The Fragmented Armada: The Transmission of an Armada News Pamphlet

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In the early autumn of 1588, Queen Elizabeth's chief councillor, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was deeply concerned about the effect of Catholic publications on readers at home and abroad. Incensed by the invective-laced pamphlets published on the continent in May and June, after the failure of the Armada in late July he worried that rumours of English vulnerability might prompt Catholic powers to attempt another invasion. Proposed in June to address the former threat, one of Cecil's most famous pieces of propaganda, *The Copie of a Letter Sent Out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza* (hereafter *CoL*) purports to be a news letter from one "Richard Leigh," a Catholic priest embedded in the English court; it was allegedly discovered in his rooms after he was "lately executed for high treason committed in the time that the Spanish Armada was on the seas."¹ The historical Richard Leigh was in fact martyred shortly after the Armada swept past England, although he had been imprisoned in the Tower since June and was not privy to many of the events witnessed by Cecil's pseudonym.² Cecil's pamphlet employs this priestly persona to

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¹ Richard Leigh [William Cecil], *The Copie of a Letter Sent out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza, Ambassadour in France for the King of Spaine*, Declaring the State of England ... Found in the Chamber of One Richard Leigh ... Whereunto are Adioyned *Certaine Late Aduertisements, Concerning the Losses and Distresses Happened to the Spanish Nauie* (London: J[acqueline] Vautrollier for Richard Field, 1588), Short-Title Catalogue (hereafter STC) 15412, title-page. The term "news letter" is used deliberately throughout this paper to emphasize the epistolary nature of these communications, which differ markedly from our modern understanding of the term "newsletter." For an exploration of the form, see David Randall, "Epistolary Rhetoric, the Newspaper, and the Public Sphere," *Past and Present* 198 (2008): 3–32.

² For example, the inscribed Leigh gives an eyewitness description of Elizabeth's speech at Tilbury. The historical Leigh's execution, along with thirteen others, is described in *A Briefe Treatise. Discovering in Substance the Offences, and Ungodly*

describe England's military preparations, political climate, and the events of the summer in a partisan epistolary form, addressed to Don Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador to France. This attempt to spread news of the Spanish defeat, to delegitimize Catholic news sources, and to dissuade Catholic support for another attempted invasion grew and developed as the political situation unfolded over the summer and early autumn of 1588. French publications in July influenced Cecil's initial revisions and inspired a sharpened focus on French readers. In September, the pamphlet was supplemented twice while in press with additional news of Spanish wrecks off the coast of Ireland; the first English edition was finally completed in October.

The pamphlet's multiple goals and target audiences led to a multifaceted text and a likewise fractured route of transmission, as English government officials pushed parts of the complex document into production in France ahead of the full translation and refocused the presentation for Italian readers. Continental printers picked up different parts of the pamphlet, translating and reproducing them for their own purposes. The disjointed development, the fragmented transmission, and the collection of this partisan Armada narrative into thematic compilations show the malleability of news in the later sixteenth century. This paper examines the production and transmission of *CoL* to explore the interpretive frameworks that textual producers, both authors and publishers, used to package early modern news.

Authors and publishers of early modern news pamphlets constructed the interpretive framework for a specific piece of news through introductions, contextualizing marginalia, commentary from multiple viewpoints, and in some cases, the juxtaposition of multiple news items. As Natalie Mears argues, this framework often included the views of the producer as well as the source of the news and attempted to guide readers' interpretations of the events described.³ In the case of printed news pamphlets, the multiplicity of viewpoints implicated the publisher in the chain of authority. This positioning often included narratives of acquisition or collection, describing how the publishers came by the news and explaining their motive for reproducing it. These frameworks acknowledge potential reader

Practises of the Late 14. Traitors Condemned on the 26. of August. 1588 ... (London: by John Wolfe for Henrie Carr, 1588), STC 24215.

³ Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153.

reactions by directly addressing readers, anticipating both positive and adverse assessments of the text and attempting to guide readings with descriptive marginalia that suggest particular responses. They may include other news items or documents, such as statutes or decrees, which the producer wished readers to consider when judging the news and its credibility. Readers could, and did, read selectively and judge some parts of collected news texts as more credible than others. The uneven transmission and reproduction of a given news pamphlet by subsequent publishers often indicates varied levels of trustworthiness and utility applied to different parts of these composite texts.

The texts that make up what is now considered to be *CoL* can be divided into four parts. The primary letter (1), written under the pseudonym of a disappointed Catholic priest, claims to have been completed “At London the [blank] of August. 1588.” The precise date, as in the next section, is left blank to signal its status as a captured copy of a letter sent to France: the (fictional) sent copy would have had the day written in at the last moment. This letter is followed by (2) a postscript in the same voice dated in September, which carries the headline “Postscritto” in John Wolfe’s Italian edition, although it has no header in other editions.⁴ An unsigned “Printer to the Reader” epistle (3) follows the postscript both in time of composition and location within the text – the first French edition is dated 20 September, while the English translation is dated 9 October, following an initial printing error that left the date blank. Finally, another pamphlet (4) appears both independently and in combination with the first three parts, in some editions separately titled *Certaine Advertisements Out of Ireland, Concerning the Losses and Distresses Happened to the Spanish Nauie (CA)*. *CA* is dated 26 (English) or 27 (French) September. All other language editions derive from these two and the dates are useful in tracing the route of translation. *CA* is by far the most variable element in later reproductions, appearing independently in additional German, Dutch, and French translations, yet also as consecutive text in many subsequent French and English editions of *CoL*. The choice by the *Short-Title Catalogue* (hereafter *STC*) to eliminate an independent catalogue number for *CA*, as well as Denis Woodfield’s characterization that *CA* was “published as an integral part of all known editions of the *Letter* printed in England,”

⁴ William Cecil, *Essempio d’vna lettera mandata d’Inghilterra a Don Bernardino di Mendoza ... nella quale si dichiara, lo stato del reame d’Inghilterra, ...* (Leida: Arrigo del Bosco, [London: John Wolfe,] 1588).

