Publicity therefore clearly posed a threat to the prince's interests.

While the tracts mostly agree on the newspapers' inherent problems, the authors differ substantially when it comes to their comment. It was Kaspar Stieler who, in his tract, outlined the newspapers' future place in public life. He recommended the reading of newspapers for educational reasons and because he deemed them useful for different groups in society. Although his position paved the way for a new and ultimately seminal understanding, he too was concerned about the »pitiable curiosity«¹⁵ of the common man, as it was of no use to the public.

The advent of printed newspapers is usually perceived as the breakthrough of a modern news society, where they nourished the public discourse on politics. However, the printed newspaper was by far not the only contemporary news form. There were different kinds of printed pamphlets, leaflets and discourses, which were also part of the public news market. The printed newspaper's predecessor, the handwritten newspaper, however, tends to disappear in its printed twin's slipstream. This can be explained by the fact that hardly any newspaper historian reads this kind of material. Many simply assume that the handwritten newspaper was replaced by the printed version – as it is described in Topsen's letter to Oxenstierna.¹⁶ This assumption, however, simply does not meet the facts. The handwritten newspapers survived and actually flourished by adopting new functions. In order to understand the handwritten newspapers' role in the wider context of a news market shaped by different printed news forms, we have to analyze the economic and social terms of this news market at about 1600. What kind of news did Topsen send from Hamburg to Oxenstierna and what difference did it make that this news was printed in Hamburg after 1618?

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the news market was shaped by a mixture of printed and handwritten news

forms. Since the late sixteenth century, the so called »Messrelation« offered a printed semi-annual news update, which was sold at the major fairs in the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁷ Since the sixteenth century, these and other printed news forms were published especially in the bigger cities. Alongside these printed news forms, there existed several handwritten news forms, correspondences, which mostly stayed within the limits of particular social relations. Since antiquity, a mutual (news) correspondence was part of the understanding of friendship.¹⁸ This mutual correspondence was often distributed by their recipients so that even a letter cannot simply be ascribed to a private relationship.¹⁹ There also existed more elaborate news networks, which were run by news agents or as part of scientific networks.²⁰ They were based on correspondences and often restricted to a number of high-ranking subscribers.

Publicly distributed handwritten news forms had their part in this news culture. They occurred at some point in late medieval times as the offspring of a mutual news correspondence between members of a social elite.²¹ In the beginning, it was most likely first of all merchants, who simply added news to their business correspondence. A similar mutual correspondence occurred in the fifteenth century between courts.²² This news eventually turned into some kind of commodity, although we have hardly any information on this transition or the price of these early newspapers.

The dispatch of news relied on messenger services, which were introduced between merchant cities as well as between courts. The most prominent example is the Imperial post of the Thurn & Taxis family, which in the late fifteenth century gained the Emperor's monopoly on all postal traffic in all of the Holy Roman Empire.²³ In the beginning, this postal traffic expanded slowly, but from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, more and more parts of the Empire were interconnected in an ever more reliable and regular way. The Thurn & Taxis were far from the only providers of postal services, and they failed in enforcing their Imperial privilege especially in Northern Germany. There were simply too many competitors. The Empire's confusing structure seems to have been advantageous for the occurrence of printed newspapers. Sweden, like many other countries in Europe, followed after.

From the perspective of the newspapers, it is important that the different postal and messenger services in the Empire became regular on a weekly basis, expanding rapidly especially in the early seventeenth century.²⁴ The handwritten newspaper followed suit and at about the same time there is the notion of a regular, »ordinary« newspaper, which circulated between the major news nodes of Central Europe. It is this newspaper that Topsen sent to Sweden.

The so-called »newspaper from several places« was a rather fluid medium, probably changing names and places now and then.²⁵ It seems to have been a regular news medium, although there are too few examples to give detailed information on its terms, prices, customers and editors. This newspaper contained roughly the same kind of information as the first printed newspapers: on war, court life, extreme weather conditions and the like.²⁶ Topsen, therefore, had good reasons to perceive continuity in the newspaper business.

