
Introduction

The inclusion of Communication students into university classrooms poses a challenge, since the studies they face are, mostly, a total novelty. The shortcomings with which they arrive to university make knowledge of the historical past more convenient than for other students. The study of the evolution of the communicative phenomenon can be of help to introduce them to concepts and to make them learn about people who have done most for the development of this activity. This handbook is intended to help study a reality as complex and exciting as the History of Communication.

There is always something interesting to learn from those around us. The life of every human being is rich, full of meaning, and is not always easy to disentangle. Every story enriches the personality and, when the example received is that of an egregious figure, the lessons obtained can be of great use. It is the great women and men who can teach us the most, since they have known how to bring to fruition a project that dignifies.

The narration of what they did and what they achieved can be useful. It is worth looking at the past with this approach and that is what we have tried to do in the following pages.

Without going into too much detail about theoretical explanations, we are interested first of all in emphasizing the importance of this discipline as a basis for Communication Science.

Over the years, the content and foundations of the History of Communication have been shaped. The methodology can still be discussed, but what today is presented as a major difficulty is the lack of national studies that follow similar guidelines.

This is what explains the difference in treatment that some countries receive in the following pages.

1. History of Communication

Although we devote much attention to the newspaper's cycle of predominance (as it is fundamental to understanding the origins of contemporary communication), we will also refer to the emergence and subsequent development of audiovisual media.

The fact that the newspaper is our fundamental content does not mean that we do not make reference to other types of communication (also closely related to newspapers) such as propaganda (interested communication with a primarily ideological purpose) and advertising (interested communication with a primarily commercial purpose). These two realities will be mentioned and dealt with when speaking about specific historical moments, in which their role was of paramount importance. If we do not mention them in other historical phases, is not because they disappeared, but rather because they continued with a natural evolution, without relevant changes. That is why we will have to deal, for example, with the propaganda activity in France during the French Revolution or in the First World War, and with publicity when it develops in an appreciable way with the development of the first popular press. Because it was in those two historical moments when they both were relevant.

Communication is a task of mediation. We, human beings, need to know, we are committed to seeking the truth, and when we do not reach it by our own means, we inquire and ask for the help of others to help us reach the desired goal. Trying to describe how humanity has come to realize the task of communication is what gives reason to this brief history. We have chosen a chronological framework, which allows us to focus on the birth and development of modern media. This is what explains why we give so much weight to the printing press or why we leave other less formalized forms of communication in the background, such as oral communication and its derivatives on popular culture, or artistic communication, for example.

The didactic nature of this manual has made us give priority to explanation and to context, but this does not mean that data are completely omitted. It would be inappropriate to make a historical synthesis without a minimum of information to help anchor in time what happened. The attempt to calibrate the usefulness of dates and names to the maximum may have failed, but there should be no doubt that it was the author's intention. It seems appropriate that, briefly, before entering into the actual history, we pay attention to historiographical issues. We only intend to

comment on some methodological aspects that will clarify the problems that arise when defining this subject.

Movements that once seemed to impose themselves and mark the avant-garde –such as Marxism, for example– have been questioned and have lost their strength; the tiredness of applying somewhat schematic and stark models has favored the return, with new airs, of orientations that had been rejected–lightly for being simplistic. New fields of research have provoked interest in realities that, from the previous contempt, have been revalued. Within this set of changes, we can highlight the rise and maturity that historical specialties have reached, dragging behind them not inconsiderable issues.

1.1. The newspaper and other communication media as history sources

It was not until well into the 20th century that centers for the study and research of communicative phenomena appeared. It can even be said that they have not yet achieved the recognition they deserve within the scientific community. The maturity that Communication Science is achieving is leading to the fact that the foundations, which had been laid by other disciplines, must be revised.

This is the case with the History of Communication, which is gradually being freed from unjustified servitudes. No one can be surprised that, for many years, the newspaper first and the other media afterwards have not been considered as a worthy object of attention for a historian. In his attempt to reconstruct the past and explain it coherently, historians have used testimonies that bring them closer to the past reality and show them, in some way, what it was like. They used different sources, some of which had more value and credibility than others, but all of them were only of merely instrumental interest.

