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Forms, Handbills and Affixed Posters

Surveying the Ephemeral Print Production of the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic

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Abstract

In 2018, we published an article that provided a first attempt to survey the whole output of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Our estimate was a minimum of 357,500 editions. This calculation did not yet include the world of ephemeral forms, handbills and posters. The survival of such commercial or private notices is microscopically small, compared to what must have been produced. It is nevertheless vital for our understanding of the print trade that we attempt to capture the complexities of this lost world: this was work that sustained printshops. It was also the form which most acutely influenced commerce, government and social life. Here we wish to offer an introduction to this most elusive genre of the early modern print world, document the myriad ways in which print infiltrated the daily life of people, and offer some hypotheses on the likely total output of certain forms of ephemeral print.

Keywords

Dutch Republic – seventeenth century – ephemera – broadsheets – bibliography – lost books

In 2018, we published an article that provided a first attempt to survey the printed output of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Our estimate, based on surviving editions; the identification of lost books; and hypothetical

approximations, suggested that a minimum of 357,500 editions would have been generated by Dutch presses during the course of the century.¹ This survey was deliberately as expansive as possible, including newspapers, government ordinances, printed diplomatic despatches, broadsheets commenting upon political affairs, price and exchange rate currents, devotional literature, academic disputations and auction catalogues. We divided our analysis between genres that were then excluded from the *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands* (STCN), such as broadsheets, and genres which were included, but which we considered to be absent in disproportionate quantities, like academic disputations and auction catalogues; either because such works survive overwhelmingly in foreign libraries, or because they have suffered significant rates of loss.

Our survey provided two further analytical contributions of interest which we did not mention in print originally in 2018. The first is that our corpus of 357,500 editions is dominated by print jobs of minimal length. Some 295,000 editions—82.5% of the total—would have been produced using two printed sheets of paper or less: a maximum of two days work on the press. They were works like newspapers, broadsheets, pamphlets and academic dissertations, which provided the necessary cash flow for printing houses to remain financially solvent while more substantial works (the remaining 62,500 editions) were produced.

We also analysed our corpus by dividing it according to their means of distribution. It is fair to assume that when one speaks of the book trade, one has in mind a world dominated by retail transactions: books are paid for—in kind, in credit or in cash—by individual customers. Yet when we consider our corpus, which takes in the entire breadth of the seventeenth-century print world, this traditional retail model applies to only some 86,000 editions. Another 46,500 editions, including newspapers and printed price and exchange rate currents, would have been sold largely by subscription. The remainder, 225,000 editions, 63% of the total, were distributed for free. This does not mean, of course, that printers produced them free of charge—these were works, like government broadsheets, academic dissertations, tax forms and some polemical pamphlets, which were paid for in bulk by one client, who would then distribute these on their own accord. This was work which was incredibly attractive to seventeenth-century printers, as they suffered no risks in taking on the job and incurred no costs from distribution or storage, while payment was generally in cash.

1 A. Pettegree and A. der Weduwen, 'What was Published in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic?', in: *Livre. Revue Historique* (2018), pp. 1-22.

These small print jobs, humble as they were, provided a substantial injection of capital into the book trade, allowing printers to undertake the great works for which they are often recognised today. This jobbing work helped sustain printing houses throughout the Dutch Republic, especially in university towns, like Groningen and Utrecht, and in towns furthest removed from the busy urban conurbations of Holland. Documenting this large quantity of low-risk printing work has shaped to a large extent our understanding of the book trade and broader print world of the Dutch Golden Age.²

Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done to reconstruct fully the ephemeral output of the Dutch press during the seventeenth century. In our 2018 article, we noted that:

Although the total adduced by our investigations may seem rather high, individual estimates fall always on the side of caution. We have added nothing to our total for official jurisdictions for which no broadsheet ordinances survive, nor for common forms like receipts, share certificates, lottery tickets or broadsheet advertisements. ... the real extent of this work can hardly be fathomed.³

The survival of such commercial or private notices, generally produced in broadsheet form, as well as tickets, forms and receipts, is microscopically small compared to what must have been originally produced. This was utilitarian print that generally lost its function once the event was past. If the items do survive, then they tend to be found in archives, hiding amongst family papers, in documentation required for a court case, or in papers of municipal administration. Seventeenth-century archives in the Netherlands, copious as they are, have not yet been thoroughly investigated for printed matter. By all indications, archives are now the richest source of undocumented printed works from the early modern period. On occasion, we have stumbled upon these rich holdings, including a stack of forty printed rental receipts issued by several polder authorities of North-Holland in the Westfries Archief in Hoorn, or two dozen carts stacked with placards from the former town archive of Veere, now held in Middelburg.⁴

2 Detailed in full in A. Pettegree and A. der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World. Making and Trading Books in the Dutch Golden Age* (London/New Haven 2019). Available in Dutch as *De Boekhandel van de Wereld. Drukkers, boekverkopers en lezers in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam 2019).

3 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, art. cit. (n. 1), pp. 19-20.

4 Westfries Archief, Hoorn, Oud archief stad Hoorn, 1356-1815, inv. 2498a. Zeeuws Archief, Middelburg, Stad Veere, Gedrukte ordonnanties, 16^e-19^e eeuw (archieftoegang 2003).

Book historians have long recognised the importance of jobbing print to the general health of the printing business.⁵ Incunabulists were among the first to consider the importance of indulgences, sometimes printed as multiple forms to be cut away from a single sheet. Some owners cherished their printed indulgences so much as to be buried with them. Religious forms, posters and devotional prints were in many European countries the first types of jobbing print that sustained the pioneers of the press, as print runs could run into the tens of thousands for a single order.⁶ Far from abating, the importance of jobbing print only increased as time progressed. Political administration throughout Europe grew more complex, and far more dependent on raising adequate funds to support its military ventures. As administrations expanded, so did a reliance on presses to produce, often at very short notice, hundreds of ordinances, forms and receipts to communicate the law and document its implementation. Private citizens took note also of the opportunities for publicity afforded by print, not least booksellers seeking to advertise forthcoming titles by means of distributing little fliers.⁷ While over time publishers increasingly turned to advertising their works in printed catalogues, other tradesmen made do with printed placards, to be distributed all over town.

Despite the prevalence of jobbing print in early modern Europe, no systematic attempts have yet been made to survey the true breadth of this genre. It is nevertheless important that we attempt to capture the complexities of this world of printed information: this was the form of print which most acutely influenced commerce, government and social life in the early modern period. The fact that the overwhelming proportion of this genre of the book world has now been lost should not dissuade us from engaging with its study. To study

5 J. Raven, *The Business of Books. Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850* (London 2007); Idem, *Publishing Business in Eighteenth-century England* (Woodbridge 2014), especially pp. 41-50; P. Stallybrass, "Little Jobs". Broad-sides and the Printing Revolution', in: S.A. Baron et al., *Agent of Change. Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst, MA. 2007), pp. 315-41; A. Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (London/New Haven 2010), pp. 226-48, pp. 333-52; *Broadsheets. Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*, ed. A. Pettegree (Leiden 2017).

6 For some examples, see F. Eisermann, 'Fifty Thousand Veronicas. Print Runs of Broadsheets in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', in: Pettegree, op. cit. (n. 5;2017), pp. 76-113.