At about 1600, the handwritten newspaper – just like the subsequent printed newspaper – was nothing more than a collection of unrelated pieces of news, each of which was introduced with a place and a date. The headline thus gives information on the origin of the news, not the place and date of the event reported. News from Vienna regularly did not report on Vienna, but on Italy, Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire; news from Gdansk reported on Poland and Russia; news from Amsterdam on England and France, and so forth. The headline therefore most likely depicts the place and time, where news that so far had been conveyed orally or in the form of a personal letter, turned public.²⁷

This news originated mostly in one of few major news nodes, central cities like Vienna, Cologne, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Lyon and Gdansk. Almost all of these nodes were situated in merchant cities, where some kind of news agent picked up news as part of his job as a postmaster, newspaper writer or secretary. Probably all of them had a variety of mutual news contacts with other postmasters and newspaper writers. But these are nothing more than elaborate guesses, as we have no names and networks,²⁸ not least because no newspaper editor would give away his sources. They were his major asset in a competitive news business.

The news that Topsen received in Hamburg, therefore, was part of an ongoing news flow between the main news nodes in Central Europe. The actual edition of both the handwritten and the printed newspaper thus contained a more or less contingent selection of news that was available at a certain place and time. The newspaper in Hamburg can therefore best be described by its time-space coordinates in the common news flow. The only internal order of this newspaper was imposed by the date of arrival of the news – most likely by mail. The news was not edited in any way, since the concept of journalism focusing around the collection, editing and presentation of news material was still unknown.²⁹ Instead, both the handwritten and the printed newspapers were written in a language that usually avoided comments and moral judgments.

This news flow was obviously so widely established in Central Europe that printed newspapers appeared in different parts of the Holy Roman Empire from 1605 onwards. At first,

this printed newspaper simply replaced the manuscript form, not the least because it was much cheaper to print a newspaper.³⁰ It is, however, hard to say what kind of public availability this early printed version had and how many copies were printed. That Topsen learned about the printed newspaper is no proof of its publicity. He had privileged access to the social elites of Hamburg and his home court in Holstein. He, too, had the means to engage in a rather expensive medium.

— EARLY TRACTS ON NEWSPAPERS —

Interestingly enough, the contemporary tracts are unaware of the date when the printed newspaper entered the news market, although they are unanimous about the succession from the handwritten to the printed newspaper. However, they date it at about 1650, that is after the end of the Thirty Years' War, thus several decades too late. Until then, they see the *Messrelation* as the main printed news medium. It would be easy to assume that the different authors simply got it wrong. More likely, however, seems the assumption that they – in conjunction with Topsen – were not so much interested in the news form. They were concerned with its public availability.

In 1700, Johann Peter von Ludewig discussed the use and misuse of newspapers.³¹ He perceived a strong connection between the upcoming of the printed newspapers and the expansion of postal services. According to him, these postal services in turn relied on the income that the merchant correspondence entailed. The merchants were strongly interested in news and newspapers – Christian Weise therefore labeled merchants as newspaper sustainers (*novellarum custodes*).³² The prince privileged printed newspapers, because they offered him and his administration the possibility to use the post for free in return.³³ Most postal organizations in Europe followed this line of reasoning. Governments opened the postal services to everybody, because they were unable or unwilling to finance them.³⁴ For Ludewig, Stieler and others, this development took place after the Thirty Years' War, whereas modern post and newspaper historians mostly see the Thirty Years' War as a decisive promoter of different kinds of news forms as well as postal and messenger services. As a consequence, Ludewig dates the introduction of postal services equally wrongly as the transition from the handwritten to the printed newspaper.

Ludewig's tract argues from the perspective of the prince and his need for news. For him, the fact that the prince opened his *arcantum*, the post, to the public for financial reasons is problematic. As a consequence, newspapers were available to a general public. That, however, was not in the interest of the prince, who needed reliable and most of all confidential information to govern his realm. Ludewig offers no solution for this dilemma, which he seems to perceive as inevitable.