⁵ Denis Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing in England* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1973), 28.

⁶ Likewise, scholars interested in these works should be cautious in trusting repository holding records, as *CA* is catalogued as *CoL* and vice versa in many catalogues.

⁷ British Library, MS Lansdowne 103.55, fols. 134–49 (draft in Cecil's hand); fols. 150–64 (fair copy in the hand of Cecil's secretary, Henry Maynard, with corrections and additions in Cecil's hand).

drafts consist only of the material later designated as the letter, without any material from the postscript, printer's epistle, or *CA*.⁸ As news of the Spanish wrecks off the coast of Ireland trickled into London in September, Cecil and his printers Jacqueline Vautrollier and Richard Field took the opportunity to expand the pamphlet to include news of the Armada's fate; eventually, the general news contained in the "Printer to the Reader" epistle was supplemented with more detailed narratives in *CA*. These expansions, recorded in the bibliographical makeup of the pamphlets themselves and in manuscript government correspondence, allow us to trace how the first two editions of the multipart pamphlet came to be produced in English and French; their distinct dating pattern and content allow us to follow the translation and reprinting of these editions by continental printers.

The original motivation for Cecil's project was a series of religious tracts and polemical pamphlets produced by Spanish government presses and imported into England ahead of the Armada. The Spanish preparations for the Enterprise against England had been in the works for years, but the publication on 9 May 1588 of *La Felicissima Armada*, a folio pamphlet produced by the King's Printer in Lisbon detailing the fighting strength of the fleet, heightened anticipation across Europe.⁹ Reprinted in a compact quarto as *Relacion Verdadera del Armada* (hereafter *Verdadera*), the text was quickly translated and reprinted in Dutch, German, French, and Italian as the ships sailed from Lisbon (see fig. 2).¹⁰ The English translation, *A True Discourse of the Armie*, was published in October of 1588 as an example of Spanish

⁸ Bertrand Whitehead speculates that the draft was begun 26 August, but does not give his reasoning. The only connection between this date and the pamphlet that I can discern is the date of the historical Richard Leigh's trial. This link seems tenuous as Leigh's name does not appear anywhere in the drafts. See Bertrand Whitehead, *Brags and Boasts: Propaganda in the Year of the Armada* (Dover: Alan Sutting, 1994), 145.

⁹ *La Felicissima Armada Que el Rey Don Felipe Nuestro Señor Mandó Juntar en el Puerto de la Ciudad de Lisboa en el Reyno de Portugal* (Lisbon: Antonio Alvarez [impressor del Rey] for Pedro de Paz Salas, 1588). This folio clearly circulated in England in both print and manuscript transcriptions: Cecil's personal copy, heavily annotated, is in the British Library, Shelfmark 192.f.17.(1.); while Robert Honywood recorded the summary sections in his miscellany, which is at the Folger Library, ms. V.a.584, fols. 80^r–82^r.

¹⁰ *Relacion Verdadera del Armada*, ... (Madrid: Por la viuda de Alonso Gomez Impressor del Rey nuestro Señor, Vendese en casa de Blas de Robles librero del Rey nuestro señor, 1588).

hubris after the event was safely over.¹¹ While the *Verdadera* texts spread the news of Spanish preparations, the Hapsburg publication program in Amsterdam argued that the Enterprise against England was a rescue of English Catholics from religious persecution.

Figure 2. Stemma of *Verdadera*, created by the author.

The direct inspiration for *CoL* was Cardinal William Allen's *Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland*, one of the most virulently polemical works to come out of the Amsterdam presses.¹² *Admonition* provided the religious rationale for the Armada

¹¹ *A True Discourse of the Armie which the King of Spaine Caused to Bee Assembled in the Haven of Lisbon ... in the Yeare 1588 against England ...* (London: John Wolfe, 1588). Wolfe's version is a translation of the French *Le Vray Discours de L'armée que le Roy Catholique Dom Philippe a Faict Assembler au Port de la Ville de Lisbonne ... en l'an 1588 Contre l'Armée Angloise ... Traduit de l'Espagnol en François* (Paris: Guillaume Chaudière, 1588); however, his edition also contains a response to the "Cologne Distich," a truly "Dewey Defeats Truman" style piece of political poetry that first appeared in *Warhafft Relation ...* (Cologne: G. Von Kempen, 1588).

¹² See Eamon Duffy, "Allen, William (1532–1594)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed October 2008, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/39; William Allen, *Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland* (Antwerp: [Richard Verstegan?], 1588), STC 368.

invasion through a detailed explication of Pope Sixtus V's renewed bull excommunicating Queen Elizabeth, characterizing continued obedience to the queen as worship to a "verie nationall idol."¹³ In a 12 June letter to Francis Walsingham, Cecil noted that in addition to banning "these vile Cardnalls libels" upon pain of treason, he wished "so[m]e expert learned ma[n], wold fayne an answer as fro[m] a no[m]bre of Catholicques."¹⁴ Cecil conceived of the response as a direct address to Cardinal Allen; as he explained to Walsingham, he wanted "to advertise y^e Cardinall, that he is deceaved in his opinion to thynk that any noble man in this land, or any gentleman of possessions will favor the invasion of ye realm." In its original form, *CoL* had two goals: to describe the state of English military preparations, both during the summer and in readiness for a renewed attack, and to depict the effect of the attack on English Catholics, specifically causing them to prioritize national loyalties over religious convictions.

