

Historia y comunicación social

ISSN: 1137-0734

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/hics.62466>

Gazeta de Amsterdam: History and content analysis

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Recibido el: 22 de mayo de 2018. / Aceptado: 31 de mayo de 2019.

Abstract. One of the most interesting Spanish-language newspapers of the second half of the seventeenth century was published by a Jewish printer, David de Castro Tartas, and appeared in Amsterdam at least from 1672 and at least until 1702, allegedly with continuity, under the title *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. It was partially based in translations of news items from other Dutch-language newspapers of its time. Nevertheless, it included news items presumably collected in Castro's (and, in the latest years, Manuel Teixeira's) office. The weekly newspaper was addressed to a community of Jewish who were born as Catholics in Portugal and Spain, emigrated to the Republic of the Netherlands due to religious tolerance. David de Castro Tartas launched another Italian-language newspaper, *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*. Since new issues of both newspapers have been found recently, we propose to complete the history of Castro's activity as newspaper editor, not only printer. Using content analysis, we try to underline the importance of this Spanish (and Italian) language printer and editor in the reproduction of material translated and adapted from other newspapers and in the production of news items originally managed in his office.

Keywords: Early modern history; Journalism history; Spanish language journalism; Newspaper history

[es] *Gazeta de Amsterdam*: Historia y análisis de contenido

Resumen. Uno de los periódicos más interesantes en lengua española durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVII fue publicado en *Ámsterdam* por un impresor judío, David de Castro Tartas, quien dio a la luz la *Gazeta de Amsterdam*, ciertamente con continuidad, entre al menos 1672 y hasta al menos 1702, si bien en los últimos años cedió el testigo a Manuel Teixeira. Estaba parcialmente basado en traducciones de noticias aparecidas en neerlandés en otros periódicos holandeses de la época, pero al mismo tiempo incluía noticias seguramente recogidas en la propia oficina de Castro y dirigidas tanto a la comunidad judía holandesa, compuesta por conversos de origen portugués y español, como también, tal como queda demostrado en este artículo, a otros mercados, incluso el español. David de Castro Tartas publicó otro periódico, este en lengua italiana, la *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*. Puesto que hemos sido capaces de encontrar nuevos ejemplares de ambos títulos, proponemos completar la historia de la actividad de Castro como editor de periódicos (también se hizo cargo de otro título anterior que se publicaba en yiddish), y no sólo como impresor. Empleando la técnica del análisis de contenido, intentamos en este texto poner de manifiesto la importancia de David de Castro en el panorama de la edición (y también adaptación, traducción y por tanto diseminación) de material noticioso producido en los Países Bajos a un importante mercado informativo europeo, como el español.

Palabras clave: Historia moderna; Historia del periodismo; Periodismo en lengua española.

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Cómo citar: Díaz Noci, J. (2020) *Gazeta de Amsterdam*: History and content analysis (1939-2017), *Historia y comunicación social* 25(1), 67-78.

1. Introduction and state of the art

The first newspaper –a weekly one– published by and for a Jewish community was the one appeared in Amsterdam during several years, at least from 1672 and at least until 1702 under the title *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. It was a Spanish-language gazette, published by the Jewish printer David de Castro Tartas, and addressed to a community of so-called *conversos*, Jewish who were born as Catholics in Portugal and Spain and then emigrated to the Republic of the Netherlands due to the toleration ambience towards religions that allowed

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them to practice the faith of their ancestors. It is important to underline that the newspaper was not written by the descendants of the first Sephardic people, those who went out of Spain during the Catholic kings' expelling order of 1492 onwards, who did not accept to converse into Christianity and started a diaspora of several centuries, and kept with them the old Spanish language, then developed independently from the Iberian Peninsula to create the so-called *ladino* or, more properly, *judezmo*.² Instead, the Jewish newspaper we examine in this paper was published by people who currently spoke contemporary Spanish language (the *conversos*), not different in one word from the mother tongue used by people from the Peninsula, the place they came from actually. That newspaper is not to be confused with the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* published in French; the newspaper created by David de Castro Tartas was not a translation of it.

The history of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* was summarily explained in a couple of articles published in 2012 (Díaz Noci, 2002 and 2012) so this paper is addressed to provide more details on the creation, development and historical context of this newspaper, and of some other journalistic initiatives related to it, like the Italian-language *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*. We will base our work on new recently found items of both newspapers, which can help to complete the facts we know about an active Jewish printer and editor, they are a modest step forward towards a better knowledge of the Spanish-language journalism of the period, and a bibliographical contribution to shed some more light on the catalogue of a couple of newspapers published in Early Modern Europe.

It is our modest aim to contribute to depict a more complete vision of what Spanish-language (and European) journalism was at that time, offering some new data. A recent *magna obra* by Arthur der Weduwen, the two-volume *Dutch and Flemish newspapers of the seventeenth century, 1618-1700*, catalogues and studies -and it is a model for further studies as well, clearly for us- newspapers published in Dutch language. Many other languages were used as well by Amsterdamer printers, as we know: French, Italian and English, whose newspapers have been already studied (Weduwen, 2017: 9 ss.). To those languages, we have to add Spanish as well.

2. Methods

In this study, we present a content analysis of the best known year of the existence of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. We will focus specially in the dissemination of news: which events were told, where they took part, where the news item was produced, which were the ways followed by those news items until they were published in Amsterdam, how long did they take to travel from the origin of the information to the hands of the newspaper's readers, and who were the main characters of all those news. To do that, we designed a database containing all the news items published during 1675 so we can present a complete study of a well known period. Some references are given about some other years' issues, but most of them are isolated numbers that cannot show us a complete picture of the ways in which news were gathered, reproduced and disseminated in the newspaper we study.