7 L. Hellinga, 'Sale Advertisements for Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century', in: R. Myers, M. Harris and G. Mandelbrote, *Books For Sale. The Advertising and Promotion of Print since the Fifteenth Century* (New Castle, DE 2009), pp. 1-18 and her 'Advertising and Selling Books in the Fifteenth Century', in: L. Hellinga, *Incunabula in Transit: People and Trade* (Leiden 2018), pp. 20-39; A. Wilson, *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle* (Amsterdam 1976), pp. 208-9.

only print that has survived leads one inevitably to study the history of collecting, rather than the history of the consumption and production of print.

Here we wish to offer a brief introduction to this most elusive genre of the early modern print world from the perspective of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. How can we document the myriad ways in which jobbing print infiltrated the daily life of seventeenth-century Dutch people? Furthermore, we hope that this article may also serve as a clarion call to take seriously the production of jobbing print, in the hope that this might lead to an investigation of all Dutch archives for such material.

'Further Details Can be Found on the Placards'

Visual evidence suggests that the public spaces of the Dutch Republic must have been plastered with print. The Golden Age has provided us with a rich quantity of paintings, etchings and engravings that reveal that public buildings, like town halls and the bourse, were often covered with printed posters. The evocative view of the *Paalhuis*, the toll house in Amsterdam, by Jan Abrahamsz Beerstraten offers one such view, as do many paintings by Gerrit Adriaensz Berckheyde.⁸ But street corners, shops, individual houses and even trees might also be covered with print, as detailed paintings by the likes of Cornelis Dusart reveal.⁹

Many of the placards posted up throughout the Dutch cityscape in the seventeenth century would have been government publications, issued by the States General, the Provincial States, the municipal government, or potentially the Admiralties, the Stadholder or other authorities.¹⁰ Instructions to civic officials like the *stadsaanplakker*, the official municipal affixer, indicate that such posters were pasted onto 'the city hall, on the doors of the churches, on the headquarters of the militia, on the weighing house, on the city gates and on all the corners of the streets in and outside in the city where it is common that one posts notifications'.¹¹ The *stadsaanplakker* of Haarlem also had a monopoly on

8 Jan Abrahamsz Beerstraten, *Het Paalhuis en de Nieuwe Brug te Amsterdam in de winter* (1640-1666), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: SK-A-20. One good example by Berckheyde is his magnificent view of the Amsterdam city hall from 1672, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: SK-A-34.

9 One example is Cornelis Dusart, *Boerenkermis* (1680-1704), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: SK-A-99. Another is offered by Cornelis Ploos van Amstel's print after Dusart, *Omroeper*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-P-1944-36.

10 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, art. cit. (n. 1), pp. 4-7, pp. 21-22.

11 Noord-Hollandsarchief, Haarlem, Stadsbestuur van Haarlem 1573-1813 (3393), inv. 1252.



FIGURE 1 Jan Abrahamsz Beerstraten, *Het Paalhuis en de Nieuwe Brug te Amsterdam in de winter* (1640-1666), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: SK-A-20.

The toll house in Amsterdam was one of many public buildings which would have been perpetually covered in printed posters.

the affixing of 'notifications of private individuals', which were to be displayed on the same buildings as listed above.¹² Although the authorities were generous in their orders to printers for producing broadsheets (we estimate a minimum of 95,000 editions for the seventeenth century in all), we do not know whether the *stadsaanplakker* of Haarlem, or indeed those of other Dutch towns, would have affixed government broadsheets more often than those of private citizens. On 9 July 1685, the *stadsaanplakker* of Utrecht, Gijsbert Yserma, petitioned the magistrates to receive the exclusive right to post up private notices.¹³ He cited the increasing proliferation of harmful 'Catholic posters' as the justification for his request, but there is a good chance that he simply wished to augment his earnings by monopolising the large quantities of placards distributed by the citizens of Utrecht. Whatever the motive, the request was denied.

12 Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem, Stadsbestuur van Haarlem 1573-1813 (3393), inv. 1252.

13 Het Utrechts Archief, Archief van de Raad (stadsbestuur van Utrecht) 1577-1795 (702), inv. 269.

What sort of placards might private individuals order at a print shop, and then distribute around town? One means by which we have begun to answer this question is through incidental data gathered from Dutch newspaper advertisements. We recently undertook a systematic study of all advertisements placed in Dutch newspapers between 1620 and 1675.¹⁴ The surviving newspapers revealed some 6,000 advertisements in all, over half of which constitute advertisements for newly published books or book auctions. There were also some 900 advertisements for other commercial goods, available for wholesale or at auction, and some, though not very many, published by citizens offering services. The most numerous of this group were schoolmasters advertising new schools, or giving notice that an established school had moved location. Other notices were placed by citizens appealing for public assistance, after the loss of personal items like watches, clothes, suitcases or cash. Children and pets that went missing also appear frequently, while servants and maids disappear, sometimes after raiding the family's jewellery box. Finally, the authorities of the Dutch Republic, ranging from city councils to the water boards, also used the newspapers to communicate news of markets, crime, employment opportunities and other matters of interest to the public, like the announcement of a prayer day.

For our purposes here, what is of significant interest is that sometimes, though not often, the advertisements explicitly state that the details divulged in the newspaper will also be found on a printed handbill or poster.¹⁵ Of our 6,000 advertisements, there are some forty that specifically mention this additional publicity, often using the term *biljet* or *plakkaat*. Some of these, again, relate to official notices, like placards by the States General, the Admiralties, the West India Company and the States of Zeeland and Overijssel. Some municipal notifications, like one placed by the magistrates of Vianen, mention placards as well.¹⁶ Yet placards mentioned in advertisements placed by citizens concern a rich variety of subjects. The widow of Berent Reyniersz, in Zwolle, notified readers that she

Means to sell her house and cloth refinery, together with three other properties under one roof. The refinery is currently used by Christiaen Sajen,

14 The results of this investigation are available in A. der Weduwen and A. Pettegree, *The Dutch Republic and the Birth of Modern Advertising* (Leiden 2020a) and idem, *News, Business and Public Information. Advertisements and Announcements in Dutch and Flemish Newspapers, 1620-1675* (Leiden 2020b).

15 What follows is partially extracted from Der Weduwen and Pettegree, op. cit. (n. 14: 2020a), pp. 230-44.

16 *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant* (henceforth *OHD*) 36, 06.09.1667.

and the licence of the refinery expires in Easter 1661. The conditions of the properties are further detailed in placards pasted up in various cities.¹⁷

Jan Tol, in Rhenen, also sold his house, 'in accordance with the published conditions'.¹⁸ An advertisement for an art collection offered a rich array of 'paintings, prints, drawings and books, including pieces by the most celebrated Italian, French, German and Dutch masters, as can be seen according to the placard and the catalogue'.¹⁹ Other advertisements for sales that were accompanied by affixed placards or handbills related to books, rarities from the East Indies, land, an oil mill, gardens and trees. Auctions related to the construction industry, as well as employment contracts, also mention placards, as do advertisements concerning changes to postal schedules.²⁰ In none of these instances have we been able to trace a surviving example of the relevant poster, but here we have clear evidence that they did exist.