Between the June proposal and the pamphlet's completion in early October, however, the news environment shifted: the Privy Council not only needed to assert the continued loyalty of English Catholics and England's readiness against a further attack, but also needed to directly refute rumours of a Spanish victory. The lengthy lead up to the battle in the Channel and the piecemeal nature of reports in late July and early August made the Armada crisis the basis of what Andrew Pettegree calls "a rolling news event which occupied most of an anxious summer, where hard news was scarce, and rumour, uncertain reports and speculation filled the vacuum."¹⁵ Early news letters printed on the continent contained rumours of Spanish success, such as the one written "from Dieppe" and hurried to print in Paris by Don Bernardino de Mendoza, which claimed that the Duke of Medina Sedona had landed on English soil with six or seven thousand soldiers and thirty pieces of artillery.¹⁶ The Dieppe account was

¹³ Allen, *Admonition*, A3^v.

¹⁴ William Cecil to Francis Walsingham, 12 June 1588, State Papers Domestic, SP 12/211/15. Also available via State Papers Online 1509–1714, accessed 29 July 2015, Gale Cengage Learning, <http://go.galegroup.com/mss/i.do?id=GALE|MC4304284741&v=2.1&u=wash46354&it=r&p=SPOL&sw=w&viewtype=Manuscript>.

¹⁵ Andrew Pettegree, "Before the Daily. Getting the News in Early Modern Europe" (lecture, Annenberg Seminar in History, 27 March 2012), 15.

¹⁶ *Copie d'une Lettre Envoyée de Dieppe, Sur la Rencontre des Armées d'Espagne et d'Angleterre, et de la Victoire Obtenue par les Espagnols* (Paris: Guillaume Chaudière, 1588), 2–3. "Le Samedy arriua sur le midy vn batteau de la coste d'Angleterre, ... [Medina] Sidonia ... où il a fait descendre six à sept mille soldats, & trente pieces d'artillerie." The Parisian printer, Guillaume Chaudière, was also

reprinted in Lyon and Toulouse before it was corrected. As late as the end of August, reprints of Spanish news letters were published in Seville reporting similar news of Spanish victory and trumpeting the defeat of Sir Francis Drake.¹⁷ Although many of these reports were quickly countered, Mendoza's publication activities made him, as much as Allen, a specific target of the Privy Council's ire.

Don Bernardino de Mendoza was well known both in England and abroad as a news source and political provocateur. It made sense for Cecil to choose him as the regular correspondent of the fictional disappointed Catholic author, the pseudonymous priest Richard Leigh. Long early modern titles are routinely abbreviated even in digital catalogues without the physical limitations of print, so the subtitle for *CoL* is easily dropped from discussions of its history. A fuller view of the title (leaving aside two additional paragraphs describing the acquisition narrative of *CoL* and the added *CA* material) reads *The Copie of a Letter Sent Out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza Ambassadors in France for the King of Spaine, Declaring the State of England, Contrary to the Opinion of Don Bernardin, and of all his Partizans Spaniardes, and Others*. The mention of Mendoza is missing from Wolfe's Italian translation, although it is present in various forms on all Dutch and French translations and reprints, including a modification by Bruyn Harmansz Schinckel that positions the letter as disappointing Mendoza's "hope" as well as his "meyninge."¹⁸ This sentence is, not unexpectedly, absent from Comino Ventura's 1593 Italian translation, for reasons discussed below.

In the first draft of *CoL*, the priest extols the hope given to beleaguered English Catholics by Mendoza's "great premises" ("vaine promises" in the printed version) regarding the military power and

the printer of the French edition of *Verdadera*; he advertised this connection at the end of the account of Spanish victory. All translations and paraphrases are my own unless otherwise specified.

¹⁷ *Relacio[n] delo Sucedido ala Armada*, ... (Seville: Cosme de Lara, [1588]). The Council found *CoL*'s refutation too subtle; several rebuttals of these specific pamphlets were subsequently produced to more clearly label the Spanish viewpoint as false, including *A Packe of Spanish Lyes* ... (London: Deputies of Christopher Barker, 1588); D.F.R. de M., *Ansver to the Vntruthes* ... (London: John Jackson for Thomas Cadman, 1589), and its Spanish translation, D.F.R. de M., *Respuesta y desengano contra las falsedades publicadas en España* ... (London: En casa de Arnolfo Hatfildo, por Thomo Cadmano, 1589).

¹⁸ William Cecil, *Copie Eens Briefs Gesonden wt Engelandt aen Dom Bernardin de Mendoze* ... (Delft: Bruyn Harmansz Schinckel), title-page.

political allegiances among the Pope, the “K[ing] Catholick” Philip II, and the “united forces of y^e noble champio[n] of y^e Church y^e Duk of Guise in Fra[n]ce.”¹⁹ Cecil excised much of the explicit criticism of French politics in subsequent drafts, instead projecting a lay Catholic rejection of specific Continental news sources that had proven disappointing and false. In a revision to the second draft, he emphasizes Mendoza’s personal responsibility for the offensive material: “Book[es] published in ffrance \and translated into fre[n]ch as yt is sayd by your lordshi[p]/.”²⁰ A marginal note added in the revision makes it clear that Cecil is referencing the French translation of *Verdadera, Le vray discours*, the “catalog of Armadas” printed in Paris in July (see fig. 3).²¹ This publication campaign, the pamphlet argues, was one of the most damaging decisions by Spanish authorities: “in very trueth no one thing hath done at this time more hurt to the action, then the vntimely hastie publishing abroad [...] before this Armie of Spaine was readie to come forth to the seas, of sundry things written and put in print, & sent into this realme.”²²

Figure 3. Detail from the second draft of *CoL* with holograph corrections by William Cecil, Lord Burghley. British Library, MS Lansdowne 103.55, fol. 150^v.
© The British Library Board.