The database included several types of fields. The first ones are identification fields of the newspaper, issue, kind of publication (periodical newspaper, in this case), periodicity (weekly), where can the number be consulted and some other formal details. The second group of fields are related to the news item (under a date, several different news could be mentioned): the title, the author (in most of cases, unknown), and a code for every item we analyse

The date of publication is another field of this group, and this allows us to know, after comparing it with another two fields of the following group (date of the event, if mentioned, and date of remission) how long did it take for a news to be known by the public of the newspaper.

More fields are those referred to the topic; to the place in which the event happened and to city this is sent to Amsterdam – usually, different places, which shows us the way the information flew – and the places mentioned, the via it followed to arrive to the final destination; the source type, if mentioned (direct, official, indirect – v. g., another newspaper, very unusual in this case – or anonymous) and the people mentioned. There is another important group of fields, intended for further research and to compare text in a mechanical way: a picture of the news item, as it appeared in the gazette (a facsimile); a literal transcription of the news text, and normalised version of it, in modern Spanish. Two more related fields have been proposed but not used already: a mark-up transcription, to mark another paratextual elements (italics, bold typefaces, titles, etc.) and a translation of the text into English, to compare it in the future with other news of the whole Continent.

² Just to compare the difference between the two varieties of the Spanish language, this is a modern reference in *ladino* to the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*: 'Es interesante ke el pionero de la prensa djudia en el mundo fue djuntamente un periodiko sefaradi, la *Gazeta de Amsterdam*, ke empeso a ser publikada en el anyo 1675, mucho antes ke kualker otro periodiko en las comunidades djudias en el mundo entero. La *Gazeta de Amsterdam* fue publikada en kastilyano, siendo ke esta era la lengua avlada por los djudios de Amsterdam en el siglo 18, kaje todos desendientes de konversos o "kristianos nuevos" de Espanya i Portugal, ke avian reushido a salir de sus paiz de nasimiento i arentarsen en Flandres i despues en Holanda onde kon el tiempo pudieron bivir aviertamente komo djudios.' Even this reference (Saul, M. 'Rolo de la prensa djudeo-esparyola en la evaluacion de las comunidades sefardis', *El Meserret*, 2, 1914: 1. Accessible at <http://www.sephardicstudies.org/ladino-shaul.html>) states clearly that the newspaper was published in Spanish (or 'Castilian', 'kastilyano' using Saul's Word) and not in *ladino* or *judezmo*.

Figure 1: Database used to analyze the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*

3. Who was David de Castro Tartas?

Let us explain first who was David de Castro Tartas. The origin of his family was Portuguese. Cristóvão Luis de Castro and his wife Isabel da Paz, before settling in Amsterdam, moved from Bragança to Tartas, Gascony, France, and adopted a second surname (Nahon, 1976). They had at least three sons and a daughter when they moved from France to the Netherlands in 1640, the year of the Portuguese independence. The sons were Isaac, David and Jacob. They had relatives in other Sephardic communities, for instance in Hamburg: one Jacob Castro was the first Jewish born there. They were also related to another well-established Sephardim in Amsterdam, the physician Elias Montalto, according to the *Jewish Encyclopedia* of 1906.

Isaac, the eldest brother, was born in Tartas in July 1626. He is considered a martyr by the Jewish community (Vainfas, 2010). He remained in Amsterdam just one year, and probably due to a struggle in which he injured and maybe killed another young man – he was preparing himself then to apply for the University of Leiden –, he moved in 1641 to Paraiba, and then to Recife in Pernambuco, Brazil, where Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, of Portuguese origin, was the first rabbi of Brazil, and founder of the first synagogue placed in town. He spent in the, at the time, Dutch Recife one year and a half, and then he decided, because of the debts or because of a murder never unveiled, and the risk of being sentenced to death,³ to move to Salvador de Bahia. He was arrested and deported to Lisbon, where he was judged by the Inquisition, after repeatedly denying to convert himself again to Catholicism, and burnt on December 15, 1647. There is little evidence about the effect that his brother’s death had in David de Castro, but at least the Yiddish-language weekly newspaper he owned at the time published in the number of August 23, 1686 a news item dated July 26 from Lisbon, about the burning at the stake of three Portuguese Jews who, as Isaac de Castro did years before, refused to renounce Judaism.

David de Castro, on his turn, entered as a clerk to a printing press, that belonged to Menasseh Ben Israel, that same year in which his brother was burnt, 1647. It was not until 1662 that he appears to be a printer with his own staple. He was a modest entrepreneur, not even trying to compete with Uri Phoebus Halevi and Joseph Athias, the other two Jewish printers of Amsterdam. All of them were in good relation, as corroborated by the advertisement on the Spanish language Atlas sold at Abraham Wolfganck’s house in Amsterdam, published twice in the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*, 5 August and 9 December, 1675. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* also says that Jacob, probably his youngest brother, ‘participated in the management of the printing-office’.⁴ Jacob was the financer of one of the first books printed by David in 1664 (Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, 2001). He needed to publish a great variety of works in several languages, not only in Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese –his mother tongue, in which he wrote some dedications of his best books– or Yiddish, but also in Italian, the *Gazzetta d’Amsterdam*. He published some major books as well: Francisco de Cáceres’ *Visión deleitable y sumario de todas las ciencias* and, most especially, *Sermões que pregãõ os doctos ingênios do kabal kadós de Talmud Torá* (1675), with engraving pictures by Romein de Hooghe and a prologue by David de Castro himself.