One can understand why the advertisers placing these notices in the newspapers might also have a printed placard affixed in public. The limited space in the newspapers was rarely enough to elucidate the full range of the goods offered for sale, or inform readers of their quality. Bartelt Jansz Bruynvis had an entire shop filled with Oriental curiosities, so it made sense to list these separately on an extensive poster.²¹ The heirs of Marten Kretzer, an astute collector of 'rare drawings and prints, all made by the most remarkable Italian and Dutch masters', similarly wanted to attract attention to 'the affixed posters' where other collectors could judge the variety of artworks on offer.²²

The critical question is how far we take these examples as indicative of the existence of additional forms of printed advertising accompanying other transactions advertised in the newspapers. For proclamations of the States General and most other official jurisdictions, the existence of a printed poster can generally be assumed, even if surviving examples can be traced only for a proportion of them. In the case of cities advertising markets, the use of printed posters to spread the word seems more likely than not, given the need to attract visitors from all over the country.²³

17 *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdagse Courant* (henceforth *OHS*) 30, 24.07.1660.

18 *Ordinarise Middel-weeckse Courante* 4, 19.01.1649.

19 *OHD* 13, 29.03.1667.

20 Numerous examples can be found using the indices in *Der Weduwen and Pettegree*, op. cit. (n. 14:2020b), especially pp. 635-6.

21 *Amsterdamsche Dingsdaegse Courant* 35, 28.08.1674.

22 *OHS* 51, 20.12.1670.

23 *Der Weduwen and Pettegree*, op. cit. (n. 14: 2020a), pp. 14-15, pp. 132-37.

Even with the advertisements that we have that do not specifically allude to a printed handbill or poster, we can find further clues embedded in the texts of the advertisements that such a printed placard did exist. In addressing whether these newspaper advertisements would have involved other forms of printed notices, it is helpful to be guided by two main considerations: the complexity of the information offered in the advertisements, and whether the target audience for a particular form of announcement or sale extended beyond those who would have been subscribers or readers of the newspapers, a relatively small and generally affluent portion of the population. In such case it is very likely that a placard or poster would have been needed to spread the word.

Let us address this second consideration first. One can easily see why schoolmasters advertised in the newspapers. Newspaper readers came from exactly the sort of prosperous families where parents and guardians might have been contemplating where best to send their offspring to school. Resorting to other forms of publicity, such as printed notices affixed on street corners, might have been thought demeaning for a professional man offering his services—the same went for notaries or lawyers. In the case of book auctions, printed catalogues were the principal form of publicity, working alongside the newspaper advertisements that announced the date of the sale and pointed potential bidders to the bookshops where the catalogue could be obtained. Sometimes, the title-page of the catalogue was also printed in a separate print run, so that it could be used as a small poster or handbill.²⁴ Schooling and book auctions, it seems, were the two cases where the readership of the newspapers and the client base for the services on offer were most perfectly aligned.

On the other hand, it seems clear that when a town changed the date of a market, a newspaper advertisement would scarcely have been sufficient to reach those who needed to know this information. On 14 February 1668, the magistrates of Haarlem announced that to avoid a damaging clash of dates with the market at Culemborg, they were moving their market back a week. It would now take place on Monday 12 March, rather than Monday 5 March.²⁵ The people who most needed to know this information were those who in a couple of weeks' time would be trundling their goods or driving herds of oxen along the roads to Haarlem. Not all of these would have been habitual readers of the newspapers. They needed this information to be exhibited in familiar places in their own towns and villages, where stallholders, sellers of produce and entertainers could read them before they set off. The last thing

24 B. van Selm, 'The Introduction of the Printed Book Auction Catalogue', in: *Quaerendo*, 15 (1985), pp. 115-49, here pp. 117-18.

25 *OHD* 7, 14.02.1668.

cities wanted was bad tempered tradesmen, afraid they would now not be able to sell their goods, milling around the gates, jostling other visitors, or bribing the guards to let them through so that they could sell their goods illegally. So it seems almost inevitable that when a town announced that its market was postponed or cancelled, or that outside vendors would not be allowed to take part, that these newspaper advertisements would also be accompanied by a printed poster, widely distributed by the city messengers.

The same considerations apply to the newspaper advertisements that offer detailed descriptions of lost family members, absconding servants or fugitives from justice. The authorities in search of the fugitive 'Jan Jansx, his wife and two sons', who 'departed in the night from the domains of Kapelle/Biezelinge on the island of Zuid Beverland', having stolen many paintings, linen and furniture, were described as follows:

The husband is short with many freckles, and is around thirty-six or thirty-eight years old. His wife is around thirty or thirty-four years old, with brown eyes and darker skin and a red blemish on her chin. The oldest of the children has a limp.²⁶

The merchant and his wife reading these descriptions in the comfort of their parlour might have their curiosity piqued, but they were most unlikely to frequent the taverns or roadside inns where such fugitives were likely to be apprehended. The best chance of an arrest, in this case as in countless others, lay in posting copies of notices in public squares, down at the harbour and at barge stations, and in taverns and inns.

Some of the advertisements, for instance those for the sale of prize goods, are so long and detailed that some sort of printed notice seems similarly inevitable:

The Council of the Admiralty of Amsterdam gives notice that it means to sell on Wednesday 29 June at 2 pm in 'The Brackish Soil', on the Nes, a large quantity of Eastern flax, as well as a load of Silesian cotton, both untreated and bleached, loads of *flouwdoeck*, hemp linen, *Brouwbreker* yarn, three bales of linen, 800 long Swedish boards, 3,600 pipe-staves, 18 barrels of Swedish *Secq*, 24 barrels of honey, 18 barrels of potash, 1,026 bars of iron, 65 balls of steel and 117 rings of copper. All the goods can be

26 OHD 48, 30.11.1666.

inspected by the door of the auction master or in the warehouses on the Oude Schans.²⁷

It is likely, in this case, that the compositor in the print shop set up this notice with the printed poster to hand. Where there was no such printed poster, and potential clients were expected to make their own arrangements to find out the goods on offer, this was specifically stated in the newspaper advertisement. Thus when the Council of the Admiralty of Zeeland gave notice of intention to sell 1,000 barrels of tobacco 'and many other goods', first in Vlissingen, and then in Veere, it stipulated that the inventory of the goods, almost certainly a handwritten list, could be inspected at the office of the Admiralty in Middelburg.²⁸

Barge, carriage and postal schedules would almost inevitably be set out on a printed poster. These feature strongly among the examples we have cited where a poster or handbill was specifically mentioned, precisely because the information they contained, of times, routes and prices, would also need to be consulted by potential passengers that would not all have been subscribers to the newspapers. So even when it is not explicitly mentioned, it seems certain that a printed placard did indeed also exist for the following notice:

From 18 February onwards the postal carriages from Naarden to Hamburg will depart regularly. The journey takes 88 hours and costs 22 *gulden* 10 *stuivers* per person. The carriages also stop at Bremen (78 hours, 17 *gulden* 10 *stuivers*), Hannover (68 hours, 17 *gulden* 10 *stuivers*), Minden (52 hours, 15 *gulden*), Osnabrück (40 hours, 12 *gulden* 10 *stuivers*), Rhein (30 hours, 11 *gulden*) and Bentheim (24 hours, 10 *gulden*). If any seats are vacant, then passengers can join for the journey from Naarden to Amersfoort for 1 *gulden* and to Deventer for 4 *gulden*. Passengers are to address carriage master Jan van Oyen, in 'The Gilded Flying Stag'.²⁹

Such assumptions are further reinforced by the survival of several printed postal and barge schedules, complete with their impressively elaborate routes.³⁰

There are also other genres of newspaper advertisements for which it seems likely that a placard may have been used as additional publicity, even if this

27 *Extraordinaire Haerlemse Donderdaegse Courant* 3, 23.06.1667.