For what have been called modern and contemporary times, one of the possible sources that could be used was the press, which, on the other hand, was not excessively reliable. It is well known that, in many cases, a certain ideological orientation clearly marked the pages of the publication, which forces one to be critical in the use of the data extracted. If to the above we add the vulgar opinion, which has traditionally distrusted the manipulative power of journalism and communication in general, we can understand the little appreciation that this source has had.

It would not be logical to disregard the above-mentioned approaches just because of their simplicity, since they are not exempt from part of the truth. In any case, even if the arguments were refuted, this would not demonstrate the need to pay attention to the media and make them the center of our research and study.

We consider—and it seems an easy assumption—that until the press and, in general, the media play an important role in society, there is no compelling reason to justify the need for their historical study. According to this, the first thing we would do would be to realize the importance of this social element and, in order to know it better, go backwards and ask ourselves about the trajectory it has followed until reaching the prominence we see it has at the moment.

In this way, we are turning around the perspective that was traditionally used: the newspaper (being the first one chronologically), from a mere instrument to know something that is contained in it, becomes the focus of our attention, we take care of it, as the end we want to reach and not as an «instrument for».

The reasoning seems simple and does not offer much dispute for its acceptance, but in practice those who do not assume the importance of the role of the media in society do not admit that this type of study makes much sense. They still think, with respect to the past, that the press, to give the most common example, has the same value as work or personal hygiene, and therefore it becomes unnecessary to deal with its history. On the other hand, those who look back at remote times see that these forms of communication do not exist there, which would show that they are not indispensable. The latter is true, but it should not be forgotten that a thorough knowledge of recent times—the last two centuries of humanity—requires reference to the media.

This means that we need to change our mentality a little and adopt an open attitude towards current social phenomena. This is what is at the root of those who deal with the phenomenon of communication, but it does not mean that it belongs exclusively to them, and scholars from other disciplines may join in. All of this requires going beyond the narrow consideration of those who start from the idea of source. It is clear, on the other hand, that a better knowledge of what communication is entails obtaining adequate criteria for correctly using this instrument in research, but this is a collateral consequence of having achieved the primary objective of better knowledge of the phenomenon itself.

Before we go any further, however, we should take a look at the crisis of history as a science, because from there we will be able to understand the particular case we are examining.

1.2. On the crisis of history

We start from the observation that historical science is in crisis. This can be seen in the problems raised about its own object and methods. Although this point

of departure is disputed by some, the object of study of history is human actions, which are temporary (we could also say that they are unrepeatable), free (because they come from personal decisions, not determined by nature) and social (because it is not the object of historical study of either the internal or the isolated that is in every man). But in addition, these actions, logically, must be passed on and form a succession, since isolated facts that did not have transcendence in the later future are of no interest.

In short, not everything that is past deserves our attention, but rather that which has a meaning for us, who find ourselves in a specific situation, typical of the moment we are living. For this reason, as has been stated throughout the last century, history, the study of history, is done from the present—which implies respect for the past, not deforming what has happened—, with methods and concerns that are proper to the time in which we live.

This has to be so, since history helps us to live, since we do not only need others for the material help they give us to satisfy the most urgent material needs: there are also spiritual needs, we have to make use of the gift of life that is unrepeatable, and to make the most of it we only have to see how others develop it, those who are our contemporaries and also the ancestors who are suitable models.

Alongside the personal use that historical knowledge can have, the particular sciences—like that of the Communication— they need to have a historical basis to acquire the feature that is proper to them. In this way, history fulfills the two functions mentioned above.

1.3. The problem of multiplicity

Having laid the foundations, we return to the subject at hand. We started from the fact that we have to leave aside the concept of source and analyze what happened to journalism and communication in general. A question thus arises: the newspaper and the other means of social communication are not one in history, but, in reality, there have been many, which have notable differences between them at a given moment and which, if we observe them diachronically, are even more diverse, since they change notably with the passing of time. What should we study? Should we deal with each and every one of those that have existed? Would it be enough to deal only with the most important ones? And, in this case, what would be the criteria to carry out that evaluation?

