

Between History and Periodicity: Printed and Hand-Written News in 18th-Century Portugal

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Abstract

What news became printed news in 18th-century Portugal? How was information conceived, exchanged and read? Drawing on Ph.D. research, this paper attempts to make sense of the most important Portuguese periodical printed during the first half of the 18th century: the Lisbon gazette, called *Gazeta de Lisboa*. The analysis is undertaken from a comparative perspective, considering the Portuguese gazette as part of an intertextual European whole. The paper will concentrate on two particular aspects: in the first place, the production of the *Gazeta* as “literary genre” from the point of view of its editor, stressing the affinities between the writing of the news and the task of the historian’s analysis. This will lead us to the periodical’s main paradox: information about events occurring in the present was somehow systematically devalued.

Historical discourse was also present in the hand-written newspapers that circulated in Portugal in the same period. Together with the information transmitted by simple letters, manuscript periodicals, possessing a title and a regular date of issue, played a major role in the exchange of information in the 18th century, circulating within the same networks as the printed periodical press. I will show that, rather than speak of possible conflict, we should speak of the complementary roles of these two media. In the end, beyond the surface of the written text, there lies a complex landscape of social relations involved with information.

Keywords

early modern gazettes; early modern historiography; print and scribal culture; learned culture; history of reading; social control over information; 1755 Lisbon earthquake; Monterroyo Mascarenhas

I

I. a) The Earthquake

On November 1st 1755, at about 9:40 a.m., an enormous earthquake, followed by a tidal wave and a succession of fires, devastated the city of Lisbon. Thousands of people perished under the ruins or in the flames. Innumerable houses were destroyed or affected, including some of the most important churches, palaces and royal buildings of the Court of Portugal. Five days later, the weekly

Lisbon gazette, the *Gazeta de Lisboa*, the only printed periodical published at the time in Portugal, reported the event as follows:

The first day of this month will be remembered throughout the centuries because of the earthquakes and fires that have destroyed a large part of this city; fortunately, the safes of the royal exchequer, as well as those of many private citizens, have been recovered from the ruins [*Gazeta de Lisboa* (GL), No. 45, 1755]¹

This was all the *Gazeta* had to say in its first issue after the terrible catastrophe. Memorable though the event was to become in the future, nothing was recorded that a 21st-century reader would consider essential reporting — no details about the exact circumstances surrounding the event, when and where, what parts of the city were affected, the main buildings that were ruined, the number of victims, what happened to the royal family, what happened in the city over the following days, etc. One week later (November 13th), information was just as scarce, consisting of another few lines concerning the repair work being carried out to the royal archives.

The Portuguese gazette's almost total silence on the subject of the great earthquake has not gone unnoticed by Portuguese historians, but it was dismissed as a confirmation of the lack of historical interest shown by such Old Regime periodicals². In my opinion, this is a clear case of anachronism and the question should be inverted: it is the "silence" that requires explanation. In fact, the brief news that was published in the gazette should lead us to raise a number of general historical questions. How was information conceived, written, exchanged and read in Early Modern Portugal? What was the role of printed information in such an era? The aim of this paper is not to give a general answer to these questions, but to approach such problems through the particular focus of the *Gazeta de Lisboa*³.

I. b) Political restraint

When the Lisbon gazette was first published in August 1715, there were already several periodicals of the same kind in existence throughout Europe. In fact, we may see printed gazettes as a particular typographic product that spread all over Europe from the 17th Century onwards⁴.

¹ "O dia 1º do corrente ficará memorável a todos os séculos pelos terramotos e incêndios que arruinaram uma grande parte desta cidade; mas tem havido a felicidade de se acharem na ruína os cofres da fazenda real e da maior parte dos particulares".

² See, for example, the work of José Tengarrinha: *História da imprensa periódica portuguesa*, Lisboa, Ed. Caminho, 1989 [1965].