28 *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren* 36, 03.09.1667.

29 *OHS* 7, 16.02.1664.

30 For example, we have traced a number of such posters in the Stadsarchief of Kampen, Oud Archief Kampen (00001), inv. 249. Kampen was an important thoroughfare on the route from the province of Utrecht to the north of the Dutch Republic and the Holy Roman Empire, which explains this happy survival in a collection of municipal ordinances.

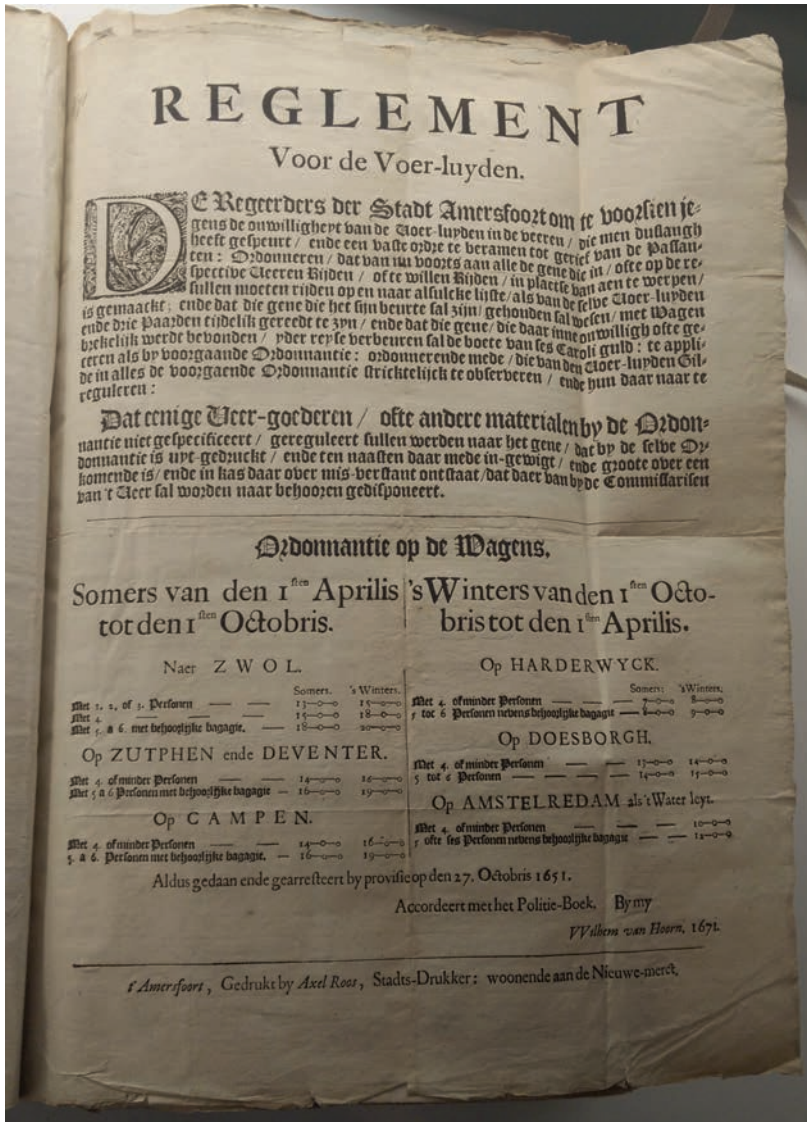


FIGURE 2 *Reglement voor de voer-luyden* (Amersfoort, Axel Roos, [1671]). Stadsarchief Kampen. An extant placard containing the regulations, including the departure times and rates, governing the post carriages which travel from Amersfoort to a variety of Dutch towns. Elaborate placards would have been required for complex information of this sort, and we can presume that most newspaper announcements for post carriages were based on a printed placard like this.

is never specified so in the advertisements. The newspapers contain numerous advertisements placed by inventors, publicising their new drainage mechanisms, watches, lanterns, mills and other curiosities. These are mirrored in surviving placards for similar inventions, such as a printed advertisement for a 'wondrous and automated wagon'.³¹ On this poster, which features an engraving of the carriage, space has been left blank for the location where the wagon could be seen: presumably the inventor travelled around the country, so he could reuse the copies of this poster wherever he went. At the end he also exhorts his readers to 'pass on the word', a phrase that was commonly used on official and commercial notices, and one that is similarly often repeated in newspaper advertisements; a further clue that such advertisements were composed using a poster at hand.

The newspaper advertisements provide many clues that point towards the existence of printed placards distributed by private citizens, corporations and authorities to communicate information on public sales, auctions and services. One area of commerce where the newspaper advertisements are largely silent is the trade in retail goods. Shop owners rarely advertised to remind readers of their presence, nor do they advertise when they have new stock for sale. The proprietors of retail outlets, particularly in trades most likely to interest well-heeled newspaper readers, traded largely on reputation, and on having an established, regular clientele; in any case, for the everyday purchases of food and kitchen supplies, it was mostly the servants who would be doing the shopping. Shop owners could also rely on their shop sign, an easily distinguished feature of their business, for advertising. Nevertheless, it is certain that some tradesmen offering goods or services, like the barber at the centre of one of Adriaen van Ostade's paintings, had posters printed to advertise their rates or services.³² The 1674 Holland regulation discussed below makes this clear. There is nothing to suggest that printed posters would only be distributed in public places: we know that the Haarlem painter Pieter Fransz de Grebber had a printed broadsheet hung up in his workshop with instructions for his pupils.³³

31 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-P-2006-262. USTC 1548962. Another good example is a print by Caspar Luyken from circa 1691, *Bekendmaking van een nieuw soort watermolen*, advertising a new mill. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-P-1896-A-19368-899.

32 Adriaen van Ostade, *Een barbierswinkel* (1673), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-T-1879-A-13.

33 Pieter Fransz de Grebber, *Schilderregels opgesteld door Pieter Fransz de Grebber* (1649), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-P-OB-81.665.



FIGURE 3 This barbershop scene by Adriaen van Ostade (1673) features a printed poster behind the barber's head, which could be an official placard regulating the trade, or an advertisement for his services. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-T-1879-A-13.

