PART 1

Introduction

A Network of Networks: Spreading the News in an Expanding World of Information

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News has become such a familiar and everyday element of modern societies that the complexity of the systems which lie behind news and which produce it rarely attract more than passing reflection. News is experienced literally every day; it has become ‘the news’ – the phenomenon has become a definitive presence and normalised as a basic fact of existence. The forms through which we consume the news may change, and we quickly adjust to the periodical and ongoing alterations in the ways in which news is mediated: the Nine O’Clock News becomes the Ten O’Clock News, newspaper titles come and go, online news sites gradually take the place of print publications, and so on. But the fundamental existence and importance of news has become a given: we would not readily adjust to the end of news; the fact of there being ‘the news’ in some easily accessible form has become an ingrained part of how societies function and of how individuals relate to the wider world. In this situation, it is worth reflecting upon what an extraordinary phenomenon ‘the news’ is and also how that phenomenon evolved, and the purpose of this volume is to probe moments in the early phases of the evolution of the news and, in the process, to illuminate the intricacy of the systems of knowledge exchange upon which the news depends.¹ The essays in the volume look back to the early modern period and into the eighteenth century in order to consider how the news came to be what it is, how news came to penetrate societies so deeply, how the news of the past was gathered and spread, how the news gained respect and influence, how news functioned as a business and interlocked with other businesses, and also how the historiography of news can be conducted with the resources available to scholars today.

News has origins in relatively simple forms of communication – a messenger carrying a single news item to a single recipient, for example. In its modern form, it involves a mass and multiple transit of information (some reliable, some not, some downright false), with manifold points of origin (shifting according to where events deemed newsworthy occur), to manifold outlet points

1 A philosophically inclined account of the defining role of news in modern culture and the common absence of self-consciousness regarding its consumption is given in: Alain de Botton, *The News: A User’s Manual* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014).

(publishers and broadcasters, often via news agencies) and thereafter to manifold consumers. The sophistication and internationalism of the systems underlying the news are, though, by no means new, and in the early modern period news rapidly became a highly developed enterprise, involving vast numbers of agents and communication routes. By the eighteenth century, news networks had extraordinary complexity and geographical reach – Samuel Johnson was not alone when he imagined “observation with extensive view” surveying “the world from China to Peru” (and perhaps that famous line is a response of sorts to the expanding information culture in which Johnson was living).² The period saw a major proliferation of regular printed newspapers – mainly across Europe, but also beyond – and no media product at the time was more complex in terms of production and more fundamentally collaborative than a newspaper. Mass, long-distance cooperation was crucial to news production, and it also shaped news as a reading experience, as consumers, through the act of reading, became drawn into a far-reaching network of knowledge exchange – one involving thousands of contributors, almost all of whom were anonymous so far as the reader was concerned. The expansion of news can be seen as a propagation of human relations – in the form of knowledge of others – across a growing number of increasingly distant locales, but in the process of expansion the news media themselves necessarily become more systematised, less personal and increasingly corporate. The single messenger of the past (a cliché, but one with a basis in reality) evolved into a dispersed army of news workers, some professional but most more incidentally connected to the business of news, such as merchants or sailors who might take on a type of ‘foreign correspondent’ role. Such contributors to early modern and eighteenth-century news were not all knowingly connected – far from it – yet they were associated by strands within what was a complex and growing network of news. Indeed, given the scope and internationalism of news, it is probably erroneous to use ‘network’ in the singular – a ‘network of networks’ is more appropriate. But however we term the mass collaboration that made news happen, one thing that is clear is that it defies easy mapping, description and enquiry. Indeed if we consider a single news publication as a type of entry point into the world of news, it becomes an immensely challenging and even bewildering object of analysis if it is considered not as a source for ‘what was happening at the time’ (a perfectly valid way in which historical news documents are often used) but as a node within the networks from which it emerged and to which it in turn contributed through its own distribution, consumption and remediation.

2 Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (London: 1749), p. 3.

Let us, in a spirit of introduction, delve into a single historical newspaper and take an issue of, say, the *London Evening-Post* from, say, the 1760s, and consider just some of the agents and communication channels that made it possible to produce this paper. The *London Evening-Post* was a thrice-weekly newspaper, produced (at this time) as a four-column, four-page folio publication; it had wide distribution in London and the provinces, and had a history of being oppositionist in terms of its political outlook.³ The British Library's Burney Collection includes many well-preserved issues, and that for 3–5 January 1764 (see Figure 0.1) is as good as any for considering the type of infrastructure within which this publication existed.

Compared with a twentieth- or twenty-first-century newspaper, a striking feature of the *London Evening Post* is the sheer number of the news reports it carries and the manner in which they are crowded together. News is presented together with an array of advertisements and announcements – filling around a quarter of the paper – and more than two columns are given over to letters to “*the Printer of the London Evening Post*”, but the paper's densely printed columns are devoted primarily to news reports: well over a hundred of them, mostly very short (in paragraphs not much longer than a modern tweet), and organised in a largely miscellaneous fashion, without headlines other than for certain categories such as ‘PORT NEWS’ and ‘AMERICA’.