In 1672, the year in which supposedly David de Castro started printing the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*, the Sephardic Jewish community was of 2,500 souls, more than the Ashkenazi Jewish community, only 1,500 people, out of approximately 200,000 inhabitants in the city. Both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews were aware

³ Part of Isaac de Castro’s testimony’s transcription in <http://www.arlindo-correia.com/120613.html> (2013).

⁴ <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4134-castro-tartas-david-b-abraham>, accessed March 5, 2014. The *Encyclopedia* follows Johann Samuel Ersch and Johann Gottfried Gruber’s *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (Leipzig, 1818-1889), part xxviii. 28: 67.

of the importance of the business of news; the first Ashkenazi newspaper *Dinstagishe un Freytagishe Kuranten* [*Tuesday and Friday Newspapers*], a biweekly paper was published at least, according to the only known issues, between 1686-1687 (later and during a much shorter period than the Sephardic gazette) by Moshe bar Avraham Avinu. It has been argued that the difference of these two first Jewish newspapers is that the Sephardic one was just printed by a Jew, but the Ashkenazi one was addressed to the Jewish community (see Cahen, 1985). David de Castro Tartas was the later printer of this Yiddish-language and Hebrew typeset gazette after Uri Phoebus Halevi, from 6 June, 1687, onwards. At that point, De Castro was in reasonably good financial position. He made some minor changes to the newspaper: he added the arms of the city of Amsterdam, as he did in his own Spanish and Italian gazettes, as it was usual in some other Dutch gazettes as well, as can be seen in the front pages of, e.g., the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* and *Amsterdamse Donderdaegse Courant*, and changed the name *Kuranten*, in plural, to *Kurant*, the singular term. The same solution was adopted in 1673 by all four publishers of Dutch-language newspapers in Amsterdam (see Weduwen, 2017: 29). Very soon, by August, David de Castro decided to cancel the edition of Tuesdays because of poor selling, so the newspaper became weekly (it appeared on Fridays; the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* appeared on Mondays).

David de Castro Tartas was in charge of the office from 1663 to 1697. He sold his enterprise and printing presses to Moses Mendes Coutinho on January 24, 1697, and probably left Amsterdam.

4. The Spanish-language newspaper: *Gazeta de Amsterdam*

David de Castro Tartas published the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* from at least 1672 (The first issue extant is one from that year, all the way) onwards. The newspaper, according to new evidence, was published at least until 1702. The Spanish-language newspaper was published in a time in which Abraham Casteleyn's *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, published in Haarlem, was the main newspaper in the Low Countries (see Weduwen, 2017: 41 ss.) and in which several newspapers, including four Dutch-language ones were published in Amsterdam (*Amsterdamse Dingsdaegse Courant*, *Courante vuyt Italien*, *Amsterdamsche Zaturdaeghse Courant* and *Ordinaris Amsterdamse Dingsdaeghse Courant*, see Weduwen, 2017: 29). Many of them could have been sources of information to provide translations of some news items. This is for sure, according to Hilde Pach's research, that at least in 1675 many news items were directly taken from *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*. It is difficult at this point to specify what Castro borrowed from other gazettes, since we lack whole collections of the period's newspapers (including, of course, *Gazeta de Amsterdam* and *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*; even issues of both of them do not match, so it is impossible to compare them and know whether they shared contents or not), which makes difficult to perform a whole comparison. Moreover, the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* was published during at least thirty years, so many changes happened in newspaper editions during that time. Some few others news were, according to the mention of the sources (e.g., private letters), added for sure in Castro's and later Teixeira's office. What Castro Tartas did was, on his turn, to select and spread those items he considered interesting for the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian-speaking community in the Netherlands and, probably, abroad, since at this point we have some evidences that his small gazette was received in Spain, and used at some point as a source of information for some Spanish newspapers.

He was not alone, he employed his son-in-law Samuel ben Isaac Teixeira Tartas in some enterprises, and it is known that he was 'a good translator with an excellent knowledge of the Dutch language' (Fuks-Mansfeld, 2001). David de Castro had some other clerks and employees, regular (the Sephardic orphan Moses Colonel, 1683-1686, and a good number of Dutch people in 1685, i.e.) or not, as mentioned by Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, 1987.

From 1697-1698 onwards, the *Gazeta* was printed by David de Castro's successor Moses Mendes Coutinho, who was recognised as the possessor of De Castro's privilege in April 1698 (Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, 1987), after acquiring his presses, and by Manuel Teixeira Tartas. This can be now confirmed since several issues of the latest years of *Gazeta de Amsterdam* have been found in the National Library of Catalonia, in Barcelona. The issues found correspond to the years 1688 (a couple of issues published on July 19 and October 25), 1693 (December 28), 1694 (February 8), 1696 (November 12), 1697 (February 18, March 4, June 10), all of them printed at David de Castro Tartas' printing office, and, which is more important, an incomplete but quite well represented collection of issues printed by Manuel Teixeira Tartás in 1702 (January 16, February 13, March 25, April 10, April 24, May 8, May 22, June 19, November 6, December 4), the latest known to this point.