³ For a more detailed analysis of the gazette's information about the Lisbon earthquake, see my article, «A *Gazeta de Lisboa* e o terramoto de 1755: a margem do não escrito» (Belo, 2000)

⁴ See Jeremy Popkin, "L'histoire de la presse ancienne: bilan et perspectives" in Henri Durantou, Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rétat (eds.), *Les gazettes européennes de langue française (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, Table Ronde Internationale Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 1993, p. 300. For more recent comparative contributions, including the circulation of manuscript news, see Henri Durantou and Pierre Rétat (eds.), *Gazettes et information politique sous l'Ancien Régime*, Centre d'Etudes du XVIIIe siècle, Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1999; Brendan Dooley and

Although the periodicity, publishing and legal existence of such gazettes might differ from state to state, they formed a sort of large international text. Foreign gazettes were well-known to Portuguese readers before 1715, when gazettes written in Portuguese reappeared in the kingdom⁵.

International information itself (usually called ‘political’ news) — focusing on diplomatic events, treaties, warfare, ambassadors’ activities and the representation of royal families at Court ceremonies — represented the most important part of the text of the new Portuguese gazette. In fact, most of its content was a translation from foreign gazettes. Once again, this was not original. In European gazettes, foreign news prevailed over domestic news at least until the end of the 18th century⁶. This prevalence can certainly be explained by the existence of powerful political control, both formal and informal, over the publication of domestic information. The apparently insignificant size of the news items in the Lisbon gazette concerning the earthquake of November 1755 was thus not exceptional: it was the traditional way of publishing Court information all over Europe. It had its logical counterpart in the fact that foreign gazettes issued much more information about the catastrophe than the Portuguese gazette. Conversely, the *Gazeta de Lisboa* reported more about the earthquake’s consequences in the cities of Seville, Cadiz, Cordoba, the Algarve and a number of small Portuguese cities than it did about Lisbon, where destruction was much more severe⁷.

The royal letter of privilege that in May 1715 gave rise to the legal birth of the *Gazeta* took foreign gazettes as the model for the Portuguese newspaper and made no reference to the reporting of domestic information in the new periodical⁸. The privilege, granted to the printer António Correia de Lemos, created a situation of monopoly: no one else was allowed to translate, print or sell printed news translated from foreign gazettes. Granted by a royal court (the ‘Desembargo do Paço’), the gazette was submitted to previous censorship, just like any other printed object in Old Regime Portugal. Monopoly and censorship are basic features for understanding the *Gazeta de Lisboa* in the 18th century: no competitors were allowed to exist and its contents had to be scrutinized weekly by a competent reader who was situated in a position close to the king.

Even though the letter of privilege doesn’t mention them, small items of news provided by the Court had been published in the new periodical ever since its first issue. Not only news about the Court, in fact: the range of (usually short) domestic news published in the *Gazeta* ranged from information about the king and queen’s public movements to news about the main ecclesiastical and noble dignitaries of the kingdom (first rank nobility, bishops, archbishops, governors and militaries, ambassadors). Their births, baptisms, marriages and deaths represented an important part of the periodical’s news. Information concerning political or social dissent was strictly absent from this social

Sabrina A. Baron (eds.), *The politics of information in Early Modern Europe*, London and New York, Routledge, 2001.

⁵ The first periodicals called *Gazeta* in Portugal were the ones published between 1641 and 1647, after the “acclamation” of the Duke of Bragança as king in 1640.

⁶ See Jeremy Popkin, *News and politics in the age of revolution. Jean Luzac’s Gazette de Leyde*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1989, pp. 91-92.

⁷ See Belo, 2000, p. 632 and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, “Le tremblement de terre de Lisbonne dans les périodiques français et allemands du XVIIIe siècle” in Duranton and Rétat, 1999, p. 305.

⁸ Printing privilege granted in Lisbon on May 25th, 1715. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Chancelaria de D. João V, L. 43, f. 219v.

theater. In fact, the gazette was supposed not only to reproduce but also produce the rigid, unequal social order of Old Regime, in other words the order determined by the Court and the king. We know that in the 1740s reference to non-courtly marriages was to be avoided in the news, because that was the king's wish⁹. Popular news items emerged in the gazette only on very rare occasions, being reported as an extraordinary natural event or as a vague, non-individualized backdrop to the representation of Court characters.