The issue begins its rapid-fire offering of news with a report from Madrid, taken from another paper – the *London Gazette* – and this internationalism and the derivative nature of the report are characteristic of much of the news printed in the issue. A large proportion of the text is comprised of remediated reports from other publications: from London and provincial papers, from “all the Evening Papers of *last Tuesday*”, from the *South-Carolina Gazette*, and more. For a good deal of its content, then, the *London Evening Post* was drawing upon information which had already been published and absorbed into a type of news ‘commons’ – an ever evolving pool of reports which were copied and recopied in an environment without restrictive protocols concerning proprietorship. The news business had seen some disputes concerning the ownership of news writing, but distinct copyright legislation had not become operative in relation to news, and, as Will Slauter has written, ‘ownership claims were rare with respect to most of the texts that filled eighteenth-century newspapers

3 For an account of the paper's politics and readership/distribution, see Bob Harris, ‘The London Evening Post and Mid-Eighteenth-Century British Politics’, *English Historical Review*, 110 (439) (1995), pp. 1132–1156.

and magazines'.⁴ Copying was standard practice, and the *London Evening Post* makes no pretence of originality. It cites many of its published sources – a form of acknowledgement as well as a way of deferring the responsibility for the accuracy of the reports – and this was the norm for the papers of the day, which are peppered with brief signals of their dependence upon the wider, collective enterprise of news transmission. Readers at this time were clearly not expecting swathes of original in-house journalism, but rather a gathering of the latest information from whatever sources their chosen paper had available to them. The *London Evening Post* was itself contributing to the 'commons' with the original reports that it could offer, but for the most part it was selecting and marshalling the information available from a well-developed news network. In this way, three times a week, it could present a dense offering of stories from London, the British provinces and from the wider world. Alongside the story from Madrid, this issue presents reports from Italy, Holland, Germany, France, Denmark, Prussia, the Ottoman Empire, Poland, Ireland, Portugal, Antigua, Canada and the American colonies. Concerning Britain, the paper includes reports, in no particular order, from Cumberland, Liverpool, Plymouth, Deal, Newcastle, Cleveland, Gloucester, Bath, Bedfordshire, Portsmouth, Oxford, Wiltshire, Manchester, Chester, Watford, Harwich, Hereford, Caernarfon, Lincoln, Falmouth, and other locations. The paper also includes more local news from London and the immediate environs – the issue has two sections headed 'LONDON' – but for more than half of its reports it is gathering intelligence from farther afield (and, indeed, the 'LONDON' sections include various accounts which have little or nothing to do with the capital at all). With its numerous, short reports, it offers a brisk tour around the happenings of the world and it does this in large part by operating as a gatherer and remediator within the evolving international information networks.

Almost all newspapers were skimming off their fellows, but a constant injection of original information was, of course, needed to keep the news industry circulating, and at this time, for all but local news, this typically arrived in the form of letters, and here again the channel was made explicit in how papers presented their news offering. The *London Evening Post* prefaces numerous reports with a declaration of origin: "Letters by the last French mail from Genoa, dated the 14th past, mention ...", "They write from Rome of the 10th past ...", "Extract of a letter from Portsmouth", "Letters from Paris, on Monday, brought

4 Will Slauter, 'Upright Piracy: Understanding the Lack of Copyright for Journalism in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Book History*, 16 (2013), pp. 34–61 (55). For an examination of journalism, borrowing and copyright legislation across a longer time-span, see Slauter's *Who Owns the News?*, forthcoming with Stanford University Press.

advice of ...”, “Letters from different parts of N. Wales, mention ...”, “By letters from Lisbon we are told ...”, and so on. For a reader at the time, these declarations could have an authorising effect, offering the assurance that the reported information actually came from somewhere, but at the same time they sound a note of caution: the report is not guaranteed to be factual but rather can be taken as factual *according to* the author of the letter, whoever that may be. What these signs also do, though, is point to the intimacy at the time of news and the national and international postal systems, the major channels of which had been in place since the seventeenth century.⁵ This connection would have been a given for original readers: news reporting was inseparable from the post; news was recognised as being, in large part, the collective outpouring of a far-flung network of letter writers – or, to use the term that has endured within news culture, of *correspondents*.

Indeed, the postal service was so important to news that any significant development concerning the post or a disruption to its regular operation would typically become a part of the news itself. The *London Evening Post* has a title which, of course, suggests that news and the post are not just related but are parts of a singular information organism, and this paper, like others, carried regular news of the postal service itself in announcements under a ‘GENERAL POST-OFFICE’ heading. On the front page of the 3–5 January issue, one such announcement instructs the public how they should address letters to Germany and Turkey (“via Flanders; *otherwise they will be sent by the Way of Holland*”), while another announcement from the Post Office reports that the “*Post-Boy bringing the Rye Mail*” has been robbed of his bag of letters having stopped at a public house for some refreshment. A reward of fifty pounds is offered to anyone who can bring the culprits to justice. Here, in fact, the thrice-weekly nature of the *London Evening Post* lends a curious narrative quality to the news it carried, since, collated and typeset over a period of around two days, a single issue could include updates in its later sections to the news presented in the earlier sections. On the final page of the issue it is reported that:

Yesterday the Rye bag ... stolen in Kent-street on Saturday morning last, was found by a ditch near Tottenham-court, by a young man who was shooting thereabouts, and brought to the Post-office ... the letters were so wet that they would take four or five hours drying, so could not be delivered out ‘till this day.