Manuel Teixeira (or Texeira) used a variation of this name in the imprints of the latest issues of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*, Manuel Texera Tartaz. His activity as a printer is relatively well documented, and it is known that, for instance, he published a book, entitled *Comedias escogidas de diferentes libros* in Amsterdam, although, probably to sell the book in the Spanish market with no risk, the imprint is placed in Brussels, a common practice at the time; there is another edition apocryphally placed at Köln (Huerta Calvo, Boer and Sierra Martínez, 1989: 686). Probably he was a relative to Samuel Teixeira Tartás, who by 1701 was not in the Netherlands but in Italy, in Livorno (some newsletters from Livorno, in Italy, where a Jewish community was very active, are presumably first-hand mentioned in the issue of *Gazeta* of March 4, 1697) so Manuel maybe was his brother, but little reference is found on him, according to Harm den Boer. This can explain why Manuel started printing the Spanish-language gazette in 1702, immediately after his presumed relative, Samuel, left Amsterdam. Manuel Texera Tartaz is documented as a teacher of Spanish at Amsterdam in 1718 (Boer, 1988: 120).

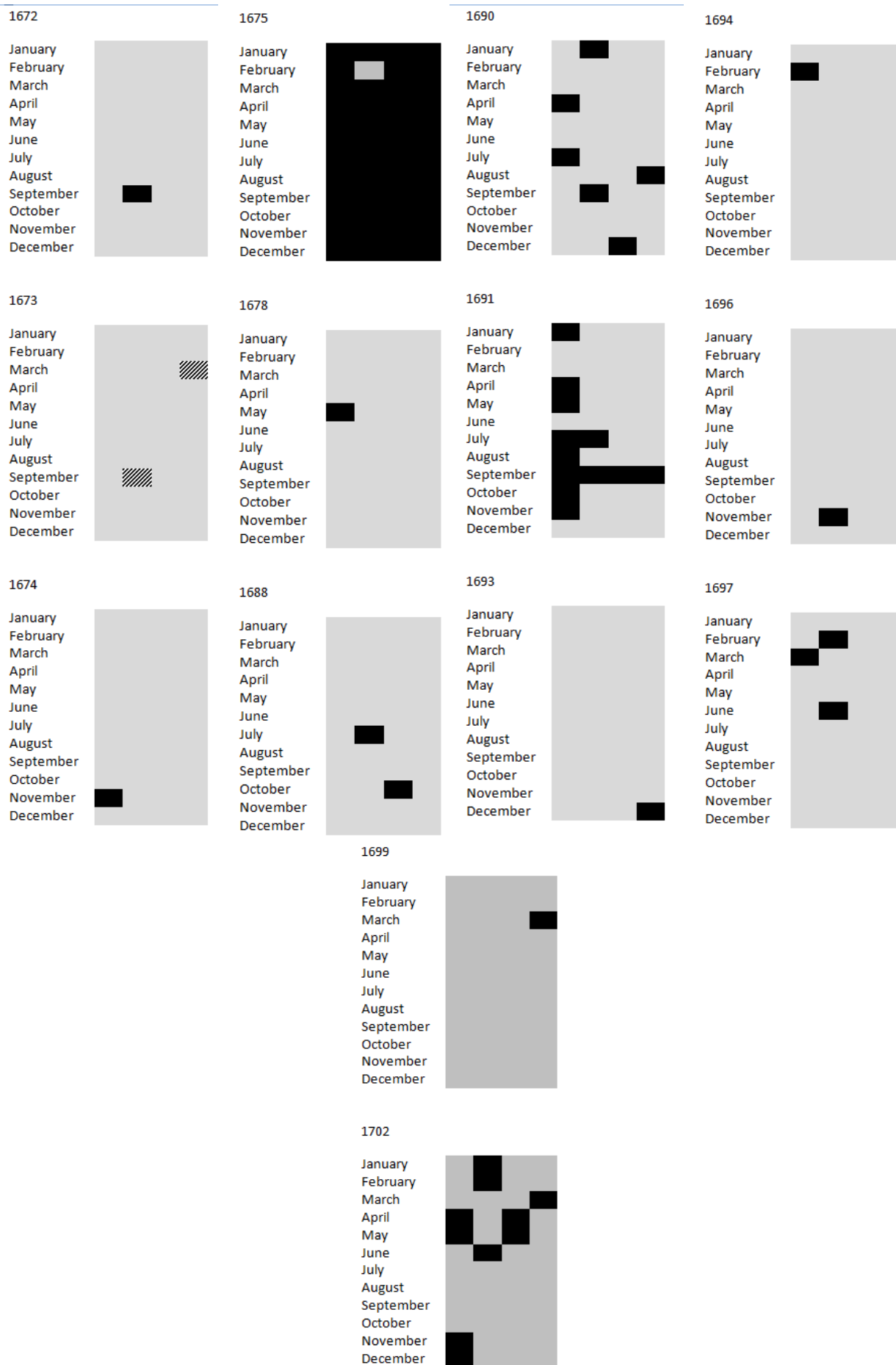


Figure 2: Known issues of *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. Prepared by the author

5. The Italian-language newspaper: *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*

David de Castro launched another newspaper, in Italian language. As referred by the Jewish magazine *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad* in November, 1975⁵, there were a couple of issues, dated 30 March and 14 September, 1673, in possession at that time of an amateur historian of the Dutch city of Vlaardingen, Jan Anderson, who purchased them some years before from an unknown private archive that was to be destroyed.

Another issue of the Italian-language *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam* has been found in, precisely, an Italian library, the Emeroteca Tucci of Naples, whose people in charge have very kindly supplied us with a copy of that issue, dated April 19, 1674.⁶ It is an important finding, since we do know now that, at least, David de Castro published this newspaper at least during 1673 and 1674. Unfortunately, we have no matching issue of both Spanish and Italian-language newspapers printed by Castro.