In theory such questions offer simple solutions, but practice shows that they are simple and ineffective. Indeed, it can be said, without further ado, that the history of

communication cannot become that of the media, if this were to be made concrete in the detailed knowledge of each and every one. It is true that such an exhaustive study is not necessary, since, according to this idea, history could never be made. If we were to abide by this rule, for example, in order to know the era of the Catholic Kings in Spain, one would have to know every last inhabitant of their kingdoms.

Having ruled out such a possibility, we wonder if it is enough to study the most important media. These are the ones that proved to be most influential at a given time. Such an idea simplifies the task greatly, as it significantly reduces the field of research. However, communication turns out to be made up of a set of products in which the elements are strongly linked and there is a mutual influence, which means that we must not only attend to the most outstanding ones, but also observe the relationship with others of lesser importance but which affect the others. Dealing only with those who have had a clear leading role contains, in the end, the prejudice that what is interesting is not the communication, but the society on which it acts and therefore the latter does not deserve to be studied by itself.

In addition to the above consideration, and in order not to mislead, we must add the following: to limit ourselves solely to the media is a poor attempt that condemns sterility. Do not see this as a contradiction with the above, since it only means that it is a form of impoverishment. Let us explain it.

Making an exhaustive and in-depth study of a publication or a television station means looking at its influence on the surrounding environment, since it is dissemination that is sought as a generic end. Such a reality imposes the obligation to observe the interferences and relations with the immediate world, since from it is formed and in it tries to act as an agent. Now it is possible to understand more fully what we wanted to allude to when speaking of sterility and impoverishment. As explained, we need to broaden the horizon, but without losing sight of the fact that all this outside the specific communicative world is a function of a better understanding of communication, which is why we continue to maintain the basic starting point of focusing on communication. This intuition is what has possibly led to the application of systems theory and to talk about the information system.

Attempts based on such a theory are a step forward, since they have perceived how it was necessary to advance in such a globalizing sense, but they do not manage to resolve the basic question, about the appropriate method of the History of Communication. And this has been so because they only aim to solve the problem of the reductionist vision of singular and isolated studies. By broadening the object of analysis, they have provided more data from the environment that help understand the activity of the media, but then, again, they find that they have to deal with them

again. They are indeed more complete, but in the end, it comes down to the same thing. If, in order to avoid this failure, they try to theorize, they abandon the properly historical terrain to remain in the pure consideration of information.

Finally, it happens that the above-mentioned approaches are resolved in a more or less detailed description of a greater or lesser number of means, within a more or less widely studied social area. If the appropriate and acceptable dimensions can be found, a complete and valuable study will have been achieved. However, the question will always remain: will there not be a radio station, agency, etc., that will help to better understand what has been studied?

1.4. A human return

In the somewhat theoretical explanation of the preceding paragraphs, one can see how the development of historiographical trends has influenced the concrete field of the History of Communication. It is logical that this is so, since in a certain sense it is only part of history considered as a whole.

When it comes to defining the object of historical research, a similar hesitation has occurred, in part, to that described above. Due to the influence of structuralism, Marxism and functionalism, among others, it has been lost sight of what the end is that the individual human person is looking for and disappears from the horizon, to make way for groups and societies. History has gone from looking at man to looking for another subject on which to focus attention.

For years now, the voices of historians have been raised, clamoring to recover the original meaning of their work and wanting to deal more directly with the person as an agent of history.

At this point, we do not want to go any deeper into such an exciting field as modern historiographical trends; we just wanted to make a reference to how an attempt has been made to resolve a controversy that affects what we are considering.

In the specific field of the History of Communication, we must also return to man. Each media is nothing more than a product made by humans. In fact, when we enter the world of information, what we do is ask about how man develops an activity that we call communicative. This is where the crux of the matter lies. We are not so much concerned with what a specific communicative product looks like, but rather with what idea someone wanted to make a reality and also, logically, with how they put the project into practice.

Studying the communicative activity implies paying attention to the circumstances in which it is carried out, otherwise neither could the idea of the promoters be

understood nor explain how they influenced it. At the same time, we do not leave aside how this idea was put into practice, how the communication media in question really was, since, in fact, this is nothing more than the concretion of the work of those who intervene in the company.

