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Inhaltsverzeichnis

III.

IV.

V.

VI.

Antonio Castillo Gómez

The *Alborayque* and Other Street Readings in the Early Modern Hispanic World*

1. Introduction

If, as American historian Robert Darnton put it, the history of reading is fraught with difficulties due to the scarce evidence left in files and because "we have not yet devised a strategy for understanding the inner process by which readers made sense of words",[1] these problems are even greater when we face elusive reading practices such as those that took place in the public space formed by streets and squares during the early Modern Age. To date both the history of the books and of reading have given preference to personal or community reading experiences that refer to texts of greater resonance in the evolution of literature, thought or religion. The approach practised by these disciplines may be supplemented by the more recent social history of communication approach, although it has focused mainly on the genres that best represent journalism in early modern centuries.[2] In parallel, philologists and historians of different types have also explored the wide field of popular or widely disseminated literature. Still, in many approaches identification and bibliographic description

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1 Robert Darnton, First Steps Toward a History of Reading, in: Australian Journal of French Studies 23 (1986), 5–30, here 15.

2 Mario Infelise, Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione, Roma/Bari 2005; Joad Raymond (ed.), News Networks in Seventeenth-century Britain and Europe, London 2006; Brendan Dooley (ed.), The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe. Surrey, UK/Burlington, USA 2011; Roger Chartier/Carmen Espejo (eds.), La aparición del periodismo en Europa. Comunicación y propaganda en el Barroco, Madrid 2012; Andrew Pettegree, The Invention of News. How the World Came to Know about Itself, London 2014; Henry Ettignhausen, How the Press Began. The Pre-Periodical Printed News in Early Modern Europe, La Coruña 2015, <http://www.janusdigital.es/anexo.htm;jsessionid=E3679401A70B8C3C929D60310A7BEAA3?id=7> (accessed April 2019); and Joad Raymond/Noah Moxham (eds.), News Networks in Early Modern Europe, Leiden 2016.

have prevailed, while the interpretation of the contexts, conditions and modalities that intervened in the dissemination and the act of reading have been given diminished attention.[3]

The preferential interest in literary and informative texts, coinciding in the case of genres such as the *occasionnels* or the *relaciones de sucesos* (i.e. accounts of events), usually left aside other similar texts, also composed in small *pliegos* or single-sheets, but focused on the dissemination of mandates and reports from the different authorities, commercial advertising, literary and academic festivities, infamy or political and religious contestation. This is an extremely varied field with numerous difficulties of documentary tracking given the ephemeral condition of an important part of this production and its generalized invisibility in many repertoires of manuscripts and prints from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[4]

In relation to this, one of the points on which I want to draw attention, as I have done elsewhere, affects the need to overcome the print/manuscript dichotomy by pursuing an all-inclusive approach to a textual production that, as is the case, shares material forms and modes of dissemination and appropriation that are analogous, if not exactly the same, on many occasions. Obviously I am not pointing out anything new, but I am rather limiting myself to retake some ideas from the work of Armando Petrucci, who has taught us from the field of palaeography to think about the written as a whole, proposing that the history of written culture "be concerned with the history of

3 Roger Chartier/Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (dir.), Colportage et lecture populaire. Imprimés de large circulation en Europe, XVI^{e}–XIX^{e} siècles, Paris 1996; Pedro M. Cátedra, Invención, difusión y recepción de la literatura popular impresa (siglo XVI), Mérida 2002; Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink et al. (dir.), Les lectures du peuple en Europe et dans les Amériques du XVII^{e} au XX^{e} siècle, Paris 2003; Pedro M. Cátedra (dir.), La literatura popular impresa en España y en la América colonial. Formas & temas, géneros, funciones, difusión, historia y teoría, Salamanca 2006; Marina Roggero, Le carte piene di sogni. Testi e lettori in età moderna. Bologna 2006; Antonio Castillo Gómez (dir.)/Verónica Sierra Blas (ed.), Senderos de ilusión. Lecturas populares en Europa y América Latina (del siglo XVI a nuestros días), Gijón 2007; Lodovica Braida/Mario Infelise (eds.), Libri per tutti. Generi editoriali di larga circolazione tra antico regime ed età contemporánea, Milano 2010; Joad Raymond, (ed.), The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, vol. 1. Beginnings to 1660, Oxford 2011.

4 While the study of pamphlets has a remarkable bibliography, other ephemeral prints on loose sheets, such as the placards, fliers forms, calendars, dissertations and ordinances, have received recent attention in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), Broadsheets. Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print, Leiden/Boston 2017. Different contributions in this volume review the problems of location, identification and cataloguing.

production, of formal characteristics, and of the social uses of writing and written testimonies in a given society, regardless of the techniques and materials used on each occasion."[5]

From the perspective of reception and appropriation, it is not an easy task to determine how the various texts posted on walls or at the streets were read or what meaning the different readers gave them. However, we can try to do so by privileging their function within the framework of the "social and cultural history of communication", to which Danton has referred,[6] despite the fact that he also has excessively linked it with printed products.

Unlike other approaches to the history of reading where the priority has been to identify the condition of certain readers, when it comes to analysing situations and reading practices developed in the street, the least important thing is to identify the subjects who read or appropriated the texts in circulation, although sometimes they are also known. It is more fruitful to deal with the different typologies of these street ephemera, investigating the spaces, gestures and ways that governed their distribution and appropriation. Of course, we must take into account the textual materiality, but also the subtle information provided by judicial interrogations, moral and political treatises, and contemporary literature or art. Often, it is these types of sources that provide the most revealing clues to interpret the meaning that a series of fragile texts had in their time, as texts that in many cases were not destined to be conserved, something that happens today with many of the papers that are stuck on the walls or thrown into the street.

These are the issues that I intend to make clear in this article, taking as a study laboratory the space shaped by cities and some rural towns in the Hispanic world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

2. Pamphlets, libels and couplets

With the previous reflections as a starting point, I will return to the episode related to the circulation and public reading of an anti-convert printed pamphlet entitled *Alborayque* in the region of La Mancha in the fifteen thirties, which has served in turn to give evidence of the existence of a typographical edition of this

5 Armando Petrucci, Prima lezione di paleografía, Roma/Bari 1992, VI.
6 Robert Darnton, What Is the History of Books? in: Daedalus 111,3 (1982), 65–83, here 65.

text before another Sevillian edition of 1545.[7] It is worth remembering that the work was probably written around 1465 in the framework of the propaganda literature composed in a particularly controversial decade of Henry IV's reign.[8] Regarding the events in La Mancha, the root of the confrontation – brought in 1539 before the Council of Military Orders – laid in the offences spread by the ploughmen of Membrilla (Ciudad Real) against the merchants. Sometimes they did so through of couplets, in which they called them "converts and other ugly and insulting names", allowing these letters to be sung by their children in the streets and squares for the abuse to be more noticeable. Other times, they did so through the printed pamphlet. The merchants pointed out that, at least for two months, the ploughmen "bring it and read among them, in many public parts and places, summoning and having other people join", with the aggravating circumstance, the merchants added, that once the farmers have "read said book and the contents thereof, they apply it publicly to us and to the others of our trade."[9]

The text is a booklet of twelve sheets, printed in quarto, with the image of a chimera on the cover (fig. 1). Julio Caro Baroja identified it as "a small treatise directed against the converts", while Francisco Rico has described it directly as a "pamphlet",[10] as is revealed by its material constitution. Certainly, not "a small treatise enjoyed by a select minority", as Fernando Serrano Mangas put it.[11] I do not intend to assess whether the ten printed books and a manuscript found in 1992 walled up in a house of Barcarrota (Badajoz)[12] came from the "table of an irresolute and ignorant bookseller", as Rico said, or from the library of the Crypto-Jewish doctor Francisco de Llerena, as is Serrano Mangas's thesis. However, it does seem necessary to qualify the opinion of this last author, assuming the restricted social circulation of the aforementioned pamphlet, claiming that

7 Pilar Bravo Lledó/Miguel Fernando Gómez Vozmediano, El *Alborayque*. Un impreso panfletario contra los conversos fingidos de la Castilla tardomedieval, in: Historia, Instituciones, Documentos 26 (1999), 58–64.

