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## Plain Truth and Misinformation in Early Modern News Networks: The Translation of the Articles of Capitulation of Breda (1625) in European Journalism

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### Resumen

La rendición de Breda en junio de 1625, tras un asedio de nueve meses por parte de las fuerzas de los Austria bajo el mando de Ambrosio Spinola, fue uno de los acontecimientos más celebrados de la Guerra de los Ochenta Años y tuvo un gran impacto mediático en un momento que coincidía con la invención del periodismo moderno. Los artículos de la capitulación circularon en una gran cantidad de publicaciones informativas en diferentes países europeos, y ambas partes en conflicto, que inicialmente se basaron en la misma fuente, los relataron e interpretaron de manera positiva. Un análisis de estas publicaciones muestra que dentro de varios tipos de narrativas hay hasta tres versiones diferentes de los términos de rendición: una copia completa basada directamente en los documentos originales y dos resúmenes parciales

diferentes, uno que incorpora elementos de oídas y el otro basado en lo que parece haber sido la redacción preferida de la cancillería de campo de Spinola y/o de la corte de Bruselas. Esta última versión fue diseñada no para contrarrestar las narrativas enemigas, sino para no dar munición adicional a elementos dentro de la monarquía española hostiles a las concesiones de Spinola.

**Palabras clave**

Periodismo; desinformación; traducción; Breda; Guerra de los Ochenta Años; Países Bajos; España; Alemania; Francia; Italia; Portugal

**Título**

Verdad y desinformación en las redes informativas del periodismo de la Edad Moderna. La traducción de los artículos de la rendición de Breda (1625) en las noticias europeas

**Abstract**

The surrender of Breda in June 1625, after a nine-month siege by Habsburg forces under the command of Ambrogio Spinola, was one of the most celebrated events in the Eighty Years' War and had extensive media impact at a time coinciding with the advent of modern journalism. The articles of capitulation were circulated in a plethora of news publications in different European countries, with both warring parties recounting and interpreting them in a favourable light. An analysis of these publications shows that embedded within a range of narratives are three different versions of the terms of surrender: one full copy based directly on the original documents, and two different partial summaries, one incorporating elements of hearsay and the other based on what would seem to have been the preferred redaction of Spinola's field chancery and/or the Brussels court. This last version was tailored not primarily to counter enemy narratives, but to deny ammunition to elements within the Spanish monarchy hostile to Spinola's concessions.

**Keywords**

Journalism; misinformation; translation; Breda; Eighty Years' War; Netherlands; Spain; Germany; France; Italy; Portugal



*quaeque Tacitus Imperii arcana vocat*  
Michel Routart, *Oculus historiae*, 1628

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines twenty-one European news publications in six languages covering the terms of surrender of the garrison and city of Breda in June 1625. This surrender concluded what was to remain one of the most famous sieges in history, although that fame owes more to its celebration in Baroque art and literature than its long-term strategic importance (Vosters, 1993). An American social scientist studying the history and sociology of capitulations in more recent times even seems to ascribe Breda a paradigmatic status as an ideal type of negotiated surrender (Wagner-Pacifici, 2005).

The twentieth-century Dutch hispanist S. A. Vosters dedicated a considerable part of his career to exploring the ramifications of the siege and surrender of Breda in history, art, and literature, along the way producing a short book studying reports in the contemporary news press (Vosters, 1987). His work gives rather cursory treatment to the articles of surrender finalised on 2 June in comparison to earlier episodes and to the events during and after the handover on 5 June, and his primary focus was on how any given published account or artistic production might have influenced or been influenced by Pedro Calderón de la Barca's play *El Sitio de Breda* [*The Siege of Breda*] (probably first performed in or before 1628; see Merique, 2015). While naturally indebted to Vosters, our own focus is very different: on the mechanisms of the international transmission of news as such.

European journalism of the early modern period has been described as a “giant hypertext” (Infelise, 2019) in which news circulated from one region to another in the form of handwritten or printed documents, which were translated, shortened, or lengthened, and adapted to different local cultures (Brownlees, 2021; Davies and Fletcher, 2014). This process accelerated during the final decades of the sixteenth century when novel printed news genres began to appear in most European countries (Pettegree, 2014) and the initial decades of the seventeenth century, when the periodical press began, but this also coincided with the entrenchment of more rigid national, religious, and ideological barriers (Raymond, 2012). In a study of the Spanish monarchy, which included not only the Iberian kingdoms but territories in the Americas, Asia, Italy, and the Low Countries, Weststeijn (2021) has recently analysed how this proliferation and diversity of news genres posed a challenge for the control policies of states.

Bellingradt (2019) has characterised the strategy by which news items were adapted from publication to publication as one of “feedback loops”, and Slauter (2012, 2019) has discussed the “paragraph” as a sort of atomic unit of news, a basic text containing a news summary, which periodicals printed in different languages and in different countries used to fill their pages. The subgenre of news explored here, however, is organised not so much in paragraphs as in an even older format of printed news, that of the list (McCusker, 2005).

Many recent works have shown how news reports, expressed in similar words, were disseminated in different European, American and even Asian countries (Espejo-Cala, 2016; De Vivo, 2019). The transnational character of this fledgling journalism is well recognised, and in recent years the notions of a pan-European news network or news culture have been widely employed in the literature on the subject (e.g. Ettinghausen, 2015; Raymond and Moxham, 2016). Notwithstanding this, few works have addressed the crucial role played by translation in the advent of journalism in the modern age (Valdeón, 2012).

Newman and Tylus (2015: 2) note that translation practices in the early modern age can be described as “a story about collectivities and collaborations, of ‘borrowings’ and thefts, about drearily accurate renderings of ‘alien’ texts and generative misprisions”, before observing that the phenomenon is particularly thought-provoking when analysed in the context of the Spanish monarchy, a veritable linguistic and cultural puzzle (Díaz Noci, 2012).

## **CONTEXT: SIEGES AND SURRENDERS**

Over the course of the Eighty Years’ War (1568-1648), Breda changed hands five times: when taken by the rebels after a two-month siege in 1577; in a surprise attack by royal forces in 1581; by a Dutch stratagem involving a peat barge (or “turf ship”) as a sort of Trojan horse in 1590; after Spinola’s siege in 1625; and again after a three-month siege by Frederick Henry of Nassau, Prince of Orange, in 1637. The city thereafter remained Dutch, so the costly royal victory of 1625, celebrated as it was, ultimately proved short-lived.

The turf-ship stratagem of 1590 became a particularly emblematic event in the Dutch memory of the war (Eekhout, 2013), partly because it was a sensational coup in itself, and partly as the first Dutch success after a series of military setbacks in the 1580s. The taking of Breda initiated a string of victories through the 1590s by which Maurice of Nassau secured what would become the heartland of Dutch territory. Added to this, the lordship of Breda was among the titles of the Nassaus, making it part of the patrimony of the main military leaders of the Dutch forces. All of this gave the town great symbolic value, but

it also had considerable strategic importance as a Dutch bridgehead south of the Rhine-Maas delta. It had enabled Maurice to threaten Spinola's positions around Bergen op Zoom in 1622 (contributing to the humiliating failure of that siege) and provided a stronghold from which raids were mounted deep into royal territory to extort "contributions" from the terrorised villagers, part of the ubiquitous background of freebooting "small war" that has received less attention in the historical literature but was of constant concern to contemporaries (on its importance in the Thirty Years' War, see Parrott 2014).

Major operations of the Eighty Years' War were usually sieges rather than pitched battles, and during the 1580s and 1590s it had become common for printers on either side to acquire official documents and reports providing details of victories, especially the capitulations that ended successful sieges, and put these into print as a combination of news and propaganda. Most notably, royal successes at Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp in 1584-1585 saw the terms of surrender widely publicised in loyal territory, and the Dutch taking of Groningen in 1594 had seen the same in the Republic. Lesser victories were also reported in the same way, but less extensively.

By 1625 there had been no such victories to publicise on either side since 1606, as the conflict had been suspended during a Twelve Years' Truce from 1609 to 1621. When hostilities resumed in 1621, both sides at first preferred to treat the Thirty Years' War in Germany (1618-1648) as a proxy war. In May 1622 the war in the Low Countries recommenced in earnest, when Frederick Henry, Maurice's half-brother, led a largescale contribution raid deep into royal territory, burning villages within sight of Brussels and pillaging the suburbs of Leuven before returning to the security of Breda, leaving a path of destruction and extortion in his wake that was deeply embarrassing to the Brussels court (Sabbe 1933). Two months later, Spinola launched the abortive siege of Bergen op Zoom, another Dutch bridgehead that more directly threatened Antwerp. There was little action in the Low Countries in 1623, during fruitless peace talks, although again there was proxy fighting in Germany, with Spanish forces taking Lippstadt from its Dutch garrison.

In August 1624 Spinola laid siege to Breda, giving rise to increasingly intense media interest across Europe as the months went by (Vosters, 1987). The elaborate siegeworks even became a royal tourist attraction, a Polish prince (the future Władysław IV) in September 1624 taking a detour from an already circuitous pilgrimage to Loreto to view the operations (Wyganowska, 1997; Hulsenboom, 2023). The armies involved were international and multilingual, with Dutch, French, English and Scottish troops among the defenders – to name only the most substantial contingents – while the besieging forces included Spaniards, Italians, Germans, Walloons, Burgundians, Croats and Irishmen.