5 An up-to-date account of the early European postal system is given in Jay Caplan, *Postal Culture in Europe, 1500–1800* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2016).

What we see in this story, complete with its happy ending, is the premium placed upon the regular mail, and in turn the value that was attached to the transit of information – a value which is literalised in monetary terms here in the huge, fifty-pound reward. In the same way that any rupture in the workings of the internet becomes big news today (usually conveyed via the internet itself), any problem with the post – when the post was the prime means of long-distance communication – was a partial system breakdown, and it became a priority to inform users of the disruption.

The two primary channels through which the *London Evening Post* was garnering its copy, then, were the postal service and already-published news (which, aside from the London papers, would have reached the paper's premises via the post). These channels do not account for how more local news was gathered – a process about which the paper is largely reticent. There are few prefatory pointers to sources for the paper's reports from London and the surrounding counties, which are presented as simply factual – presumably because there could be greater confidence in the accuracy of less travelled reports. Readers of the 3–5 January issue are simply told, for example, that “On Monday night the Earl and Countess of Fife arrived in town from Scotland, at their house in Charles-street, Berkeley-square” (with the plainness of the prose leaving little doubt that this paper's priority was to inform rather than entertain). By whatever means the paper was receiving its more local news – via its own news gatherers, or regular informants, or through letters and messages sent through local channels – it does not show a need to frame the reports with qualifications and caveats drawing attention to those sources, but the stories themselves point to the existence of an extensive local network of news providers. The paper presents reports from all corners of what is now Greater London: reports of crimes and accidents, announcements of deaths and births, news of the court and of the comings and goings of the aristocracy, reports of legal trials and judgments, and so on. There is news from the major institutions of the capital, from private dwellings and from the streets – all pointing to the *London Evening Post* having developed a sophisticated local information gathering system.

Focusing purely on the *London Evening Post*'s acquisition of news, this relatively cursory examination of a single issue immediately begins to suggest the immeasurability of the information networks of which it was a part. Those networks, of course, begin to expand and multiply when other factors underlying the paper's existence are taken into consideration. There are the material aspects of the paper's production: the manufacture of paper, ink, presses and type, the transportation of materials, together with the actual typesetting and printing. The economic set up of the paper is another multifaceted area,

with income generated through a combination of the two-pence half-penny cover price and revenue from a long list of advertisers, which was needed to balance the outgoings involved in production and news-gathering, the Stamp Tax, and the costs of distribution both locally and further afield. How the paper was distributed opens up further questions, and leads in turn to perhaps the most important questions that can be asked of a single news product and of news culture more broadly: who were the consumers, in what ways were they consuming news, and what were the effects of news upon individuals and the wider communities of which they were a part? Was the paper an instrument of education, enlightenment and liberation, or of propaganda, passification and control – or was its prime purpose the filling of leisure time? Did it combine several of these functions, all of which have been seen at different moments and in different contexts in the long history of news?

A basic point that emerges here – and this is a rationale for this collection of new contributions to news studies – is that contact with a historical news document immediately begins to point outwards into byzantine realms of news production and consumption about which much can be known but much remains remarkably obscure, despite the very many outstanding studies of news which have been produced over many decades. The *London Evening Post*, like most papers, allows us to glimpse its workings and its possible effects, but it is suggestive rather than explanatory. “They write from Rome of the 10th past ...”? Who are “They”? Why did they write? Did someone pay them to do so? Why did they choose to write about this rather than that? What might readers have made of this information sent from Rome? Was the information of any use? Did readers find it credible, and if so how had the news media earned this trust? When probing the mass collaboration of news, such questions soon begin to multiply, and at the same time they reveal that, in order to understand more about how the news of the past worked and evolved, it is necessary to complement analysis of news documents themselves with explorations of contextual factors which are not necessarily explicitly pointed to or revealed by the news product.

The essays in this volume are very deliberately diverse in terms of their objects of investigation and approach, and an aspiration of the volume is to present a series of detailed, analytical snapshots of different aspects of international news history together with considerations of a number of more philosophical and methodological overarching issues. The diversity is in part a result of three basic principles which have governed the direction of the volume – principles of openness which have emerged from the nature of news itself and from the manner in which it is now available, in archival terms, as a field of study.

1 News is an Intrinsically International Field of Study

From its very beginnings, news has allowed people to stretch the horizons of their knowledge of the world; it has fed a craving for information about what lies beyond the literal horizon, allowing men and women, in Andrew Pettegree's words, "to experience the fascination of faraway events".⁶ News, in other words, has always been an international enterprise. The reporting of foreign news has been prioritised throughout history, at times even without much regard for comprehensibility. Writing on 'the Duty of a Journalist' in 1758, Samuel Johnson complained that it was

common to find passages in papers of intelligence which cannot be understood. Obscure places are sometimes mentioned without any information from geography or history. Sums of money are reckoned by coins or denominations of which the value is not known in this country.