Forms, Taxes and Passports

In 1674, the States of Holland announced a variety of new excise duties, imposed upon its citizens to pay for the war effort against France. This new programme of taxation included two infamous duties, one on footwear, the other on hospitality, both of which were revoked by the States after outraged protests. Another new and less controversial duty introduced that year, was a tax on printed paper. This excise included heavy duties on newspapers, but also on a range of other ephemeral items. The States specified the following printed items: tax forms, funeral invitations, printed slips distributed by tax farmers, and advertisements issued by private citizens for sales and other services, including posters by physicians 'and other artisans'.³⁴

This is an extremely revealing regulation, since it offers us a glimpse of the types of ephemeral print judged to be so ubiquitous that the Holland authorities deemed them worth taxing. The posters affixed by 'other artisans' we have already considered above, and this provides further evidence of their pervasiveness in Dutch society. More surprising is the fact that placards by medical practitioners are singled out in the excise, given their relative absence from the newspaper advertisements.³⁵ Surviving examples of medical posters are also extremely rare: we have identified one extant placard by 'the surgeon and physician' J.M.P., a doctor who practised in Amsterdam around 1700.³⁶ This was a rather lavish broadsheet, complete with an illustration that demonstrated the variety of services that the doctor could offer. This seems to have been a common theme of such placards: visual representations of quacks generally include an image of a board or poster replete with illustrative clues to the skills of the advertising practitioner.³⁷ One can imagine that certain physicians would never resort to distributing printed placards, and leave such publicity strategies to their less-respected colleagues practising in the town or village square.

In the 1674 ordinance, medical placards as well as other commercial posters attracted a duty of two *penningen* per copy.³⁸ Printed funeral invitations

34 *Ordonnantie, na de welcke in den lande van Hollandt en West-Vrieslandt sal werden gegeven een impost op eenige gedruckte soo inlantsche als uytlantsche papieren* (Den Haag: Jacobus Scheltus, 1674).

35 J. Salman, 'The Battle of Medical Books. Publishing Strategies and the Medical Market in the Dutch Republic (1650-1750)', in: D. Bellingradt, P. Nelles, and J. Salman, *Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe* (London 2017), pp. 169-92.

36 Johannes van Bevoort, *Advertisement for the services of doctor J.M.P.* (1700). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-P-1901-A-22233.

37 See for example Abraham Delfos, *Kwakzalver* (1741-1820). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: RP-T-1918-330.

38 There were sixteen *penningen* to one *stuiver*, and twenty *stuivers* to one *gulden*.

attracted a duty twice as much, at four *penningen* a copy. This higher rate corresponds to their importance and ubiquity, certainly by the second half of the seventeenth century, as well as the fact that the social classes who issued such notices could well afford to pay. Yet, for this genre we too have few surviving examples, and they tend to be for prominent individuals, like Joost van den Vondel and Admiral Michiel de Ruyter.³⁹ Then again, there is a very good chance that many more printed funeral notices are to be found in personal archives held in municipal collections, as this was a form of ephemera to which individuals might attach profound emotional significance, more so in any case than a tax form or commercial placard.

Another form of ephemera singled out by the Holland authorities concerned printed slips handed out as receipts by tax farmers. Most taxation revenue in the Dutch Republic was generated by the *gemene middelen* (general means), a series of excise duties raised on a variety of consumables and some commodities (like printed paper). By the early eighteenth century, the States of Holland raised excise duties on fifty-two consumables and commodities, including duties on the ownership of yachts and the employment of servants, while the other provincial States raised duties on around half the same number. The authorities raised money from these duties by auctioning off for a cash sum, every twelve or six months, the right to raise the tax on each duty in a particular jurisdiction. This process itself involved a variety of printed matter, from the placards announcing the sales, to pamphlet regulations governing the excise duties and the pamphlet forms distributed in the days before the sale.⁴⁰ The individual who bought the right to extract the excise duty (the tax farmer) was required to hand out slips of paper to those who had been taxed, as proof of receipt, and in 1674 the States of Holland specified that all of these slips of paper must be printed too. From a surviving example from the municipal archive of Kampen we know that this was a practice that was already fairly standard in the 1650s.⁴¹ A discovery in the municipal archive of Deventer

39 De Ruyter: *Uitnodiging voor de begrafenis van Michiel de Ruyter* (1677), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: NG-29. Vondel: Stadsarchief, Amsterdam, 30579 (personalia), inv. 38, 2341.

40 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, art. cit. (n. 1), p. 19. See also J. de Vries and A. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy. Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge 1997), pp. 91-112 and W. Fritschy, 'The Efficiency of Taxation in Holland', in: O. Gelderblom, *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic* (Abingdon 2016), pp. 55-84.

41 Found in Stadsarchief Kampen, Oud Archief Kampen (00001), inv. 250 (Provinciale plakaten, 1600-1725).

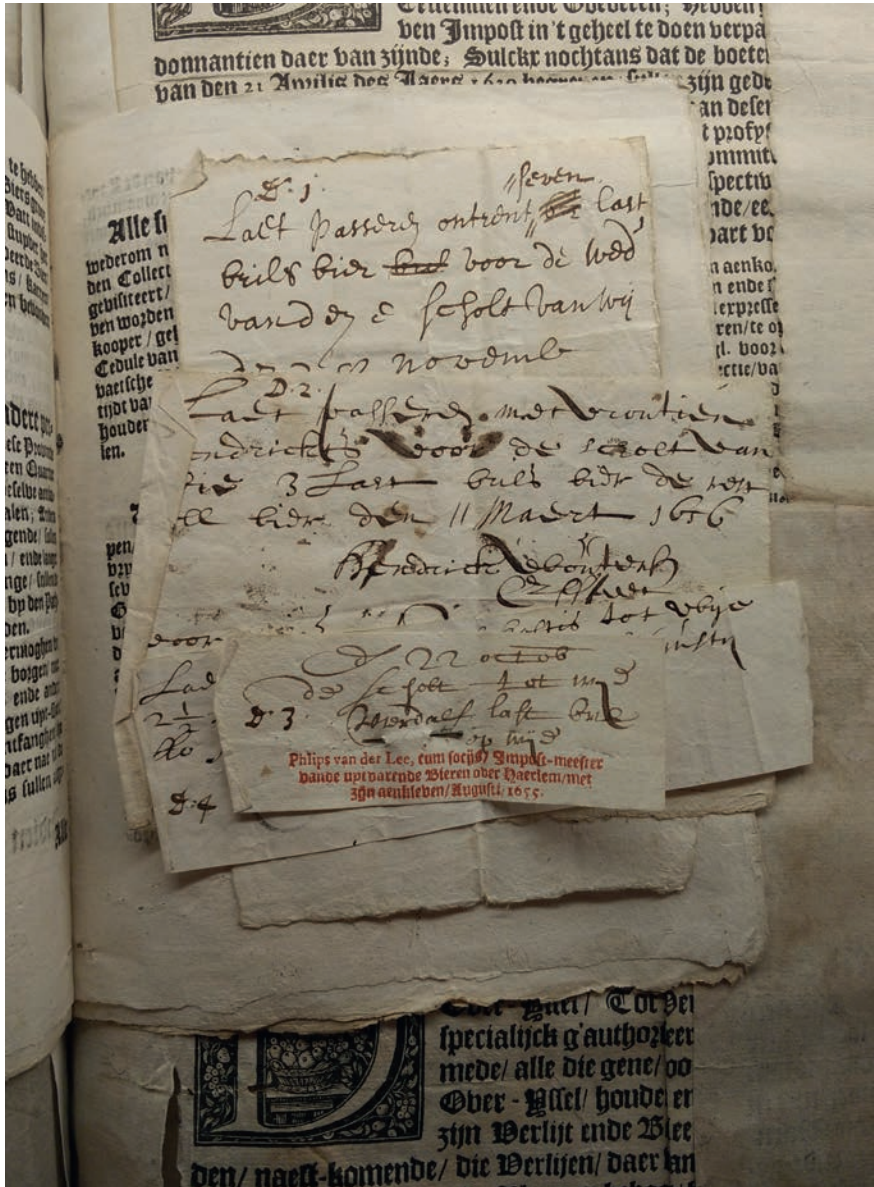


FIGURE 4 Printed tax form slip issued by the farmer of the tax on imported beer (Kampen, c. 1655). Stadsarchief Kampen.