8 For all that concerns the different manuscript and printed copies of this text, see the preliminary study by Dwayne Eugène Carpenter that accompanies the facsimile edition of the *Alborayque*, Mérida 2005.

9 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Órdenes Militares, Leg. 51070, fol. 1r.

10 Julio Caro Baroja, Los judíos de la España moderna y contemporanea, Madrid 1978, vol. I, 292; Francisco Rico, La librería de Barcarrota, in: id., Los discursos del gusto. Notas sobre clásicos y contemporáneos, Barcelona 2003, 222.

11 Fernando Serrano Mangas, El secreto de los Peñaranda. El universo judeoconverso de la biblioteca de Barcarrota, siglos XVI y XVII, Huelva 2004, 26–27.

12 On these see the studies collected in the monographic dossier of: Alborayque. Revista de la Biblioteca de Extremadura 1 (2007), 8–211.

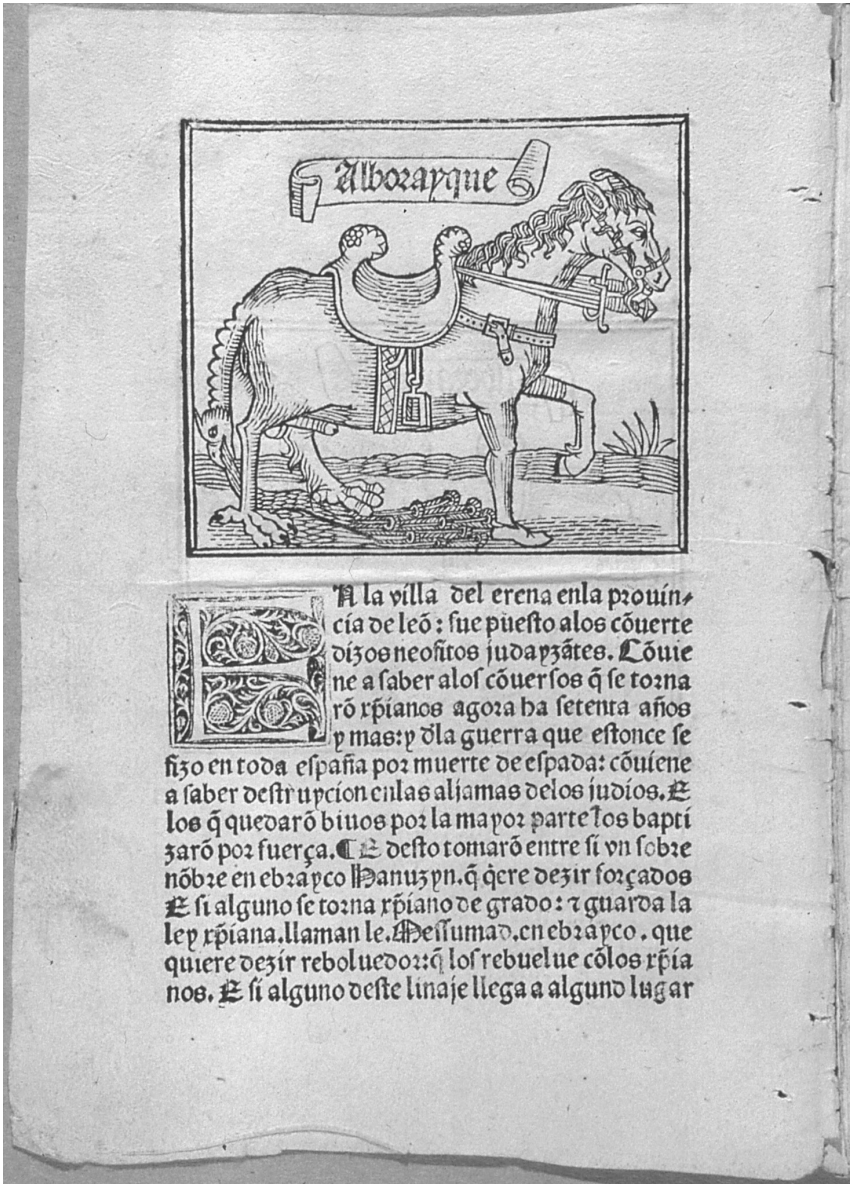


Fig. 1. *Alborayque*. Membrilla (Ciudad Real), 1539. AHN, Órdenes Militares, Leg. 51070.

"no bookseller sold that work, especially in Barcarrota."[13] I do not know if it was so in that town of the province of Badajoz, because no proof in either direction is given, but the episode that I am analysing shows that it was not a small treatise destined to a select minority. Our records evidence that the pamphlet was read in public squares and other places of Membrilla, a town in La Mancha that in the second half of the sixteenth century had about 4500 inhabitants,[14] and where it was heard by people of very diverse social condition. Likewise, it confirms that in those days the pamphlet enjoyed an estimable circulation because it was even sold at the Alcázar de San Juan fair and in a bookstore in Manzanares, both in the province of Ciudad Real.

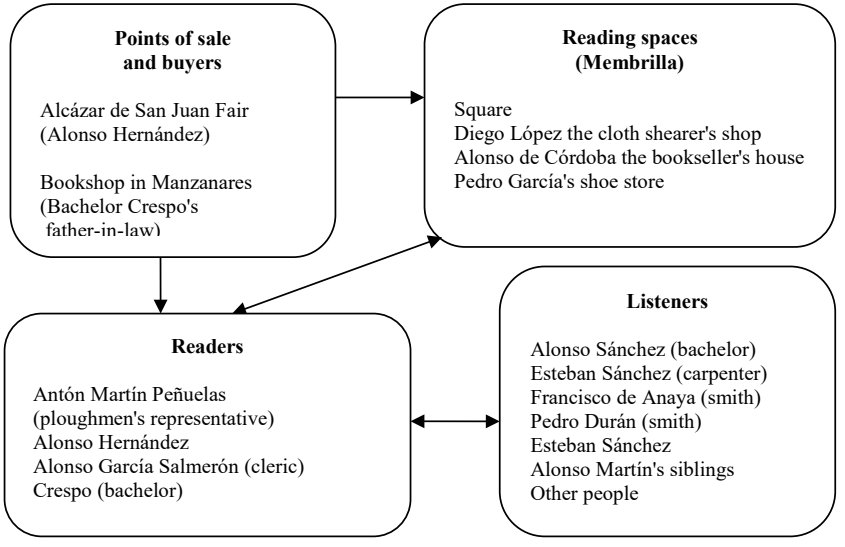
Public reading, even in popular circles, is proved by the statements of different witnesses. Several of the shopkeepers with stalls in the Square of Membrilla agreed to impute the ploughmen's representative to the town council, Antón Martín Peñuelas, as the main instigator of the outrage. Apparently, the triggering event occurred on Saturday, 22 November 1539, when Antón Martín, accompanied by several of his brothers and others, appeared in the square, took the *Alborayque* out of his sleeve and began to read it. Rodrigo de Toledo points out that he arrived with the book at the shop of Diego López, a cloth shearer, and went out with others, "he believes that to read said book", and then he said: "you are seeing it here, and I will put it on the pillory so that everyone may hear it". The blacksmith Francisco de Anaya argued that Alonso Hernández was one of the readers, stating that "he and others read it twice or thrice", while Juan de Orozco denied it, alleging that Alonso Hernández had no will to hear it and left. Actually, according to the accused himself, he began to read it but "not being a Grammarian, [he] didn't understand it", so he gave it to the cleric Alonso García Salmerón for him to read it and to clarify "what in said book was in Latin", as he did, arguing that it would be a charge of conscience that people who had it were unable to understand it. Another witness pointed Bachelor Crespo out as a reader, who would have gotten the book from his father-in-law after he bought it from a bookseller in Manzanares. The carpenter Esteban Sánchez recalled that he had left for a moment Pedro García's shoe store, where there was reading going on, but he returned when he heard how those gathered there "began to laugh and have a lot of pleasure". In the same line, Bachelor Alonso Sánchez and blacksmith

13 Serrano Mangas, El secreto (as note 11), 26.
14 José Camacho Cabello, La población de Castilla-La Mancha (siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII): crisis y renovación, Toledo 1997, 115.