Johnson's objection was to journalists who misjudged their readers' capabilities: newsmen should be better acquainted with "the lower orders of mankind", he insisted, and be more explanatory for that audience.⁷ But his observation can also be taken as a pointer towards the elevated status of foreign news, with its suggestion that an obscure gesture to the wider world – a blurry squint towards the exotic – was at the time deemed worthy of printing even if, for most readers, it conveyed nothing that amounted to actual knowledge.

The international diffusion of news and how this has changed over time are, as suggested above, complicated topics, and for some projects within the study of news it is clearly wise to keep the lids on those cans of worms in order to perform more locally focused analyses. Dedicated studies of news enterprises within a national context, such as Victoria Gardner's wonderfully detailed *The Business of News in England, 1760–1820*, clearly need to avoid becoming enmeshed in the wider international networks of news in order to maintain their concentration on a national scene.⁸ The current volume, however,

6 Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 13.

7 Samuel Johnson, 'Of the Duty of a Journalist' in Donald Greene (ed.), *The Oxford Authors: Samuel Johnson* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 545–546 (545). The essay was first printed in 1758 in *Payne's Universal Chronicle*, the weekly paper in which Johnson's *Idler* essays would appear.

8 Victoria Gardner, *The Business of News in England, 1760–1820* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

purposefully avoids a geographical delimitation and opens up the consideration of different ways in which news has crossed international borders, with essays which give attention to the motivations, the means of transmission and the agents involved in the international transit of news, as well as to issues of medium, language, and translation. There is nothing new in embracing a cross-cultural approach to news, and much excellent scholarship on the internationalism of news has been performed, as is seen in the immense collection of essays on *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (2016), edited by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham.⁹ But there remain numerous under-explored border-crossing lines in the history of news, as well as new possibilities for examining them due to the discovery of new sources and, perhaps most significantly, the rise of searchable digital archives of news publications (about which more below). The transit of news in and out of Moscow in the early modern period has been a particularly obscure area (one not treated in Raymond and Moxham's collection) and this is explored in three of the chapters in this volume, while other chapters address international aspects of French, British, Dutch, American, Baltic and Scandinavian news cultures, as well as more fundamental issues concerning the status of information which was valued because of its geographically distant origin.

The opening chapter by William Warner is an interrogation of how newspapers came to gain the trust of their readers, and the spatial distance between the site of a reported event and the site of a reader's consumption of the report is central to that problem. How could newspapers convince a reader of the truth of a report of something which that reader was distant from and had therefore not witnessed? The spatial distance might actually be small – from one side of a town to another – but news culture, as has been suggested, was preoccupied with far-flung events and so trust had to become embedded in the international network of knowledge exchange. Warner shows different ways in which the newspapers built credibility so as to gain a status, in readers' eyes, as "the most timely, varied, flexible source of information about events occurring in places remote from the paper's production" (p. 46). Warner focuses upon the Anglophone newspaper and pursues a case study of the *Boston Gazette's* reporting of the Boston Massacre of 1770, but the claims of his essay have pertinence to the wider culture of news production and consumption, and the

9 Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). For a much earlier study which explores news beyond the bounds of a single national context, see, for example, Stephen Botein, Jack R. Censer and Harriet Ritvo, 'The Periodical Press in Eighteenth-Century English and French Society: A Cross-Cultural Approach', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23:3 (1981), pp. 464–490.

questions of reliability and trust enter into the other chapters concerned with the international spreading of news.

In Chapter 5, Heike Droste and Ingrid Maier offer a micro-historical account of news transmitted in the seventeenth century from Moscow to Sweden and its Baltic territories by one man: Christoff Koch (1637–1711). The chapter shows the evolving infrastructure which, from the mid seventeenth century, was enabling a growing culture of correspondence with Russia, and the authors' research reveals much about the key role of individuals within the business of news. Koch was not a full-time professional newsman; he worked primarily within commerce, but as a well-connected resident in Moscow he was well placed to function as an informant for the Swedish crown and government, and he proved to be a key agent in the transmission of Moscow's cultural and political news for many years. Chapter 9, by Malte Griesse, furthers the interrogation of the early diffusion of news from Moscow, but where Droste and Maier focus upon a particular agent in the business of news, Griesse takes as a case study a single event – the Moscow Salt Uprising of 1648 – and explores the different narratives of the event which were generated as the news spread south-westwards into Sweden and thereafter into France. Griesse shows a transformation in the tellings, uncovering a series of adaptations whereby the facts of the event were successively altered so as to be made palatable for the intended readers within the foreign culture in which the news would be consumed. The chapter is a reminder of the narrative nature of news – of the gap between phenomena and the language which describes and distorts them – and it shows the role of international borders in the refraction of truth which can occur in remediation.

Chapter 6, by Daniel Waugh, also examines the transit of information in early modern Russia but with a focus upon how Muscovites acquired intelligence of events abroad as a basis for diplomatic policy making. How, Waugh asks, did the *Posol'skii prikaz* (the Muscovite Diplomatic Chancery) gain useful and reliable international news? The answer to this – typically for news studies – involves consideration of multiple channels, and Waugh shows how these shifted and evolved over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and included public channels such as newspapers as well as more clandestine and unofficial information suppliers.