For Ludewig, the value of news is intimately linked to its public availability. Seen from the perspective of the prince, the most important source of news is the diplomatic correspondence. This could be considered confidential, although even the diplomatic news came in different degrees of publicity. In consequence, the regular diplomatic correspondence was not good enough for the prince. Instead, Ludewig strongly recommended the personal letter (»Hand-Brieflein«), written by a diplomat for the prince's eyes only. In this way, the writer and the prince could be assured that the letter would not be read by anybody else, as it would not end up in the prince's archive, where it could be subject to historical studies.³⁵ In other words, Ludewig is not concerned about the diplomat's access to important news. In question is the diplomat's personal security, when sending the news. The diplomat will only dare to write what he knows when he can be assured that his news will be confided only to the prince. This presumed danger is obviously to be found to a substantial degree at his home court.

This aspect, the sensitive and possibly dangerous character of news, is evident even in the Swedish case. The Swedish post director Johan Beijer was responsible for sending news to the Swedish diplomats from the court in Stockholm. In a letter to Bartholomäus Wolfsberg, secretary to Charles X Gustav, he explained why Wolfsberg should not expect too much of this correspondence. According to Beijer, it was simply too dangerous for him to send important news, because he could not be sure that this news would not end up in the wrong hands. Beijer was obviously concerned about the court society in Stockholm. He therefore asked Wolfsberg to understand that the correspondence would not have much to say, that it would be written without the usual courtesy and on top of that anonymously.³⁶

In this discussion on the public availability of news and its value, the printed and the handwritten newspaper have but a small contribution to make, according to Ludewig. It was in particular the high costs of the diplomatic service which might force a prince to rely on public news media alongside his diplomatic service. But even if he had diplomats in different places, the prince might want to read the public newspapers, as they might offer something interesting. Still, in comparison with other news forms, Ludewig considered newspapers to be the most vulgar news medium.³⁷ He simply equated the public availability of news with its low news value. As early as 1616, Oxenstierna judged the news, which he received from a Pomeranian court secretary, as nothing more than »merchant news«.³⁸ Both Ludewig and Stieler complained about the newspapers' affinity with rumor and gossip – in other words, the newspapers' lack of quality. They recommended public censorship as a means to uphold a basic quality. In their eyes, the

absence of such a censorship devalued the Dutch newspapers in particular,³⁹ as they could, indiscriminately, print whatever they wanted. That could not be in the interest of the readers. Ludewig and Stieler seem to ask for some kind of guidance to make sure that the right persons received the right kind of news.

In this discussion, Ludewig considered the handwritten newspaper to be an independent genre. Stieler refused to do so, deeming the handwritten newspaper to be nothing more than the draft of the printed one.⁴⁰ Ludewig agreed in principal, adding however some comments on the handwritten newspaper's characteristic features. It was faster than the printed version and could thus disperse news, which for the most part went into print the very next day.⁴¹ According to Ludewig, printed newspapers would often print the most respectable news of the handwritten version. Even Ludewig was thus mostly skeptical, claiming that the handwritten newspaper was only sold because it meant good business for postmasters. He therefore stressed the economic interests of the newspaper editors, in that way downsizing the differences between those two different media forms. However, this position is not convincing, as Ludewig cannot explain why anybody should be willing to pay such a high price, if the news could be had much cheaper the next day in the printed edition.

—THE CASE OF THE SWEDISH HANDWRITTEN NEWSPAPERS—

In 1645, post director Johan Beijer started to publish the first – and, for a long time, only – printed Swedish newspaper. He did so on behalf of the crown and under the supervision of the chamber, which he was a member of. The editing of a newspaper had been part of his job description as post director.⁴² This arrangement entailed a far reaching control of the news business in Sweden, and it can be interpreted as a typical example of the news politics of a highly centralized country.

However, the very same Johan Beijer published an advertisement, a few years after he started editing the Swedish printed newspaper.⁴³ In this advertisement he offered to deliver several newspapers from Amsterdam and from Hamburg, the Latin newspaper from Cologne, other newspapers from the Holy Roman Empire and Italy – in all, more than a dozen weekly newspapers. On top of these newspapers he was able to send regular price lists from important harbours as well as pamphlets and smaller publications on state affairs. Next to this printed information, he offered regular copies from a variety of incoming written correspondences, »as much as could be publicized«. All of these news forms could be subscribed to on a weekly basis in all parts of the Swedish Empire.