Therefore, such an approach does not represent any loss with respect to previous proposals and, furthermore, it solves the problems raised at the beginning. There is no need to resolve the issue of the multiplicity of objects of study, media and communication products, since the truth is that the peculiarities that define each one and distinguish them from others are not radically different in the way the activity is carried out, so there is no need to stop at irrelevant details.

The acceptance of this perspective would facilitate a greater distance from the singular media, since history is not exhausted in them, and, at the same time, we would ask ourselves about the questions that are really decisive, since if something attracts us from the past it is because it is present in our world. When we see how people acted in certain circumstances, partly past but partly present, we get answers for our present situation. It is not, of course, a question of learning how to make radio programs, advertising campaigns or image campaigns from our ancestors; we can learn from them about how we can solve current problems.

The communication company, as it has been configured over time, is the field within which this task of making communication products is carried out. To put it as a key point of the study has the problem that it corresponds to an advanced stage in the development of the communicative activity, so that it would not be useful for the previous stages. This obstacle can be overcome to the extent that, for those years of non-existent organization, we make a certain abstraction and consider who are those who make the announcement or the medium we study a reality. In many cases, it will be a specific person, who carries out his work alone and with scarce resources, and sometimes even with others. In such a case, we would be dealing with a one-person company and that is how it should be studied. The fact that it is so precarious does not mean that it does not have a project or that it does not have the means or organization; all this happens, and it is necessary to know it, because it has interest.

1.5. The History of Communication at the present time

Although notable steps have been taken in recent years, the communicative past is still little known –in some countries less than in others, it is true–and hence it is necessary to develop basic research work, which then develops into monographs and comprehensive studies.

The aforementioned situation speaks to us of temporariness and it is good to stop here to refer to it from another perspective. The history of communication is currently undergoing a period of change, and the scientific status of this subject has yet to be clarified: this is a consequence of the general situation of communication science. We are far from the ideal of broad knowledge and appropriate methodology, if we compare this part of history with others.

A symptom of this immaturity to which we allude is the predominance of description, which is not complemented by theoretical elaboration. Hence, it easily falls into a list of data, the meaning of which is ultimately beyond us. We must avoid this if we want to give more room to humanistic approaches, even if, sometimes, it is very difficult to achieve it when starting from such a deficient basic material.

In order to achieve a more complete vision, far from sterile detail, we are going to refer to the information system as a reality that designates the media and its immediate context. The set of people, communicative organizations and institutions in connection with the latter would constitute what we call a communicative system, defined, therefore, by the communication relations between transmitters and receivers. With this delimitation, which is certainly broad, we intend to ensure that no interesting reality of the world of communication remains out of sight.

Evidently, as it is presented, this approach could lead to losing sight of the specific, since there are many social realities that have to do with the media. For this reason and as we have already said, we must focus our attention on the information companies and from there look for the relationship with the social sphere. In this way, we do not remain only in an external analysis that is: only centered in how society has been influenced, but we can see those effects as a consequence of a cause, of some informative agents, that act in a certain way because they possess some singular characteristics. In definition, we refer to people, who are the ones who really, in use of that freedom that distinguishes them, cause the events.

At the same time, the concept of a correctly elaborated information company, as Professor Nieto does (see his book *El concepto de empresa periodística*, Eunsa, Pamplona 1967), allows us to give unity to the various elements that make it up. We will take, as a starting point, the definition given by the aforementioned author, according to which a news company is the organized group of personal elements, economic and material means, and commercial relations for the dissemination of information and ideas through the publication of periodicals or audiovisual and communication products in general.

Every company arises, ultimately, for what the same author calls business idea, in which the editorial principles play a capital role, since it is intended to disseminate information and ideas. A newspaper or a radio station is more than just abstract principles, but this does not mean that all the components are of equal value and, if it is considered so crucial, the role it plays is through its ability to pull, to convince the public that its judgments are the right ones.

From this perspective, the very close link between the History of Ideas and the History of Communication is clear. At least in the last two centuries, every doctrinal trend with a palpable presence in society can be found reflected in the pages of newspapers. What is more, the development of contemporary ideologies would not be understood if one did not turn to the world of journalism.