The chapters described above are all concerned with the development of international systems of knowledge exchange during a period in which the geographical scope of news was expanding due to European colonialism, to increasing international trading, and to the voyages of discovery dedicated to charting and exploring the world's unknown territories. Chapter 7, by Marius Warholm Haugen, shows that global exploration was itself an important part

of the news and remained so well into the eighteenth century and beyond. His chapter is a study of remediation which, focusing on the French periodical press of the late eighteenth century and Napoleonic period, examines how travel accounts from around the globe reached Europe and were disseminated through news channels. The chapter explores how news outlets shaped the European perception of distant lands and cultures, and how remediation expanded access to knowledge, since a news publication could reach a wider reading public than a travel account published in book form.

Chapter 8, by Johanne Kristiansen, considers the same period and investigates several of the issues described above in an examination of the British reporting of the French Revolution. Her study shows the significance of a particular individual in the international transmission of news in relation to the transformation of narrative in the process of remediation. The chapter focuses on the work of James Perry (1756–1821), a politically progressive editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, who travelled to Paris to report on the revolution – and was thereby among the earliest professional foreign correspondents in an industry which had continued to rely primarily upon the dispatches of part-time news workers, such as Christoff Koch in seventeenth-century Moscow. When published in the *Morning Chronicle*, Perry's reports were, as was typical, treated as fair game by other newspapers, but the chapter shows how in the process of borrowing the reports were reworked before their further publication to suit the political orientation of the appropriating newspaper. By tracing the afterlife of Perry's reports, Kristiansen shows how passages from the radically inclined *Morning Chronicle* were edited and reinflected to serve more conservative news outlets such as the *St. James's Chronicle*. The chapter further demonstrates how a major event such as the French Revolution could bring about changes in the workings of the news industry, as rivals to the *Morning Chronicle*, such as the *Times*, came to recognise the necessity of more regularised and reliable foreign reporting and began a professionalisation of journalism that would be further developed in the nineteenth century.

Warner's discussion of how newspapers built up readerly trust in reports of distant events, therefore, serves as a foundation for a number of studies which show how the news in which trust was invested was always determined by and contingent upon the nature of its source and upon what happened to the report between its point of origin and its point of reading – and collectively the chapters show that this issue pertained within the long history of news, not only in that of the newspaper. Christoff Koch retained his position because his contacts in Sweden trusted his reports; it was a version of this type of trust in an individual that had to become a part of the world of newspaper publication – even if in diluted or fragmented form – as communication

between personal contacts grew into the more impersonal networks of international news transmission.

There has, of course, long been mistrust of news alongside the craving for it. News stories, for example, were dubbed “Those Lyes that do our Passions move” by Edward Ward in his burlesque poem *St. Paul's Church* (1716), and assaults upon the truth claims of the news industry continue in such projects as Donald Trump's blustering attempts to discredit media institutions as purveyors of ‘fake news’.¹⁰ But without a basic, tacit agreement between news providers and consumers that their transactions revolve around narratives based in truth, the very concept of ‘the news’ would collapse. Truth is clearly put under pressure within news, but the idea of true narration is the kernel of the industry.

A systematic manipulation of truth can be seen at historical moments in which censorship has been imposed upon the circulation of news, and this is shown in this volume in Chapter 12 by Kaarel Vanamölder. This chapter examines the Swedish-controlled Baltic provinces in the late seventeenth century and it demonstrates how the move towards absolutism in the Swedish empire after 1680 led to new controls upon the news media with the appointment of a state newswriter. Vanamölder focuses upon the news market in Riga, a hub in the postal networks at the time and therefore a key connection between eastern and western Europe. The management of international news in Riga, Vanamölder argues, was central to the Swedish crown's strategies of control, and those who held the royal privilege, in order to maintain their monopolies on news, were required to select and edit foreign news to render it favourable to Swedish imperial policy. Regarding international news, cross-border remediation and the epistemological transformations that it can entail are seen *in extremis* in this episode. But censorship has not always targeted truth; in other cases, not far removed from Sweden, censorship has been aimed at curtailing the opinionated spin that might be published alongside the report of an event – not at the truth but at what interpretations might be laid upon it. Chapter 13, by Ellen Krefting, examines the controlling mechanisms at work in Denmark-Norway in the eighteenth century. She explores the consequences of a decree from the Danish monarchy in 1701 which censored ‘reasoning’ and discussion around factual reports, and ruled that the news should be a narration of events that had occurred without the dressing of commentaries on those events. If censorship derives from authoritarian fear of the circulation of text, what is seen in this case is a fear not of news *per se* but of the power of thought and argument for which news is a prompt.

10 Edward Ward, *St. Paul's Church; Or, The Protestant Ambulators* (London: 1716), p. 24.

What Krefting's essay also shows is how the appetite for news had spread. The Danish colony of Norway may, as the chapter suggests, have been geographically peripheral but by the beginning of the eighteenth century it had a news culture which was active and extensive enough to be worthy of the imposition of a censorship order. Like the other chapters described here, Krefting's study makes very clear that early modern news networks stretched far and that news was an inherently international business.