Beijer was not the only Swedish postmaster who offered handwritten news from Europe. There are several known

examples of postmasters in other Swedish cities who engaged themselves in the news business.⁴⁴ Despite its highly centralized administration and its efforts to control its outward image, Sweden was wide open to different news channels. Alongside the postmasters and newspaper writers, travellers and merchants as well as correspondents from outside of Sweden were sending news sheets.⁴⁵ The nobility's archives give ample evidence of this rich news flow.⁴⁶ With tens of thousands of letters sent every year via the official post in the second half of the seventeenth century and an unknown number of letters outside the postal system, any effort to control this news transfer was doomed from the outset.

Beijer advertised a handwritten newspaper, which was based on correspondence that he as a general post director and member of the chamber received. This newspaper was far more expensive than the printed newspaper, about four times as much, and Beijer claimed that he only asked for the costs of the scribes.⁴⁷ There are only few copies left of this handwritten newspaper from before the end of the seventeenth century.⁴⁸ It is of course problematic to discuss the absence of archival evidence, but it seems that handwritten newspapers flourished especially a long time after the introduction of printed newspapers. By 1700, the substantial price difference that Beijer had asked for had more than doubled. Still, the provincial governments in Stade and Stralsund ordered handwritten newspapers alongside the printed ones.⁴⁹ At that time, the handwritten newspaper from Hamburg was priced at about 12 riksdollar per year, whereas the printed one did cost one riksdollar. The price in itself highlights the importance of the medium. Both Stieler's and Ludewig's positions seem questionable. The handwritten newspaper obviously offered something else, other than a speed advantage, which probably did play a role. The following examples concern Swedish handwritten newspapers from the beginning of the eighteenth century, sent to different merchants and ironmasters.

The handwritten newspaper regularly referred to the printed one, and sometimes the ink imprint of the printed edition can be seen on the handwritten newspaper.⁵⁰ Customers obviously read the handwritten next to the printed newspaper as some kind of supplement. The first impression of the handwritten newspaper is that it is rather nondescript in form and design. The handwriting is sometimes rather bad and mirrors the haste of the scribes. The news is written on irregular paper sheets and by a variety of different hands, often several hands within one newspaper.⁵¹

If we compare the content of the printed Swedish newspaper and the handwritten newspaper, both issued in Stockholm, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there are some distinct differences. The printed one offered news from all over Europe,

as long as the Northern War allowed for this news transfer, whereas the handwritten form often focuses on just one or two places, often in direct connection with the Swedish war efforts. So, in 1710 the focus is all on the Baltic provinces, which were eventually conquered by Russia.⁵² The handwritten form is also more inclined to report about Swedish affairs, whereas the printed regularly did not publish any news from Sweden itself. This news from Sweden and in particular Stockholm often reports on the death of some crown servant. It also tells readers about newly appointed crown servants, sometimes even in the form of a longer list.⁵³ As this was probably some kind of customer service, the readers of the handwritten newspapers were most likely members of the crown elite or close to it.

Another difference between both forms is that the handwritten newspaper is faster. It often appeared the very same day that the continental post arrived in Stockholm, whereas the printed one usually came the next day. This time advantage seems to have been treasured by customers. It also made it possible for the handwritten newspapers to be tailor-made according to the specific day of the outgoing mail from Stockholm. There are a number of handwritten newspapers, which were sent from Stockholm into the Mälars area on consecutive post days.⁵⁴ In part, these newspapers contain the same news as the next day's editions, but it was also possible to insert news that had arrived the very same day. In that way, it might also have been possible to design different editions for specific groups of customers.