The differences between the two newspapers printed in De Castro's staple were very few; the most important one, whether they were each other's exact translation or shared some contents, which seems to be the most logical thing, is not known, since we have no extant issues of the Spanish gazette from 1673. It is even possible that during that year David de Castro published its newspaper in Italian, and during some other years he offered it in Spanish, we do not know whether they were two different titles living together or alternative presentations of the same. Attending to the formal characteristics of the both, we can conclude that they were slightly different.

The issue unknown until now, published on a Thursday, April 19, 1674, contains news from Spain (dated back in Madrid in March that year), France, England, Poland, Germany and, as it was usual in the Spanish-language *Gazeta* as well, the Netherlands, both from The Hague (probably reproduced from other newspapers) and from Amsterdam, dated that same day and for that reason presumably originally managed in David de Castro's office, containing in this case news from France.

6. The reception of *Gazeta de Amsterdam* in Spain

The audience of *Gazeta de Amsterdam* (we have no evidence about it regarding the Italian newspaper) went clearly beyond the Jewish community, and it is a product of the increasing secularization of that social group. One of the Iberian-origin Sephardim was Baruch de Spinoza, who was excommunicated from the Jewish faith in 1656, as were in different moments Uriel (born Gabriel) da Costa, Juan de Prado (1658) or Daniel de Ribera. It is uncertain to which extent it was intended to be consumed outside Amsterdam and beyond the Sephardic community of the Netherlands, Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld say that the gazette was planned to reach an Iberian audience. It was, most probably, not a product intended to reach predominantly Spain, a place where its dissemination was undoubtedly problematic, but incidentally it was known.

We are now in clear condition to confirm that Castro's newspaper was consumed in Spain. We have a mention found in *Noticias Generales de Evropa, venidas a Zaragoza por diferentes partes, y publicados en ella oy Martes a 20. de Setiembre de 1695* in Saragossa by Jaime Magallon (a printer who acted under an official license, by the way): "Por los que con la *Gazetilla de Olanda* se han tenido de Venecia de 22. del mismo por diversas Embarcaciones...". No extant issue from 1695 is preserved, so it is impossible, for the time being, to check it, but it is almost sure that this "small gazette from the Netherlands" is David Castro's one: the issues we have consulted in several libraries in Europe were printed *in octavo*, and many issues of David Castro's and Manuel Texera's gazette appear bound in factitious volumes preserved at the National Library of Catalonia (Barcelona, Spain) alongside with other Spanish-language informative sheets, so it seems that quite a regular supply of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* arrived to Saragossa and Barcelona, and we have now some new clues about the reception of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* in Spain.

The *Gazeta de Amsterdam* may be confused with some other newssheets published in Spain under the same title, but they were translations into Spanish of some of the issues of the French-language *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, printed in Barcelona by Jacinto Andreu and Rafael Figueró in 1673, 1684, 1720 and 1735 (thus, in the latest year, when the one created by De Castro was no longer published, so it could not be a reprinting of it), and in 1689 by another printer from Barcelona, Martin Gelabert. In this issue, the only one that could be a reproduction of David de Castro's *Gazeta* (but no matching issue is extant), dated August 20, the last news item's source is an *aviso* from Paris.

Some Spanish printers had some contacts with Amsterdam as well. For instance, Amsterdam was a place to purchase typefaces, since it is documented that Martín de Huarte, official printer of San Sebastian, near to the border of France and a city connected to the postal service coming from Central Europe, acquired his typographical set in the Netherlands. Martín de Huarte paid 300 ducats in exchange of a typographical set, actually Martín de Huarte's first known printed document, in 1668, is entitled *Memorial de Martin de Huarte a la Provincia de Guipúzcoa manifestándole los gastos que ha hecho para traer de Amsterdam letras nuevas y*

⁵ See especially 'Italiaanse Gazzetta D'Amsterdam ging aan de Spaanse vooraf', *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad* 111(14), 28 November, 1975: 16.

⁶ I would like to thank very specially Umberto Mazza.

cajas en virtud del nombramiento que se le dio de Impresor de la Provincia, y pide una ayuda de costa y salario como tal impresor [Memorial by Martín de Huarte to the Province of Guipuzcoa explaining the spending done to bring new typefaces and printing boxes from Amsterdam due to the appointment as the official printer of Guipuzcoa, and asks for a help and a salary as such printer].

It is quite possible for the paper to be read in the near provinces still under the Spanish sovereignty, the so-called Catholic or Southern Netherlands, especially Brussels. News from Brussels were reproduced sometimes (for instance, in the issues of October, 25, 1688, and April 24, 1702). It is well known that a fortnightly – and during a short period, weekly – newspaper was published in Spanish, at least from 1685 onwards: *Noticias Principales y Verdaderas*. One can conjecture that this gazette was a reaction to the one produced by the Jews of Amsterdam, which was most probably well known in Brussels, since these two cities had a fluid commercial relationship – including, needless to say, news as a usual commodity. The great difference between the two markets and news centres is that in the Spanish provinces works needed the ‘official approbations by the representatives of the Brown and the Church’ (Boer, 1985; see also Lankhorst, 2001: 153), so the hunger for news in Spanish language was best covered by the production made in the Southern Netherlands. David de Castro Tartas had also a non-Jewish reader in mind. Once again, Harm den Boer is of the same opinion: ‘Tartas merely profited from the privileged position of Amsterdam as a centre for newsgathering, and would count on a readership interested in keeping up-to-date with current events, whether they were Jewish, New Christian merchants, or even interested, Old Christian Iberians’ (Boer, 1985: 96).