Pedro Durán described the reading as a pleasant moment, which provided "much rejoicing and laughter" to those who heard it.[15]

With regard to the distribution and sale, Francisco de Anaya said that it was brought from the Alcázar de San Juan fair and that it was read two or three times by several people at Alonso de Córdoba the bookseller's house. The aforementioned Alonso Hernández stated that he had bought the book at said fair, held on the 8th September. Pedro Durán confessed that Alonso Hernández had brought the book to Membrilla because he found it very apt to "jubilate and rejoice by reading it". And in turn, Antón Martín Peñuelas, the main defendant, argued in his defence that he had done nothing but "read what is printed and publicly sold to all who may want to buy it",[16] therefore denoting that the pamphlet enjoyed wide circulation.

The statements I have just mentioned contain the essential elements for reconstructing the communication circuit of this pamphlet (see graphic), sold



15 AHN, Órdenes Militares, Leg. 51070, fols. 7r, 13v, 10v, 11v, 20v and 21v.

16 Ibid., fols. 10v, 12v, 20v–22 and fol. unnumbered, writ of allegations by Antón Martín Peñuelas, Madrid, 19 December 1539.

at the Alcázar de San Juan fair and at a Manzanares bookstore, read by people of unequal social status (from a cleric and a bachelor to the ploughmen's representative) and listened to by even more ordinary people (like several blacksmiths and some carpenter), in very different scenarios: a bookstore, the shop of a cloth shearer, a shoe store and the town square. Even the reactions to the text of some of the readers/listeners are mentioned, since some described the moment of reading/listening to it as pleasant and humorous, so that the reading, together with an insulting interpretation towards the merchants, also had a playful sense.

In another vein, this episode contradicts the implausibility that some scholars have attributed to peasant reading evenings immortalized literarily by Cervantes in the famous episode of the La Mancha inn:

> "when it is harvest-time, the reapers flock here on holidays, and there is always one among them who can read and who takes up one of these books, and we gather round him, thirty or more of us, and stay listening to him with a delight that makes our gray hairs grow young again."[17]

When interpreting this type of testimony as unlikely, the argument put forward has always been the high illiteracy of the Castilian rural world,[18] which nevertheless requires some qualifications. Without entering now into the complexity of the term 'literate' in the early Modern Age and even less in the different methods used to measure it, researches such as that by Trevor Dadson on Villarrubia de los Ojos (Ciudad Real) call for a questioning the traditional image of the Castilian countryside as a territory of almost total illiteracy, because in the case of this town it has been proven that 33 per cent of the population had some ability to sign in the seventeenth century.[19] In addition, it should be taken into account that in those times the number of people who knew how to write was always lower than the number of those who knew how to read.[20]

17 Miguel de Cervantes, The History of Don Quixote de la Mancha, Chicago 1982 (Tewnty-Fourth Edition; First Edition 1952), Part II, Chap. 32, 118.

18 Maxime Chevalier, Lectura en voz alta y novela de caballerías. A propósito de Quijote I:32, in: Boletín de la Real Academia Española 79 (1999), 55–65; id., Lecture à haute voix et diffusion de la littérature dans l'Espagne du Siècle d'Or, in: Louise Bénat-Tachot/Jean Vilar (eds.), La question du lecteur. XXXI[e] congrès de la Société des hispanistes français, mai 2003, Marne-la-Vallée 2004, 85–89.

19 Trevord J. Dadson, Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain: Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava, Woodbridge 2014, 46. From the same author see: Literacy and Education in Early Modern Rural Spain: The Case of Villarubia de los Ojos, in: Bulletin of Spanish Studies 81 (2004), 1011–1037.

20 For an approach to this subject and the data on the literate population in the Spain of the early Modern Age, see Antonio Viñao Frago, Alfabetización y primeras letras (siglos

Thus, the passage of *Don Quixote* points in the same direction as the testimony on the public reading of the *Alborayque* in La Mancha and other similar events that could be brought up.[21] These give evidence on the extension of reading aloud and, above all, its contribution to make known certain texts to people who could not read,[22] in the same way that the inability to write could be remedied by going to public notaries installed in squares, who are more documented in cities than in rural areas.[23]

The modality of reading that evidences the circulation of the *Alborayque* is the same as that of the libels and pasquinades disseminated in the streets or stuck on the walls, which either had an injurious content towards certain persons, criticised the bad government or the performance of different political or religious representatives, or questioned the hegemony of Catholicism in the Hispanic world. Thus, there is evidence that some of the pamphlets published during the Zaragoza uprising of 1591 were displayed at the door of the church of Our Lady of Pilar, in the palace of the Aljafería (the seat of the Inquisition) and in La Seo Square, specifically at the house of Juan de Hervás; while others were dropped in the public squares and places "to be taken and seen"; likewise, others were heard read aloud in the street, at Jerónimo Andrés the scrivener's or in prison.[24]

Street reading, handwritten copies and removal of pasquinades stuck on the walls also appear in the trial brought by the Mexican Inquisition against one

XVI–XVII), in: Antonio Castillo Gómez (ed.), Escribir y leer en el siglo de Cervantes, Barcelona 1999, 39–84; Dadson, Tolerance (as note 19), 37–39; Ricard Expósito i Amagat, Nivells d'alfabetització i pràctiques culturals en la Catalunya moderna: aprendre de liegir, escriure i comptar, Maçanet de la Selva (Gerona) 2016, 23–34.

21 Margit Frenk, Entre la voz y el silencio (La lectura en tiempos de Cervantes), Alcalá de Henares 1997, 21–38 and 47–56.

22 Roger Chartier, Loisir et sociabilité: lire à haute voix dans l'Europe moderne, in: Littératures classiques 12 (1990), 127–147.

23 For the Hispanic case, I refer to my work: Cultura escrita y actividad escribanil en el Siglo de Oro, in: Enrique Villalba/Emilio Torné (eds.), El nervio de la República: El oficio de escribano en el Siglo de Oro, Madrid 2010, 351–370. The relevance of writing delegation in certain situations has long been highlighted by Armando Petrucci, Scrivere per gli altri, in: Scrittura e Civilta 13 (1989), 475–487. For a more recent historiographical assessment, see Martyn Lyons, The Power of the Scribe: Delegated Writing in Modern Europe, in: European History Quarterly 44,2 (2014), 244–262.