Even the kings of Denmark and Sweden sent aid to the Dutch relief effort, although their support seems to have made little appreciable difference. When the siege concluded, it was not only the first significant change of territory in the Low Countries in almost twenty years, but an outcome that had been speculated and wagered on across Europe for months: a prime media event.

In the days immediately after the siege, versions of the articles of surrender began to circulate internationally, appearing in different configurations and compositions. Not all publications giving news of the siege's conclusion had these. For example, a *Relacion verdadera* [*Truthful relation*], published in Barcelona by Sebastián and Jaime Matevad, reviewed some of the key moments of the siege before concluding simply that at its end the royal forces had taken the town, and that the reader should pray that others would likewise surrender. Such publications have been left out of account here, to focus on the reports that reproduced the articles of surrender in whole or (more often) in part.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The articles of capitulation of the garrison and town of Breda have been chosen for analysis because reports on them were drawn from a range of newsletters and official diplomatic and military dispatches issued by the warring parties. Specifically, the corpus comprises five printed news publications from the United Provinces (the Dutch Republic), five from the Spanish Netherlands, four from Italy, three from Spain, and one each from Germany, Portugal, and France. These appeared in French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, German, and Portuguese (for the corpus, see appendix 2). All the news pamphlets were printed in the days, weeks, or months after the surrender of Breda on 5 June 1625. Before performing the analysis, they were transcribed and then translated into English to create a bilingual corpus containing the publications in both their original language and modern English, the lingua franca of the researchers involved.

The main research objective is to gain a deeper understanding of how early modern news networks functioned: who supplied the basic information subsequently distributed among printing presses the length and breadth of Europe, and by which means; how the information was translated and the extent to which the original texts were manipulated in accordance with the propaganda aims of the different local powers involved. The twenty-one news publications making up the corpus, which reproduce these official documents in full or in part, often include an exordium and/or a peroration relating the episode in a partisan fashion.

## THE DUTCH VERSION

Unusually, given the tendency of victors to publicise their achievement by printing the terms on which their vanquished foes had surrendered, the first publication of the full articles of surrender took place in Holland. This is not simply due to proximity: Antwerp and Rotterdam are both about fifty kilometres from Breda, but a full version of the capitulations was not printed in Antwerp until the year after the surrender, by then in a work of history rather than of news.

Printing presses in three Dutch cities published four substantial pamphlets in which the official terms of surrender were transcribed or translated in full, with a fifth appearing that only provided the capitulations for the town, not those for the garrison. As the terms drafted by the vanquished had been accepted almost in their entirety and were as advantageous to their interests as might be expected, the Dutch could in a way present their defeat as a moral victory. Or, at the very least, could console themselves that if this was defeat, at least it was defeat without dishonour (Swart, 2016).

### Dutch editions

Given the multilingual parties to the negotiations (including an Italian general, a French colonel, and ultimately a Spanish princess), it made sense for the articles to be drafted in French, one of the languages of the Low Countries that often served as an elite lingua franca (Haar, 2019, chapter 2), and Vosters (1987) reports that this was indeed the case: the original manuscript of the agreement with the town, bearing Spinola's signature, surviving in the town archive in Breda, is in French and substantially corresponds to the relevant portion of the text printed in Rotterdam under the title *Articles Demanded by the Governor and the Garrison of Breda and Articles Demanded by the Town Council of Breda* (EPBS-7), any differences having more to do with orthography and typography than content. The printer's address was the house known as Fame, under the sign of a winged trumpeter, which was the address of Jan van Waesberghe, the official printer to the city of Rotterdam and the admiralty of the Maas. The printer named on the title page, however, was not Jan (who would die in 1626), but his twenty-year-old son, Isaac van Waesberghe, who had set up in business from his father's address a year earlier (Ledebor, 1859). The result is that the pamphlet has a hint of officialdom without strictly being, or claiming to be, an official publication.

Waesberghe's pamphlet contained both the articles negotiated for the departure of the garrison, numbered 1-17, and those negotiated for the surrender

of the town, numbered 1-16 (for a summary overview of both sets of articles, see appendix 1). The only addition was at the end of the capitulations for the garrison, which reads:

NOTE. They also requested in article 1 that those of the Reformed Religion have a house in which they might pray, preach, and exercise their Religion. Item, in article 6 that his lordship the Prince of Orange should enjoy the revenues and lordship both in the town and in the barony of Breda. To which the Marquis would not agree.

The most Spinola would concede was that Protestants would have a two-year transition period in which to make up their minds to leave the town or conform, with no enquiry made of their beliefs as long as they caused no public scandal, and a designated cemetery during that time; and that Frederick Henry, who had succeeded his half-brother as Prince of Orange on Maurice's death in April 1625, would have six months to send for the furniture from Breda Castle.

Dutch translations of this edition soon followed. In Dordrecht, an eight-page news pamphlet entitled *Articles requested by the governor and garrison of the town of Breda, which have been agreed to by Marquis Spinola. Together with the articles requested and agreed by the town council of Breda. Faithfully translated from the French original* (EPBS-8), came off the printing press of Pieter Verhaghen. This is a faithful translation of the French articles of capitulation, the only addition being a pair of manicules next to the note about the articles refused. A verbatim copy of this pamphlet was printed in Amsterdam by Pieter Walschaert (EPBS-9), acknowledging Verhaghen on the title page.

Verhaghen's version was also reprinted without acknowledgement by another Dordrecht printer, Nicolaus Vincentsz (EPBS-10), whose title and text are identical except for the addition of a brief and breathless paragraph of news on the last page, about an opportunist bit of freebooting against a convoy of tourists heading to view the captured town:

Yet our men got booty, captured from certain citizens, with a great lady with the Lord of Sackis, with two coaches, many carriages and wagons, 116 horses and much baggage, there was a priest with them who would not give himself captive, with a young man from Antwerp, they were struck dead, the enemy's men ran away despite being as strong as our men, thanks be to God.

Another Dutch translation is independent of the Verhaghen–Walschaert–Vincentsz version: *Conditions and articles of the surrender of the town of Breda, agreed upon between the Marquis of Spinola and the deputies of the*



*aforesaid town. Translated from the French into our Dutch language* (EPBS-11), printed by Matthijs Bastiaensz in Rotterdam. Unlike the previously mentioned versions, only the articles for the town are included, and they are printed in separate but unnumbered paragraphs. Like the others, it mentions that it is a translation from the French, and it is a much more literal translation, in terms of both lexis and syntax.

The question of honour discussed by Swart (2016) is very relevant to the Verhaghen–Walschaert–Vincentz version, but other considerations seem more applicable to Bastiaensz's. While the official agreements were each produced in duplicate on parchment, it would have been necessary to produce additional copies of at least the main points, so that officers would know what orders to give their men, and citizens would know what their rights were under the agreement. As a matter of pure practicality, there were thousands of people in Breda and elsewhere in the Netherlands who were granted rights under the treaty. Article 9 of the conditions granted to the townspeople reads:

Should the city not be sufficiently provided with ships and wagons to accommodate the citizens and denizens who wish to depart with their goods and furniture, it is agreed and granted that during the aforesaid period of two years other ships and wagons may be brought from Holland or elsewhere for that purpose, and will then be free to return: all without requiring any other passport than this present treaty.

Simply knowing that they had such rights under the treaty was facilitated by there being printed copies available. Bastiaensz's Rotterdam edition meets this need.

### **Dutch perspectives**

There is yet another, more subtle, rhetorical effect to the publications: the Dutch versions not only showed that the garrison had surrendered with honour, but also the limits of what terms could be expected. Waesberghe explicitly noted that two conditions had been rejected: the exercise of the Reformed religion, and the Prince of Orange's hereditary rights of lordship. The Dutch translations printed in Dordrecht and Amsterdam not only included his prominent note to this effect, but picked it out with manicules. Dutch news culture had developed a relatively strict separation of reporting and commentary, with newspapers and newsbooks usually dry and factual (Weduwen, 2017), but a profusion of treatises, songs, satires, engravings and sermons appearing separately, more than making up for the lack of direct

commentary in news reports (Harline, 1987). These small additions could be telling – but it is hard to interpret them without looking at the wider culture of commentary upon current affairs.

Pieter Walschaert, printer of the terms in Amsterdam (EPBS-9), in 1625 also brought out a controversial pamphlet, *Basuyne des oorloghs, ofte Waerschouwinghe, aen de Vereenichde Nederlanden, dat de selvige in den oorloge met den coningh van Spaengien moeten continueeren* (Trumpet of war, or warning to the United Netherlands that they must continue the war against the king of Spain). Penned by a pseudonymous “Honest Patriot”, the pamphlet reminded its readers that the very things for which the Dutch were fighting, after survival, were “their privileges, liberties, rights, temporal means, and furthermore their admitted well-founded freedom of conscience, accepted and instituted public exercise of the True Christian Reformed Religion” (Oprecht, 1625, sig. A3) – precisely the rejected articles maniculised in EPBS-9. These were non-negotiable for the Dutch and for the king of Spain, who in the pamphlet is accused of a catalogue of all imaginable vices, from envy, anger and pride to a desire for universal monarchy; in what seems an oblique reference to Breda, it is claimed that once he set his sights on any piece of territory, no matter how small, he would spare no expense to make it his own. His four chief supports are said to be the Devil, the Antichrist, the Jesuits (sworn enemies of true religion), and the Spanish Council of State, each member of which was possessed by at least ten demons. Breda is not mentioned explicitly, but on this reading of current events, any kindness Spinola might seem to show could only be a trap: peace with Spain was ultimately impossible.