7. The contents

7.1. Taken and original: A combination of news sources

The contents published by David de Castro Tartas were not all original. Nelleke van Wendel thought that they were, but Fuks and Funks-Mansfeld and Hilde Pach (Pach, 2014: 34), are of the opinion that David de Castro Tartas had not enough economic funding to maintain his own news network. As Hilda Pach’s own PhD dissertation clearly confirms, there was a substantial part of the items published by David de Castro that were almost taken verbatim from at least two Dutch-language and French-language gazettes: at least for one issue of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* (the one published on January 7, 1675), published just two days before in Haarlem, a considerable percentage of the news items were taken from *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, one of the best Dutch newspapers of the period, and some other few items were taken from *La Gazette d’Amsterdam*. The practice was common at the period; Arthur der Weduwen states how Abraham Casteleyn prevented *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*’s readers from piracy performed at Amsterdam by one Pieter Symonz, who reprinted a newspaper putting together “a few reports from the authentic Haarlem issues, but complemented with many ‘old tydings’” (Weduwen, 2017: 47).

Some others items, instead, are of unknown origin, and it cannot be discarded that they could be original. As it is usual for Early Modern press, a complete comparison needs for us to have at our hand all the issues published, which is not the case at this moment. Very few issues of 1675, and not even one of the issues published later and currently available, of *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant* match the same publishing period for *Gazeta de Amsterdam* and *Gazzetta d’Amsterdam*, for instance.

It was a common practice to use some others’ contents, but some of the news published by David de Castro were dated just some days before or on the same publication day, whilst many others came from the centres of Jewish activity, at least for the few presumably original contents not taken from *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant* (or from other important newspapers, such as the *Amsterdamsche Courant*). The most original items were the ones Castro Tartas usually published at the end of his *Gazeta*, dated in Amsterdam the same day and gathering many information sources from different places of Europe. It is not unusual to add last hour information dated the same day the newspaper was sold to some news items of precedent days, a fact which confirms the existence of correspondents in those places. We have proofs of alternative information apart from the official or semi-official one: in a news item published in the issue dated 14 October, 1675, sent from Paris ten days before, ‘news and *avvisi* not very profitable for this Crown’ are mentioned. In 1688 (July 19) the last item dated in Amsterdam that same day gathered news of letters from Canterbury through Antwerp. Those ‘breaking news’ are placed as the latest items, dated invariably in Amsterdam. This is an example, but much others are to be found: ‘*Avvisi* came yesterday on letters from Cologne and Strasbourg, which inform that the city of Treves was taken by assault, and the details will be given next week by the *Gazeta*’ [‘Los avisos ayer llegados con las cartas de Colonia y Stratzburgo dizen, como fue tomada la Ciudad de Treves por assalto, las condiciones y particularidades se avisarán en la gazeta de la semana proxima’]. In the issue published in September, 30, 1675, the last item dated in Amsterdam that same day mentions letters from Marseille and Warsaw, in this case about the retreat of the Turkish – a news which continues another one published the week before –, and in the number of October, 28, 1675, some letters from Vienna complete the latest information dated in Amsterdam. This is a usage followed by Manuel Texeira, as confirmed in every issue of 1702 we have examined. For instance, he

mentioned private correspondence ('un propio con nuevas') which arrived to Amsterdam on June 16, 1702 at 11 a.m., containing news dated on June 15 from Wesel, and reproduced in the issue of the *Gazeta* of June 19, 1702. There are some other mentions to this way.

Even if most of the contents published by Castro Tartas were taken and adapted from other Dutch newspapers, it is interesting to perform a content analysis of the items published (and selected from the available ones) in the *Gazeta* (and the Italian-language *Gazzetta* as well) to contribute to explain the ways information flew in Europe at that time. The common situation was that "more often publishers in the Dutch Republic were faced with an abundance of news, and difficult choices of what to include" (Weduwen, 2017: 68). To some extent, it seems to be Castro's case as well. Accordingly to the content analysis of the news published in the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* especially during 1675, the main town – even if he took those news from other gazettes – whose news were reproduced in David de Castro's enterprise was Venice, even in 1688, since it gathered news from all the Mediterranean coast and from other places of the Continent – for instance, Lisbon.

Castro used to publish many news, original or not, from Hamburg, a place that had a well-established Sephardic community from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Hamburg is not just a place in which news were produced, but also and most especially a place where news from the North arrived, so it was quite usual that news from Denmark arrived to Amsterdam via Hamburg – and news from even more distant places, like Sweden, came via Copenhagen, another important centre for news in the Continent. The difficulty of receiving news with some regularity from Copenhagen is the reason why Denmark does not appear as a constant headline – and not every week – in the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* until as late as 10 October, 1675. From 1694 onwards, news from Turkey were offered as well, mentioning newsletters from Constantinople (issue of February 8, 1694) or Smyrna (i.e., in the issue of November 1696, 12), maybe reproduced from some other undetermined newspaper. Letters from Russia are reproduced in that same number, and dated in Amsterdam, so they were probably originally managed by Castro Tartas' office.

News dated in Amsterdam were originally collected by Castro's office, presumedly, since they were dated the same day the newspaper was published. Teixeira Tartas also used that way, for example in the issue of December 4, 1702, using letters from London dated on November 24. Meaningful enough, the Italian-language *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam* started with news from Paris and London – and not from Italy. The news items were ordered according to the arrival of the post, so the information which came from the nearest places was offered at the latest pages of the newspaper. This was a usual practice in every newspaper in Europe.