If the political dimension — in this sense one of political restraint — of the Court gazettes and particularly of home news is well-known to historians, less has been said about describing it as a “literary genre”¹⁰. And, if we read the newspaper more closely, we understand that it cannot be characterized only by political heteronomy, but also by the autonomy of its discourse. Gazettes were considered by their readers and authors as historical texts. Or, at least, as a minor part of historical discourse, involved in a paradoxical relationship with information occurring in the present.

I. c) Historical discourse and the fear of the present

Between 1715 and 1760, the editor of the *Gazeta de Lisboa* was José Freire de Monterroyo Mascarenhas. Known in the Portuguese “Republic of Letters” for his erudition and his considerable genealogical research, he made an unsuccessful attempt to enter Portugal's most important academy, created in December 1720 by Dom João V, the *Academia Real da História Portuguesa*. According to a letter he wrote to the 4th Count of Ericeira, Dom Francisco Xavier de Meneses, who supported his election, the reason alleged for his exclusion was that he was too busy working on the gazette¹¹. In this letter of self-justification, Monterroyo denies the incompatibility between writing the gazette and conducting research work at the new *Real Academia* and argues in favor of the periodical's utility. However, Monterroyo is indeed more concerned with stressing his skills and experience in the field of historical erudition than with discussing the gazette. Although there may have been reasons for the exclusion of Monterroyo from the new academy that were not mentioned in the letter, we can see that the gazette's rhetorical role is not a central one for Monterroyo himself. Such undermining of importance is connected to the fact that gazettes — and the periodical press in general — were not considered a source of social pre-eminence and authorship in the ‘Republic of Letters’. On the contrary, they could be used to legitimize a decision to exclude Monterroyo from a new and very important source of literary status and authorship: the royal academy, composed of illustrious *Académicos Reais*, a title which would distinguish its members in the future, connecting them directly to royal power. Monterroyo, who had no titles of nobility, no university degrees and had not made a

⁹ Information reported by the editor of the gazette, Monterroyo Mascarenhas, in his correspondence conserved at the Biblioteca Pública de Évora: CVIII/1-4, fl. 7 (letter of 25-2-1741) and 174-174v (14-3-1745).

¹⁰ The most interesting analyses of the text of gazettes, in my view, have come from historians of literature, particularly in France. See Durantón and Rétať, 1999, part III (“Discours”) and Durantón, Labrosse and Rétať, 1993, part III (“Texte et lecture de la gazette”).

¹¹ At least three copies of this letter have been preserved: in Évora (Biblioteca Pública de Évora, CIX 1-4, f. 145-148), in Lisbon (Torre do Tombo [TT], Manuscritos da Livraria, No. 1096) and at the British Library (Add. 15199, fl. 297).

career in administration, was thus left standing at the threshold to an important form of social distinction. He continued with the same work throughout his long literary life: genealogical and heraldic research. This production was largely kept in manuscript form. He also wrote and translated printed news, some shorter (the gazette) and some larger (dozens of other non periodical newsbooks (*papéis*) that were also included in the gazette's letter of privilege). We can say that, while such literary and historical work guaranteed Monterroyo a regular income, it seems to have failed to provide him with a higher social position.

Monterroyo wanted to be considered as both a historian and an author. The word 'journalist' (*jornalista*) was not used in Portugal in the first half of the 18th century, being derived from the French *journaliste* and immediately being given a pejorative sense. The translator and editor of the Portuguese gazette was sometimes referred to as a *gazeteiro* (gazetteer), a name that occurs more than once in the context of satires directed against the gazette. In the advertisements of his own printed works made in the gazette, where his full name seldom appears, Monterroyo is occasionally mentioned as the 'author of the gazette'. In Monterroyo's life, periodical and occasional newsbooks did not give a name to an author. Authors were understood to be authors of books.