Less demoniacally, the Amsterdam news commentator Nicolaes van Wassenaer, in his overview of events from April to October 1625, was dismissive of the suggestion that Spinola had been particularly clement. He remarked that while the articles “in the first instance had a fine sheen”, they concealed many inconveniences, were depopulating a fine town, and that it was particularly “odious” that respectable citizens “might not lay their dead in their forefathers’ tombs in the churches” (Wassenaer, 1625: 81v). The vehemence of the Honest Patriot’s warning to his countrymen, and Wassenaer’s waspish insinuation that people had been too ready to see the terms as advantageous, suggest that there was a constituency of opinion they both felt needed contradicting. Perhaps the propaganda effect of publishing the full articles had, in some quarters, backfired.

## THE INFORMATION STRATEGY IN THE HABSBURG CAMP

In contrast to their Dutch counterparts, pro-Habsburg news publications were strangely reticent about the full terms of surrender of either the garrison or the town of Breda. It was not until the following year that the capitulations were published in full in Habsburg territory, in a work of history that was the centrepiece of the long-term communication strategy: a chronicle of the siege by Spinola's Jesuit confessor, Herman Hugo, published from the Officina Plantiniana, one of the most prestigious publishing houses in Europe, as *Obsidio Bredana, Armis Philippi IIII, Auspiciis Isabellæ Ductu Ambr. Spinolæ Perfecta* (the siege of Breda by the arms of Philip IV, under the auspices of Isabel, and the leadership of Ambrogio Spinola). The frontispiece was a magnificent engraving designed by Rubens, and the book was a great success. It was reprinted in Milan (1627), went into a second Antwerp printing (1629), and was translated into Spanish (1627), two English versions (1627, 1628), and French (1631). Important as Hugo's work was in shaping perceptions of the surrender of Breda, the siege was old news by the time it was printed. We will have cause to refer to Hugo in the pages that follow, but have not included the relevant parts of his work in the corpus of news publications.

The terms of surrender of Breda were in many ways comparable to those of other towns in the Low Countries in the period 1582-1606, including the stipulation that Protestant inhabitants would have two years to make up their minds whether to leave or to conform: the same had been granted to Ghent in 1584 and Brussels in 1585. When Antwerp had surrendered in 1585, Protestant inhabitants were given an exceptional four years to sell up or convert. In other respects, the terms were also comparable to the capitulations that Spanish commanders had granted German towns earlier in the 1620s.

Nevertheless, Hugo recorded that Spinola was criticised for showing too much leniency. There were those who thought that rather than grant the Dutch almost all the terms they requested, as soon as they requested them, he should have let them stew for a few days longer, until the pangs of hunger drove them to beg for mercy on any terms. Hugo's riposte was that such pettily vindictive critics had failed to understand the weightier concerns that motivated Spinola, who knew that every day the king's army was unnecessarily tied up at Breda was a day too long. Hugo did not explicitly mention that the besieging army was rapidly dwindling through disease and desertion, but he did emphasise that the king's men had spent the whole winter camped outside the town with precarious supply lines, poor lodgings, and infrequent pay. He even stated that the besieged Dutch had departed from the town in better health than the troops

who had vanquished them: “they made a far better exterior show than our men, for they had been better lodged, having had the benefit of good fires; and their bread never failed them till the day they marched away” (Hugo, 1627).

Spinola was noted from early in his career for his willingness to make generous concessions in order to achieve his main goal (Lamal and Arblaster, 2022), and it has sometimes been suggested that his clemency at Breda was part of a propaganda strategy to cast the Spanish high command in a chivalrous and compassionate light. But the generosity that would attain such iconic status was largely born of pure pragmatism. The terms of Breda’s surrender were at first not even greeted as a propaganda coup, but seem, rather, to have been regarded as a potential embarrassment. This is in all probability because while perhaps not so exceptionally lenient as sometimes suggested, these terms were lenient enough in comparison to what was happening elsewhere in Europe at the time as to seem overly generous. Accordingly, the emphasis of reporting immediately after the siege somewhat obscured the full extent of the concessions, focusing instead on Spinola’s personal courtesy to the vanquished, and the military supplies that the Dutch had been obliged to leave behind.

### **Abraham Verhoeven reporting on surrenders**

The earliest printed news of the terms under which Breda had surrendered appeared in issue number 51 of the *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*, a news periodical printed in Antwerp by Abraham Verhoeven since 1620 (Arblaster, 2014; Weduwen, 2017). Issue 51 was published on Friday, 6 June, the day after Dutch forces had departed from the town, under the title *New Tidings of the Surrender of the Town of Breda* (EPBS-1)<sup>1</sup>. The report is primarily concerned with the negotiations, rather than their conclusions. It states that “Those within the town demanded many conditions, not all of which were granted”, but without specifying which had been rejected. The terms on which the garrison were to depart were summarised as “with arms and baggage, and colours, with all their sick, and they would be provided with wagons for the purpose”, later adding, “It is said the enemy was granted 2 artillery pieces.” This summarises four of the garrison’s seventeen articles of surrender with tremendous economy and some inaccuracy (see appendix 1). The phrase “It is said” indicates that the report was at least partly based on hearsay.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nieuwe Tijdinghe, van het overghaen der Stadt Breda. Eerst Ghedruct den 6. Iunij. 1625* (Antwerp, Abraham Verhoeven, 1625). For the sake of convenience, the titles of the news pamphlets, plus the citations from them, have been translated into modern English. Both are followed by EPBS – *European News Publications on Breda’s Surrender* – and a number corresponding to the table with the titles in their original language in appendix 2.

Verhoeven went into rather more detail on the concessions granted the townspeople, still providing no more than a bare summary of five of the sixteen terms of their surrender:

The citizens obtained a good agreement, the particular articles of which will soon be published at length. [...] The citizens have two years to leave, if they live quietly without causing scandal. They will have a cemetery for 2 years to bury those of the Reformed Religion. They will not be heavily burdened with soldiers. The ministers or preachers are to leave the city immediately. The citizens will be allowed to go to the United Provinces twice or thrice yearly, provided they obtain a passport from the governor. The fuller particulars will be declared to the reader at the earliest opportunity.

The first and last sentences quoted here indicate that Verhoeven expected to receive the full articles, and intended to print them once he had. So far as we know, this never happened.

There is, however, a frustrating hole in the evidence: issue number 56 of the *Nieuwe Tijdinghen*, printed between 13 and 18 June, is not known to survive, and might have included the fuller particulars promised. Then again, it might have had nothing to do with Breda at all, or have contained an account of the Infanta Isabel's triumphal entry into the town on 12 June (an even more surprising gap in Verhoeven's coverage). Issue 56 might have failed to survive by mischance, but there is also the possibility that it was spiked or recalled: on 21 June, Antwerp's magistrates ordered the suppression of an allegorical print depicting a funeral procession for the turf ship of Breda, accompanied by a satirical dialogue, with a fine of 100 guilders for anyone found to possess a copy. This anonymous print has sometimes been attributed to Verhoeven, and he certainly printed satirical dialogues, so if issue 56 of the *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* contained the same or a similar piece of satire, that could explain its vanishing. There is no way of knowing for sure, but if Verhoeven indeed failed to print the full articles of surrender, this would have been untypical for him but would fit a wider pattern in the reporting.

Verhoeven printed plenty of other terms of surrender, which throw some light on those of Breda. Most notably, when Jülich surrendered to Spinola early in 1622, the "very reasonable conditions" were modelled on those by which the Dutch had taken the town from Archduke Leopold in 1610 (NT 1622 no. 17) and were detailed in the *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* in a special double-length issue (NT 1622 no. 24). When the Dutch garrison at Lippstadt surrendered to a Spanish force in October 1623, another double-length issue (NT 1623 no. 130) detailed 31 articles that are broadly similar to the 33 articles agreed at Breda, casting some doubt on how exceptional those really were.

Such terms stand in marked contrast to surrenders reported from elsewhere. Four years previously, during the mopping up of the Bohemian Revolt, Verhoeven had reported (NT 1621 no. 84) that when the troops that the Count of Mansfeld had left to garrison Locket finally surrendered to the Count of Tilly, they proposed eight articles of surrender: that the garrison leave with full military honours; with the officers' baggage and horses; with the Count of Mansfeld's personal servants and possessions; that they be convoyed safely to the borders of the Upper Palatinate; that Mansfeld's civilian commissioner, Dr Friedrich Georg von Altenburg, be allowed to leave unhindered with his wife, children, belongings, horses and household; that Tilly provide carts to transport the sick and wounded; that defectors who had previously served the emperor be allowed to leave together with the rest; and that the noble refugees in the town be allowed to depart freely. Tilly granted the first three points and the sixth (the provision of carts), but categorically rejected the rest. Once the town was back in imperial hands, with a Bavarian garrison, it was reportedly penalised with a levy of 200,000 Reichsthalers, while seventeen prominent individuals, Dr Altenburg among them, were imprisoned in the castle awaiting investigation and expecting "a very hard time" (NT 1621 no. 85).

Several of the capitulations at Breda seem designed specifically to prevent such eventualities. Spinola made ample concessions relating to the security of civilian administrators and refugees, as well as agreeing that the town not be subjected to any greater exactions than were due from other towns in the duchy, while article 1 of the capitulations of the garrison includes the specification (omitted in every summary published) that:

None of those who draw pay in the service of the States of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, of whatever country or nation they might be, shall be arrested or detained on any pretext whatsoever: even if they formerly served and drew pay from his Catholic Majesty or their serene highnesses the Archduke or Infanta: all shall be allowed to leave.