The only known censorship case offers more insights into the process. In 1696, a handwritten newspaper had published an article concerning the new securities that crown servants had to deliver before they entered their crown office.⁵⁵ This new rule ordered the crown servants to insert all of their own as well as their wives' assets as a security. This arrangement would have changed the conditions for the crown servants in a drastic way, as the wife's possessions usually were not considered part of her husband's finances. The reform was never implemented, but found itself mentioned in a handwritten newspaper. Charles XI probably did not want his unavailing reform mentioned in a newspaper and ordered an investigation, which was carried out by the chamber. At first, the chamber ascertained that the particular newspaper had been written by a young scribe, who worked for post clerk Erik Elseen. Elseen defended himself by referring to post inspector Daniel Möller, who had told him about this news. Möller in turn pointed out that he had heard about the king's order from several postmasters in Sweden, with whom he was in regular correspondence. He had also »seen« a letter from the king in the chamber that had had the same content. He therefore assumed that the news was already public and that he could publish it without objections.

This example describes the ways in which news was distributed. The post clerks in Stockholm obviously had their specific customers, which they supplied with newspapers. In consequence, there are complaints about the clerks in Stockholm, because they neglected their work in favor of the newspaper writing. The clerks in turn had different sources, which were used as a backup in case of censorship problems. Both Möller's and Elseén's defenses were based on the argument that the news in doubt was already public. This was a common argument, even in censorship cases relating to printed newspapers. Editors claimed to publish news that was already public, and thus censored, from elsewhere.⁵⁶

The handwritten newspaper was a public medium and therefore part of governmental censorship. Still, there are distinct differences between the printed and the handwritten newspaper. These can be explained by the different degrees of publicity. There is no indication that the manuscript form was not sold publicly. But it was so much more expensive than the printed one that we can assume an exclusiveness, which made the censorship less harsh and the content therefore more open to gossip, rumor, state affairs and such. The range of possible news was wider. However, the Swedish handwritten newspapers from the beginning of the eighteenth century show that their strength probably lay in their ability to focus on certain areas of interest as well as to choose the most important news – in other words, to presort what the customers needed and wanted to know.

The handwritten newspaper that reported on newly appointed crown servants was most likely sent only to those customers that either were crown servants themselves or had regular contacts with the administration. They belonged to some kind of second-rank elite, which had no immediate access to the diplomatic correspondence or more private news contacts abroad. This was an intermediate layer of sufficiently influential and wealthy men, close to the crown and the economic elites. They had a need for news from the court. On top of that, a genuine sense of curiosity might explain their interest.

The known censorship bills from the continent focus in particular on the handwritten newspaper's exclusiveness. The newspaper was rarely forbidden in itself, but several bills ordered that it should not be on display in coffee shops, which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were known for offering newspapers alongside coffee.⁵⁷ This exclusiveness in turn was most likely another advantage of the newspaper, as the reader had an information advantage in comparison with the reader of the printed edition, on top of a possible speed advantage.

We may therefore assume that the handwritten newspaper, albeit publicly sold, had a limited form of publicity and in consequence more liberties. The newspaper had its share of a

news market, which offered different news forms for different audiences. Exclusiveness was a result of the price of the news.

These public news forms have to be seen as part of a news culture, which up until the eighteenth century distributed news between friends as well as members of the social elites. Their private correspondence often contained the latest news from their respective place, expecting to hear about the latest news in return. This handwritten news correspondence often looks very similar to the handwritten newspaper, and both are close to the work of news agents, who were working for specific recipients, often members of the government, if not the prince himself. Post director Beijer therefore had to decide every week anew which available news was suitable for which kind of recipient. An incorrect decision could endanger his position, because news was discussed in terms of publicity and secretiveness. Handwritten newspapers were no medium in which to publish secrets or to criticize the prince.

I would therefore conclude by highlighting the handwritten newspaper as a commodity, which can be compared to the printed newspapers in many ways, but which had advantages according to its speed and exclusiveness. It was also much more expensive and in consequence therefore open to news which would be more risky to print, because censorship was harder for printed material. That was also possible as contemporaries still had the notion of different degrees of publicity, not the abstract notion of just one public sphere, constituting a counterpart to the state. This notion seems to have disappeared in the middle of the eighteenth century, probably due to a different idea of public debate, which was part of a movement we now call the Enlightenment. ■

■ — E N D N O T E S —

1 Peter Topsen to Axel Oxenstierna, Hamburg, November 1, 1619, Oxenstiernska samling, E 741, Swedish National Archives, Stockholm (RA).

