

The economics of 17th-century newspapers



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The economics
of 17th-century
newspapers



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Introduction:
The news market

What did a
17th-century
newspaper look
like?

News-
correspondence
friendships

The market value
of newspapers

Literature



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The news market

Preconditions:

- ▷ Cheap rag paper
- ▷ A generally accessible postal infrastructure
- ▷ Social mobility

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Major European postal routes

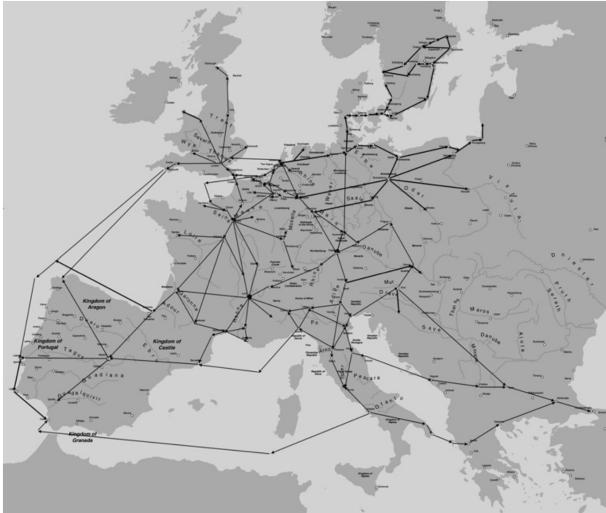


FIGURE 2.13 *Sketch map of major European postal routes operating at various times during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Collaboratively compiled, at the Vienna workshop of the News Networks in Early Modern Europe research project, 13/9/12, by Paul Arblaster, Nikolaus Schobesberger, Mario Infelise, André Belo, Carmen Espejo, Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, with input from Oswald Bauer*

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What did a 17th-century newspaper look like?

- ▷ Quarto or octavo
- ▷ News items with place and date of the correspondence
- ▷ Reported on political, diplomatic and military events
- ▷ Average circulation somewhere between 350 and 400 copies

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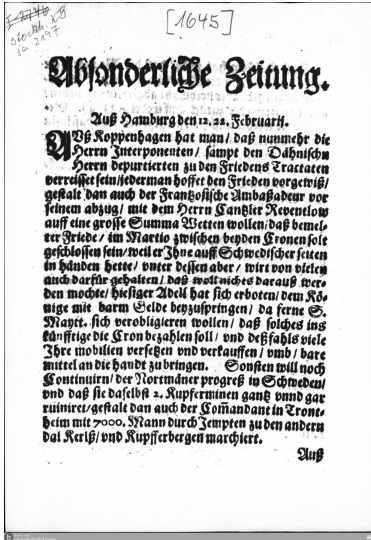


Abbildung: Absonderliche Zeitung : (1645). [S.l.]. Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen / Public Domain Mark 1.0, p. 1

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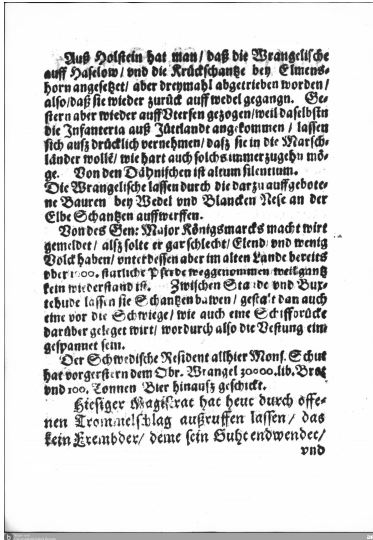


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What did a 17th-century newspaper look like?

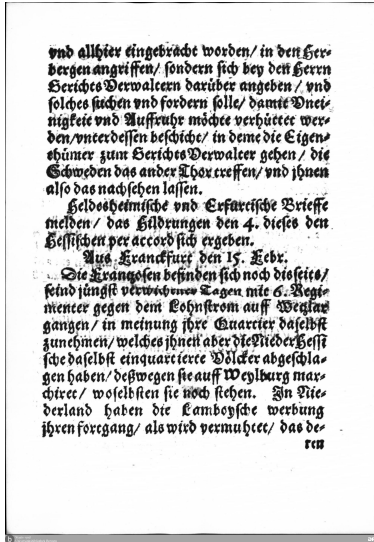


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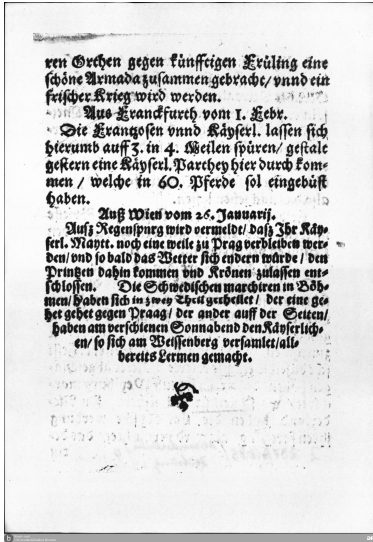


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News-correspondence friendships

- ▷ Princely privileged, generally accessible postal organization emerges
- ▷ The new functional elite is out to secure protection, privileges and monopolies from the ruling elite through news News-correspondence friendships
- ▷ Exchange news for some kind of remuneration
- ▷ Friendships are an essential part of education

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The market value of newspapers

- ▷ Numbers of copies too small to create revenue
- ▷ Resources to keep extensive correspondences, scribes and personnel
- ▷ Handwritten newspapers created more revenue
- ▷ most people engaged in publishing the news didn't stay in the business
- ▷ The only exception to this are postmasters

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- ▷ Newspapers as educational material
- ▷ Topics not available to you
- ▷ The emerging class of functional elites could offer being in touch with the stream of history



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Thank you for your attention!

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Primary literature

- ▷ <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/zeitungen17/periodical/titleinfo/994429>

Secondary literature

- ▷ Bender, Klaus, *Relationes historicae: ein Bestandsverzeichnis der deutschen Messrelationen von 1583 bis 1648, Beiträge zur Kommunikationsgeschichte*, 2 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1994).
- ▷ Droste, Heiko, and Madeleine Hurd, *The Business of News, Library of the Written Word*, volume 86 (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2021).
- ▷ Hillgärtner, Jan, 'Newspapers and Authorities in Seventeenth-Century Germany', in *Print and Power in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)*, ed. by Nina Lamal, Jamie Cumby, and Helmer J. Helmers, *Library of the Written Word*, volume 92 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), pp. 134–48.
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- ▷ Weber, Johannes, 'Strassburg, 1605: The Origins of the Newspaper in Europe', *German History*, 24.3 (2006), pp. 387–412.

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