In France, Louis XIII showed even greater severity towards his rebels. In 1621 he issued a proclamation declaring that everybody within the Huguenot towns of La Rochelle and Saint-Jean-d'Angely was to be regarded as guilty of treason (Declaration, 1621). When Saint-Jean-d'Angely submitted after a hard-fought month-long siege, the face-saving formula of surrender agreed was that the king would proclaim that the town had unconditionally thrown itself upon his mercy, and that by his royal grace he granted pardon to the inhabitants (NT 1621 no. 103[a]). Verhoeven went on to report the far harsher terms of surrender at Clérac (NT 1621 no. 121) and Monheurt (NT 1622 no. 5; Larroque

1880). He seems not to have reported the massacre at Nègrelisse, where civilians were slaughtered and the surrendering garrison hanged, but French royal propagandists declared that this terrible example would serve as a warning of how rebels deserved to be treated (Grand, 1622). While we might now think that the far more humane capitulations his armies granted in Germany and the Low Countries make the king of Spain look clement, it seems that at the time there were those who thought it made him look weak.

The terms conceded at Breda in 1625 were in two respects more restrictive than those at Jülich (1622) or Lippstadt (1623), where the Protestant clergy were left undisturbed and territorial lords (in particular the Elector of Brandenburg) retained their rights. These were precisely the conditions that Dutch pamphlets flag Spinola as rejecting at Breda, and the fact that they had been granted on other recent occasions make them look less of a stretch than they might otherwise seem. The king of Spain's soldiers could apparently be more generous in Germany than within the king's own territory.

On 10 June, Verhoeven printed *Articles or agreement that the citizens of Breda have obtained. With the departure, and the plentiful ammunition found in the same town* (EPBS-2), which includes a list of the munitions found to have been left by the departing Dutch garrison. Two days later, in issue 54, titled *Particular account of all the ordnance, ammunition and other material of war found within Breda, as well as the order in which the enemy departed from the city* (EPBS-3), he gave a more substantial version of this list. The same list would be included in Hugo's history of the siege, where it is identified as an inventory of munitions submitted to Thomas Wingard, lieutenant of artillery. That this was made available to Verhoeven within a week of the surrender shows that he had connections that could, when they wanted, speedily supply him with official documents. It makes the absence of the articles of surrender from his newspaper all the more curious.

Issue 53 (EPBS-2), containing the first version of Wingard's inventory, is also, as far as can be known with certainty, the closest that Verhoeven came to fulfilling his promise to provide "further particulars" of the terms of surrender. Even so, it has nothing like the full list of articles published by Hugo in 1626 or by Dutch pamphleteers in 1625. Despite billing itself as "The agreement that the citizens obtained", it jumbles together seven of the seventeen articles granted the garrison, and one of the sixteen granted to the citizens:

They first desired freedom of religion, but this was immediately refused. They furthermore desired to leave with flying colours and with 4 big guns and two mortars, which was granted. That they should be allowed to transport all their movables, and that 1,200 wagons should be assembled at Geertruidenberg for

the purpose, which was granted. That each should be given respite to sell property. And that it would not be confiscated. The citizens were granted two years for this; the soldiers 18 months. That they would not be obliged to leave before 5 June, was also granted. That they might transport all the ships, was also granted. That the Prince of Orange should keep the movables of his late lord brother that were in the castle, was allowed. This was mutually confirmed, and hostages given.

Besides this summary of the articles and the list of munitions, EPBS-2 also recounts the Dutch garrison's departure, stressing the magnanimous and gentlemanly demeanour of the Spanish high command, especially Spinola himself. This theme would be developed in issue 54 (EPBS-3), which gives the fuller version of Wingard's catalogue but has nothing on the capitulations.

Finally, Verhoeven also brought out a French version of the news carried in his newspaper. This was part of a bilingual broadsheet in Dutch and French. The French text, appearing in the lower half of the page, is entitled *Articles of Breda or the agreement of the burgesses, with the departure, and the plentiful ammunition found in the same town, which surrendered by agreement to His Royal Majesty of Spain on 5 June 1625* (EPBS-4). The accompanying Dutch text is a satire, a fictional dialogue between Frederick of the Palatinate – Bohemia's briefly reigning "Winter King" – and the dying Maurice of Nassau. The upper half is taken up by two large illustrations, one showing Dutch forces leaving Breda and the other depicting Maurice on his deathbed.

The French text of the articles of surrender is very close to the Dutch text of *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* issue 53 (EPBS-2), while the list of munitions is the same as that in issue 54 (EPBS-3). In between this material, it gives an account of the Dutch garrison's departure with previously unpublished details. The text is likely to have been composed on or very soon after 12 June, as it mentions Isabel setting out from Antwerp for Breda early that morning, but not that she arrived that evening.

### **Echoes of Verhoeven in Germany and Portugal**

Unsurprisingly, given the interest with which the rest of Europe had been following news of the siege, Verhoeven's publications were reproduced in foreign parts. One extant publication was based directly on *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* 53 (EPBS-2): a German news pamphlet with the very similar title *Agreement obtained by the citizens and soldiers of Breda. With a summary of the ammunition and victuals found in the city* (EPBS-5). The printer's name and address do not appear on the pamphlet, which perhaps indicates that the news



would be unwelcome in the jurisdiction where it was to be distributed. While for the most part a direct translation, the German text has a telling sentence added at the end. Where Verhoeven's periodical states that "there was only enough grain to last the soldiers a few days", its German counterpart qualifies this: "There was only enough grain to last the soldiers a few days. *But the citizens had suffered no shortages*" (emphasis added), a testament to the rationing that had been imposed in the town during the siege. In *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* 51, in contrast, Verhoeven's correspondent asserts that "*finding themselves in extreme need*, those of Breda began to negotiate a good agreement for surrendering the town to His Majesty" (emphasis added). Given the proclivity to emphasise the effectiveness of one's own side's actions, this suggests that the German publication was the work of somebody sympathetic to the Dutch but obliged to rely upon a pro-Habsburg source for news.

In Portugal (then part of the Spanish monarchy), an almost verbatim copy of the French text appearing under Verhoeven's broadsheet (EPBS-4) was published in Lisbon with the title *Account of the capture of Breda, a town in Brabant belonging to the Prince of Orange, the terms under which it surrendered to Espinola, the general of our army, after a long siege in which it had suffered from hunger, plus an inventory of the ordnance and ammunition that was found within* (EPBS-6). The title page states that it has been "faithfully translated into Portuguese from another publication in French printed in Antwerp". The license for this publication was granted on 18 July, five weeks after the probable printing of the source text in Antwerp, which shows that the news was being spread almost as fast as the public posts could carry it.

The Portuguese news pamphlet translates Verhoeven's text in its entirety, but adds three short items of its own. The tone of these additional items reflects a certain critical distancing from the discourse elaborated by the victors:

Besides this account, letters relate that more than 7,000 people, including women and children, plus 10 nuns living a holy life, starved to death during this very tenacious siege.

And this strength is of the greatest consideration and importance these days.

It is also said that the enemy has fielded 30,000 men, which is an unusually strong force.

The circulation of Verhoeven's publications from Antwerp to other territories is a good example not only of how efficient news networks were in the first decades of the seventeenth century, but also of how no text was copied blindly: both printers taking Verhoeven's texts as their source adapted the account of the surrender to the ideological mindset of their readers.

Verhoeven's summaries of the articles were disseminated internationally, but were not the only version in circulation. Spain, Italy and France received versions of their own, different from Verhoeven's but similar to one another.

### **The official discourse in the Spanish news pamphlets**

Developments in the siege of Breda were followed closely in Madrid. Once the handover had been completed, Spinola despatched a field officer, Fernando de Guzmán, to inform the king that his troops had taken possession of the town (Hugo, 1627). Guzmán was in Brussels by 9 June, when the Infanta Isabel entrusted him with an official despatch of her own, and the Spanish Council of State took official cognisance of the news twenty days later, on 29 June (Lonchay, 1927). However, an enterprising courier had brought the news a fortnight ahead of this, presumably having left before the handover had been completed, so the first intimation reached Madrid on 15 June, Olivares thanking the speedy messenger with 500 doubloons (González Palencia, 1942: 120). It was a summer full of promise for the Spanish monarchy, for the good tidings from Breda coincided with another excellent piece of news arriving at the end of June: the recapture of the Brazilian stronghold of Salvador de Bahía, which the Dutch had seized the year before (Bousard, 2018; Espejo-Cala, 2021).

Guzmán's despatches may have included a full copy of the articles of surrender, but it is also conceivable that the king was in the first instance only provided with what would now be called an "executive summary": a number of articles were time-specific to the days surrounding the handover (such as that troops would be confined to their quarters during the ceasefire between 2 and 5 June, or that the river would be open to transport baggage and the sick out of the town from 2 to 14 June), so would be irrelevant by the time the despatch reached Madrid. As on many other occasions, the content of letters sent to the king in person was conveniently leaked to the press with the aim of notifying the general public of good news.