24 Jesús Gascón Pérez, La rebelión de las palabras. Sátiras y oposición política en Aragón (1590–1626), Zaragoza 2003, LXXXVII–LXXXIX.

of its main critics: Guillén Lombardo.[25] His libels appeared fixed on the doors of the cathedral of Mexico (fig. 2),[26] but also "in the usual streets", mainly at the corner of Tacuba Street and at the junction between Donceles and Santo Domingo.[27] Exposed there, they gave rise to different uses: some, like Francisco de Ribera and Juan de Mansilla, "tobacco suckers", used them to roll tobacco without knowing the contents of the paper.[28] Others, like Fray Juan de Oñate, read and destroyed them "because they said very bad things against the ministers of this Holy Tribunal".[29] And there were also those who began to read them in the middle of the street forming a group, as can be deduced from the following testimony:

> "that on Monday, the second day of Christmas, between the seventh and eighth hour of the morning, coming down Tacuba Street, when leaving it he saw many people, standing in the corner where a new house and store are located, reading a lengthwise-oriented paper, with very small print, that was fixed and stuck on the wall, in front of the sewer, and this declarant read the first line that said: 'Don Guillén Lombardo, by the grace of God'. And then at the foot of said paper, a signature saying: 'Don Guillén Lombardo', which was initialled."[30]

Similar appreciations were made about other libels and pasquinades, whose propagation would be inexplicable without considering the intersections between the different forms of communication prevailing then: written, led by the manuscript or printed materiality of the writings; visual, referring to the figurative motives used in the composition of some of these texts or in the iconographic richness of others, for example the pamphlets disseminated in the Netherlands against the Catholic monarchy during the War of Flanders (1566–1584);[31] and of course, oral, not because the texts were read publicly, but because it was common to memorize them to grant them greater diffusion, in addition to the fact that often written pamphlets and libels interacted with

25 On this figure, Javier Meza González, El laberinto de la mentira. Guillén de Lamporte y la Inquisición, Ciudad de México 2002 (First Edition 1997); Fabio Troncarelli, La spada e la croce. Guillén Lombardo e l'Inquisizione in Messico, Roma 1999; Andrea Martínez Baracs, Don Guillén de Lampart, hijo de sus hazañas, Ciudad de México 2012; Kimberly Lynn, Between Court and Confessional. The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors, Cambridge 2013, 238–293.

26 City of México, Archivo General de la Nación, Inquisición, vol. 1497, fols. 8 & 17.

27 AHN, Inquisición, Leg. 1731, exp. 53, num. 24, fols. 144^{v}, 147^{v} and 158^{r}, *inter alia*.

28 Ibid, fol. 152^{r}. Declaration by the tailor Francisco de Ribera, City of Mexico, 2 January 1650.

29 Ibid., fol. 157^{v}.

30 Ibid., Leg. 1731, exp. 53, num. 24, fol. 149^{r}.

31 Ingrid Schulze Schneider, La leyenda negra de España: propaganda en la guerra de Flandes, 1566–1584, Madrid 2008.

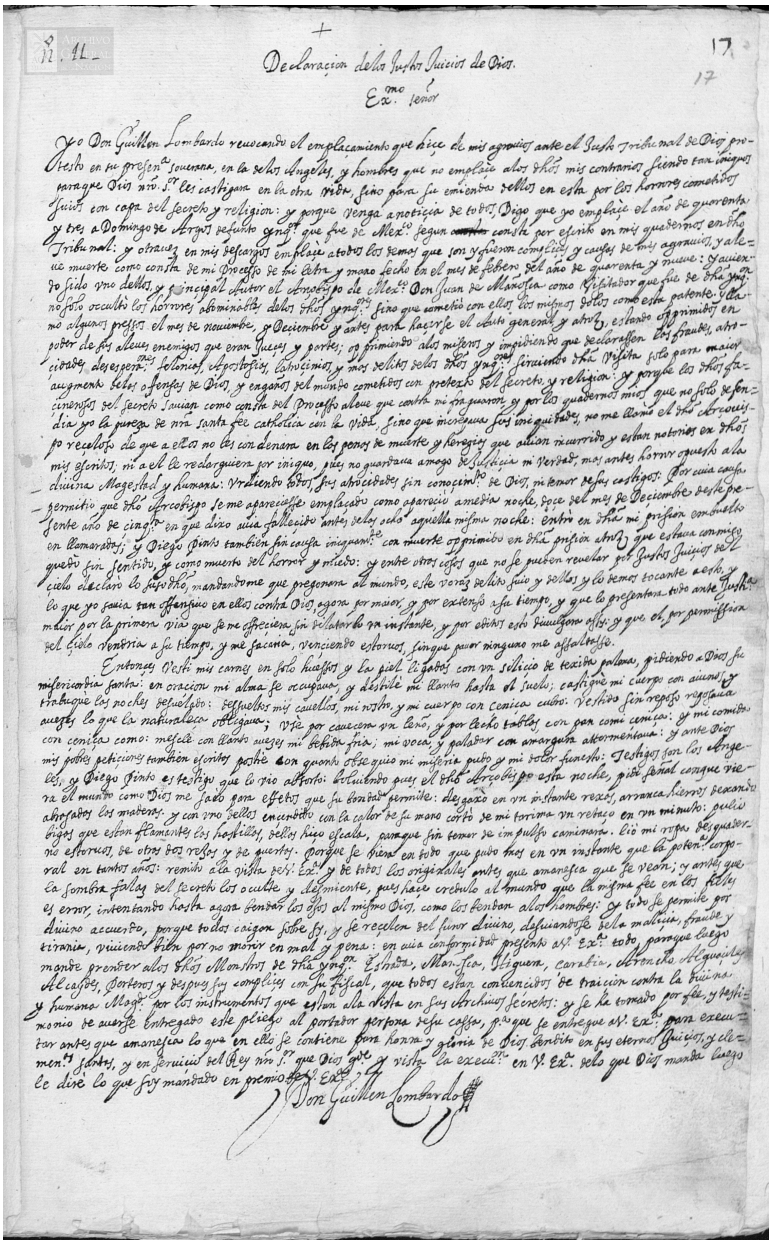


Fig. 2. Libel by Guillén Lombardo against the Mexican Inquisition. City of Mexico, 26 December 1650. City of Mexico, Archivo General de la Nación, Inquisición, vol. 1497, fol. 17.

couplets and songs.[32] This was the case, for example, in the clashes between Catholics and Protestants in Seville or Toledo in the mid-sixteenth century.[33]

The combination of word technologies that occurred in circumstances such as those just referred to justifies the consideration of "mass medium" applied, in certain cases, to the pamphlets,[34] especially when taking into account that public reading allowed the message to reach more people than those able to read them. All in all, the wide circulation of many libels, pamphlets and couples accounts for their persecution and criminal sanction, which differed depending on their content. The penalty of excommunication was applied mainly to those cases, judged by the inquisitorial and ecclesiastical courts, which involved an infraction of the moral order that sustained the ideological apparatus of the Catholic monarchy.[35] When these limits were not reached, the authors and accomplices of the crime of writing and disseminating libels were condemned to less severe penalties. Thus, in 1613 the Madrid Hall of Royal Court Judges (Sala de Alcaldes de Casa y Corte) arranged that no person may sing either night or day dishonest songs or offensive things, under penalty of public shame, four years of exile from the Court and five leagues around plus one fine of ten ducats.[36] Two years later, it resumed the matter, ordering that "no one, men, women or youngsters, be daring to sing or say couplets or dishonest songs, under penalty of one hundred lashes and six years of exile."[37]

32 On the importance of orality in the early Modern Age and its intersections with writing, see Luca Degl'Innocenti/Brian Richardson/Chiara Sbordoni (eds.), Interactions between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture, London/New York, 2016; Stefano Dall'Aglio/Brian Richardson/Massimo Rospocher (eds.), Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society, London/New York, 2017; Luca Degl'Innocenti/Massimo Rospocher (eds.), Street Singers in Renaissance Europe, special issue Renaissance Studies 33,1 (2019), 1–158.

33 On the Protestant persecution at those times, see Thomas Verner, La represión del protestantismo en España, 1517–1648, Leuven 2001, 211–299; Frances Luttikhuizen, España y la Reforma protestante (1517–2017), Vigo 2017, 182–241.