The above is a sign of the importance of a thorough knowledge of the history of communication, which is not limited to political history.

2. Communication in history

The origins of communication, as we have already said, force us to go back in time many centuries. As a human phenomenon, the task of informing must have arisen at the very moment when contact between two people took place. We are not interested in following the process of formalization of the ways of communicating, and not because it lacks interest, but because of the difficulty it would pose and the lack of studies that would allow us to reach interesting conclusions about that evolution.

It is easier to focus on the specific and proper means of disseminating information. This leads us to study the **newspaper*** (this sign indicates that it is a **key concept**), according to the characteristics detailed below. The somewhat diffuse origins of this first media, which aimed at an indiscriminate audience, can only be understood by taking the perspective back to the Middle Ages. That is why, in this chapter, we have to start by referring to the informative reality before one of the greatest revolution in the world of culture: the printing press.

Due to the need to include current events in the pages of newspapers, these were closely related to the mail, as an essential instrument in the process of capturing and communicating reality. Those who carried out journalistic tasks at that time required news, and for that purpose they used letters and other printed matter that arrived from outside. However, once the printed matter was prepared, they also had to deliver the goods to the public, in many cases to private subscribers, and in that phase of the process the postal service was once again irreplaceable. To understand

the evolution of the media in the sixteenth century, therefore, we must refer to all these factors and instruments, and that is what we will do in this chapter.

2.1. Pre-printed journalistic information precedents

Suppose someone wanted to find the first copy of the newspaper in history. We can imagine a shrewd archaeologist, in search of a historical rarity. He would consult the existing bibliography and could go back to the first civilizations, in which there are traces of written communication. Yet, he would most probably decide to discard everything that was not printed, written with the help of a machine. Moreover, this first issue would have to contain information about recent events, that is to say, about current events of its time, and it should have been printed regularly, because if it were a unique product, without continuity or periodicity, it would be something different. Thanks to this work of data collection, our intrepid archaeologist would have a better definition of what a newspaper was, he would know that its origin is close to the printing press and he would only need to determine the place where the first of these products was printed. Despite the baggage of this daring searcher, however, he would not achieve his goal. The reason is simple: there is no such object to find.

The newspaper, as we will see below, was born in an unpremeditated way, without any explicit aim. It came about as a result of several coinciding circumstances and without a clear awareness that a new means of communication was being created, which was going to influence the world so much within a few years of its appearance. Let us see, first of all, what the situation was before the printing press came into use.

We leave aside the question of the newspaper's history in the Old World. From ancient times there were stories about current events that were made known to the public. In the Middle Ages, along with the oral transmission of these stories, there were already **city chronicles** and **chronologies of kings*** that recorded outstanding events, occurring in a particular town or during a particular reign.

On the other hand, commercial development meant that, in key cities, **news** were **written manually***, which was useful for businesses. Along with these, the merchant houses themselves developed their own information network, with correspondents, for exclusive private use. The figure of the person in charge of compiling and writing these news appeared.

In addition to this production of news, it is necessary to note the existence of **almanacs***, which collected –apart from the calendar– various current materials, and at the same time included forecasts of the future, with the help of astrology.

In short, several ways of transmitting current information were gradually established. These can be summarized as: official chronicles of cities and kings; handwritten news («avvisi», «fogli a mano», «nouvelles à la main», gazettes) produced by the so-called «menanti»; **personal letters**^{*}; for example, the collection of the Fugger bankers; and almanacs.

Price lists or «price current» soon emerged as specialized advertisements on prices of goods, which also added more information.

Factors that explain the development of these forms of communication and the public interest in them are: the geographical discoveries, especially of America, which aroused enormous curiosity and affected trade; the creation of the national states that needed to possess abundant information, which is why they institutionalized these channels to collect news; the wars that took place throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the concerns inspired by the Renaissance spirit –which had a lot to do with religious reform– which were a source of controversy and confrontation of positions.