In Seville, then still a thriving node in the international news market, Juan de Cabrera – one of the most prolific and innovative printers in the market (Espejo and Baena, 2016) – took the lead in disseminating the news that the king himself had received. In the text of his *Conditions under which the city of Breda surrendered to His Excellency the Marquis of Espinola in the name of His Majesty King Philip IV, in this year of 1625. This is a copy of the letter that was sent to His Majesty the King* (EPBS-12), Cabrera boasted of the chain of transmission: from the Low Countries to the king in Madrid, thence to a reputable gentleman in Seville, and so finally into print from his shop. Despite this pedigree, and like Verhoeven's publications and those based on them,

Cabrera's pamphlet contains a somewhat jumbled summary of some of the main terms of surrender, which he prints as numbered articles that bear little relation to the order or the numbering of the original. So, for example, articles 5 and 10 of the conditions of surrender for the town become Cabrera's point 2, reading "that their preachers get out of the town at once, and the inhabitants will not be burdened with greater impositions than other people of Brabant". In all, nine of the sixteen articles for the surrender of the town are edited together into points 1-5, followed by nine of the seventeen articles for the garrison, edited together into points 6-8 (four points with the number 6 being used twice). A number of hypotheses can be formulated about the moment in the transmission at which this cutting, rearranging and renumbering occurred: in the original letter to the king, in the copy sent from court to the gentleman in Seville, in the copy of that letter supplied to Cabrera, or in the printing shop itself. The evidence provided by other printed versions of the capitulations suggest that the numbering may have been Cabrera's, but the cuts and rearrangement had occurred at a much earlier stage.

Another important printer from Seville, Simón Fajardo, published an *Account of the conditions and agreements which, in the name of His Catholic Majesty our master King Philip IV, the Marquis of Espinola negotiated with the governor of the city of Breda* (EPBS-14). This version, which claims to be based on information sent from Antwerp to Madrid, similarly starts with a long preamble summarising the events in the days running up to the surrender, followed by a list of articles that is very close in content to Cabrera's *Conditions* (EPBS-12), despite being numbered 1-18 rather than 1-8. Fajardo's points 1-5 summarise the same four articles (splitting one of them into two) that Cabrera lumps together into point 1: both correspond to articles 1-3 and 13 of the surrender of the town; Fajardo's points 6-7 correspond to Cabrera's point 2, summarising articles 5 and 10 in the original, and so forth. Although their numbering differs, both printers summarise the articles for the surrender of the town that Hugo numbers 1-3, 13, 5, 10, 7, 6, 4 (Cabrera's points 1-5, Fajardo's 1-11). The only difference is that Fajardo inserts a summary of article 11 between 7 and 6, while Cabrera has no version of article 11 (which in the original specifies that the incoming garrison will give as little trouble to the town as possible, but in Fajardo's translation states that the royal garrison will be amicably accommodated). Neither gives any version of articles 8-9 or 12-16.

Likewise, their version of the garrison's capitulations (Cabrera's 6-8 and Fajardo's 12-18) summarise articles 1-6 and 8-10 in order, but Cabrera puts article 17, which specifies the date of their departure, before the rest, and misleadingly runs together articles 6 and 8, which have nothing to do with one another – the Prince of Orange to keep his furniture, and no soldier's departure

to be delayed by debt claims – so that it looks as though the prince’s furniture is not to be seized by creditors. Fajardo keeps article 17 to the end, and also includes article 7 (that soldiers too sick to be moved could leave freely after recovering their health: absent from Cabrera’s version), so there is no confusion about whose debts are meant. Neither pamphlet includes articles 11-16. For them to cover the same articles, and those of the town in the same out-of-order pattern, can hardly be coincidental.

The wording of the articles is mostly similar but never quite the same, suggesting that Cabrera and Fajardo were drawing on different Spanish versions. One substantive difference is that Fajardo’s translation garbles the meaning of the townsmen’s article 6, which is about those “who have served as elders and deacons”. Presumably through unfamiliarity with Dutch Reformed church order, the elders and deacons are turned into citizens who have served as magistrates. Something Fajardo mentions but Cabrera omits is that a lot of munitions were found in the town, but the details remain vague: he does not have Wingard’s inventory.

Cabrera did publish Wingard’s inventory, not in his pamphlet about Breda, but in a gazette containing multiple items of news from several European fronts, the title page of which mentions only the opening story: *Famosa relación en que se avisa de cómo en una gran refriega que hubo entre la caballería de Milán, y Genoveses, mataron al contrario ciento y cincuenta hombres de a caballo y otros muchos soldados, entre los cuales mataron al príncipe Tomas, hijo del de Saboya* (“Famous account of how in a large skirmish between the cavalry of Milan and the Genoese, they killed 150 enemy cavalymen and many soldiers, including Prince Tommaso, the son of the Prince of Savoy” – the final snippet factually inaccurate, as Tommaso would live another thirty years). The printer fills the final page with the list, noting that he is printing it at the request of many curious readers, for “in the many accounts of the events transpiring in the city of Breda, the supplies that were found within have been overlooked”.

Both Juan de Cabrera and Simón Fajardo had claimed that their printed accounts were based on information contained in letters sent to Madrid (Cabrera says to the king, Fajardo merely to the court), copies of which had reached them via prominent gentlemen in Seville. Yet they have essentially the same abbreviated, jumbled version of the articles of surrender, mixed and matched to make different numbers of articles in the printing. Fajardo supplies summaries of two of the articles that Cabrera omits entirely, but Cabrera soon made up the difference, bringing out a pamphlet entitled *Third letter sent to a gentleman of this city, informing him of how the city of Bre[da] is now in the possession of*

*our lord the King, and of the agreements reached to this effect* (EPBS-13)<sup>2</sup>. The title suggests that it formed part of a serial news publication (there will have been first and second letters) containing summaries of international current affairs. It contains several stories beyond the one billed on the title page. It starts by confirming an old piece of news, the capture of San Salvador de Bahía in Brazil, and also provides tidings from other fronts, but most of the pamphlet is devoted to the developments in Breda: the handover; the Infanta's journey to visit the town; and a concise but unnumbered list of the capitulations of both the town and its garrison, as well as a much-abbreviated list of munitions. The same text was also printed in Valladolid by the widow of Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, under exactly the same title, right down to "a gentleman of this city".

The first part of this news pamphlet drew from ordinary and extraordinary reports reaching Spain with international news, the first stated as having come by the post from Flanders that arrived on 3 July (given as "Junio", but clearly a misprint). Depending on the precise timing of transmission between Madrid and Seville, this might make this version the first in print, and something of a scoop for Cabrera. Unusually, the abbreviated articles of capitulation are included in a separate, undated text within the same publication, headlined "Second gazette", and although unnumbered they cover all the ground that Fajardo's version had done (again, in the same order), and sometimes with more detail than he had included. As far as surviving imprints attest, this was the fullest version of the capitulations to be printed in news publications in Spain, or indeed in any part of the Spanish Monarchy.

### Letters to Italy

At least five pamphlets celebrating the end of the siege of Breda were published in Milan, and at least two of these provided versions of the capitulations and the list of munitions. Each had wider dissemination through reprintings in other Italian cities. The first of these publications was *Copy of a letter written from the camp outside Breda on 5 June 1625. Which relates the surrender of that place, with the terms negotiated* (EPBS-15). The publishers

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<sup>2</sup> The long, original Spanish title is: *Carta tercera que vino a vn cavallero desta Ciudad, auisandole como la Ciudad de Bre[da] està ya por el Rey nuestro señor, y de los conciertos que se hizieron antes de darse. Y como el Marques de Espinola entrò dentro de la Ciudad, y tomò la possession della en nombre del Rey don Felipe nuestro señor. Y dase cuenta como salieron de la dicha Ciudad quatro mil y quinientos hombres, y quinientos carros con el bagaje, y como salieron todos con sus mosquetes al hombro, con bala en boca, y mecha encendida, y como el dicho Marques de Espinola hallo despues en la Ciudad mas de cinco mil vezinos, y muchos tiros y gran cantidad de municion. Y tambien se auisa de algunos ordinarios de Flandes y otras partes.*

were the Malatesta brothers, Giovanni Battista and Giulio Cesare, identified on the title page simply as “li Malatesti” (Buono and Petta, 2014). The anonymous writer was presumably attached to one of the Italian contingents taking part in the siege, perhaps as an officer or a secretary. There are numerous instances of letters home from such figures providing copy for Italian news publications (Lamal, 2020). This particular letter is addressed to a lord or noble patron, and the first pages of the pamphlet give a lively account of the heroism of the Italian soldiers who repulsed Frederick Henry’s final attempt to break Spinola’s siege lines on 15 May, especially Sergeant Major Carlo Roma, himself Milanese. The Italians took credit for the victory, but acknowledged that “Spaniards, Walloons and Germans” had provided support.

In this instance, Milan, and the Malatesta brothers, set the tone for Italian reporting. Naples, like Milan, was part of the Spanish Monarchy, and there the *Copy of a letter* was reprinted verbatim by Secondino Roncagliolo<sup>3</sup>. Rome was ruled by Pope Urban VIII, a Florentine whose election to the papacy in 1623 had been celebrated with special delight by the French and the Venetians, who regarded him as an ally in limiting Spanish influence. Nevertheless, when it came to reporting victories against heretics in faraway places, Rome was happy to follow Milan’s lead and celebrate a Spanish triumph. Papal displeasure at a French invasion of Italy may also have played a role, for in the spring of 1625 Italy was the theatre of another proxy war: the Duke of Savoy, in alliance with France, had laid siege to Spinola’s hometown, Genoa (see Parrott and Oresko, 1998) – officially a neutral, independent state but effectively a satellite of Spain, and the provider of banking services essential to financing the war in the Low Countries. The crisis was ended by another Habsburg victory, to add to those in Brabant and Brazil.