7.2. A well represented character: Juan José de Austria

It was quite usual to have indirect news from Rome, and it is not until the latest days of 1675 when news sent directly from Rome are offered in the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. The first was written in Rome on November 20, 1675, and published in Amsterdam more than a month later, December 23, 1675. It is about a well-represented character who appears frequently in the pages of the newspaper: Juan José de Austria, the bastard brother of the Spanish king, of military, political and informative importance: he was in charge of recovering Catalonia for the Spanish crown in 1652, the governor of the Spanish Netherlands from 1656 to 1659, confronted to the regent of Spain, his half-brother Charles II's mother Mariana of Austria, and he was the creator of the first semi-official periodical newspaper in Spain, the *Gazeta Nueva*, later to be named *Gazeta de Madrid*, in 1662. Original or not, those news were intentionally selected by De Castro, because of Juan José de Austria's importance and his concern about the dissemination of news is so great that it cannot be by chance that his name appears so repeatedly in a newspaper created in Amsterdam by a Sephardim. We have found many examples, e.g. news via Naples dated March 20, 1675 and published in the issue of April 15, 1675, but even from Spain, in a news dated in Madrid the 27th of March, 1675 and published on April 22, 1675. Later on, news from Spain came from different ways, for instance news about the Dutch army from Cádiz arrived to Amsterdam (February 18, 1697) in letters from France.

7.3. News from Spain

News items from other places were of much more difficult access. Items from Portugal, for instance, were not usually received in the Netherlands directly from Lisbon, and had to follow several ways, usually via Venice. Those news dated in 1675 about Portugal have been studied by María do Rosário Themudo Barata (Themudo Barata, 1975). News from the campaign of Catalonia came indirectly from Paris, which is not surprising because of the importance that the possession of Puigcerdà was for the French, since it gave access via Vic to all Catalonia and Aragon in the Peninsula (see Espino López. 1994: 436 ss.). Puigcerdà was taken by the French in 1678. News on Catalonia (original or not) are selected for publication in the second issue of the *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*, a news item about the Dutch fleet, the siege of Maastricht, some sea battles of the Dutch mercenaries against the French, how these and the Spaniards gathered some more troops in Catalonia, how the Prince of Condé gathered several troops as well (this is a news item that from Brussels), and how the Duke of Lorena dismantled a conspiracy of Turenne to take the city of Frankfurt. Some other

news on Catalonia (i.e., a news item dated in Madrid, September 11, 1675, published almost one month later, October 7 of that year, about some frictions amongst Catalan and Castilian militaries) are also indirect. Direct sources from Barcelona were gathered in 1702, in the last item dated in Amsterdam in the issue of March 27, 1702, which mentions letters from Catalonia dated on March 10. News from Barcelona arrived via Genoa or Brussels, and were not collected by Castro. Some other places of Spain, different from Madrid and Catalonia, are scarcely mentioned, we have just found one mention to Bilbao.

Surprising as it can be—the censure of the Spanish Crown on news was considered to have been very tough—it was not unusual to have news from Madrid (see., i.e., a reference to a letter from Madrid published in the last page of the news dated in Amsterdam, June 3, 1675, or the long report containing several items dated March 27, 1675, and published in Amsterdam on April 22; the first issue published by Castro and containing information from Spain is the Italian-language gazette's one dated on April 19, 1674), maybe due to the influence of Juan José de Austria, already a pretender to the Crown of Spain. Occasionally, the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* informed about official news of the Spanish court or even of such organisms as the *Consejo de Indias*, the one in charge of the relations with the American colonies and of the silver and gold that came from the News Continent and helped financing the wars of the Spaniards all over Europe (see, the news item dated in Madrid, 4 December and published in the issue of 30 December, 1675).

News from Spain, very frequent—almost every issue of the *Gazeta* says something about the Spaniards—, could come from a great diversity of places in Europe, and were probably reproduced from other newspapers, via Paris and/or Brussels, and we have even found one sent from Madrid to Rotterdam and then reproduced in Amsterdam. The Mediterranean way was alternative to the one we have described, so news items from Madrid were also sent to the Netherlands via Naples and/or Venice—and even, but more rarely, via Genoa, this one dated 8 October 1675, once again about Juan José de Austria—. There was also another way, the diplomatic one, we have found some news sent from Copenhagen which came from Paris about Spain and some others via Vienna. News other than from Madrid or Catalonia are extremely rare, but we have found one from Cádiz, via Genoa (November 1675).

7.4. The war

Most of the news items were related to war movements in Europe, approximately 67% of the news items we have analysed. Like most of the Dutch newspapers, the ones produced by David de Castro sympathized with the Habsburg. Another 24% referred to politics, so there was little room for any other kind of topics: news related to nobility occupied 4% of the *Gazeta*, 3% of the items were about commercial movements and religion and deaths were just 1% each of the news. Religion wars (not Judaism) are mentioned in a news item sent from London on June 20, and published June 29, 1675. Letters of any kind (generally speaking, the 'ordinary post') supplied the news items published by the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. References to military letters are quite explicit in its pages, usually dated in The Hague and coming from the Dutch army. This is the same in the Italian-language *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*: a couple of news, dated in The Hague on 30 March and in Maastricht 29 March, 1673, described how some soldiers of the Dutch army captured several French prisoners and took a nice booty on the 22nd of that month of March; from Liege and Brussels, they related several military movements and some news on the letters received by the Prince of Orange, one from Spain, of unknown content for the editors of the *Gazzetta*, and another one from the Elector of Brandenburg, who notified that the kings of France and England had finally agreed to start peace negotiations in one of eight neutral cities, and Cologne was the one chosen.