2 In the Age of Print, News was More than Printed News

Much of the discussion above has focussed upon the newspaper, but this volume is concerned with news rather than any particular medium which has transmitted news, and overall it points to the ways in which different news media have overlapped and complemented one another. There have been tendencies within the historiography of news, as Joad Raymond observed in *The Invention of the Newspaper* (1996), to plot the development of news media within an overarching narrative of progress as a series of displacements whereby new media arrive and supplant their less technologically sophisticated forebears. Raymond writes:

Traditionally historians of the news have taken a telescopic view of the development of news media in the early-modern period, and identified a long-term development and increase in communication. The story has all the properties of the classic Whig model of history: it tells of the move from an oral culture through a manuscript culture to a culture of print.¹¹

The expansion of print is undoubtedly the major media development of the period, and the proliferation of printed news products certainly lends a seductive quality to the Whig narrative. Yearly newspaper sales in Britain, for example, are estimated to have been around 16 million by the 1790s; surely, we might assume, it was within the world of the newspaper that news was happening. But print did not briskly sweep away pre-existing means of news transmission and, just as radio has survived television (contrary to the predictions of the 1920s following television's invention), manuscript and oral forms of news transmission survived healthily alongside printed news. Printed newspapers were largely modelled on manuscript news products: the commercial *avvisi*

11 Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641–1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 4.

of the sixteenth century, which were produced principally in the news hubs in Italy and provided privileged customers who could afford the service with reports of the most important happenings around Europe.¹² In terms of format and style, the printed newspaper owed much to the *avvisi*, but the mechanically produced offspring did not oust the handmade parent, and *avvisi* were still being produced well into the eighteenth century, offering a news service of a more elitist character than that provided by the cheaper printed papers. In this volume, this issue of different media types existing in parallel within news culture is addressed directly by Rachael King in Chapter 4, 'The Eighteenth-Century Manuscript Newsletter', which explicitly challenges the 'rise of print' narrative of the period's news history and demonstrates the endurance of handwritten news in the marketplace. King shows that, as today, a tangle of media were involved in the transmission of news, and that, when print became the preeminent means of mass reproduction – and in the process changed and expanded the audience for news – it was a major augmentation of news culture rather than an all-consuming transformation of the means of transmission. Other essays are also concerned with the interaction of different media in the business and consumption of news.

Chapter 3 by Daniel Reed is a close study of the relationship between a particular profession – the English clergy – and the news press. The chapter demonstrates the importance of the eighteenth-century newspaper as a mediator of events and of changes in the world of the Anglican church, but it also points to the newspaper's status as one among several channels of communication concerning church business. Church preferments, for example, were made public in newspaper announcements, but these, Reed points out, "were a secondary channel of information to the flurry of epistolary and oral exchanges of intelligence that accompanied the vacancy of a position in the Church" (p. 80). Reed provides here a pointed reminder that scholars should consider not only the *avvisi* but also private, personal letters as constituents of a strand within news culture. The news that was exchanged in oral encounters has, of course, been lost to time, but in the private letter we often find the sending of news – derived from newspaper reports or elsewhere – as well as personal commentaries upon it.

The chapters concerning the flow of news into and out of Russia are similarly concerned with the private letter as a means of transmission and with the ways in which information contained in letters connected with that expressed in the more public form of the newspaper. Droste and Maier's study of Christoff Koch is an examination of elite correspondence between Koch and

12 See Pettegree, *The Invention of News*, p. 110.

the Swedish monarchy and government as well as agents in Sweden's Baltic territories – handwritten news for a select audience. Griesse's study of the reporting of the Moscow Salt Uprising similarly explores the private reports produced by diplomats and ambassadors while also tracing the transformation of the story when it reached the pages of the *Gazette de France*. Waugh's research into the foreign news available to the *Posol'skii prikaz* suggests that the diplomats in Moscow were interested in whatever they could access: they were multi-media consumers, hungry for trustworthy reports of all kinds whether they came in printed, handwritten or oral form.

But as well as seeing news as something bigger than any single form of transmission, with regard to print there is another way in which this volume considers news documents as part of a wider media landscape. Two of the chapters presented here point to the intimacy of the news press and the book trade, showing how, economically and technically, there was an interdependence between news and book publication. Both chapters are focused on newspaper advertisements – those fiscally charged meeting points between the news press and a whole range of other trades. Chapter 10 by Arthur der Weduwen examines Dutch newspaper advertisements – and shows that the Dutch were pioneers, using advertising as a means of funding the news from the early seventeenth-century, long before other nations. In the first phase of Dutch newspaper advertising, the main products that were advertised were other printed products, notably didactic books. Around half of all Dutch booksellers, der Weduwen's research reveals, had made use of newspaper advertising by the 1640s. In the second half of the seventeenth century, a wider range of luxury goods came to be advertised in the Dutch press, but books remained an important part of the business – and so they continued to fund the news, whilst in turn the advertisements helped the book trade grow. By the eighteenth century, advertising had become a part of the news cultures of other nations, including Britain, where, as in the Dutch Republic, books figured prominently among the advertised goods. The connection between the British trade in newspapers and in books – particularly novels – is examined in Chapter 11 by Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, who points to the layered nature of the interdependency of books and news print. The relation was partly economic and infrastructural: newspapers were often produced on the same presses as books; they were often sold and delivered together; booksellers were sometimes also newspaper proprietors. But in terms of audience, there was also a symbiotic relation: the rise of the newspaper was a factor in rising literacy; the newspapers raised awareness of new books; both print forms fostered cultures of reading and helped popularise reading beyond the metropolis in the British provinces. Brandtzæg's chapter, with its particular attention to novels, also