An example of a printed slip, issued by Philips van der Lee, the tax-farmer of imported beer in Kampen. Tax-farmers were encouraged, and later obliged by the state to use standardised printed forms of this sort. Surviving examples are generally found only in archives.

demonstrates that individuals who bought the rights to raise tolls also employed similar printed slips.⁴²

There were many other printed forms in circulation in the Dutch Republic that were not mentioned in the 1674 excise duty introduced by the States of Holland: presumably because these were mostly forms which were issued by the authorities themselves, rather than by private individuals. Eric Ketelaar tells us that from 1595 onwards, beggars in Holland were required to have a licence on them at all times. These licences were initially handwritten, but soon replaced by printed licences.⁴³ Only three surviving copies have been identified, out of a presumed total of tens of thousands. Printed forms were also used to designate sufferers of leprosy.⁴⁴ In Amsterdam, owners of taverns and tobacco houses were also required to retrieve a printed licence from the *Spinhuis* (the correctional centre for women) every three months. By the eighteenth century, up to 1,000 licences were printed four times a year for this purpose, only one of which has thus far been identified in a surviving copy.⁴⁵

Other printed forms were also required for the smooth running of commerce and finance. Printed bills of lading and insurance forms were used in Dutch ports, while the Amsterdam *Wisselbank* issued printed receipts for deposits.⁴⁶ Forward contracts, used extensively by merchants in Amsterdam, were printed with an innovative design that allowed them to be cut in half, so that both parties to a transaction could keep a half, which could if required be reconstituted to prove the validity of the deal.⁴⁷ Perhaps no printed forms from this period are as famous as the ‘VOC shares’, printed receipts for payment of the capital sum of the investment, issued by the East India Company. Only a handful have been traced today, the oldest of which dates from 1606.⁴⁸

In the year that the States of Holland implemented the first excise duty on printed paper, the magistrates of Amsterdam presented an instruction to their *stadsdrukker*, the printer to the municipality, which reveals to what extent printed forms had become commonplace in Dutch society. Alongside regular placards for the city and the militia, the *stadsdrukker* was expected to print

42 Historisch Centrum Overijssel, Deventer, 0691 (Schepenen en raad van stad Deventer), inv. 49.

43 E. Ketelaar, *Archiving People. A Social History of Dutch Archives* (Den Haag 2020), pp. 38-9.

44 Ketelaar, op. cit. (n. 43), p. 39.

45 E. Ketelaar, ‘Accountability portrayed. Documents on Regents’ Group Portraits in the Dutch Golden Age’, in: *Archival Science*, 14 (2014), p. 77.

46 Ketelaar, op. cit. (n. 43), p. 255.

47 An example is illustrated in L. Petram, *De bakermat van de Beurs. Hoe in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam de moderne aandelenhandel ontstond* (Amsterdam 2011), p. 166.

48 Ketelaar, op. cit. (n. 43), p. 293. Westfries Archief, Hoorn, Oud archief stad Enkhuizen, (0120), inv. nr. 1587.

forms for the sale of tax farming positions in the city, municipal bonds, attestations and certificates of citizenship. These forms were all produced in folio or quarto format on high-quality paper, but evidently the *stadsdrukker* would also have to produce unspecified 'forms of six to a sheet' or 'forms of eight to a sheet'.⁴⁹ While the full range of uses for these forms is not yet clear, they certainly included marriage registration forms.⁵⁰ In comparison, in 1698 the *stadsdrukker* of Dordrecht received regular orders for forms for the 'lantern tax' and other excise duties, as well as 'all other sorts of bills', 'letters for the prayer days' and 'lists of the aldermen and councillors'.⁵¹

Although other instructions for official printers exist for the seventeenth century, the two specified above are the most detailed. Nevertheless, we have surviving examples of other printed forms for cities like Gouda, Groningen, Rotterdam, Vlissingen and Leiden which suggest that there too print had infiltrated every niche of municipal administration.⁵² Extant examples include forms used for property valuations or inspections, shipping tolls, the sale of municipal land, the sale of graves in local churches, municipal bonds, oaths of civic officials, and for the regulation of prices, like those of fish and cheese. Certainly, one of the most pervasive printed forms used in Dutch cities was the form of the *broodzetting*, the municipal regulation of bread prices.⁵³ By the end of the seventeenth century, administrative forms were clearly common in smaller jurisdictions too: by 1660, court orders handed out by bailiffs in Zoeterwoude and Voorhout were no longer handwritten, but issued as standardised printed forms.⁵⁴

The largest single tranche of surviving examples of municipal forms identified thus far are from the famous *Raadhuispers* of Leiden, the city hall printing press set up by secretary Jan van Hout in 1577.⁵⁵ The *Raadhuispers* was an

49 Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 5039 (Archief van de Thesaurieren Ordinaris), inv. 6 (resoluties, 1674-1680), resolution of 30 November 1674, ff. 17-19.

50 A good example is illustrated in J. Brouwer, *Levenstekens. Gekaapte brieven uit het Rampjaar, 1672* (PhD thesis Rijksuniversiteit Groningen 2013), p. 130.

51 Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Stadsarchieven (3), inv. 1953a.

52 A. der Weduwen, *Selling the Republican Ideal. State Communication in the Dutch Golden Age* (PhD thesis University of St Andrews 2018).

53 J. de Vries, 'The Political Economy of Bread in the Dutch Republic', in: Gelderblom, op. cit. (n. 40), pp. 85-114.

54 Erfgoed Leiden, Archief Voorhout, Rechterlijke Archieven, inv. 40.

55 W.J.C. Rammelman Elsevier, 'De voormalige drukkerij op het Raadhuis der stad Leyden, Ao. 1577-1610', in: *Werken Maatschappij der Ned. Letterkunde*, 10 (1857), pp. 273-93. More broadly, see P. Hoftijzer, 'Veilig achter Minerva's schild. Het Leidse boek in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', in: A. Bouwman, et al., *Stad van Boeken. Handschrift en druk in Leiden 1260-2000* (Leiden 2008), pp. 153-287.