The Lutheran attempt for reform, which ended with a schism in one part of the Western Church, fits into this context and its importance from the perspective of public opinion should not be overlooked. A fact that supports this thesis is that in little more than three years more than 300,000 copies of Luther's writings were sold, which he came to define as «the greatest and most grandiose act of Divine Grace, by which the influence of the Gospel is spread». The so-called Reformation became an appeal to citizens to reject the corruption of a Roman church, which also became a form of control over the nation states. The peculiar circumstances of Germany and its zone of influence explain the good reception of a religious doctrine that had obvious political derivations. All this, we repeat, would not have been possible without the help of the book and the pamphlet that were so widely distributed.

2.2. Elements that helped on the dawn of newspapers

There are two material instruments that became necessary for the emergence of printed periodicals: the mail and the printing press.

2.2.1. The postal service

To understand the situation of communications in the late Middle Ages, we must take into account that the Roman road system was lost, so that isolation became the hallmark of Western Europe.

Gradually, several initiatives were launched to restore what had disappeared. It seems that it was the monks' monasteries that began to connect with each other

and have a regularity in that communication. As trade developed, merchants also saw the need to create channels to disseminate information about markets. When the universities were born, they set up a system for students and their families to maintain a minimum of contact. But the most immediate antecedent of the postal service came when some Italian cities (Bergamo seems to have been the first) organized a postal system to fulfill the above-mentioned function. It was the Tasso family (some say that this is where the future taxis will come from) who, in exchange for a lump sum, offered citizens permanent communication.

The information needs of the new states led to the creation of a stable postal service. It was the states that were able to maintain security on the roads, something that was essential for the development of the postal service, and to which they contributed, since they were the main interested parties in obtaining news, both political and war news, as well as commercial news that would help their interests. Successively, in France, Great Britain, Spain, the Holy Empire... the kings created this service, sometimes depending directly from the royal house and others entrusting it exclusively to a private person, as it happened with the Taxis family in the Holy Empire.

A fundamental element in the organization were the post houses, where the horses of riders and small carts that transported the mail rested. Easily, the managers of these houses collected information that they could make particular use of; they could even make a profit by selling the news to interested customers. As it developed, the mail conditioned the periodicity of the publications.

2.2.1. The printing press

A key invention in the history of mankind was the printing press, which emerged between 1438 and 1450 in Strasbourg and Mainz, thanks to Gutenberg's activity. This invention was the result of the accumulation of technical advances, such as mobile letter types, the press and the manufacture of ink and paper. This innovation had unsuspected consequences and, possibly without a clear purpose, the most unexpected of all was the creation of the newspaper. In other words, those who invented it did not think they were going to create a specific means of communication.

Johann Gutenberg's vicissitudes show a man's determination to make a dangerous enterprise a reality and the economic problems that led him to lose ownership of that initiative. Born at the end of the 15th century, the first news of his activity as a printmaker is known in 1434. At that time the art of printing, as it was something exclusive to a group of select workers, was developed within the secrecy and silence that explains why Gutenberg hid and perfected various techniques (use of mobile

letters, tablets to align and group the letters, brushes to distribute the ink...) in a laboratory installed in the ruins of an abandoned convent.

Once the new techniques were used, he formed a company in Strasbourg in 1437 with other people. There he worked and printed a small devotional book, although in a hidden way, since externally he was dedicated to the manufacture of mirrors. He took the opportunity to learn about metal smelting and was part of the guild of silversmiths and gold beaters.

In view of the lack of economic resources, he left Strasbourg and marched to Mainz in 1448. There he proposed to a goldsmith and alchemist to form a company to exploit his invention. After the agreement, they set up a workshop in 1449 and, in a secretive manner, they began the task, which they did not manage to hide completely. A worker from their partner's workshop discovered them and joined the agreement. Between the three of them they worked on what will later be the «forty-two-line Bible», consisting of two volumes of just over three hundred pages each. This first printed book seems to have been finished between 1454 and 1455. Gutenberg's first partner undertook a trip to Paris to sell the product, where he almost died at the stake, as he tried to sell the copies as manuscripts and only saved his life once he made the invention known.