¹⁹ British Library, MS Lansdowne 103.55, fol. 134^r.

²⁰ Ibid., fol. 150^r.

²¹ Ibid. A concluding note, “Depuis est party de Lisbonne sur la fin de Iuin dernier vn supplement d’Armee en bon equipage contenant quatre vint Voilles, pour se ioindre à lādite Armee,” suggests that Chaudière’s octavo was not published before the beginning of July (*Vray Discours*, 46). Although Cecil owned and heavily annotated a copy of *Felicissima Armada*, now British Library 192.f.17. (1.), he appears to be specifically targeting the French translation here.

²² Cecil, *Copie*, 4.

The inscribed Leigh describes his letter to “My Lord Ambassadour” as his “second writing,” occasioned by the need to correct false English and foreign news reports, “to aduertise you in what termes this countrey now standeth, farre otherwise then of late, both we at home, and others abroade did make accompt of.”²³ Mendoza’s reputation as a textual mediator provides a rationale for discussing the effect of news pamphlets, as the writer wishes to inform him that the pamphlets he is promoting are causing negative reactions among English readers. As David Randall has pointed out, military news letters throughout the period employ encoded social interactions between writer and addressee as a means of conveying credibility.²⁴ The framing of *CoL* as a *private* news letter captured from an enemy news service is particularly important to its credibility for English readers. *CoL* implicates Mendoza as not only the addressee, but an actual reader of the letter, by claiming on the title-page that “[t]his Letter, although was sent to Don Bernardin Mendoza, yet by good hap, the Copies therof aswell in English as in French, were found” in the possession of a Catholic spy.²⁵

While a Catholic source would normally be presented as untrustworthy (as, indeed, Mendoza is throughout the work), Randall argues that for English Protestant readers, “Catholic news could be read when it testified against the Catholic interest. This was not the voluntarily given news of a friend, but news captured, so to speak, from an informant and extorted against his will – not given in exchange in any sense, but taken by force and therefore acceptable.”²⁶ The negative tone of this captured news is thus also central to its presentation of the news. The terminal printer’s epistle argues that the credibility of the letter can be judged by the distress of the “Catholic” author at the news that he must report to a partisan reader: “neither the first writer of these Letters now by me printed, nor yet the Spaniard *Don Bernardin* to whome they are directed, had any desire to hear of any good success to the state of England,” and this reluctance, the printer maintains, can be read as a sign of the false letter’s validity, “as may appeare in the writer, by shewing him selfe grieved, to make any good report of England, other then of meere

²³ Ibid., 1.

²⁴ David Randall, *Credibility in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Military News* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 42.

²⁵ Cecil, *Copie*, 1, title-page.

²⁶ Randall, *Credibility*, 113.

necessitie he was vrged.”²⁷ The title-page narrative of acquisition and the terminal “Printer to the Reader” epistle explicitly frame the work for Protestant readers, arguing that the private letter and its postscript would never have been remediated into print by Catholic sympathizers and so can be read as an honest report of negative Catholic views.

The terminal “Printer to the Reader” epistle makes up the first substantial expansion to Cecil’s original letter and was added during the simultaneous and disrupted production of the first English and French editions by Jacqueline Vautrollier and Richard Field. In the epistle, the implied printer (notably singular and generic) declares that his epistle is added to further refute the claims of victory by Mendoza, “who was so impudent, or at the least, so blindly rash, as to disperse in print, both in French, Italian and Spanish, most false reports of a victorie had by the Spaniards.”²⁸ My use of the masculine singular possessive adjective is potentially problematic. As Franklin B. Williams Jr. argues, “since the term *Printer* was used with masterly imprecision, an unsigned epistle of ‘The Printer to the Reader’ is about as valuable and negotiable as an unsigned cheque.”²⁹ The printer in this epistle makes active assertions about his role in producing *CoL*, in acquiring news of Spanish wrecks, and of restructuring the document to refute a specific kind of foreign propaganda.

Jacqueline Vautrollier, a Huguenot refugee with extensive experience printing alongside and in the absence of her late husband Thomas Vautrollier, is a strong candidate for the author.³⁰ Vautrollier was quite capable of the active professional engagement depicted in the epistle and certainly sympathetic to its political tone. *CoL*’s English editions are the only works that carry her own (initialized) name. Woodfield assumes that her late husband’s name, rather than her own ability to translate and print, attached Vautrollier to the project: “It is probable that Burghley gave the French and English texts to Jacqueline Vautrollier, as her late husband’s heir, since Thomas Vautrollier had done such good work for him in the past,” including publishing the French and Latin editions of *The Execution*

²⁷ “Printer to the Reader,” in *Copie*, Fr^r.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Franklin B. Williams, Jr., *Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses in English Books before 1641* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1962), 235.

³⁰ Woodfield claims this epistle was “actually written by Lord Burghley.” There is no evidence for this, and given that the physical makeup reflects the acts described by the printer, there is a strong implication that this epistle was, indeed, composed in the printing house. Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 143.

of *Justice* (1584).³¹ Jacqueline, however, had been printing on her own intermittently since at least 1581, when she was granted permission by the Stationers' Company to continue printing in her husband's absence.³²

Jacqueline Vautrollier married Richard Field, the publisher named on the imprint and Thomas Vautrollier's former apprentice, the next spring. Vautrollier may have needed Field's involvement as publisher – or simply his name – in October of 1588 to get around the restrictions imposed by the Stationers' Company, which explicitly forbade her from printing on 4 March 1588. The ban was reiterated in May, when the Company allowed her to complete an edition of Luther "p[ro]vided alwayes that she medle not w[i]th the printinge of any thinge els vntill shee p[ro]cure her self to be chosen and alowed to prynt accordinge to the decrees of the starchamber."³³ No records survive that would clarify which of the couple, who were both fluent in French, composed the epistle. The generic printer does not, however, assert a female persona and the emphasis throughout the epistle is on the printer's professional actions and responsibilities.³⁴

The "Printer to the Reader," like the letter it accompanies, concludes with a dateline, and describes the incoming news as appearing "yet whilst I was occupied in the printing thereof," stressing its role as a news letter itself and the stop-the-presses level of immediacy of the added news of Spanish wrecks.³⁵ The English "Printer to the Reader" is dated either the [blank] of October or, thanks to an in-press correction, "The 9. of Octob. 1588." The earlier date of Vautrollier and Field's French epistle, 20 September,

³¹ Ibid., 28.