34 Asa Brigss/Peter Burke, A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to the Internet, Cambridge ^{3}2008, 64.

35 Antonio Castillo Gómez, "Être non seulement libelle mais aussi exposé au public". Les inscriptions censurées au Siècle d'Or, in: Alexandra Merle/Araceli Guillaume-Alonso (eds.), Les voies du silence dans l'Espagne des Habsbourg, Paris 2013, 309–328, here 313–317.

36 AHN, Consejos, Libro 1202, fol. 46.

37 Ibid., fol. 385^{r}.

3. *Mentideros*: information and entertainment

It is not just that different readers noticed what was written on the walls or that in certain cases they removed the papers to read them and even copy them, as was done with some pasquinades. Another characteristic aspect of the phenomenon of street reading in the early Modern Age is given by the role that some urban corners played. In Venice, it was common for people to go to the Rialto Bridge to learn all kinds of news,[38] in London people congregated in Grub Street[39] and in Paris, around the Tree of Cracow;[40] in the Spain of the Habsburgs that role was mainly played by the *mentidero*, which is defined in the first Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (*Diccionario de Autoridades*) as "the location or place where idle people meet to talk"; the dictionary further specifies that the name was due to the fact that "fables and lies (*mentiras* in Spanish) are regularly told therein."[41]

In the Seville of the Golden Age, the *mentidero* had place in the stands of the cathedral, where the public notaries' offices were also installed.[42] During the heyday of the journeys to the Americas, those constituted a business area frequented by all kinds of people, where it was not uncommon to hear conversations in Arabic due to the many Moriscos who lived in the city.[43]All kinds of acts and ceremonies were held there, to the point that such a reunion of people also brought about readings aloud, apparently even from books of chivalry, as referred to by Juan Arce de Otálora (1515/1520–1562) in his *Coloquios de Palatino y Pinciano*:

38 Infelise, Prima dei giornali (as note 2).

39 Bob Clarke, From Grub Street to Fleet Street: An Illustrated History of English Newspapers to 1899, Aldershot 2004, 3–10; Howar Cox/Simon Mowatt, Revolutions from Grub Street: A History of Magazine Publishing in Britain, Oxford 2014, 1–3.

40 Robert Darnton, An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris, in: The American Historical Review 105,1 (2000), 1–35, here 2–3.

41 Real Academia Española, Diccionario de Autoridades, Madrid 1734, vol. IV, <http://web.frl.es/DA.html> (accessed April 2019).

42 Antonio Collantes de Terán Sánchez, Una ciudad, una catedral, in: Alfonso Jiménez Martín et al., La catedral gótica de Sevilla: fundación y fábrica de la obra nueva, Sevilla 2007, 115–146, here 120.

43 Francisco Nuñez Roldán, La vida cotidiana en la Sevilla del Siglo de Oro, Madrid 2004, 15–16; Michel Boegli, Entre la cruz y el Corán. Los moriscos en Sevilla (1570–1613), Sevilla 2010, 69 and 73.

> "In Seville they say that some officers, during the festivities, in the evenings, bring one of those books to the stands and they read it, and many boys and officers and workers, who should be playing or fighting or in the tavern, go there to hear, and if it were necessary, they would pay money to be allowed."[44]

There were three *mentideros* in Madrid: that of the Palace Slabs, rather political in nature, where courtiers and public employees used to come; that of the comedians, in the corner of Santa María and León streets, lively with all kinds of comedians and theatre workers; and thirdly, the most renowned, that located in the stands of the church of San Felipe el Real, at the Puerta del Sol on the corner of the Mayor Street, which was especially crowded, boisterous and heterogeneous, as it was attended by soldiers and people of very different circumstances (fig. 3).[45] According to Manuel de León Marchante (1631–1680), known as "master León", some even spent all day there and only left the place to eat.[46] It was customary for people to gather there in order to be informed, to comment on gossip and to give free rein to the most varied rumours, regardless of whether they were true or not:

> "In Galicia, the Portuguese have not taken any strongholds, and if something had happened, it is true that it would have been said, and no one knows any news. Those ships said to have come to Portugal are as uncertain as the other things, since there is no memory of such a thing nor it has been said in the San Felipe *mentidero*, where everything is said, what is certain and what is uncertain."[47]

As noted by Francisco Javier Castro Ibaseta, the structuring of the San Felipe *mentidero* "as a political and cultural space took place in the same years in which the 'new comedy' triumphed massively in the open-air theatres (*corrales*) as a model of popular theatre",[48] i.e. in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

44 Juan Arce de Otálora, Coloquios de Palatino y Pinciano, ed. José Luis Ocasar Ariza, Madrid 1995, 455.

45 Francisco Rodríguez Marín, Cervantes y el mentidero de San Felipe, in: Revista de la Biblioteca, Archivo y Museo 1 (1924), 5–12; José Deleito y Piñuela, Sólo Madrid es corte (La capital de dos mundos bajo Felipe IV), Madrid 1942, 208–223; Consuelo Moreno Sánchez, Los mentideros de Madrid, in: Torre de los Lujanes 18 (1991), 155–172; Manuel López García, Diccionario Akal de Teatro, Madrid 1997, 543 ("Mentidero de los comediantes"); Francisco Javier Castro Ibaseta, Mentidero de Madrid: la Corte como comedia, in: Antonio Castillo Gómez/James S. Amelang (dir.), Carmen Serrano Sánchez (ed.), Opinión pública y espacio urbano en la Edad Moderna, Gijón 2010, 43–58.

46 Manuel de León Marchante, Obras poéticas pósthumas, Madrid 1722, vol. I, 407.

47 Letter from Sebastián González to Father Rafael Pereyra of the Society of Jesus. Madrid, 9 June 1643; cf. Cartas de algunos padres de la Compañía de Jesús sobre los sucesos de la Monarquía entre los años 1634 y 1648, vol. V, Comprende desde febrero de 1643 a últimos de 1644, in: Memorial Histórico Español. Colección de documentos, opúsculos y antigüedades, Madrid 1863, vol. XVII, 111–112.

48 Castro Ibaseta, Mentidero de Madrid (as note 45), 43.

Fig. 3. Church and Convent of San Felipe el Real, drawn by José María Avrial y Flores. Lithograph in: José Amador de los Ríos, Historia de la Villa y Corte de Madrid. Madrid, 1861–1864. Madrid, Museo de Historia, Inv. 2404.

A particularly relevant moment in its politicization was the situation of the years 1618–1621, led by the crisis of the favour of the Sandoval family with the fall from grace of Don Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, first Duke of Lerma, who until then had counted with the protection of King Philip III.

Written a few years later, one of the most striking evocations of the San Felipe *mentidero* is due to Madrid writer Francisco Santos (1623–1698). In his book *Día y noche de Madrid* (1663) he recounts the street wanderings of Onofre and Juanillo, who in their wander through the city suddenly notice the presence of a large group of people in front of grills in that church, at the place where the "courier" stood, and they note that the name of *mentidero* came from the many lies that could be heard there:

> "'Let's then forget,' said Onofre, 'what is not easy to prevent and tell me what are all these people doing at those grills.'
>
> 'That is the courier,' answered Juanillo, 'he's coming today from Badajoz, and the *mentidero*, this canopy on the San Felipe stores, must be truly crowded.'
>
> 'Why do you call *mentidero*,' asked Onofre, 'a sacred place?'