The gradual undermining of gazettes and other *papéis* of news can be analyzed through the physical form of the periodical itself. If we consider it as a printed and commercial object, we can see that it had an intrinsic ambiguity. In fact, it was published and distributed to its subscribers on a weekly basis throughout each of the 52 weeks of one year. But the accumulated issues also gave rise to an annual book, a yearbook that gazette readers could either bind themselves or buy in a directly bound form. Each periodical issue contained the typographic features usually found in a book: the gazette's page numbers continued on from those of the previous week. The reading of Monterroyo's correspondence shows us that the selling of annual collections of gazettes could take place several years after their publication: issues that followed on from one another gave rise to annual books, which in turn gave rise to collections of books. This was a common feature of periodicals in the 17th and 18th century in Portugal and other European countries¹².

Thus, retrospectively, the gazette increasingly took on the appearance of a book. More particularly, it was supposed to be a historical book. The annual compilation of gazettes had a different title to the periodical, presented in a book-like title page: it was the *Historia Annual Chronologica, e politica do Mundo...*¹³. Several of the preserved collections of the gazette have this title page, which describes the accumulated content of the gazette as a historical work, divided into several parts. In other sources, such as the royal letter of privilege of 1752, it is said that the author followed a 'not only

¹² See the synthesis of Jean Sgard, «La multiplication des périodiques» in the monumental *Histoire de l'Édition Française*, by Roger Chartier and H.-J. Martin (dirs.), vol. II, *Le Livre Triomphant, 1660-1830*, Paris, Fayard/Cercle de la Librairie, 1990 [1984], esp. pp. 246-248.

¹³ The full title was *Historia Annual Chronologica, e politica do Mundo, e especialmente da Europa onde se faz memoria dos nascimentos, despozorios, e morte de todos os Emperadores, Reys, Principes, e pessoas consideraveis pela sua qualidade, ou empregos; encontros, sitios de Praças, e Batalhas terrestres, e navaes; vistas, e jornadas de Principes, Tratados de Aliança, Tregoa e Paz, com todas as mais acçoens militares, & civis, negociaçoens politicas, & sucessos mais dignos da attenção, & curiosidade.*

Historical, but also Chronological and Geographic method'¹⁴. Skilled readers of the periodical also perceived it in this way. Barbosa Machado, the author of the most important dictionary of Portuguese writers in the 18th Century, the *Bibliotheca Lusitana* (1741-1759), included the compilation of gazettes in the branch of 'secular History'¹⁵. In this metaphorical library, periodicals were not afforded an autonomous place, only books and their authors. Once again, it was "bookishness" that defined authorship: authors of periodicals were denying themselves as authors.

This doesn't mean that we must think of the gazette as a history book and not as a periodical publication. It means that it was a hybrid object intrinsically inhabited by a tension between both forms. This tension is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the gazette's typographic form. Moreover, we can correlate this tension in form with a tension in content, a tension between past and present.

After the appearance of gazettes, in the 17th century, their authors were aware of the difficulty of recording the present. Unlike the events of the past, the present had not yet been turned over. Writing about the present had to be different from historical writing. This contributed to the disqualification of the gazette's discourse when compared to the historical one, a limitation that the authors themselves were well aware of. To quote the father of the French *Gazette*, Théophraste Renaudot, in 1632:

History is the account of things that have happened; the gazette is only the noise that comes from it. The former must always tell the truth. The latter is good enough when it prevents the spread of lies; and it doesn't lie even when it publishes false information that was transmitted as being true¹⁶.

In Renaudot's sentence, the reference to history and the truth is very important. There were role models for the gazette. But there was a contradiction between periodical information and historical method. According to Renaudot, the first echoes of events deserved little credit. Orality and rumors were enemies of solid, document-based history. The distinction between right and wrong, true and false news, required a comparison between different written sources and the elimination of information that was unworthy of credit. Detailed, accurate information and haste were also opposed to one another. The practical consequences of this method were a delay in the reproduction of information. In the 40th edition in 1716, for example, Monterroyo justifies the delay of the 'individual and exact' report on the 'battle of Hungary' with the need to base it on a 'large number of manuscripts and printed papers coming from several Courts'. If gazetteers were to be good historians, they had to wait. In a sense, the historian-gazetteer was afraid of the present.