³² W.W. Greg and E. Boswell, eds., *Records of the court of the Stationers' company, 1576 to 1602 – from Register B* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1930), 11, quoted in Andrew Pettegree, "Vautrollier, Thomas (d. 1587)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 17 July 2015, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/28158.

³³ Greg and Boswell, *Records*, 26, 27. This ban makes it clear that Jacqueline was involved in more than the "supervisory" role Woodfield credits her with. See Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 35.

³⁴ These activities were typically coded as masculine in this period despite the active involvement of a number of female printers. The gender issues raised by the use of a generic working persona deserve further consideration elsewhere, as does the reuse of generic printers' epistles across multiple editions, which has led to the Vautrollier-Field epistle being attributed to other printers, such as Jérôme Haultin (c.f. Louis Désgraves, *Les Haultin, 1571–1623*, Geneva: E. Droz, 1960, xxxvii).

³⁵ "Printer to the Reader," in *Copie*, Fr^r.

led *STC* bibliographers to speculate that “the French translation, ... was probably printed before the English text.” However, the date on a final section does not necessarily mean that the entire edition was completed in a single attempt. Multistage production would explain the apparent conflict between the dates and the claim, which appears on all of the French title-pages, that the French works are “Nouvellement Imprimé.” If the news of the wrecks on the Irish coast began to arrive between 15 and 20 September³⁶ when the English quartos were off the press but while the French octavo edition was at an early stage in printing, it would have made sense to add the printer’s summary of the fate of the Spanish fleet to the French version first.³⁷ Vautrollier’s workshop was able to insert the epistle beginning on E2^r, separated from the postscript that ends the letter by a small woodcut border and concluding on [E4^r], leaving the last page of the gathering of four blank. Conversely, the English quarto edition begins the material in a new quire consisting of two leaves, F1 and [F2], easily added to an already complete letter, while leaving half of [E4^v] blank.³⁸

One might expect that adding such a short section to the English pamphlets would take far less time than the two weeks between 20 September and 9 October. Vautrollier’s printing ban meant that this project was the only item on her presses at the time, and issues of simultaneous printing or problems of standing type are not likely to have delayed production. However, the pattern of adding material and delaying the completion of the English edition was repeated: Vautrollier’s presses were occupied in the closing weeks of September with a short companion pamphlet also printed in English and French: *Certaines Advertisements Out of Ireland (CA)*. On 16 September

³⁶ The “Imprimeur au Lecteur,” dated 20 September, claims that “Cest armée fut pousse par la tempeste delà les Orcades enuiron le premier iour d’Aoust, il y a maintenant plus de six semaines” (*Copie d’une Lettre*, [Eij^v]). Whether this section was composed first in French or English is ambiguous, although French is likely. Regardless, the translations are extremely close, “The Fleete was by tempest driuen beyond the Isles of Orknay, about the first of August, which is now more then six weekes past.” “Printer to the Reader,” in *Copie*, Fr^r.

³⁷ “Printer to the Reader,” in *Copie*, Fr^r.

³⁸ While a logical means of testing this hypothesis would be to look for variations in paper stocks, two factors make this difficult: (1) the diversity of paper used in printing *STC* 15412 ranging across extremely common watermarks such as pots, gloves with 5 pointed stars, and gloves with fleur-de-lis, as well as a fairly distinctive double trefoil, and (2) the brevity of quire F, consisting of only F1 and [F2].

1588, Cecil received a letter from Sir Henry Wallop, Lord Justice in Ireland, detailing interviews with sailors taken prisoner off the coast of Ireland.³⁹ Two English versions of this pamphlet circulated independently and in conjunction with *CoL*. The most common version is a ten-leaf pamphlet that collates A–B⁴C² with the Vautrollier (later Field) *Anchora Spei* printer's mark on the title-page. The far rarer version collates A–B⁴; although it also claims the Vautrollier and Field imprint, the *STC* bibliographers have assigned it to Thomas Orwin on the basis of its initials. Both English versions of *CA* are dated 26 September. The French version, dated a day later, contains an apology that makes the order of translation for this section clear: the names in the pamphlet were translated “first from the mouth of Spaniards, and then English, into French.”⁴⁰ The French *CA* was not crafted as a stand-alone text with its own title-page, but rather as a work-and-turn octavo in fours, begun in a new quire, F, and added to *CoL* after a blank page and a half. While there is no change in paper in the French printer's epistle, there is a distinct change in paper used for both the English and French *CA* in the first editions of each language.⁴¹ The first French edition does not mention this addition on the title-page, suggesting it arrived after the title-page

³⁹ Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 28; Henry Wallop to William Cecil, 16 September 1588, State Papers Ireland 63/136 fol. 139; enclosure 63/136 fol. 141–144, State Papers Online sequence no. 147–150. *State Papers Online 1509–1714*, accessed 10 Nov. 2014, Gale Cengage Learning, <http://go.galegroup.com/mss/i.do?id=GALE|MC4309880092&v=2.1&u=wash46354&it=r&p=SPO L&sw=w&viewtype=Manuscript>.