provides a reminder of how the writing of fiction – a growth industry in the eighteenth century – also had a relation to news in terms of content. Indeed, it has long been a claim within the broad ‘rise of the novel’ story that ‘the novel’ (a clue is in the name) was in part the progeny of the news, and that the diverting tales of contemporary life that the novel offered were appealing to readerly desires which had been stoked by the spread of news.¹³

The long story of the news, then, clearly embraces many different media and genres. The period under scrutiny in this volume was that which saw how, as Andrew Pettegree writes in the final chapter here, “a fully articulated network of public news media reached its first climax” (p. 322) and the newspaper was essential to that peak. But the newspaper existed within a cluster of media involving letters, pamphlets, books, speeches, conversations, songs and more, all of which could carry the news.

3 Digital News Archives Have Revolutionised News Studies but Sources Stretch beyond These Archives

This volume has been produced at a time of major transformation within the field of news studies due to the development by both libraries and commercial online publishers of a series of major digital databases of historical news documents.¹⁴ Such resources began to have an impact on the field around the turn

13 The news-novel connection has been put forward influentially by J. Paul Hunter in *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992) – see particularly Chapter 7: ‘Journalism: The Commitment to Contemporaneity’. See also Doug Underwood, *Journalism and the Novel: Truth and Fiction, 1700–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

14 Regarding Anglophone material, many early newsbooks and pamphlets – i.e., one-off news publications, catalogued by a single title – have been available digitally since the launch of *Early English Books Online (EEBO)* in 1998 and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)* in 2003. Regarding periodically published material (not included in *EEBO* and *ECCO*), the British Library’s digitisation of its Burney Collection – launched in 2007 – was both pioneering and inspirational. The British Library itself has developed *British Newspapers 1620–1900*, and has collaborated with the commercial genealogy service findmypast to produce the growing *British Newspaper Archive*. Notable among other commercial academic resources are Chadwyck-Healey’s *British Periodicals* and Adam Matthew’s *Eighteenth Century Journals*. Most recently at the time of writing, Gale Cengage has digitised the Bodleian Library’s ‘Nichols Collection’ and launched, in 2017, its *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Nichols Newspaper Collection*. Beyond the Anglophone world, there are numerous digitisation projects, completed or underway, which are focused upon or include news publications. The French National Library and its

of the century, since which time scholars have been exploiting the increased access to primary sources as well as exploring how the resources allow for the asking of new questions and the development of new methods of analysis. Uriel Heyd, the author of *Reading Newspapers: Press and Public in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America*, noted the fundamental turning point within news studies in 2012. Introducing his book, Heyd suggested that his own work was “probably one of the last pieces of research on eighteenth-century newspapers to be conducted through the examination of newspapers in their original or microfilm form” and he saw that digitisation would “revolutionise the study of the press, both by changing methods and scope and by opening the material to a much wider community”. He was writing, he suggested, at a “watershed moment” for the field and he pointed to a “particular need for historians to continue studying newspaper culture in its historical context”.¹⁵ The studies presented in this volume have been undertaken after this ‘digital turn’ (mostly with the contextualising drive Heyd calls for) and many of the authors have drawn primarily on digital resources and have explored the new research possibilities that have been opened up by them – particularly by the searchability of digitised news documents. Marius Warholm Haugen’s chapter on the reporting of travellers’ discoveries in the French periodical press, for example, exploits digital searching to detect paths of textual remediation that would, in practical terms, be undiscoverable by means of traditional archival research. Here, and in other chapters, the new resources allow the scholar to trace the journeys of snippets of news texts – to compare and connect different publications – and thereby to better understand the nature of what was pointed out above as one of the key features of news culture: its collective investment in appropriation and remediation as a means of dispersing the news. Searchability can also expand the ambition of research involving the surveying of large swathes of material, as is seen in Siv Gøril Brandtzæg’s chapter on advertising in British

partners have provided access to eighteenth-century periodicals published in France (or published in French outside France) through *Gallica – bibliothèque numérique*, while *Le gazetier universel: Ressources numériques sur la presse ancienne* has been established as a virtual library of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French periodicals. In Norway, the National Library has included newspapers within a broad programme of digitisation, and has made many issues of the earliest Norwegian newspapers available online. The National Library of Germany has established a portal – *Zeitungsinformationssystem (ZEFYS)* – giving access to historical German and Prussian newspapers. A valuable list of newspaper digitisation projects is maintained online by the International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON) at <http://icon.crl.edu/digitization.php>.