The Roman edition of the news from Breda (EPBS-16) was printed by the well-known news publisher Lodovico Grignani (see Casetti Brach and Di Cesare, 2002) to be sold by Marco Antonio Benvenuti on the Piazza Pasquino. Almost a literal copy of the Milanese original, it included one minor change – not to the report itself, but to its peroration. The original text had concluded:

It cannot be denied but that this enterprise was heroic, for the forces of the four crowns of England, France, Denmark, Sweden, as well as Germany and Venice, and the diversion of Italy, were not sufficient to prevent it. It will also be of great consequence not only for these countries of Flanders, but for the affairs of Italy and other provinces. This is what has happened up to the day I write, which is 5 June 1625.

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<sup>3</sup> It was also reprinted by Ardizzoni in Piacenza and by Tebaldini in Bologna (Lamal 2023), but we have been unable to compare those reprints to the original.

There were indeed a small number of Venetians on the Dutch side, under the terms of a defensive alliance concluded in 1619, and here there seems to be somewhat oblique reference to the French siege of Genoa as a “diversion”, and Breda’s surrender freeing Habsburg resources to refocus on problems in Italy. The Roman version cuts all reference to French, Venetians or Italy, saying only that:

It cannot be denied but that this enterprise was heroic, for the forces of England, Denmark, Sweden, and other enemies were not sufficient to prevent it, nor diversions in other parts. This is what has happened up to the day I write, which is 5 June 1625.

There was a Florentine reprint under an altered title, *Overview of the surrender of Breda. With the articles of capitulation* (EPBS-17). This went even further in abbreviating the peroration, reducing it to: “It cannot be denied but that this enterprise was heroic, for the forces of various potentates were not sufficient to prevent it.” Despite such alterations, the terms listed remained exactly the same, and, like the Spanish versions, considerably summarised and rearranged. But, remarkably, rearranged in much the same way as those printed in Spain (see appendix 3).

The Malatesta brothers went on to publish a more circumstantial account of the siege and surrender, running to 16 pages, providing a sketch of the town’s location and history, giving a brief overview of the whole siege, and including not only the capitulations (in exactly the same wording as EPBS-15) but also Wingard’s inventory of munitions. This *Brief overview of the site and position of the town of Breda* (EPBS-18) seems not to have been reprinted elsewhere. Finally, there is a partial pamphlet surviving in the British Library, lacking the titlepage, which is catalogued as *Ragguaglio della resa di Breda. Con le capitolazioni stabilite tra l'eccellentissimo signor marchese Spinola et altri felici successi* (Milano, per Malatesta, 1625) (EPBS-19). This is the same title as the Florentine reprint (EPBS-17) of the *Copy of a letter* (EPBS-15), but the text is different. Where EPBS-17 follows EPBS-15 verbatim up until the final sentence, EPBS-19 is a new translation that includes article 7 for the garrison, that had been missing from EPBS-15, just as Cabrera’s *Third letter* (EPBS-13) did for his *Conditions* (EPBS-12). Like EPBS-12, EPBS-15 also runs together the articles about the Prince of Orange’s furniture and soldiers’ debts (articles 6 and 8), and tries to make sense of the resulting text by mistakenly specifying that the Prince of Orange’s creditors are not to seize his furniture, when the original means nothing of the sort.

That pamphlets in Milan and Seville should make the same mistake about how articles 6 and 8 of the garrison's surrender relate to one another is a strong indication that they were working from a common source. Perhaps the message brought to Madrid and printed by Cabrera as *Conditions*, and the letter sent from camp that became the Malatestas' *Copy of a letter*, were both written on the basis of a working summary provided before the "official summary" had yet been finalised; Cabrera and the Malatestas went on to expand their coverage in the *Third letter* and the *Overview*, respectively, to incorporate the same fuller, more accurate summary of the capitulations. Even more remarkably, the same "official" summary was publicised not only in Seville and Milan, but even in hostile France.

### THE HABSBURG SUMMARY IN FRANCE

Notwithstanding the religious differences between the two countries, the French monarchy supported Dutch independence as another brake on any expansion of Spanish power. Louis XIII had formally entered into a defensive alliance with the Dutch in 1624, encouraged Frenchmen to enter Dutch service, and was heavily subsidising the Dutch war effort. As has already been seen, the taking of Breda was celebrated not only as a victory over the Dutch, but as one achieved in defiance of the four crowns of England, France, Denmark and Sweden. The French monarchy will not have been inclined to promote public awareness of the event.

Just days before the surrender, French publishers were bringing out jubilant reports about how untenable Spinola's positions around Breda had become (*Defaite*, 1625), how much longer the Dutch would still be able to hold out (*Lettre*, 1625), and how Spinola's first overtures for negotiations had defiantly been rejected (*Sommaton*, 1625). Small wonder that a French pamphlet summarising the capitulations should be published under the title *Truthful reduction of the town of Breda and its castle. With the articles agreed upon by both parties*, and open with a paragraph about how many lies had been spread. The Universal Short Title Catalogue lists five editions of this: three without a printer's name or address, one of these from the Southern Netherlands (USTC 1509118) and two from France (USTC 6019892; 6019909); one printed in Lyon by Claude Armand (USTC 6903658); and another in Toulouse by Jean Boude (USTC 6808975). The Toulouse edition declares on the title page that it follows "the copy printed in Paris", but no Paris edition is known to survive, unless this refers to one of the anonymous French editions. Two editions have been consulted, that from the Southern Netherlands and that from Toulouse (EPBS-20/21).



The pamphlet from the Southern Netherlands makes a stab at the vocabulary used in France: attempts to reach understandings between the Crown and the Huguenots in sixteenth-century France had led to an unhappy compromise between accepting the self-image of the Huguenots as the True, Reformed Church, and the Catholic view of them as a sect following the heretical teachings of Calvin, and so to refer to them as “the so-called Reformed religion” (“la Religion pretendüe reformée”). Although it would fall out of official use in the seventeenth century, the term was still widely found during the Huguenot Wars of the 1620s. The news pamphlet fails, though, to get it quite right, referring to Dutch Calvinism as “their so-called religion” rather than “the so-called Reformed religion”.

The news is without doubt from the perspective of the victors, with a description of the departing garrison not as a fine body of men but as a rabble:

[The conditions] were put into effect that Thursday morning, with the departure from the city of about 1,500 or 1,600 men in bad order and very visibly marked by the fatigue and hardship that the nine-month siege had caused them, during which more than 3,000 soldiers and 4,000 burgesses had perished, few by arms but most by the miseries and maladies due to a lack of victuals and refreshment.

The *Truthful reduction* is explicit that it provides an abridgement of the articles (“par abbreuvé”), but remarkably it is precisely the same selection of articles, in the same idiosyncratic order, as in both Cabrera’s *Third letter* and the Malatesta *Overview*. This strongly suggests that there was indeed a preferred summary that was printed in key information centres in Habsburg territory (Seville, Milan, and perhaps Brussels in the Southern Netherlands), and that shaped the discourse beyond Habsburg territory (Rome, Florence, Lyon, Toulouse). What is most remarkable is that it was accepted as the news in France, a party to the conflict on the losing side. This is presumably why the French pamphlet from the Southern Netherlands was printed anonymously: so that it could circulate in France without immediately being recognised as foreign, and be reproduced by enterprising printers with plausible deniability.

It is possible that the French version came first, and was translated in Seville and Milan only after Cabrera, Fajardo and the Malatesta brothers had already brought out earlier versions based on a variety of letters from those close to the action. But none of them reproduced the framing texts of the French version, about lies and truth, and the parlous state of the defeated garrison, which suggests that they were not drawing on it as their primary source. More probably, newswriters in the Low Countries providing texts to Spain and Italy

were relying on a summary of the capitulations circulated by Spinola's field chancery. After all, access to the original documents, each prepared in duplicate, was initially extremely limited: only Spinola, the Infanta, Justin of Nassau, and Breda town council had copies. For all the variety of narrative details and rhetorical techniques in the published pamphlets of news, their summaries of the capitulations are remarkably uniform. For the speed with which this preferred summary came to be circulated in Spain, Italy, and even France, we should perhaps look to Spinola's secretary, Michel Routart, who countersigned the final agreements with the town and with the garrison. Before entering Spinola's service in 1623 he had worked directly for Philip IV, and within a month of the surrender of Breda, Isabel had appointed him secretary to her Privy Council (de Ridder, 1910).

## CONCLUSIONS

A comparative analysis of the content of twenty-one news publications (broadside, pamphlets and newspapers) containing some versions of the articles of capitulation that were signed at the surrender of Breda in 1625 shows that, despite many superficial differences, there were ultimately three versions in print: the Dutch publication of the full articles, that had no echo in news publications outside the Netherlands; Verhoeven's quick and inaccurate summary, at least partly based on hearsay, which carried the news from the Southern Netherlands to Germany and Portugal; and a preferred summary, perhaps circulated from Spinola's field chancery, which went through a number of iterations in Italy and Spain, and became the only version published in France. This third version provided a list that was remarkably stable even when its items were grouped and numbered in different ways, and could be embedded in an ever-changing variety of narratives and commentary. Quite a different list, Thomas Wingard's inventory of munitions, found its way into all countries except France and the Netherlands: publications based on Verhoeven's texts, as well as publications in Spain and Italy that made use of the preferred summary, all shared an interest in this list, which Cabrera's comment in the *Famosa relación* attests was added to his publications in response to popular demand.