⁴⁰ “Il peut estre suruenu quelques fautes en l'écriture des noms Espagnols en François, pource qu'ils ont esté écrits par forme d'interpretation, premierement de la bouche des Espagnols & puis d'Anglois en François: Mais au nombre & qualités des personnes, ou des morts ou des viuans, il n'y peult auoir faulse, selon les informations faictes iuridiquement. Le 27. de Septembre, 1588.” Cecil, *Copie d'une Lettre*, [H4^v]. “Some errors in the writing of Spanish and French names may be evident, because they have been written by way of interpretation, first from the mouth of Spaniards, and then from English, into French: but as to the number and ranks of people, whether living or dead, there can be no error, according to the official facts.” Translation by A.E.B. Coldiron.

⁴¹ This change can be quite clearly seen in British Library shelfmark C.123.c.17. (1.), a copy of the first French edition, where a large wheel, similar to Briquet 13.234, is found only in the *CA* section; and National Maritime Museum shelfmark E4066, a copy of the first English edition, has a distinct change from a sphere watermark throughout *CoL* to a glove watermark in *CA*. A full census of the papers employed by Vautrollier and Field in this period would assist in identifying the paper use patterns more precisely.

for this edition was set.⁴² The second French edition (STC 15414.4) and all English editions of *CoL* subsequently included a paragraph on the title-page describing the added *CA* material. Publishing the more specific *CA* content in both languages was clearly prioritized over completing the English pamphlet with the printer's epistle.

On 30 September, Francis Walsingham sent the English *CA* to Edward Stafford, the English ambassador in Paris.⁴³ He wanted Stafford to have it translated immediately for independent publication in French.⁴⁴ The resulting text was paired with a narrative about Sir Thomas Cavendish's circumnavigation of the globe and published as *Advertissement Certain Contenant les Pertes Advenues en l'Armée d'Espagne, Vers le Noest, de la Coste d'Irlande, ... et du Nombre des Hommes & Navires Perdus Avec Deux Lettres* ([Paris], 1588). Walsingham saw *CA* as politically valuable because it "can not be constructed to be delivered of anie cunning on our part considering y^e they are the confessions and testimonyes of our adversaries themselves."⁴⁵ He was right.

On 9 November, Marcantonio Messia, an *actual* Catholic informant, sent a version of the English edition of *CA* to Mendoza.⁴⁶ Messia judged the credibility of *CoL* and *CA* quite separately. Indeed, he explains in his letter to Mendoza that he has already forwarded Wallop's reports and that they were subsequently attached to a propaganda pamphlet: "Those which were reported lost on the coast of Ireland I set forth in a memorandum I sent to your lordship. The list was afterwards printed at the end of a little tract in French, which they, in their usual cunning way, pretended had been written by a Catholic to your lordship."⁴⁷ Messia emphasizes that Cecil intended *CoL* for circulation on the Continent: "It was done by the

⁴² The only difference between STC 15414.2 and STC 15414.3, as described in the *STC*, is the presence or absence of *CA*. While *CoL* may well have circulated without the added material, it would have been easy for the two parts to become separated at a later point.

⁴³ Woodfield mistakes this for *CoL*, as he did not believe *CA* circulated separately in the English editions. Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 29n37.

⁴⁴ Francis Walsingham to Edward Stafford, 30 September 1588, British Library, MS Galba E VI, fol. 366^r.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Marcantonio Messia to Don Bernardino de Mendoza, 9 November 1588, K. 1567, (N.S.) Paris Archives, "Simancas: November 1588," *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas)*, vol. 4, 1587–1603 (1899), 484.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Lord Treasurer, and they sent a great number of copies to France.”⁴⁸ Walsingham’s letter on 30 September confirms Messia’s observation about the intended audience for *CoL*: although Walsingham directed Stafford to have *CA* printed immediately, he also informed Stafford that “within a while the substance of the whole proceedings of the spanish navy and owers shalbe published both in frensh and in Italian.”⁴⁹

John Wolfe registered the Italian translation with the Stationers’ Company under Walsingham’s authority on 23 October 1588, and printed it with a false imprint, “In Leida, per Arrigo del Bosco,” possibly a joke on Richard Field’s name.⁵⁰ Wolfe’s edition de-emphasizes the connection between the inscribed author’s priesthood and subsequent execution by significantly revising the title-page and eliminating Protestant printed marginalia that in the French and English editions highlight points of outrage. He retains the original terminal printer’s epistle and *CA* material, but adds a new prefatory “Printer to the Benign Reader,” which contains the acquisition narrative found on the title-page of French and English editions. Wolfe’s title-page replaces the discovery of the letter in the “Priest’s chambers” with a justification of the work’s translation into Italian, allegedly at the “insistence and desire” of Italian readers who wished to distinguish Mendoza’s false rumours from the true events of the attack.⁵¹ Without the Protestant marginalia and with the altered title-page, Wolfe’s version provided a different interpretive framework for an Italian readership, one that emphasized readers’ scepticism of Continental news sources while downplaying the persecution of

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Francis Walsingham to Edward Stafford, 30 September 1588, British Library, Galba E VI fol. 366’.

⁵⁰ Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640*, vol. 2 (London: privately printed, 1875), 2:504. Paul Voss is mistaken in believing that this gave Wolfe the copyright to the English and French editions; Richard Field’s copyright passed to George Miller, who reprinted the English edition in 1641. Paul Voss, *Elizabethan News Pamphlets: Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlow & the Birth of Journalism* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001), 51. Woodfield replicates the error, likely originating in Lyell, that identifies a 1601 edition printed by Miller. The date is the result of the title-page sophistication in British Library G.6068.(2.). Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 28.