- 15 Uriel Heyd, *Reading Newspapers: Press and Public in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2012), p. 4.

eighteenth-century newspapers. Her project has involved the searching in the period's papers for *all* known eighteenth-century novel titles (more than 2000 of them), allowing her to advance the new claim that, almost without exception, every new novel was advertised in the papers of the time – a discovery of importance in its own right, but one which is also further revealing of the intimacy of the news press and the world of imaginative literature in the period.

The studies presented here have capitalised on the new resources but the volume aims to avoid being a wide-eyed celebration of the digital, and the authors have also considered the challenges and limitations of the new newspaper archives as their work has proceeded. One basic consideration concerns what digital archives do not include. An aura of comprehensiveness can easily be projected upon certain digital archives – their gaps are rarely displayed, and commercial publishers in particular place great emphasis upon what the resources they offer contain rather than what they do not. The Burney Collection has become for many scholars the 'go to' resource for investigations into the eighteenth-century British newspaper, but the collection – vast and exceptional though it is – is far from a comprehensive gathering of the papers printed in the period. Based on the collection of one late eighteenth-century news print enthusiast, the Reverend Charles Burney (1757–1817), the runs of individual titles in the archive include many gaps, and overall the collection has a strong bias towards the metropolitan papers. This issue is considered here in Daniel Reed's chapter on newspapers and the clerical profession, which highlights the fact that many papers held in British regional archives are not represented in the Burney Collection; basing research purely on the Burney archive, the chapter suggests, will produce history which is skewed by the collecting habits and opportunities of Charles Burney. At this point it should also be remembered that news publications have long been treated as the most disposable of all print products – destined to become bumf, kindling or chip wrapping – and that a great deal of news print has simply been lost to history. The digital archives do not offer access to the news of the past; they offer access to a number of partial collections of what has survived of the news products of the past.

Here, of course, we also return to the issue of the multi-mediality of news, since the digital archives are predominantly archives of *printed* material. Research libraries are increasingly digitising their manuscript collections – and in this way handwritten *avvisi* are becoming more available to a wider scholarly community – but digitised manuscript texts are, as yet, not electronically searchable, and so cannot be explored *en masse* by means of the techniques used to explore large bodies of digitised printed materials. So while scholars such as Rachael King are, by means of research within manuscript

archives, uncovering new chronologies for the history of manuscript news, as described above, there is a danger that digitisation projects are privileging printed news and again obscuring the modes of manuscript transmission that existed alongside print. The need sometimes to cast a wide archival net is demonstrated in Daniel Waugh's chapter on the *Posol'skii prikaz*. In part a 'state of the field' review, Waugh's study provides a vivid demonstration of how some news studies need to range across a variety of different archives: if the aspiration is to uncover a sense of the totality of information accessible at a particular time and place – including information supplied by spies and secret agents – then the search clearly has to range far beyond the digital archives of printed materials.

Furthermore, the idea of the searchability of digitised historical texts can be misleading. This issue is addressed directly and at length by Andrew Prescott in Chapter 2 of the volume on 'Pre- and post-digital newspaper research' as he explores the levels of accuracy of the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) mechanisms which transform the visual image of a printed page into a file of searchable text. Historical newspapers present a whole range of challenges to OCR: close typesetting, unclear printing, 'bleed through' from one side of a page of print to the other, the long 's', poor preservation, and so on. Prescott shows that the strike rate of a keyword search in the Burney Collection can be remarkably low. His essay – which takes to task certain scholarly studies based on blithe keyword searching of digital archives – provides a stark warning to scholars within news studies, and is a timely pointer towards the need for greater awareness of what electronic searching can reveal and of what it might conceal. Prescott's chapter is that which most self-consciously addresses these methodological issues within contemporary studies of news, while the book as a whole has been conceived as one which should capitalise on the research possibilities opened up by the digital archives whilst attending to their limitations and the partial access to the field which they provide.

Did the expansion of news culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries bring about positive developments for the people living at the time? Did the increasing availability of regular newspapers contribute to an 'Enlightenment' of the world – particularly Europe – towards the end of the eighteenth century by spreading knowledge, the ability to think and to behave rationally and, thereby, to contribute to a more advanced society? In the final essay of the volume, a sceptical view of any association between the newspaper and a widespread European Enlightenment is put forward by Andrew Pettegree, whose *The Invention of News* (2014) informs several of the chapters presented here. Pettegree's essay suggests that if the newspaper is seen as an agent in the

creation of a newly informed, critical public, then that development should be dated earlier than the eighteenth century, the period in which the idea of a 'public sphere' is typically placed. But the scepticism goes beyond chronology and questions the basic idea of the progress of news: more news came to reach more people, but did it inform and improve individuals and society, or was it rather an instrument of partisanship, commercialism and vulgarity? William Warner's essay at the beginning of the volume points to positive effects of the evolution of the newspaper and the information it dispersed. Pettegree is persuasively unconvinced. The editors hope that the poles of this debate – one which is still operative with regard to contemporary news media – may hover over the reading of the volume as a whole.