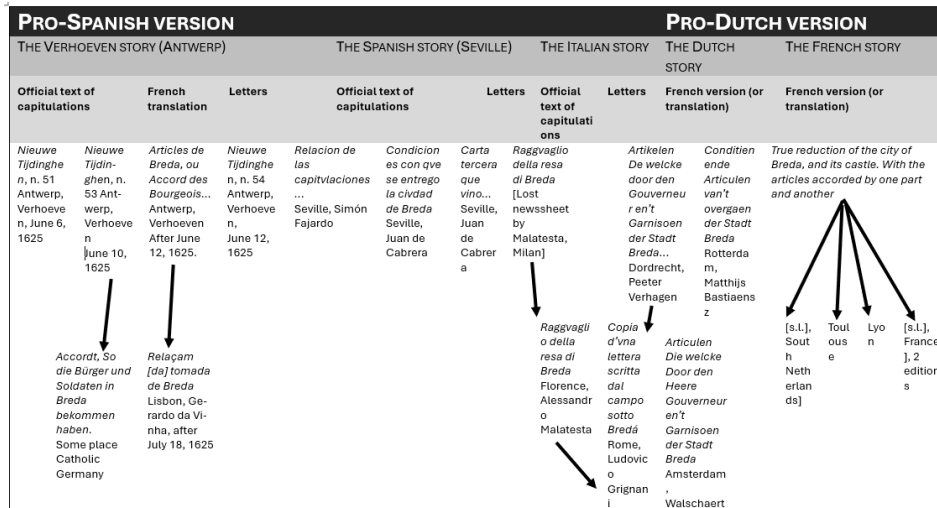


Fig. 1. Relationships between the different versions of the surrender of Breda (1625). Source: Own elaboration.

It is therefore possible to confirm not only the pan-European dimension of journalism at the beginning of the modern age, but its unquestionable capacity for telling the news. The key points of the terms of surrender that the Dutch had been granted reached large parts of Europe in little over a month from the end of the siege. But while Holland saw the articles published in full, the version elaborated in Spain, Italy and France gave prominence to the limitations on Protestants and glossed over the full extent of Spinola's concessions. We know from Hugo that Spinola was criticised as too eager to accept Dutch terms, and can surmise that this was at least in part because it was making Philip IV look comparatively lax in his punishment of rebels. If the way that the terms of the surrender of Breda were reported in Spain, Italy and France was intended to forestall such criticism, this can be regarded as a propaganda exercise by a faction aligned with Spinola, aimed not so much against the Dutch as primarily against rivals within the Spanish monarchy seeking to undermine his standing, and perhaps secondarily to support those in France who deplored royal support for foreign heretics.

This propaganda makes no false claims and no false denials, but obfuscates, giving the terms of surrender “at half lights” (Bacon, 1625/2000), and so serving as a practical example of what contemporary thinkers theorised as “dissimulation” (Snyder, 2009), quite distinct from more obvious cases of contemporary disinformation (see Bellany and Cogswell, 2015). Manuel Sueiro, one of the leading figures in the Spanish secret intelligence networks in the Low

Countries (Echevarría, 1984, 2009), and a man who can be linked tangentially to Verhoeven's propagandising (Arblaster, 2004), was not only the Spanish translator of Hugo's *Obsidio Bredana* but also a translator of Tacitus, whose concept of "arcana imperii" enabled Baroque political thinkers to adapt Machiavellian themes of state secrecy and misdirection while denouncing Machiavelli himself (Echevarría, 1992; Dooley, 1999).

The news publications on the surrender of Breda show not only some of the patterns and practices of news transmission but also how key opinion-brokers who controlled access to official information could seek to influence these by more subtle means than censorship or direct command. Broadly speaking, we could say that there was a difficult balance between full disclosure and dutiful silence when disseminating European news at the beginning of the modern age and, therefore, a dual or hybrid strategy for telling that news.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: The capitulations of the surrender of Breda

Listed below, much abbreviated, are the 17 articles conceded to the departing Dutch garrison [G1-17] and the 16 articles granted to the townspeople [C1-16] that were published in full in Holland in 1625 and in Hugo's *Obsidio Bredana* in 1626. Those marked with an asterisk are not mentioned in any of the abbreviated summaries included in news publications printed in Habsburg territory in 1625.

G1: All the officers and men of the infantry and cavalry, without exception, to leave with full military honours: flags flying, fuses lit, drums, trumpets, and baggage.

G2: Artillerymen and those providing ancillary services to the garrison (chaplains, clerks, engineers, etc.) also to leave freely with their families and belongings.

G3: All the boats in Breda to be used to transport officers' belongings and the sick; afterwards to be free to return to Breda or not according to the owner's choice, and the river to be kept open to navigation for 12 days for this purpose.

G4: The besieging army to make sufficient wagons available to transport the garrison's belongings, with sureties provided for their return.

G5: The governor to make choice of four cannons and two mortars to take with him.

G6: The Prince of Orange to have six months to have his furniture fetched from Breda Castle or otherwise make arrangements for its disposal.

G7: Anybody unable to leave on the appointed day due to sickness to be allowed to remain until healthy and then be free to leave on the same conditions as the rest.

G8: Nobody belonging to the garrison to have their departure delayed by debt claims.

G9: Soldiers owning property in the town to have 18 months to arrange for its disposal.

G10: Prisoners on either side to be released immediately without ransom.

\*G11: Members of the garrison to retain any booty in their possession as their own property.

\*G12: The governor to be provided with safe conduct for a messenger to communicate the articles of surrender to the Prince or Orange before 5 June.

\*G13: A ceasefire to take effect immediately; soldiers to be restricted to their quarters.

\*G14: Two hostages to go with the garrison to Geertruidenberg until the expiry of the 12 days allowed for the transportation of baggage and the sick by river.

G15: Both sides to exchange hostages as sureties for the fulfilment of the articles.

\*G16: Hostages provided by the garrison to be released upon the garrison's departure.

G17: The garrison to depart the town early on the morning of Thursday, 5 June.

C1: Pardon and oblivion granted to every inhabitant of Breda for any past offence.

C2: Citizens free to remain for two years without any religious tests, provided they give no scandal, and free to make arrangements to dispose of their property as they see fit.

C3: Citizens free to leave at any time within those two years and to dispose of their property as they see fit, with freedom of movement in royal and neutral territory.

C4: Travel to the United Provinces to be permitted under passport four times per year.

C5: Preachers free to depart at once with families and goods, and to have two years to make arrangements for any property they own in the town.

C6: Elders, deacons, and other functionaries of the Reformed Church to be included in the terms. [Ambiguously worded but seeming to mean they should enjoy the rights of other citizens rather than leave at once like the preachers.]

C7: Any civilians involved in army finance to have the same freedoms as others and to be able to retain their ledgers without enquiry.

\*C8: Boatmen with boats in Breda free to depart with their boats as they see fit.

\*C9: If there should not be sufficient carts or boats to transport the goods of those departing within two years, they are free to fetch carts or boats from elsewhere.

C10: No exactions to be levied beyond those also levied on other towns in Brabant.

C11: The royal garrison to be lodged with the least inconvenience to citizens.

C12: All citizens and denizens currently absent from town to be free to return and to enjoy the same rights under this agreement as any others; outsiders who had taken refuge in the town to be free to leave with their belongings.

C13: A garden to be provided as a Protestant cemetery for the following two years, with freedom to transport bodies out of the town for burial if preferred.

\*C14: Sentences of the magistrates and the criminal court of Breda to retain their force.

\*C15: The town's creditors free to claim any repayment, interest or annuities due.

\*C16: Spinola to have the agreement ratified by the Infanta by letters patent under her great seal within fifteen days.

## Appendix 2: European news pamphlets on Breda's surrender (EBPS)

BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS	
EPBS-1	<i>Nieuwe Tijdinghen 1625 no. 51</i> <i>Nieuwe Tijdinghe, van het overghaen der Stadt Breda.</i> Antwerp, Abraham Verhoeven, 6 June 1625.
EPBS-2	<i>Nieuwe Tijdinghen 1625 no. 53</i> <i>Articulen ofte Accort dat de Borghers van Breda becomen hebben. Met de wt treckinghe, ende groote Amunitie ghevonden inde selve Stadt</i> Antwerp, Abraham Verhoeven, 10 June 1625
EPBS-3	<i>Nieuwe Tijdinghen 1625 no. 54</i> <i>Particuliere verclaringhe van allen t'Gheschut, Ammonitie, ende andere ghereetschappe van Oorloghe, binnen Breda ghevonen is. Noch in wat Ordre den Vyandt de stadt verlaten heeft</i> Antwerp, Abraham Verhoeven, 12 June 1625
EPBS-4	<i>Articles de Breda, ou Accord des Bourgeois, avec le sortiment, &amp; gra[n]de Amonition trouuée dedans la mesme Ville, &amp; se rendit avec appointeme[n]t a sa Royale Majesté d'Espagne le 5. de Iuing, 1625</i> Antwerp, Abraham Verhoeven, 1625
EPBS-5	<i>Accordt, So die Bürger und Soldaten in Breda bekommen haben. Mit verzeichnuß. Der Amunion und Victualien, so in der Stadt gefunden seindt worden</i> [Germany], 1625
EPBS-6	<i>Relaçam [da] tomada de Breda [ciu]dade de Brabancia, so principe d'Orange, as capitulaçoês com que se entregou ao Marques de Espinola General de nosso exercito, despois de largo cerco com que se esteue oprimida de some; &amp; o inuentario do que nella se achou de peças de artelharia, &amp; miniçoês.</i>