> 'It's not me who treats this place with indecency,' said Juanillo, 'but those who tell lies there, in a sacred place, whom I call liars, as they desecrate it and turn it into a *mentidero*, where more lies can be heard than among tailors and women; and for you to see some of the many things that happen in this market, notice that man who's just read that letter and you'll notice how rowdy he can get.'"[49]

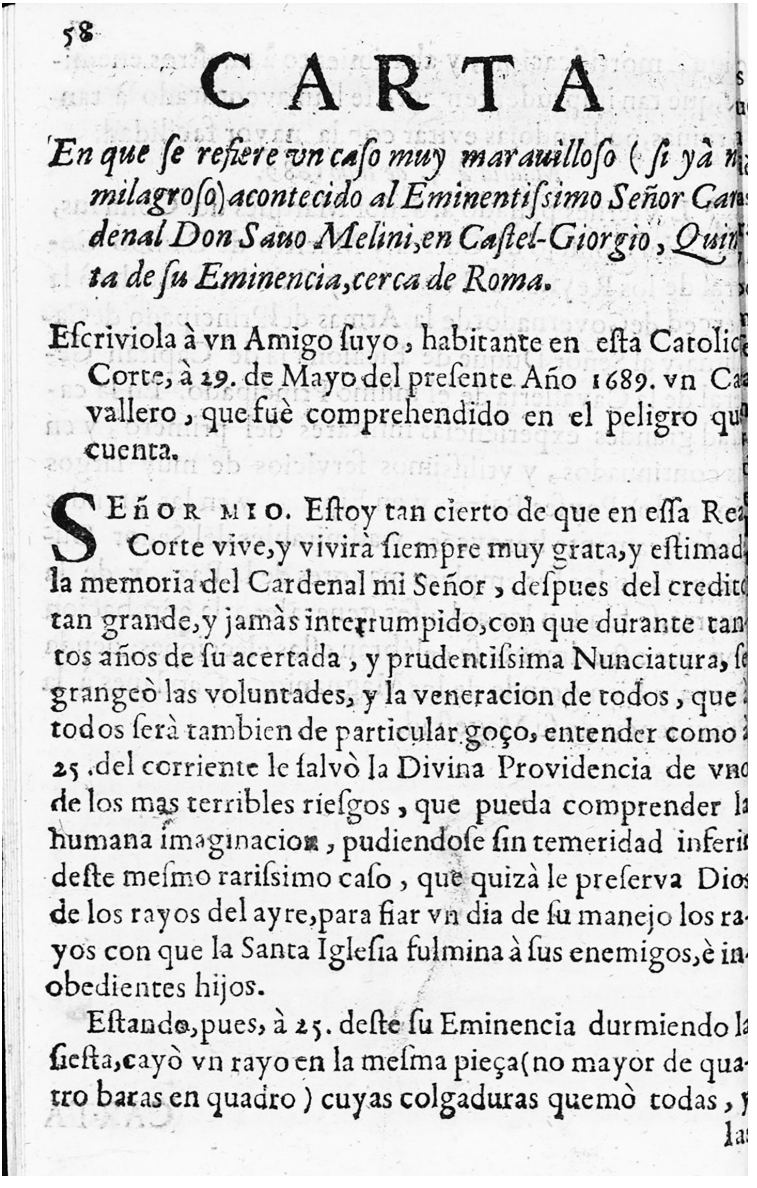
The man alluded to was none other than an army captain. The people were arranged in circle and he, in between, read the letter for more than an hour. As he did so, the public went in and out of the "gossip circle", "some making the sing of the cross, others stretching their eyebrows, others biting their lips, others clasping their hands and kicking hard." When he finished reading the letter "or an intrigue on paper", as it is also called to highlight the mendacious character it might have, he stayed there "surrounded by busybodies, telling about the disposition of the army, prevention of the campaign and siege of the enemy and giving his opinion in the way that people should be governed for an assault and where it was convenient to have it started." According to Juanillo, the captain had not left Madrid, which did not prevent him from telling thousand battles presuming to have received more than five hundred wounds. He had a reputation as a "gossip", which led to think that the letter he had just read could have been written the night before at the inn, "to dazzle today a hundred fools who have their taste in the lies they hear."[50]

Our couple of cicerones do not hesitate to disqualify the mood of the "busybodies", but just this note warns us about a reality that seemed to be relatively common. The alluded text could have bee a letter of *relación* or a newsletter, not always distinguishable from the *relaciones* themselves (fig. 4).[51] Along with the diplomatic messages, the reports, the *relaciones* and the non-periodic gazettes, such letters constituted an informative genre of wide scope in the society of the Golden Age, as many writers of the time show to know this literature of reports and insert it in some of their works. All this production enjoyed a swift and

49 Francisco Santos, Día y noche de Madrid, Madrid 1992, 142–143.

50 Ibid., 143–144.

51 José Luis Gotor, "Formas de comunicación en el siglo XVI (Relación y carta)", in: Mª. Luisa López-Vidriero/Pedro M. Cátedra (eds.), El libro antiguo español. Actas del primer Coloquio Internacional (Madrid, 18–20 dicembre 1986), Salamanca 1988, 175–188; Pedro M. Cátedra, En los orígenes de las epístolas de relación, in: Mª. Cruz García de Enterría et al. (eds.). Las relaciones de sucesos en España (1500–1750). Actas del primer coloquio internacional (Alcalá de Henares, 8, 9 y 10 de junio de 1995), Alcalá de Henares/Paris 1996, 33–64; Víctor García de la Fuente, Relaciones de sucesos en forma de carta: Estructura, temática y lenguaje, in: ibid., 33–64; Víctor Infantes, ¿Que es una relación? (Divagaciones varias sobre una sola divagación), in: ibid., 203–216.



58

CARTA

En que ſe refiere vn caſo muy marauilloſo (ſi yà n milagroſo) acontecido al Eminentiſsimo Señor Car denal Don Sauo Melini, en Caſtel-Giorgio, Quin ta de ſu Eminencia, cerca de Roma.

Eſcriviola à vn Amigo ſuyo, habitante en eſta Catolic Corte, à 29. de Mayo del preſente Año 1689. vn Ca vallero, que fuè comprehendido en el peligro qu cuenta.

SEñor mio. Eſtoy tan cierto de que en eſſa Re Corte vive, y vivirà ſiempre muy grata, y eſtimad la memoria del Cardenal mi Señor, deſpues del credit tan grande, y jamàs interrumpido, con que durante tan tos años de ſu acertada, y prudentiſsima Nunciatura, ſe grangeò las voluntades, y la veneracion de todos, que todos ſerà tambien de particular goço, entender como 25. del corriente le ſalvò la Divina Providencia de vn de los mas terribles rieſgos, que pueda comprender l humana imaginacion, pudiendoſe ſin temeridad inferi deſte meſmo rariſsimo caſo, que quizà le preſerva Dio de los rayos del ayre, para fiar vn dia de ſu manejo los ra yos con que la Santa Igleſia fulmina à ſus enemigos, è in obedientes hijos.

Eſtando, pues, à 25. deſte ſu Eminencia durmiendo l ſieſta, cayò vn rayo en la meſma pieça (no mayor de qua tro baras en quadro) cuyas colgaduras quemò todas, y la

Fig. 4. Carta en que se refiere un caso muy maravilloso (si ya no milagroso) acontecido al eminentísimo señor cardenal don Savo Melini, en Castel Giorgio, quinta de su eminencia, cerca de Roma (Letter that reports a very wonderful case [if not miraculous] that happened to the Most Eminent Cardinal Savo Melini, in Castel Giorgio, his estate, near Rome). Madrid, by Sebastián Armendariz, 1689. Madrid, Hemeroteca Municipal, A.H. 9/2 (1737 bis).

widespread diffusion facilitated by the ease with which they could be copied and printed, even shortly before being put up for sale, as it was said of the crazy stories that some blind men invented in the afternoon, printed by the night and sold the next morning. This was noted by Franscisco de Lira, a Sevillian printer, in the warning to the reader of some copies of one of his *relaciones* on the festivities that the city of Lisbon organized to receive King Philip II:

> "TO THE COMMON PEOPLE: I see you so fond (oh, friend) of buying, reading and even keeping as in a file all the accounts that you can find every Sunday or holiday, that I feel forced to warn you (so that at least you cannot complain that we are pulling the wool over your eyes) that all or most of them are nothing more than well or badly composed novels that a blind man devises in the evening, has printed at night and sells you in the morning. And some as foolish as you must have noticed so many times."[52]

Beyond the fact that the *mentidero* has entered the dictionary as the place where they fables and lies used to be told, its existence tells us about street spaces where very varied stories and news – some truthful and others less but entertaining nonetheless – were commented and read, from political issues of current relevance to catastrophes, miracles, crimes and extraordinary events.[53] *Relaciones*

52 Fiestas que la ciudad de Lisboa tiene prevenidas para recibir a la católica Magestad del Rey don Felipe III nuestro señor [Sevilla, by Francisco de Lyra, 1619], cited in: Juan, Pérez de Guzmán y Gallo, Bosquejo histórico-documental de la Gaceta de Madrid escrito al entrar en el IV siglo de su existencia y para solemnizar la declaración de la mayor edad del Rey Don Alfonso XIII, Madrid 1932, 232. Without concrete data on the festive account from which it comes, beyond the indication of being published in Madrid on the occasion of Philip III's visit to Lisbon, also mentioned by Pascual de Gayangos in the introduction to the first volume of Cartas de algunos padres de la Compañía de Jesús sobre los sucesos de la Monarquía entre los años 1634 y 1648, in: Memorial Histórico Español, Madrid 1861, vol. XIII, XI. Nieves Pena Sueiro has pointed out that this warning does not appear in some copies of this account. See Nieves Pena Sueiro, Los autores de las relaciones de sucesos: primeras precisiones, in: Giovanni Ciapelli/Valentina Nider (eds.), La invención de las noticias. Las relaciones de sucesos entre la literatura y la información (siglos XVI–XVIII), Trento 2017, 491–507, here 495–496.

53 On political aspects: Pierre Civil/Françoise Crémoux/Jacobo Sanz (eds.), España y el mundo mediterráneo a través de las relaciones de sucesos (1500–1750). Actas del IV Coloquio internacional sobre Relaciones de sucesos (París, 23–25 de septiembre de 2004, Salamanca 2008; Jorge García López/Sònia Boadas (eds.), Las relaciones de sucesos en los cambios políticos y sociales de la Europa Moderna, Barcelona 2015. With regard to ordinary and extraordinary events: Henry Ettinghausen, Noticias del siglo XVII: relaciones de sucesos naturales y sobrenaturales, Barcelona 1995; id., Prensa amarilla y Barroco español, in: Chartier/Espejo (eds.), La aparición (as note 2), 127–157; Ana Mancera Rueda/Jaime Calbarro García, Las relaciones de sucesos sobre seres monstruosos durante los reinados de Felipe III y Felipe IV, Bern et al. 2014. On everything concerning event accounts (catalogue, publications, etc.) see the website of the Sociedad Internacional para el Estudio de las Relaciones de Sucesos (SIERS), http://www.siers.es/siers/principal.htm (accessed April 2019).

de sucesos, reports and gazettes would be the textual genres that best conveyed the flourishing news commerce of those times (fig. 5),[54] masterfully immortalised by Ben Jonson (1572–1637) in his comedies *News from the New World discover'd in the Monn* (1620) and *The Staple of News* (1626). More modestly, Lope de Vega (1562–1635) also referred to it, to the point of characterizing the Madrid of Philip IV, in his comedy *La prueba de los amigos*, written in 1604 and published in 1617, as a place where one could find "news from all the world / and about it and about the deep sea / great lies are told".[55] Therefore, it has been said that the city had all the signs of a Babylon "where information swarmed",[56] and that it had been established as "a framework of infinite truths and lies, as the territory of all oral and written languages, as a space of the marvellous".[57]

4. Conclusion

In the previous pages I have analysed the most genuine practices of street reading in the early Hispanic Modern Age. However, the urban graphosphere of that time, understood as "the space of the visible word, the sum of the places where words are to be seen",[58] was full of monumental inscriptions and many

54 To the general bibliography cited in not. 2, I add now specific bibliography focused on Spain: Henry Ettinghausen, Informació, comunicació i poder a l'Espanya del segle XVII, in: Manuscrits: Revista d'història moderna 23 (2005), 45–58; Javier Díaz Noci, La circulación de noticias en la España del Barroco, in: Chartier/Espejo (eds.), La aparición (as note 2), 207–243; Henry Ettinghausen, Els primers mitjans de comunicació de masses. Relasions i Gasetes, in: Josep Antoni Iglesias-Fonseca (ed.), *Communicatio*: un itinerari històric, Molina de Segura (Murcia) 2013, 165–190; Ricard Expósito i Amagat, Informació i persuasió: en el origins de la premsa catalana (c. 1500–1720), Ph.D. Dissertation, Universitat de Girona 2014; Carmen Espejo Cala, The Invention of the Gazette. Design standardization in Spanish newspapers, 1600–1650, in: Media History 22 (2016), 296–316; Ciapelli/Nider (eds.), La invención de las noticias (as note 52).

55 Lope de Vega, La prueba de los amigos, in: id., Obras escogidas, ed. Federico Carlos Sáinz de Robles, Madrid 1987, vol. I, 1439 (Third act, First scene).

56 Teófanes Egido, Opinión y propaganda en la Corte de los Austrias, in: José Alcalá-Zamora/Ernest Belenguer (eds.), Calderón de la Barca y la España del Barroco, Madrid 2001, vol. I, 567.

57 Enrique García Santo-Tomás, Espacio urbano y creación literaria en el Madrid de Felipe IV, Madrid 2004, 83.

58 Simon Franklin, Information in Plain Sight: The Formation of the Public Graphosphere, in: Simon Franklin/Katherine Bowe (eds.), Information and Empire: Mechanisms of Communication in Russia, 1600–1854, Cambridge 2017, 341–368, here 341. Further on this concept see Simon Franklin, Mapping the Graphosphere: Cultures of Writing in Early 19th-Century Russia (and Before), in: Kritika 12,3 (2011), 531–560, here 531.

Fig. 5. Account dealing with the entrance of Their Majesties the King Felipe Our Lord and the Queen in the City of Leon, with the reception and feasts made unto them, in this year sixteen hundred and two, on the first day of this month of January: together with what happened to the Count of Fuentes in Italy, Seville, by Fernando Lara, 1619. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, R/34183/13.

other texts likewise spread in streets and squares: bands and edicts, literary posters, announcements of academic theses, writings of public punishment and embarrassment, commercial signs and advertisements.[59] In the publication of some, such as edicts and proclamations, public reading by the town crier, or by the priest when it came to inquisitorial and ecclesiastical edicts, played a main role, followed by the setting of the text in different places of the city and on church doors during a certain time. Inscribed on these surfaces, it is not uncommon for them to attract the attention of people, as happened in 1588 to the Portuguese shoemaker Joan Vicente, who decided to emigrate to Brazil instead of Cape Verde or Angola, as he had planned, attracted by some "bills (probably edicts) posted on the walls" that he saw on the streets of Lisbon, in which the king offered free passage to anyone who wanted to cross the Atlantic with their wife and children.[60]

Almost in the same period, at the end of 1574, another ordinary person, Juan Alexandre, owner of a cheese shop in Medina del Campo (Valladolid), read a written paper that was stuck on a wall. As he was looking for a house, he thought it could be the announcement of "something for rent",[61] when in fact it was one of the pasquinades that were published in different Castilian cities against Philip II's fiscal policy.[62] This street reader brings us to another aspect of that written city that the urban centres of the early Modern Age had come to be: commercial advertising. For this purpose, handwritten and printed advertisements of different sizes were prepared, in order to give notice of the sale and rental of land and houses, theatrical and other performances, sale of books or classes on different subjects, to refer to those of which there are more references and vestiges for the Hispanic world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Thus, as we have seen, documentary and literary testimonies coincide in pointing out the success achieved by a series of printed texts and manuscripts – although some were also epigraphic and of other type – that had their com-

59 Antonio Castillo Gómez, La letra en la pared. Usos y funciones de la escritura expuesta en el Siglo de Oro, in: Manuel F. Fernández/Carlos Alberto González/Natalia Maillard (eds.), Testigo del tiempo, memoria del universo. Cultura escrita y sociedad en el mundo ibérico (siglos XV–XVIII), Barcelona 2009, 581–602; id., Desde el muro. Formas y mensajes de la escritura expuesta en la ciudad altomoderna, in: Gemma Puigvert/Carme de la Mota (eds.), La investigación en Humanidades, Madrid 2010, 91–110.