⁵¹ “Translatata di francese in italiano ad istanza di chi desidera, che gl’Italicì houmini conoscano quanti i romori, dell’Armata spagnoula, sparti dal Mendoza, sieno bugiardi & falsi.” Cecil, *Essempio*, title-page.

the “Catholic” author – although Wolfe, or his translator, could not resist concluding his version of *CA* with the announcement of the defeat of the “Invincible Armada.”⁵² Wolfe’s translation reached at least some of the Continental audience it was aimed at; we know it was picked up at the Frankfurt Book Fair by the Augsburg bookseller George Willers.⁵³

Although Wolfe’s Italian edition purported to have origins in Leiden, actual productions from Dutch towns likely preceded it and did so with title-pages that match their English and French sources in describing Leigh’s trial and execution. When the source text was English, as it was for all but one publication, the two works were consistently reproduced separately. In Amsterdam, Cornelis Claeszoon closely followed the first English edition of *CoL*, including the lack of precise date on the “Printer to the Reader” epistle. He also brought out a Dutch edition of *CA*, translated from the second English state, which adds two ships and 603 men to the concluding summary of ships lost in the initial confrontation between England and Spain. Like the early English editions of both works, Claeszoon’s had separate title-pages and registers and circulated independently.

Dutch readers could also acquire *CoL* in Delft from Bruyn Harmanssz Schinckel, who had printed a translation of the pro-Spanish *Verdadera* in early August. Schinckel’s edition lacked the vocally Protestant “Printer to the Reader” epistle, although he does nothing to tone down the atrocities discussed in the letter and postscript and keeps the marginalia. While Vautrollier and Field

⁵² “Finisee il raccont amento dell’infelicità dell’Armata Spainiola, che INVINCIBLE sidiceua, mandata a conquistare il potentissimo Regno della felicissima Inghilterra” [106]. This particular sentence does not appear in any other translation of *CoL*; Wolfe (or his unnamed translator) likely pulled the phrasing from another work he printed in October, the Dutch *Heylige Bulle, Ende Krsade des Paus Van Roomen ... Midtsgaders, Een Corte Verclaringhe Voor Aen Gheset/ Gheuonden Onder die Armade Van Spaengien/ Vanden Vermetelicken Hoochmoet Vanden Spaengiaert/ die Ter Instigatie Vande Voorsz Bulle/ Aenghenomen Heest die Toerustinghe Vande Onverwinnelicke Armade (Soo Zyse Noemen) Wt Portugael ... Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1588, emphasis mine, Universal Short Title Catalogue 429952 and 422653. This was printed by Wolfe as *The Holy Bull, and Crusado of Rome ... Together with a Brief Declaration (Set Downe in the Beginning) Which Was Founde in the Armado of Spaine, of the Prowde Presumption of the Spaniard: Which Through the Instigation of the Aforesaid Bulle, Hath Taken in Hand the Setting Forth of the Invincible Army (As They Terme It) Out of Portingale ...* (London: Wolfe, 1588), STC 12354.*

⁵³ David Paisey, “German Bookfair Catalogues,” *Library* 4, no. 4 (2003): 417–27 (421).

printed with a particularly English agenda, Schinckel was not alone in producing work aimed at both sides of the conflict. An enterprising printer in Cologne, Niclaus Schreiber, printed two versions of the German translation of *Verdadera*, one with a woodcut of Phillip II on the title-page, one with Sir Francis Drake.⁵⁴ That said, in the majority of cases both *CoL* and *CA* were published (notably separately) by printers with political ties to the English government. *CA* was available in Delft from Albrecht Hendricxz, printer to the states of Holland, and in Middleburg from Richard Schilders, printer to the states of Zeeland. The *STC* suggests that in 1575, Schilders printed a Dutch book either in the Vautrollier printing house or with their materials; this previous connection to the Vautrollier household may be why Schilders mentions Jacqueline Vautrollier but not Richard Field in his imprint. Perhaps the most creative reinterpretation of the *CA* material comes in the excerpts included in Johann Fischart's German compilation in celebration of Spain's defeat, printed in Strasbourg by Bernhard Jobin.⁵⁵ Derived from the first state of the English *CA*, not a translation of any of the Dutch editions, the reports of Spanish wrecks were paired with other news of the event and the whole concluded with a series of poems in Latin and German that can best be characterized as expressing the Protestant sentiment "neener neener neener, we won."

In contrast to the discrete transmission routes for the texts deriving from the English editions, when translated from Vautrollier's French edition, *CoL* and *CA* were treated as a single work. Messia's letter to Mendoza made it clear that the French edition of *CoL* was a source of concern for Spanish officials in France and was imported into France in significant numbers. A French reprint produced in La Rochelle, although anonymous, has been attributed by the USTC to Jérôme Haultin, a well-known Calvinist publisher and typefounder who had worked in London until 1587.⁵⁶ Lisa Parmelee has pointed out

⁵⁴ Both versions are titled *Warhafftige Zeytung und Beschreibung von der Gewaltigen Armada ...* (Cologne: Niclaus Schreiber, 1588), USTC 705682 (Drake) and 705684 (Philip II).

⁵⁵ Engelprecht Moerewinder [Johann Fischart, called Mentzler], *Gantz Gedenckwürdige ... Verzeichnuss, wie die ... von Vielen Jahren her zugerüste Spanische Armada ... Durch H. Engelprecht Mörewinder von Fredewart auss Seeland* (Gedruckt zu Murbaden bey Sixto Sexto Ontrei [B. Jobin: Strasbourg], 1588).