Gutenberg's bad economic situation was not solved because his two collaborators fought with him and, after losing in court, they kept the machine. So, he had to go to Mainz to exploit his knowledge there. This was the beginning of a period of relocation to various cities (Strasbourg, Harlem and, again, Mainz), motivated by the wars of the time, which led to the extension of the printing press. Until the last years of his life, the father of the movable types could not enjoy a peaceful existence. He died in 1468 in Mainz, after having received, three years before, the title of gent, which gave him the right to a pension.

The printing press brought about a major cultural and social change. Some of the effects that its use brought about were the following:

- To cover the information needs that were becoming increasingly important at the time.
- To lower the costs of news production; to accelerate the process of multiplying and reproducing news.
- To create a print production industry, which required high expenses and had to be made profitable by carrying out smaller tasks (it happened that the by-product became independent and more important than the machine that generated it).

- To increase the resonance of information, as it could reach many more people, because of all the above.

The fact is that in the last quarter of the 15th century most of the European cities of entity had this instrument and a new commercial activity was created, closely controlled by the rulers, to avoid problems.

With the political and religious struggles that took place at that time, the importance and vigilance of that instrument increased at the same time.

The new industry affected existing types of information products. In spite of the survival of the old forms we referred to before (which can be explained not only by their lower cost, but also by the confidentiality and exclusivity they had with respect to their new competitor), changes occurred and, thus, they emerged:

1. **Non-regular prints: news sheets***, they narrated a resounding event or one that wanted to be (they adopted different names: «avvisi», «Relationes», «occasionels», relations...); **controversial writings***: to publicly defend a position in an entity dispute; and **canards*** or fantastic narrations: that dealt with extraordinary facts because of the unusual and that easily fell into invention.
2. **Printed newspapers**: the first were those of Michael von Aitzing, a relative of the Fuggers, who from 1587 published two volumes per year on the occasion of the two annual fairs held in Frankfurt. This was followed by other imitators in various countries, who compiled the most important European events. This type of production represented a profound change in conception, since, as the periodicity of the events marked the rhythm of their appearance, the importance of the events was less important, and this was not the fundamental factor.

2.2. The first gazettes

In the early 17th century, the **first gazettes*** appeared, which were in fact a very direct precursor of the newspaper. It was a weekly report, usually containing information preceded by the name of the city and the date. It seems that it was in Antwerp (then under Spanish rule) that the first appeared, (then called *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* since 1605) as a bi-monthly. The first weeklies were born around that time in Strasbourg and in the following years they were developed throughout the rest of Europe. The novelty of the dailies can be attributed to Johannes Carolus, who in June 1605 began to print (also in Strasbourg) a daily handwritten news sheet that began with the usual title of Relation. Anecdotally, the oldest newspaper published

today is the one started by Abraham Casteleyn in Haarlem in 1658 under the title *Opregte Haerlemsche Courante*.

We must make a small introduction to the following paragraphs, which deal with the gazette name. According to some authors, this name comes from the currency with which, in the Venice of the end of the 16th century, the printed weekly-news appeared. The success of this word is demonstrated by the rapid spread it achieved throughout Europe, adapted to the linguistic peculiarities of each country.

Among this journalistic production, the «**Dutch gazettes**»* should be highlighted, as they acquired a personality of their own that made them worthy of being called a specific type of print. As the Spaniards lost possession of the North Netherlands, the cities that were left free turned to publishing news and gazettes to enable them to do business. In Antwerp, Leyden, Amsterdam, all kinds of advertisements, libels, gazettes were published, and they soon began to be known and bought at European fairs. They were written in French and were smuggled into many countries, as rulers pursued these writings, for they endangered their absolute power.

In those first gazettes, which gradually acquired a title, the main information was that from abroad, as foreign events attracted attention. The rulers were not interested in giving information about their own country that could be conflicting, and the gazettes were made from the information they could get from other gazettes published outside, which were copied. The names by which they were known, in addition to the most common *gazette*, were several: corantos (hence the English «current»), mercury (Mercury is the messenger god) ...

KEY CONCEPTS

Newspaper
Chronicles of cities and kings
Handwritten news
Almanacs
Personal letters
News sheets
Controversial writings
Canards or fantastic stories
First gazettes
“Dutch Gazettes”