This is a very important moment not only for political reasons, but also for commercial ones, with several examples on news about the disputes on the control of the sea and the shipping hegemony against the British. There is also some advertisement paid by the Dutch East India Company and published in the issue of September 16, 1675. As Yosef Kaplan remains, most of the Sephardim of Amsterdam were wealthy merchants who tried to emulate the living conditions of the local elites (Kaplan, 1996: 16).

8. Conclusions and further research

The precedent pages have tried to show, with the extant resources, some of the motivations, structure and business model of David Castro in Amsterdam, not very different to the labour developed by many other news printers and entrepreneurs in Europe. We have described the intentional selection of news, taken, adapted and translated from other newspapers in many cases, and first-handed ones in some others, published by both David de Castro Tartas and by his successors. We have been able to see the importance some important actors of the European politics of the time attributed to the dissemination of news, and how news from sensitive places in Europe were offered by the modest Spanish and Italian-language gazetteers of Amsterdam.

Just some very few words on further research. It is out of our goals by the moment to compare all extant Dutch or French newspapers published in the Netherlands with the known issues of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* (and of the *Gazzetta d'Amsterdam*). It will require, for starters, a research team to manage such different languages.

Anyway, it is obvious that a common database of all news items published in any European language of the period, with a translation in a common language is needed to check to which extent contents were original, or were they translated, adapted or mashed up from other contents.

Original or not, the news items selected by Castro Tartas and his followers show the importance of some European foci of information. First of all, this map shows clearly which were the main town in Europe which acted as a hub of news:



Figure 2: Main news supplying centres to the *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. Prepared by the author

Alongside with Venice, Naples and Hamburg, almost every number of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* contained news items from Paris, Strasbourg, London and Brussels, and, needless to say, from The Hague and Amsterdam themselves.

The period of time comprised between the event’s date and the day it was published (or republished) by Castro was variable. The time it took to arrive (minimum in grey colour, maximum in black) is shown in this graphic. The news items from the Netherlands and from Brussels arrived in a few days, even if many of them were translated from other newspapers. The supply of news from Strasbourg, Paris and London took usually less than a week to arrive to Amsterdam, but under some conditions news items from Paris could be delayed until one month – it is also the case of Venice and Naples. Paris and Strasbourg are the places which supplied with more regularity information to Amsterdam. News from Vienna, an important diplomatic place which was the main supplier of news of diplomatic origin from Eastern Europe and from the Turkish dominions, took usually a couple of weeks to arrive to Castro’s hands and were quite regular. All of them, if not all, were taken from other Dutch newspapers of the time:

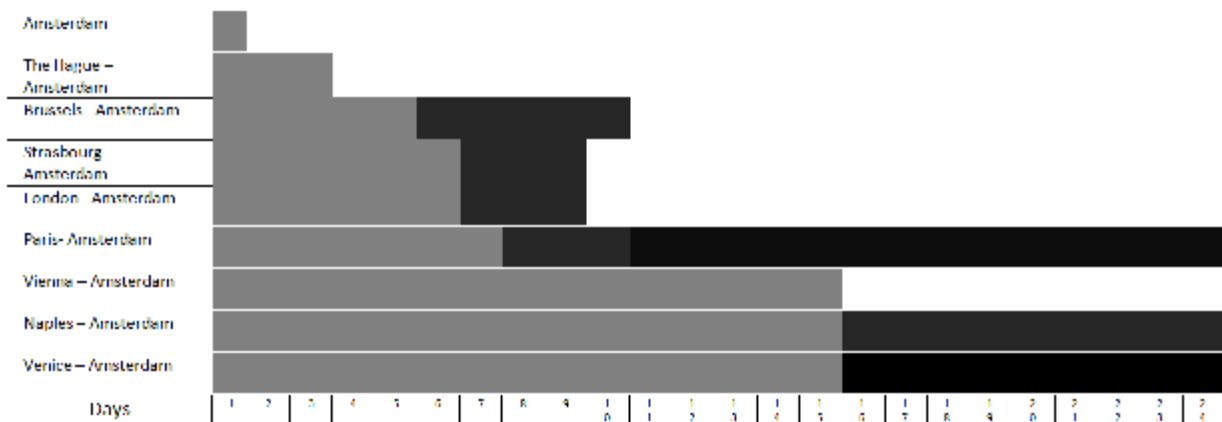


Figure 3: News items supply time for the main information network of *Gazeta de Amsterdam*. Prepared by the author

The graphic above, disregarding the origin of news (direct or, in many cases, indirect) shows us what was the delay an usual reader of the *Gazeta de Amsterdam* suffered in getting the news, adding some more days to the original news, for instance the items reproduced from *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*.

News from Spain, which should be of great interest for the readers of Castro's gazette, were taken from many newspapers or came by many indirect ways, as it is shown in this graphic and has been explained before. Even if the delay was great, even larger if we consider that probably many of them were taken and translated from another gazettes, Castro Tartas considered interesting to publish them, as his newspaper, as we have seen, was consumed even in Spain and their news reproduced in some other Spanish gazettes, for instance in Sagarossa and Barcelona.



Figure 4: News from Spain. Prepared by the author

The panorama is complex and it needs much more further research. For the Spanish-language press we need catalogues and *corpora* before carrying out a longitudinal, comparative and transnational research on the dissemination of news in Europe – and America, which is also another challenge for the scholars involved in researching the news networks which used the Spanish language as a communication resource. Only building databases one could compare the origin of events, letters containing information which is later elaborated, transformed, maybe translated and quite certainly adapted to offer news items. The existence of newspapers written in Spanish and published outside Spain (in Amsterdam, Brussels and America) of how important the Spanish language was at the period, and the need to take it into account to explain in its whole dimension the flow of information in the Western societies.

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