¹⁴ A letter of privilege granted to Monterroyo following a conflict for its ownership of the gazette with the family of printers and booksellers who had held it since 1715. See *Gazeta de Lisboa*, No. 22, 1752.

¹⁵ Diogo Barbosa Machado, «José Freire de Monterroyo Mascarenhas», *Bibliotheca Lusitana, Historica, Critica e Chronologica...*, «Ophir—Biblioteca Virtual dos Descobrimentos Portugueses», Lisbon, CD-ROM edition, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1998, vol. 2 [1747], p. 854; vol. 4 [1759], p. 660?.

¹⁶ "L'Histoire est le récit des choses advenues; la gazette seulement le bruit qui en court. La première est tenue de dire toujours la vérité. La seconde fait assez si elle empêche de mentir et elle ne ment pas même quand elle rapporte quelque nouvelle fausse qui lui a été donnée pour véritable". From the preface to the *Relation des nouvelles du monde*, March 1632, quoted by Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rétat, «Le texte de la Gazette» in Durantou, Labrosse and Rétat, 1993, pp. 139-140.

With a discourse that was limited by the fact that it occurred in the present, gazettes became a minor part of history: they would consist of a first record of true events, a first analysis of reality. Gazettes could be, at best, an assemblage of materials for the future writing of history. This also explains why it was considered necessary to read gazettes in sequence: in this way, false information could be corrected with the passing of time. We arrive at a paradox that now becomes fully explicit: it was the periodical form of the gazette which prevented it from being history; it had to be published weekly and report versions of events that sometimes the passing of time showed to be false. Because of its implicit contract with the readers, a gazette could not stop to see what happened in the end, when a war was over or all the consequences of a catastrophe had ceased to be visible¹⁷. In this sense, periodicity was a restraint on the discourse used, a restraint that we must add to the political one in our understanding of its information.

II

II. a) Printed and Hand-written News

What has been said until now, I believe, gives us a general framework for understanding the scarcity of printed domestic news in the gazette. My intention was to explain exactly why the short piece of news on the earthquake was the one given and not others. What I wanted to show was that there were political reasons for it, but also reasons connected to the conception of the gazette as a (historical, periodical) discursive genre. To these we might add very practical restraints connected to the demands of typographic work.

But, if we think of the enormous amount of information exchanged all over Europe about the Lisbon earthquake, in all possible forms of media (orality, print, manuscript, theater, engraving), what obviously lies hidden behind the short lines of the gazette is an immense non-printed text. Let us then move away from the earthquake and take our analysis a little further.

It is difficult to visualize our gazetteer-historian at work. However, the letters he addressed to a correspondent in Santarém, Dr. Rodrigo Xavier Pereira de Faria (a notary in the Casa da Misericórdia de Santarém), represent an important source of information for the reconstitution of Monterroyo's work environment. The letters, sent on a regular basis, usually weekly, between January 1741 and October 1749, show us the close connection between hand-written and printed news. To begin with, letters sent directly by correspondents placed in different cities of Portugal or Europe were, together with foreign gazettes, the sources of the newspaper's information. Dr. Pereira de Faria was one of these correspondents, feeding Monterroyo with first-hand information. Prior to Monterroyo's selection, correspondents undertook a first operation of distinguishing and establishing a hierarchy for disorderly events. The gazette's editor lived and worked in Lisbon. Fundamental for him was the constitution of a network of correspondents whom he considered reliable and trustworthy. Information was thus gathered and reported by letter to Monterroyo, who then made his own selection and had his manuscript censored and finally printed. In the course of such a succession of operations, from orality

¹⁷ For the question of news writing in the present, see Shelley Charles, «L'écriture du présent», in Duranton, Labrosse and Réta, 1993, pp. 177-185.

or manuscript into print, an important amount of information would not be published in the *Gazeta de Lisboa*. This happened for a complex number of reasons that, once again, cannot be simply summarized as political restraint: Monterroyo's own criteria of historical credibility or social relevance seem to have been very important in his selection of the news.