60 AHN, Inquisición, Leg. 1647[1], exp. 3, fols. 25[r] and 35.

61 Valladolid, Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, Leg. 72, doc. 71, fol. 1029[r].

62 Fernando Bouza, Servidumbres de la soberana grandeza. Criticar al rey en la corte de Felipe II, in: Alfredo Alvar Ezquerra (ed.), Imágenes históricas de Felipe II, Alcalá de Henares 2000, 141–180.

munication field in the streets and squares of the cities of the early Modern Age. In street groups and individually, in those places a type of *in itinere* reading, that we might call street or square reading, was implemented in transit, reading or listening as one was going from one place to another.[63] For many, due to their being illiterate, it could have been passive reading.[64] Certainly, we cannot equate the situations we just discussed with the reading practice of those who did so in their study with a notebook in their hands or who privately enjoyed any fictional text, but we would incur an error if we forgot that reading it is a complex fact that involves both the one who reads on his own or for others and the one who hears it, as it was actually noted on the cover of some of the *pliegos* distributed and read on the streets "worthy to be read and heard" on the *pliego suelto*: Nueua y verdadera relación de un lastimoso caso que sucedio a ocho días deste presente mes de nouiembre y año de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis, en la ciudad de Ecija, donde se declara el grande estrago y muertes que hizo en casa del doctor Bermudo, médico, vn esclauo suyo, martes al amanecer, y la justicia que del se hizo; lo qual hallara el curioso lector en este pliego, digno de ser leydo y oydo, ordenado por Rodrigo de Aguilar, natural de Ecija, Córdoba, por Manuel de Cea Tessa (fig. 6). The reading public was heterogeneous and mostly anonymous, which is not an impediment for the texts, due to their content, to have a varied reception and even in certain cases to generate reading or interpretation communities.[65]

In brief, the set of ephemeral papers analysed in these pages shows that written communication, then as now, goes beyond books, despite the fact that most of what is written on the history of literature, books and reading insists on the contrary. It is worth remembering, in conclusion, that Cervantes himself confessed to reading even the scraps of paper he found in the streets:

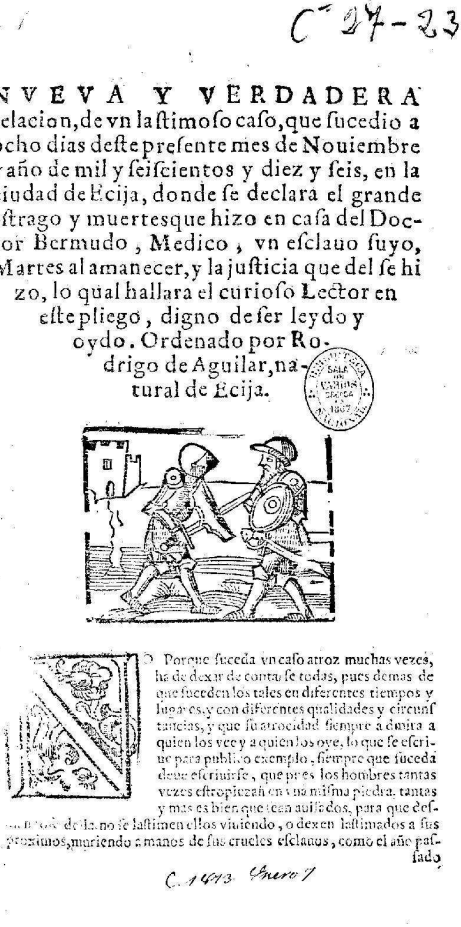
> "One day, as I was in the Alcaná of Toledo, a boy came up to to sell some pamphlets and old papers to a silk mercer, and, as I am fond of reading even the very scraps of paper in the streets, let by this natural ben of mine, I took up one of the pamphlets the boy had for sale ..."[66]

63 Antonio Castillo Gómez, Leer y oír leer. Ensayos sobre la lectura en los Siglos de Oro, Madrid/Frankfurt a.M. 2016, 121–152.

64 Jacqueline Pearson, Women Reading, Reading Women, in: Helen Wilcox (ed.), Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700, Cambridge 1996, 80–99, here 81.

65 In relation to this concept, see Roger Chartier, Communautés de lecteurs, in: id., L'ordre des livres. Lecteurs, auteurs, bibliothèques en Europe entre XIV[e] et XVIII[e] siècle, Aix-en-Provence 1992, 13–34. It does in turn connect with the "interpretive communities" ideas of Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities**,** Cambridge 1980.

66 Cervantes, The History of Don Quixote (as note 17), Part. I, Chap. 9, 22.



C. 27-23

NVEVA Y VERDADERA relacion, de vn laſtimoſo caſo, que ſucedio a ocho dias deſte preſente mes de Nouiembre y año de mil y ſeiſcientos y diez y ſeis, en la ciudad de Ecija, donde ſe declara el grande eſtrago y muertes que hizo en caſa del Doctor Bermudo, Medico, vn eſclauo ſuyo, Martes al amanecer, y la juſticia que del ſe hizo, lo qual hallara el curioſo Lector en eſte pliego, digno de ſer leydo y oydo. Ordenado por Rodrigo de Aguilar, natural de Ecija.

SALA DE LIBROS RAROS Y CURIOSOS

PORque ſuceda vn caſo atroz muchas vezes, ha de dexar de contaſe todas, pues demas de que ſuceden los tales en diferentes tiempos y lugares, y con diferentes qualidades y circunſtancias, y que ſu atrocidad ſiempre admira a quien los vee y a quien los oye, lo que ſe eſcriue para publico exemplo, ſiempre que ſuceda deue eſcriuirſe, que pues los hombres tantas vezes eſtropiezan en vna miſma piedra, tantas y mas eſtan bien que eſten auiſados, para que deſ... de la no ſe laſtimen ellos viuiendo, o dexen laſtimados a ſus proximos, muriendo a manos de ſus crueles eſclauos, como el año paſſado

C. 1613 Guero 7

Fig. 6. Nueua y verdadera relación de un lastimoso caso que sucedio a ocho días deste presente mes de nouiembre y año de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis, en la ciudad de Ecija, donde se declara el grande estrago y muertes que hizo en casa del doctor Bermudo, médico, vn esclauo suyo, martes al amanecer, y la justicia que del se hizo; lo qual hallara el curioso lector en este pliego, digno de ser leydo y oydo, ordenado por Rodrigo de Aguilar, natural de Ecija (New and true account of a piteous case that happened eight days before this month of November in the year sixteen hundred and sixteen, in the city of Écija, wherein the great havoc and deaths provoked in Doctor Bermudo's house by one of his slaves, on Tuesday at dawn, are reported, and the justice made to him; which the curious reader of this sheet shall find worthy to be read and heard, under direction of Rodrigo de Aguilar, of Écija), Córdoba, by Manuel de Cea Tessa, 1616. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, VE/27/23.