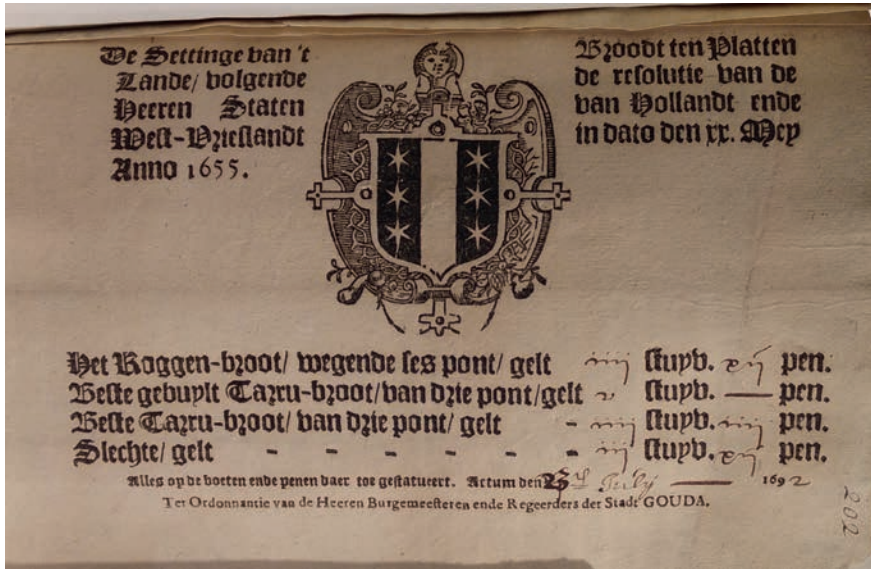


FIGURE 5 A surviving example of a *broodzetting* form, this one issued by the magistrates of Gouda in the early 1690s. Such forms are rarely preserved: they were often made obsolete soon after issuing by the frequent fluctuations in the price of bread. Streekarchief Midden-Holland, Gouda.

unprecedented fusion of municipal governance and the printing press, which allowed the municipality to produce a superb range of printed placards, pamphlets and forms which it had hitherto disseminated in manuscript. Van Hout himself estimated that the press saved nine-tenths of the expense of having forms and ordinances copied by hand.⁵⁶ The most evocative surviving examples concern forms which demand loans from citizens for the relief of the siege of Antwerp in 1585 and the blockade of the Spanish Armada in 1588.⁵⁷

The *Raadhuispers* also produced a variety of printed passports, including one that allowed unemployed citizens to travel beyond the city walls with the approval of the magistrates.⁵⁸ Passports and other travel forms represent another genre of jobbing print that was essential to the political administration of the young Dutch Republic: as numerous ordinances by the States General

56 P. Valkema Blouw, 'The First Printers of the City of Leiden. Jan Moyt Jacobsz and Andries Verschout (1574 to 1578)', in: *Dutch Typography in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. T. Croiset van Uchelen and P. Dijstelberge (Leiden 2013), pp. 349-59, here p. 349.

57 1588. *Leeninge tot equippage* ([Leiden: Raadhuispers, 1588]), USTC 426741.

58 *1c Loth Huygensz Gael, schout der stadt Leyden* ([Leiden: Raadhuispers], 1596), USTC 427384.

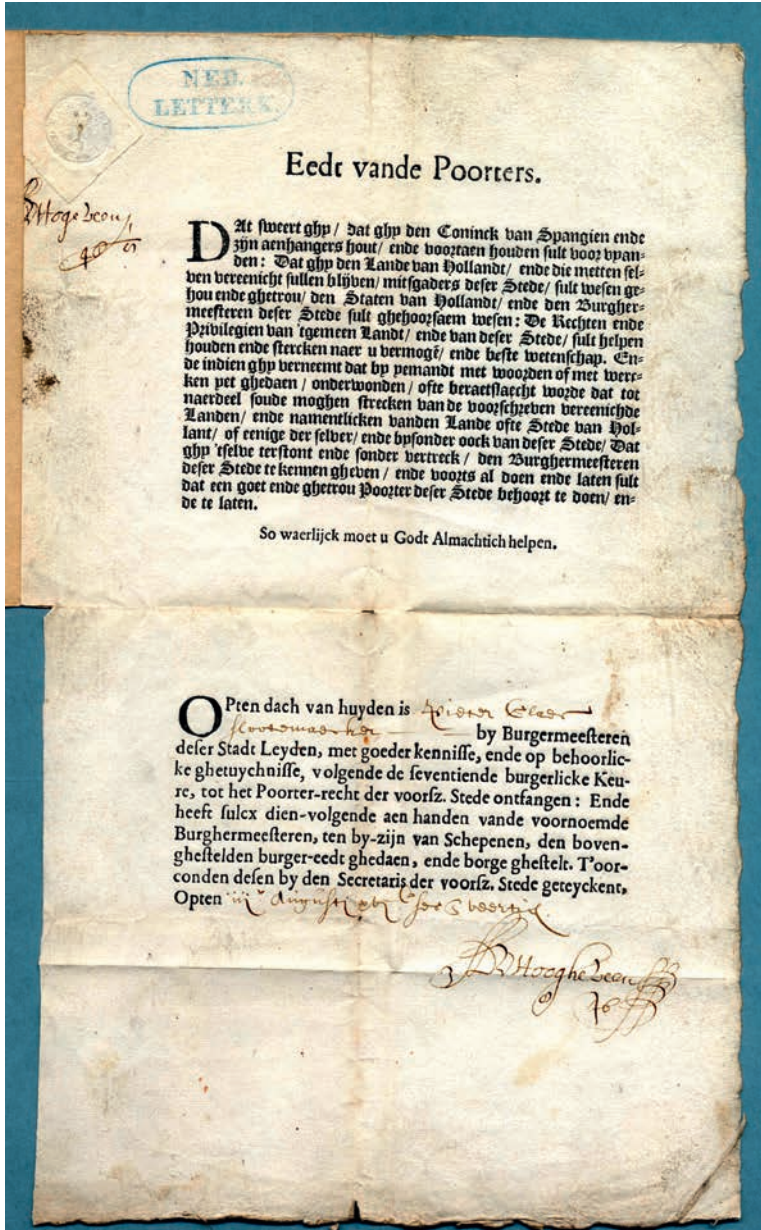


FIGURE 6 Administrative and polemical print. This Leiden *Portereed*, a citizen's oath, from 1646, opens with the statement that the citizen shall keep the King of Spain and his adherents as his enemies. University Library, Leiden.

made clear, these were obligatory to carry when one crossed the Dutch border.⁵⁹ The widow and heirs of Symon Moulert in Middelburg received an order in 1632 for 47,500 sheets of passports from the Admiralty of Zeeland.⁶⁰ If these were printed six or eight to a sheet, then the Admiralty would have a stock of between 285,000 and 380,000 passports to distribute. The family Moulert, for their part, received 852 *gulden* for this bulk order: these were the substantial sums that injected capital into the business of books. This, for instance, represented almost two year's salary for one of Middelburg's Reformed ministers. Such jobs helped make printers of state some of the richest in the trade, and helps explain why the office of *stadsdrukker* or *Statendrukker* was so coveted. Jobbing print was certainly not despised in the printing houses of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

A Typology of Ephemeral Print

It is clear that print occupied a place at the heart of Dutch society in its Golden Age. Placards, pamphlets and forms were found in all social, economic and political spheres of the Dutch Republic. But to what extent is the typology of ephemeral print that we have documented above characteristic of the Dutch Republic only? We know that to some extent, the infiltration of print into Dutch administration went further than in any other country. In 1669, the States General ordered that their new *Statendrukker* would henceforth be required to print all documents that were required for circulation in more than four copies.⁶¹ This was unprecedented, and as far as we know this made the Dutch authorities pioneers in their dependence on the press. In other aspects, such as the complexity of its decentralised government institutions, and the ready access to printing presses in many small towns, the Dutch Republic can also be considered unusual for its time. Yet if we compare the known scope of jobbing print in the seventeenth-century Netherlands with two other print domains, some striking similarities emerge (see table one, below).

59 An early surviving example is identified at *USTC 427455: De Staten Generael saluyt* [Den Haag, Aelbrecht Hendricksz, 1597].