Letters are a good source of information: uncensored, they included remarks, comments and important details for understanding both the news that was circulating and the news that was being published in the gazette. If we read the gazettes for the 1740s along with letters written by the reporter, the scarcity of the printed gazette's information makes a lot more sense. Although we have not yet found any letters from Monterroyo contemporary to the earthquake, what he printed was obviously only a small part of the news he accumulated about the event.

The reading of Monterroyo's correspondence with Dr. Pereira de Faria also shows us that the flow of news was not only being sent from Santarém to Lisbon, but that the reverse was also true. Monterroyo sent his own news to Santarém, in his regular letter to Pereira de Faria or in a different pamphlet, usually composed of three to four written pages known as a *folheto* ('leaflet'). This *folheto* was sent either to Pereira de Faria or to Father Luís Montez Mattozo, (an apostolic notary) another key character in the network of information that was built up around the gazette. These *folhetos*, along with a series of other newsletters which undoubtedly circulated¹⁸, may be considered the Portuguese equivalent of the French *nouvelles à la main*, as they have been described in the texts of François Moureau¹⁹.

Montez Mattozo (and Pereira de Faria himself) was similarly responsible for the writing of the hand-written periodical *Folheto de Lisboa*, also entitled *Mercúrio de Lisboa* or *Mercúrio Histórico de Lisboa*. Unlike Monterroyo's already-mentioned *folheto*, it had a large headline that could be printed, drawings or engravings and other features that imitated a printed gazette. The existence of at least three different copies of it in Portuguese archives (the Biblioteca da Academia das Ciências and Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon, and the Biblioteca Pública de Évora) demonstrates the extent of its circulation. This is a clear case of publishing through the manuscript²⁰. Though we still lack essential background

¹⁸ Namely the *Diários*, such as the one attributed to Dom Francisco Xavier de Menezes, of which we know of a copy published by Eduardo Brasão (1943). The recent critical work on the rich collection of newsletters at the Biblioteca Pública de Évora has made it possible to locate another copy of this diary. The collection, 14 volumes dated from 1729 to 1754, is now being printed in a project coordinated by João Luís Lisboa, Tiago C. P. dos Reis Miranda and Fernanda Olival (2002).

¹⁹ See F. Moureau, "Les nouvelles à la main dans le système d'information de l'Ancien Régime", in Idem (ed.), *De bonne main. La communication manuscrite au XVIIIe siècle*, Oxford-Voltaire Foundation and Paris - Universitas, 1993, pp. 117-134

²⁰ On this very important question, see the seminal work of Harold Love, *The culture and commerce of texts. Scribal publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, University of Massachusetts Press, 1998 [1993]. For the circulation of manuscripts in the 16th and 17th-century Iberian world, see the recent book by Fernando Bouza, *Corre manuscrito*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2001. For a systematic approach to "publishing" as a social process in Early Modern times, especially in France, see Christian Jouhaud and Alain Viala (eds.), *De la Publication. Entre Renaissance et Lumières*, Paris, Fayard, 2002.

about its production, copying, trading and the extent of its circulation and reading²¹, we know that it was sent from Santarém to several readers. As with the printed gazette, the *folhetos* could be assembled in one-year volumes, with a different title from the weekly issue: this was the case with the *Anno noticioso e historico*, which was started in January 1740. Like the gazette, the *folhetos* were thus conceived as a periodical publication that gathered together historical material. The *folheto* also imitated the internal structure of printed gazettes: geographical division into ‘chapters’, each one representing the geographical origin of the news, as well as a chronological progression from the oldest to the most recent news.

The hand-written *folhetos* only make sense if we consider a legal regime in which there was a monopoly of printed information. If competition in print was forbidden because of the letter of privilege, it could be carried out at another, less public, level of circulation, through the manuscript. In the first number of the *Folheto* for the year 1740, Luís Montez Mattozo explains to the readers in a prologue (a typical feature in a book) the reasons for the new periodical’s appearance. The reference to the printed gazette is immediate: since its foreign news was too slow in being reported, the *folheto* would announce it sooner; on the other hand, the domestic news that was not usually printed in the gazette would be published in the *folheto*²². At the end of the prologue, an important reference is made to the method of gathering information: only news deserving of credit, either directly eyewitnessed or given by trustworthy correspondents, was to be published. Historical credit seems to have the same grounds both in the printed and in the hand-written gazette.