2 Heiko Droste: »Hieronymus von Birckholtz. Sveriges förste underrättelseman« in *Personhistorisk Tidskrift* 94 (1998), 76–98.

3 Oxenstiernska samling, E 741, RA. These letters mostly deal with Topsen's work as a councilor. They do not contain newspapers, neither printed nor in manuscript form.

4 For a more detailed discussion of this aspect, cf. Heiko Droste: »'Einige Wiener briefe wollen noch publiciren'. Die Geschriebene Zeitung als öffentliches Nachrichtenmedium« in Volker Bauer and Holger Böning (eds.): *Die Entstehung des Zeitungswesens im 17. Jahrhundert. Ein neues Medium und seine Folgen für das Kommunikationssystem der Frühen Neuzeit* (Bremen 2011), 1–22.

5 Elger Blümm and Rolf Engelsing (eds.): *Die Zeitung*.

Deutsche Urteile und Dokumente von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, (Bremen 1967), offer a collection of the earliest discussions on the printed newspapers.

6 Kaspar Stieler: *Zeitungs Lust und Nutz. Vollständiger Neudruck der Originalausgabe von 1695*, ed. by Gert Hagelweide (Bremen 1969).

7 Jürgen Habermas: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main 1962). The English translation: *The structural transformation of the public sphere* (Cambridge 1989); Claes-Göran Holmberg, Ingemar Oscarsson, Jarl Torbacke (eds.): *Den svenska pressens historia. vol. 1: I begynnelsen (tiden före 1830)* (Stockholm 2000).

8 Habermas suggested that monarchical and feudal societies organized themselves around symbolical forms of representation.

9 Esther-Beate Körber: »Vormoderne Öffentlichkeiten: Versuch einer Begriffs- und Strukturgeschichte« in *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 10 (2008), 3–25.

10 Holger Böning: »'Gewiss ist es/ dass alle gedruckte Zeitungen erst geschrieben seyn müssen.' Handgeschriebene und gedruckte Zeitungen im Spannungsfeld von Abhängigkeit, Koexistenz und Konkurrenz«, in *Daphnis* 37 (2008), 203–242, offers many examples of handwritten newspapers, but does not differentiate between public newspapers and more private or official correspondences.

11 Some examples of works on handwritten news forms from recent years: Zsuzsa Barbarics: »Die Bedeutung der handgeschriebenen Neuen Zeitungen in der Epoche Ferdinands I. am Beispiel der so genannten 'Nádasdy-Zeitungen'« in Martina Fuchs (ed.): *Kaiser Ferdinand I. Ein mitteleuropäischer Herrscher* (Münster 2005), 179–205; Zsuzsa Barbarics: »Die Sammlungen handschriftlicher Zeitungen in Mittel- und Südostmitteleuropa in der Frühen Neuzeit« in Václav Buzek (ed.): *Společnost v zemích habsburské monarchie a její obraz v pramenech (1526–1740)* (Česke Budejovice 2006), 219–244; Ina Timmermann: »'Nachdem uns an itzo abermahls beyliegende zeittungen zue kommen.' Höfisches Nachrichtenwesen zwischen geschriebener und gedruckter Zeitung am Beispiel hessischer Landgrafen am Ende des 16. und zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts. Dokumente aus dem hessischen Staatsarchiv Marburg« in Astrid Blome (ed.): *Zeitung, Zeitschrift, Intelligenzblatt und Kalender. Beiträge zur historischen Presseforschung* (Bremen 2000), 137–159; François Moureau (ed.): *Répertoire des nouvelles à la main. Dictionnaire de la presse manuscrite clandestine XVIe–XVIII siècle* (Oxford 1999) gives an overview of collections, especially in Western Europe. Due to the lack of a definition, the above mentioned works deal with rather different news forms.