	<i>Traduzida em Portugues de outra impreßa em Anvers em lingua Francesa fielmente</i> Lisbon, Gerardo da Vinha, 1625
EPBS-7	<i>Articles Demandez par le Gouverneur &amp; la Garnison de Breda &amp; Articles demandez par ceulx de Magistrat de la ville de Breda</i> Rotterdam, Isaac van Waesberghe, 1625
EPBS-8	<i>Artikelen De welke door den Gouverneur en't Garnisoen der Stadt Breda versocht, ende met den Marquis Spinola veraccordeert zijn. Mitsgaders D'Artijckelen die door den Magistraet der Stadt Breda versocht ende geaccordeert zijn. Wt het Fransoys ghetrouwelijck verduytscht</i> Dordrecht, Peeter Verhaghen, 1625
EPBS-9	<i>Articulen Die welke Door den Heere Gouverneur en't Garnisoen der Stadt Breda versocht ende met den Marquis Spinola veraccordeert zijn. Mitsgaders D'Artijculen die door den E. Magistraet der Stadt Breda versocht ende geaccordeert zijn. Wt het Fransoys ghetrouwelijck verduytscht. Eerst Ghedruckt tot Dordrecht by Pieter Verhaghen</i> Amsterdam, Pieter Walschaert, 1625
EPBS-10	<i>Artikelen De welke door den Gouverneur en't Garnisoen der Stadt Breda versocht, ende met den Marquis Spinola veraccordeert zijn. Mitsgaders D'Artijckelen die door den Magistraet der Stadt Breda versocht ende gheaccordeert zijn. Wt het Fransoys ghetrouwelijck verduytscht.</i> Dordrecht, Nicolaus Vincentsz, 1625
EPBS-11	<i>Conditien ende Articulen van't overgaen der Stadt Breda, Gheackordeert Tusschen den Marquis Spinola ende Ghedeputeerde der voorsz Stede. Overghezet uyt de Fransoysche, in onse Nederlandsche sprake</i> Rotterdam, Matthijs Bastiaensz, 1625
EPBS-12	<i>Condiciones con qve se entrego la ciudad de Breda, al excelentissimo señor Marquès Espindola, en nombre de su Magestad el Rey nuestro señor Felipe Quarto. En este año de 1625. Este es traslado de la Carta que vino a su Magestad El Rey nuestro señor</i> Seville, Juan de Cabrera, 1625
EPBS-13	<i>Carta tercera qve vino a vn cavallero desta Ciudad, auisandole como la Ciudad de Bre[da] està ya por el Rey nuestro señor, y de los conciertos que se hizieron antes de darse. Y como el Marques de</i>

	<p><i>Espinola entrò dentro de la Ciudad, y tomò la possession della en nombre del Rey don Felipe nuestro señor. Y dase cuenta como salieron de la dicha Ciudad quatro mil y quinientos hombres, y quinientos carros con el bagaje, y como salieron todos con sus mosquetes al hombro, con bala en boca, y mecha encendida, y como el dicho Marques de Espinola hallo despues en la Ciudad mas de cinco mil vezinos, y muchos tiros y gran cantidad de municion. Y tambien se auisa de algunos ordinarios de Flandes y otras partes</i></p> <p>Seville, Juan de Cabrera, 1625 [Reprinted under the same title in Valladolid]</p>
EPBS-14	<p><i>Relacion de las capitvlaciones, y conciertos que en nombre de la Catolica Magestad del Rey nuestro señor don Felipe IIII. tratò el señor Marqués Ambrosio Espinola con el Governador de la Ciudad de Breda, para auersela de dar y entregar obediente a su Real Corona, se las concedio en la forma siguiente.</i></p> <p><i>Juntamente se auisa el uúmero de la gente de guerra que salio della, y lo que se les permitio que sacassen: las cosas de gran valor que se hallaron en la Ciudad, y otras cosas de sumo gusto. Dicho por menor, còforme se auisa de la ciudad de Amberes a la villa de Madrid Corte de su Magestad. Tratado y concedido a dos de Iunio de 1625. años. Auisase tambien de las treguas y pazes que el gran Turco ha hecho con el Emperador de Alemania</i></p> <p>Seville, Simon Fajardo, 1625</p>
EPBS-15	<p><i>Copia d'vna lettera scritta dal campo sotto Bredá</i></p> <p><i>Adì 5. Giugno 1625. Quale racconta la resa di quella piazza, con le Capitulationi stabilite trà l'Eccelentiss. Sig. Marchese Spinola Generalissimo delli Esserciti intrati per S. M. in Alemagna, e Governatore Generale nelli Stati di Fiandra. Et altri felici successi occorsi innanzi à questa resa</i></p> <p>Milan, Malatesti, [1625]</p>
EPBS-16	<p><i>Copia d'vna lettera scritta dal campo sotto Bredá. Adì 5. Giugno 1625. Quale racconta la resa di quella piazza, con le Capitulationi stabilite trà l'Eccelentiss. Sig. Marchese Spinola Generalissimo delli Esserciti intrati per Sua Maestà in Alemagna, e Governatore Generale nelli Stati di Fiandra. Et altri felici successi occorsi innanzi à questa resa. In Milano, &amp; di nuouo ristampa in Roma</i></p> <p>Rome, Lodovico Grignani, 1625</p>
EPBS-17	<p><i>Raggvaglio della resa di Breda. Con le Capitulationi stabilite trà l'Eccelentiss. Sig. Marchese Spinola Generaliss. delli Esserciti entrati per S. M. in Alemagna, e Gou. Generale nelli Stati di Fiandra. Et altri</i></p>

	<i>felici successi occorsi innanzi à questa resa</i> Florence, Alessando Frescobaldi, 1625
EPBS-18	<i>Breve raggvaglio del sito, e positvra della villa di Bredà, Et in che modo, e quando diuenero Padroni di essa gli Conti di Nassai, detti poi Prencipi d'Orange; E quante volta in che maniera, ed in che tempo l'hanno persa, e recuperata; E come vltimamente s'è resa all'Eccellentissimo Sig. Marchese Spinola, con l'Inuentario delle monitioni, e stromenti militari trouati in essa nella sudetta resa</i> Milan, Malatesti, [1625]
EPBS-19	Titlepage lacking [Ragguaglio della resa di Breda. Con le capitolazioni stabilite tra l'eccellentissimo signor marchese Spinola et altri felici successi] [Milan, Malatesta, 1625]
EPBS-20	<i>Redvction veritable de la ville de Breda, et de son chasteav. Ensemble les Articles accordez tant d'une part que d'autre</i> n. p. [Brussels?], 1625
EPBS-21	<i>Redvction veritable de la ville de Breda et de son chasteau. Ensemble les Articles accordés tant d'une part que d'autre</i> Toulouse, Jean Boude, 1625

### Appendix 3: The capitulations summarised in Habsburg lands

<b>The order in which the capitulations of the town were summarised in news publications in Habsburg territory, regardless of how grouped or numbered</b>								
<i>Nieuwe Tijdinghen</i> 51, Verhoeven (EPBS-1)	2	13	11	5	4			
<i>Nieuwe Tijdinghen</i> 52, Verhoeven (EPBS-2)	2-3							
<i>Articles</i> , Verhoeven (EPBS-4)	2-3							
<i>Relaçam</i> , Vinha (EPBS-6)	2-3							
<i>Condiciones</i> , Cabrera (EPBS-12)	1-3	13	5	10	7		6	4
<i>Carta tercera</i> , Cabrera (EPBS-13)	1-3	13	5	10	7	11	6	4
<i>Relacion</i> , Fajardo (EPBS-14)	1-3	13	5	10	7	11	6	4
<i>Copia d'una lettera</i> , Malatesta (EPBS-15)	1-3	13	5	10	7	11	6	4
<i>Ragguaglio</i> , Malatesta (EPBS-19)	1-3	13	5	10	7	11	6	4
<i>Reduction veritable</i> , anon. (EPBS-20)	1-3	13	5	10	7	11	6	4



<b>The order in which the capitulations of the garrison were summarised in news publications in Habsburg territory, regardless of how grouped or numbered</b>									
<i>NT 51, Verhoeven</i> (EPBS-1)	17	1	7	4					
<i>NT 52, Verhoeven</i> (EPBS-2)		1	5	4	9	17	3	6	15
<i>Articles, Verhoeven</i> (EPBS-4)		1	5	4	9	17	3	6	15
<i>Relaçam, Vinha</i> (EPBS-6)		1	5	4	9	17	3	6	15
<i>Condiciones, Cabrera</i> (EPBS-12)	17	1-6		8-10					
<i>Carta tercera, Cabrera</i> (EPBS-13)		1-6	7	8-10	17				
<i>Relacion, Fajardo</i> (EPBS-14)		1-6	7	8-10	17				
<i>Copia, Malatesta</i> (EPBS-15)		1-6		8-10	17				
<i>Ragguaglio, Malatesta</i> (EPBS-19)		1-6	7	8-10	17				
<i>Reduction veritable, anon.</i> (EPBS-20)		1-6	7	8-10	17				