60 T. Weststrate, "Drucker ordinarius der Heeren Staten van Zeelandt." Het bedrijf van Symon Moulert en erfgenamen (1597-1646) als Statendrukkers (1618-1646); in: *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis*, 11 (2004), pp. 51-66, here p. 65.

61 M. Schneider, *De voorgeschiedenis van de "Algemeene Landsdrukkerij"* (Den Haag 1939), p. 60.

The archive and records of the Plantin-Moretus press in Antwerp, studied by Leon Voet and Dirk Imhof, give testament to the wide range of printed broadsheets and other ephemera produced by Christophe Plantin and his heirs.⁶² The Plantin press received orders for ephemera from many different government institutions in the Southern Netherlands, not least the magistrates of Antwerp, who were prolific users of print. Most remarkably, the magistrates handed out printed forms to vagrants ordering them to leave Antwerp within twenty-four hours.⁶³ A range of Catholic ephemera, including the omnipresent indulgences, were also produced by the Plantin press. The continued relevance of religious ephemera should not be understated. We know that in Flanders, around 1640, each month some 13,000 printed *suffragia*, small printed sheets featuring the name of a Saint or an event from the life of Jesus or Mary, would be handed out for free by the Jesuit Order—the equivalent of 156,000 a year.⁶⁴

In London, we know thanks to Alex Hill that Tomas Symcock and Roger Wood obtained an unlikely monopoly on the production of broadsheets in 1621. The text of their privilege provides an evocative list of the purposes to which print could be put: indentures for apprentices, licences, bonds and receipts, writs and warrants, articles for church visitations, commercial notices. Playbills, advertisements for sporting events and shows and fliers posted by schoolmasters seeking students were specifically mentioned.⁶⁵ Such a monopoly could not be contemplated in the Dutch Republic, and indeed it seems that this monopoly was unenforceable in London too. Nevertheless, it offers us a remarkable insights into the influence of print on daily life in seventeenth-century London.

62 L. Voet, *The Plantin Press (1555-1589). A Bibliography of the Works Printed and Published by Christopher Plantin at Antwerp and Leiden*, 6 vol. (Amsterdam 1980-1983). D. Imhof, *Jan Moretus and the Continuation of the Plantin Press. A Bibliography of the Works Published and Printed by Jan Moretus I in Antwerp (1589-1610)* (Leiden 2014).

63 Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerpen: R 16.27 (55). Voet, op. cit. (n. 62), vol. I, p. 85.

64 A.K.L. Thijs, 'Notities voor een studie van de Antwerpse 17^{de}-eeuwse *Suffragia*', in: Francine De Nave, *Liber Amicorum Leon Voet* (Antwerpen 1985), pp. 561-94.

65 A. Hill, *Lost Books and Printing in London, 1557-1640. An Analysis of the Stationers' Company Register* (Leiden 2018), pp. 147-8.

TABLE 1 A comparison of types of ephemeral print known to have been produced by Dutch presses (as deduced from newspaper advertisements and attested by surviving examples), the documented output of the Plantin-Moretus publishing house in Antwerp between 1570 and 1610, and the Symcock/Wood monopoly on broadsheets in London (1621).

Reported in Dutch Newspaper Advertisements, 1620-1675, and attested in archives or by survivals	Printed in the Plantin-Moretus shop, Antwerp, 1570-1610	The Symcock/Wood monopoly in London, 1621
From Advertisements	Passports	Briefs for collections
Notification of markets	Customs forms	Letters Patents
Lost or absconding servants	Notice to quit city	Indentures for:
Wanted posters for fugitives	Bridge tolls	Apprentices
	Tax forms	Water works
Sales and auctions of:	Tax payment receipts	Draining of lands
Rarities from the East Indies	Exemptions from watch	
Art	Fishing permits	Bonds and recognizances for:
Books		Victuallers
Land	Ecclesiastical Calendars	Ale-house keepers
Prize cargoes	Table of Confession	
Oil mill	Devotional works	Licences:
Trees	Lists of prohibited books	Victuallers
Construction equipment	Jubilee announcements	Sellers of wines
Construction contract	Indulgences	
Houses and estates		Bonds, bills and acquittances
Cloth refinery	Jesuit school: curriculum	
Gardens	Jesuit school: regulations	Articles for ecclesiastical visitation
	Summaries of school books	Bills for teaching
Postal schedules		Bills concerning physicians
Barge timetables	News sheets	
Carriage services	Wedding poems	Portraits
	Funeral orations	Ballads
Others attested	Celebratory poems	Bills of lading
	Songs	Writs and warrants
Publicity for:		Bills of sickness

TABLE 1 A comparison of types of ephemeral print (*cont.*)

Reported in Dutch Newspaper Advertisements, 1620-1675, and attested in archives or by survivals	Printed in the Plantin-Moretus shop, Antwerp, 1570-1610	The Symcock/Wood monopoly in London, 1621
Inventions	Almanacs	
Doctors	Catalogue of books	Maps
	Regulations of print shop	
Workshop regulations		
Funeral invitations		
Forms:		
Tax forms		
Tax slips (issued by tax-farmer)		
Toll receipts		
Tavern and tobacco licences		
Beggar licences		
Leprosy certificates		
Bills of lading		
Insurance forms		
<i>Wisselbank</i> receipts		
Forward contracts		
'VOC shares'		
Bonds and forced loans		
Citizens' certificates		
Letters for the prayer days		
Lists of aldermen and councillors		
Property valuations		
Oaths for officials		
Sale of church graves		
Price regulations		
Court orders		
Passports and travel forms		

Comparing the known ephemeral products of presses in the Dutch Republic, Antwerp and London in the seventeenth century, it is evident that jobbing print developed along similar paths in the major metropolises of early modern Europe. The total scope of this work is hard to quantify, but in any future work on the publishing industry of early modern Europe it cannot be neglected. Even if only fifty posters for public sales or auctions were printed every year in every Dutch town with a printing press in the seventeenth century, we would expand the known corpus of printing by some 175,000 editions. Even this estimate seems to us to be extremely cautious; especially when we remember that the Haarlem *stadsaanplakker* was required to present himself at the town hall twice a day to collect the latest notices, official and private, for posting. Taking into consideration all the ephemeral forms, notices, handbills and placards discussed above, it does not seem farfetched to consider that our initial approximation of some 357,500 editions published in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century would rise to well over half a million editions if we had a better survey of jobbing print output. There was a reason that this sort of work was largely monopolised by the local printer lucky enough to be nominated as city printer. This work, along with publishing academic dissertations, official broadsheets and other works not intended for retail sale, was the most lucrative part of the business. As we consider the central theme of this journal issue and reflect on the future perspectives that will contribute new insights into book history, it seems to us that delving deeper into the archives for further examples of this ephemeral print has a prominent role to play in shaping a more refined understanding of the impact of print on both society and the publishing industry itself. The present authors would be extremely grateful if researchers who come across this material would share these discoveries: in due course, all will be logged in the *Universal Short Catalogue*.⁶⁶

66 <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>. We wish to express our thanks to other scholars working in this field, such as Paul Hoftijzer, Eric Ketelaar, Paul Dijstelberge, Anton van der Lem, Paul Begheyn, and others who have shared their discoveries with us.