12 See Per Rydén: *Världens äldsta. Post och Inrikes Tidningar under 1600-, 1700-, 1800- 1900- och 2000-talet*,

(Stockholm 2005), 32–33; and *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, 24 (Brockhaus, 1996), 503. The English definition only highlights »immediacy, characteristic headlines, and coverage of a miscellany of topical issues and events«, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 26, *Macropedia* (London, 2002), 431.

13 Manuscript D 850, Handwritten newspapers to Eva Insenstierna, Royal Library Stockholm; Nordin 906, Handwritten newspapers from 1702–1718 to merchant Jacques Möhlman; and Nordin 926, Handwritten newspapers from the 1730s, several recipients in the Mälars Region, University Library Uppsala.

14 See footnote 5.

15 Stieler: *Lust und Nutz*, 10. »Es ist ein jämmerlich Ding um solche Gernwesser.«

16 Wolfgang Behringer: *Im Zeichen des Merkur. Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen 2003), 375, dates this transition in the first half of the seventeenth century.

17 Juliane Glüer: *Messrelationen um 1600 – ein neues Medium zwischen aktueller Presse und Geschichtsschreibung. Eine textsortengeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Göppingen 2000).

18 Verena Epp: *Amicitia. Zur Geschichte personaler, sozialer, politischer und geistlicher Beziehungen im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart 1999).

19 Heiko Droste: »Briefe als Medium symbolischer Kommunikation« in Marian Füssel and Thomas Weller (eds.): *Ordnung und Distinktion. Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft* (Münster 2005), 239–256.

20 Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (eds.): *Samuel Hartlib and universal reformation. Studies in intellectual communication* (Cambridge 1994); Lore Sporhan-Krempel: »Georg Forstenheuser aus Nürnberg 1584–1659. Korrespondent, Bücherrat, Faktor und Agent« in *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel, Frankfurter Ausgabe* (1970), 705–743; Zsuzsa Barbarics and Renate Pieper: »Handwritten Newsletters as a Means of Communication in Early Modern Europe« in Francisco Bethencourt (ed.): *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2007), 53–79; Mario Infelise: *Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione (secoli XVI e XVII)* (Rome 2002).

21 Theodor Gustav Werner: »Das kaufmännische Nachrichtenwesen im späten Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit und sein Einfluß auf die Entstehung der handschriftlichen Zeitungen« in *Scripta Mercaturae* (1975), 3–52.

22 Johannes Kleinpaul: *Das Nachrichtenwesen der deutschen Fürsten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geschriebenen Zeitung* (Leipzig 1930).

23 Behringer: *Zeichen des Merkur*.

24 Karl Heinz Kremer: *Johann von den Birghden*,

1582–1645. *Kaiserlicher und königlich-schwedischer Postmeister zu Frankfurt am Main* (Bremen 2005) is a very thorough study on one of the front figures in the early post as well as newspaper business.

25 The catalogue by Else Bogel and Elger Blühm: *Die deutschen Zeitungen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 3 volumes (Bremen 1971–1985), clearly describes the many name changes.

26 Oxenstiernska samling, E 823, RA, contains a collection of these newspapers from 1615, sent to the Chancellor of the Realm by a Pomeranian secretary.

27 Droste: *Wiener Briefe*.

28 Karl Heinz Kranhold: *Frühgeschichte der Danziger Presse* (Münster 1967) offers a thorough investigation into Gdansk as an important news place in the Baltic Sea area. Kranhold was unable to ascertain the identity of the news correspondents of that time.

29 Nicholas Brownless: »Narrating Contemporaneity. Text and Structure in English News« in Brendan Dooley (ed.): *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham 2010), 225–250, offers an example of a rare exception, a newspaper editor who did edit his news.

30 Johannes Weber: »Gründerzeitungen. Die Anfänge der periodischen Nachrichtenpresse im Norden des Reichs« in Peter Albrecht and Holger Böning (eds.): *Historische Presse und ihre Leser. Studien zu Zeitungen, Zeitschriften, Intelligenzblättern und Kalendern in Nordwestdeutschland* (Bremen 2005), 9–40.