A systematic comparison between the two periodicals’ news items will certainly reveal other similarities, but also differences in content. For the moment, we may confirm that domestic news was indeed more prolific in the manuscript. To the very restricted social order of the printed gazette, the *folhetos* brought a wider world. The popular element is often present in its news, mostly in contexts of violence and riots. If the fact that news was hand-written in the *folheto* — and thus uncensored — does indeed make a difference, we should not try to see in the manuscript, at least not in this particular case, a clandestine version of the gazette. At the end of the first volume of the *Anno Noticioso...*, Luís Montez Mattozo signs a statement in which he denies the contents of his book in the event of any conflict with God’s commandments or royal dictates.

II. b) Conclusion: a model for the reading of the *Gazeta de Lisboa*

The fact that Monterroyo and his fellow information-gatherers from Santarém exchanged news between one another shows us that printed news and hand-written news were not in conflict with each other and that their roles were complementary. The logic of this complementarity is by no means casual: it is political (based on censorship), technological (based on the difference between print and manuscript), but also sociological. Montez Mattozo’s literary and historical interests belonged to the same world as Monterroyo’s: local erudition, history and genealogy. They were all members of small-sized literary academies in Lisbon and Santarém. They seem to have shared the same conceptions of

²¹ On this subject, see João Luis Lisboa, *Mots (dits) écrits. Formes et valeurs de la diffusion des idées au 18ème siècle au Portugal*, Ph.D. thesis at the European University, Florence, 1998, pp. 377-406.

²² Luiz Montez Matozo, *Anno noticioso e histórico*, Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, vol. I, 1934, “Antiloquio”, p. 1. Available online: http://purl.pt/304/index-HTML/M_index. Html accessed on 4th April, 2004.

history when writing news. They existed in a wider network of social exchange, where not only information circulated, but also other goods, both symbolic and material. The composition and extent of such a network remains to be reconstituted. We can see, for instance, through the letters preserved in the Academia das Ciências (Lisbon), that there was an important relationship between Montez Mattozo and the Convent of the Theatines in Lisbon²³. Through Monterroyo, he was presumably in contact with Dom Francisco Xavier de Menezes, a regular supplier of Court news to the gazette²⁴, thus having access to the Court's own news.

The *Gazeta de Lisboa* was thus situated at the confluence of different networks of manuscript and printed information. Besides periodicals and letters, historical agents had other means of information that were very important and are not considered here: orality and images. They enjoyed a wide range of sources, which they manipulated according to an evaluation of the different social qualities of the different media. We thus reach one of the conclusions of our research: we must always consider the *Gazeta de Lisboa* in a wider context of information. Letters, *folhetos* and other manuscripts are fundamental aids for reading it in a double sense: for reading it methodologically and for reading it historically. The news of the earthquake should not be read alone by the historian because it was not read alone by its readers.

This leads us also to the definition of one model for the reading of the gazette, the one that occurred in the inner circle of the social agents involved with the writing, exchange and publishing of information. I will call it, through an appropriation of literary categories relating to Early Modern Portugal and Spain, a “discrete reading” (*leitura discreta*). The “discrete reading” of the printed gazette was a secondary-level reading. It was produced by the gazetteers or other people who were able to produce and exchange information. As well-informed members of networks where news circulated rapidly and was abundant, they did not read first-hand news in the printed gazette. They learned it from the best placed persons in the Court and they read it in manuscript form before it was eventually published in the gazette. In this restricted public sphere where several sources of information could be manipulated, reading the gazette meant comparing it with other sources — a critical method. To read it was to confirm what was already known by other sources. Particularly in the case of domestic information, what was important was *how* it was written in the gazette, how news became — or did not become — public.

²³ Correspondence addressed to Luís Montez Mattozo: Biblioteca da Academia das Ciências, Manuscritos Vermelhos, 835.

²⁴ Biblioteca da Ajuda, Papéis Avulsos, 54-XIII-13, No. 6.

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