31 Johann Peter von Ludewig: »Vom Gebrauch und Mißbrauch der Zeitungen. Bey Eröffnung eines Collegii geführt. Anno 1700« in Johann Peter von Ludewig: *Gesamte kleine teutsche Schrifften* (Halle 1705), 80–111.

32 Christian Weise: *Schediasma curiosum de lectione novellarum*, Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1676, translated and edited by Karl Kurth: *Die ältesten Schrifften für und wider die Zeitung*, Brunn, München, Wien 1944, 129–162; quote 132, cf. even Stieler: *Lust und Nutz*, 15, and Ludewig: *Gebrauch und Mißbrauch*, 88–90.

33 Ludewig: *Gebrauch und Mißbrauch*, 92.

34 For the Swedish case see Heiko Droste (ed.): *Connecting the Baltic Area. The Swedish Postal System in the Seventeenth Century* (Huddinge 2011); a rare exception was the Spanish post under Philip of Spain, cf. Cristina Borreguero Beltrán: »Philip of Spain. The Spider's Web of News and Information« in Dooley: *Dissemination of News*, 23–50.

35 Ludewig: *Gebrauch und Mißbrauch*, 85.

36 Johan Beijer to Bartholomäus Wolfsberg, Stockholm, August 12, 1648, Wolfsbergs samling, E 6095, RA.

37 Ludewig: *Gebrauch und Mißbrauch*, 90.

38 Axel Oxenstierna to Hieronymus Birckholtz, undated,

probably 1616/1617, Oxenstiernska samling, E 569, RA.

39 Ludewig: *Gebrauch und Mißbrauch*, 98, Stieler: *Lust und Nutzen*, 12–13.

40 Stieler: *Lust und Nutzen*, 28–29.

41 Ludewig: *Gebrauch und Mißbrauch*, 89.

42 Authorization for Johan von Beijer as general postmaster, Stockholm, October 15, 1642, Riksregistraturet, RA.

43 Kanslikollegiet, G V, vol. 1, RA, undated draft to an advertisement by Beijer.

44 Gabriel Hilletan in Helsingborg (De la Gardieska samling, E 1439, RA; Commissar Barchman in Elsinore, sending »aviser« to different recipients in Sweden, Kanslikollegiet, E I C:2, RA.

45 Heiko Droste: »The Terms of Royal Service. Post Servants' Finances, c. 1700« in Droste, *Connecting the Baltic Area*, 123–176, especially 166–168.

46 Arne Losman: *Carl Gustaf Wrangel och Europa. Studier i kulturförbindelser kring en 1600-talsmagnat* (Stockholm 1980).

47 Kanslikollegiet, G V, vol. 1, RA.

48 Stockholm newspapers from 1667, fond 673, apr. 1, l. 1081, Latvian State Archive (LVVA), Riga; Strödda historiska handlingar, vol. 28, RA.

49 HS 654, Stadtarchiv Stralsund, contains a bill from the Royal Swedish Post Office in Hamburg, December 22, 1685, for the government in Stralsund.

50 Nordin 926, University Library Uppsala.

51 Nordin 906, University Library Uppsala.

52 Nordin 906, University Library Uppsala.

53 D 850, Royal Library Stockholm.

54 Nordin 906, University Library Uppsala, collection of handwritten newspapers to different merchants in the Mälars Area.

55 Stockholm, March 16, 1696, Kanslikollegium, G II:a, vol. 1, RA.

56 A typical example is the newspaper editor Andreas Meder in Stettin, who defends himself against complaints concerning his printed newspaper by referring to the newspapers from Riga and Hamburg. He claims only to print what was already printed in them. Both of them were already censored; Letter Meder's from February 8, 1708, Rep. 16, nr. 190, Stadtarchiv Stralsund.

57 Staatskanzlei Patente 16, Patent May 25, 1671 and May 10, 1672, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien. I am grateful to Daniel Bellingradt for this trove. Esther-Beate Körber found a remark in a newspaper extract, *Der eingelauffenen Nouvelles*, XIV. Stück, Leipzig, April 9, 1740, 57, about the ban on handwritten newspapers in Vienna. I wish to thank Esther-Beate Körber for this trove.