⁵⁶ See Hendrik D. L. Vervliet, *The Palaeotypography of the French Renaissance: Selected Papers* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 147. Woodfield attributes this to Hierosome Haultin. Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 142.

that the French Protestants in La Rochelle kept in close contact with Huguenot refugees like the Vautrolliers in England, and as a result, “a reciprocal relationship often resulted in the printing in England of works from La Rochelle, and vice versa.”⁵⁷ An unattributed French edition of *CoL* printed in Delft also follows Vautrollier and Field’s first French edition closely. The British Library holds a third French edition without place of imprint, date, or *CA* materials, but with distinct typography.⁵⁸ Both the Delft and unattributed continental reprint carry different marginalia than Vautrollier’s editions: each lacks, for example, the marginal note on page sixteen that emphasized the danger to Catholics’ lives caused by Spanish propaganda efforts.⁵⁹ Following the first state of Vautrollier’s integrated French edition, neither of these reprints mentions the *CA* material on the title-page; however, the material is present in the Delft copies I have examined.⁶⁰

Both informants within England and polemicists abroad recognized *CoL* as English propaganda within months of its publication. The year after Messia denounced Cecil’s authorship to Mendoza, Richard Verstegan, an English exile and Catholic propagandist working in Amsterdam, responded with a pamphlet that mimics *CoL*’s epistolary format and the translation narrative of Wolfe’s Italian edition. Verstegan worked “as a publishing agent, editing, proofreading and dealing in English Catholic books” for the Hapsburg cause, and was paid through a pension drawn on the military treasury at Flanders.⁶¹ He was responsible for a number of William Allen’s works, including overseeing the publication of *Admonition*, the polemic which inspired Cecil to write *CoL*.⁶² His direct response to *CoL*, *The Copy of a*

⁵⁷ Lisa Parmelee, “Printers, Patrons, Readers, and Spies: Importation of French Propaganda in Late Elizabethan England,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25, no. 4 (1994): 853–72 (856).

⁵⁸ British Library shelfmark G.6079 ends after the “L’Imprimeur au Lecteur.” Woodfield describes this copy as “printed on the continent” (*Surreptitious Printing*, 143).

⁵⁹ According to the *STC* the La Rochelle editions should contain *CA* material, although this does not necessarily mean it remained with individual copies. I have not yet been able to examine the copy held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (FRBNF39368339) to determine whether it is the La Rochelle edition mentioned by Woodfield.

⁶⁰ Oxford Libraries Bodleian 8° M 277(19) Th.; Harvard, Houghton Library FR 1232.3.10*.

⁶¹ Paul Arblaster, *Antwerp & the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 36.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 43.

Letter, Lately Written by a Spanishe Gentleman, to His Freind [sic] in England: in Refutation of Sundry Calumnies purports to be written by a Spaniard taken prisoner after the Armada, translated from Spanish “for the benefite of those (of that nation) that vnderstand not the Spanishe tounge.”⁶³ In this pamphlet, Verstegan (an English Catholic clearly in conspiracy with the Hapsburgs) decries the abuse of “the Catholiques of your owne country” by means of “false lying libells,” which “haue soughte to insinuate that they vvere of conspiracie vvith vs.”⁶⁴ Verstegan’s Spanish persona then catalogues the rumours of Spanish atrocities and English Catholic plots that circulated in the wake of the Armada: “An infynite number of suche like blazes haue bin made, amonge vvich, the often kylling of the Queene, and the sundry plotts for the fying of London.”⁶⁵ He takes the position of a Spaniard defending his sovereign – and, incidentally, English Catholics – against the same kinds of imported foreign news decried in *CoL*.

Verstegan’s pamphlet employed a dated postscript to convey news of the failed English Counter Armada of 1589, recreating the pattern of expansion through discrete dated segments used by *CoL*. In the postscript, Verstegan’s Spanish persona asks an English friend for the kind of information contained in *CoL*’s “Printer to the Reader” and *CA*. Citing Cecil’s pamphlet by title, the Catholic voice mocks the negative tone taken by the inscribed Leigh, and requests reports of the 1589 English Armada’s failure: “wheras in the beginning of that letter, the author seemeth to be very sad and sorowfull: after so late, and long expected comforte, to haue an occasion to signify the lamentable losse, and vtter dissolution, of all hope. Now I can assure him, he may make a peece of amends, in sending ouer at this tyme such good newes, as can somewhat counteruaile the former ill.”⁶⁶ In case any readers missed the irony of soliciting reports from the dead historical Richard Leigh (one of the Catholics executed and condemned by “false lying libells after there deathes”), the printer’s marginalia helpfully labels “the author” as “A counterfait Catholique.”⁶⁷ By mimicking the form and

⁶³ [Richard Verstegan], *The Copy of a Letter, Lately Written By a Spanishe Gentleman, To His Freind in England: in Refutation Of Sundry Calumnies, There Falsly Bruited, and Spred Emonge the People ... Translated Into Englishe, ...* ([Antwerp: J. Trognesium], 1589), title-page.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6, 38.

interpretive framework of Cecil's pamphlet – the translation narrative, the invested writer, and the epistolary features, including the delayed composition allowed by dated segments – Verstegan attempted to train readers to question such features.

For at least one near contemporary editor, *CoL* was either seen as exactly what it purported to be – documentary evidence of English Catholic sentiment at the time of the attack and the English military preparations – or was at least considered trustworthy history despite its original Protestant framework. In 1593, Comino Ventura published an Italian translation of *CoL* in Bergamo as part of his series on contemporary news events, *Collection of Writings Published in France* (*Raccolta d'altre scritture publicate in Francia*).⁶⁸ Ventura described his series as being “about the miserable French seditions.”⁶⁹ The purpose of the collection was to explain not only what these pamphlets were, but about “the wars, and the counsels of state, so that profitably and honorably they can be understood.”⁷⁰ Ventura saw *Asserte Ragioni* as containing explanations of both the English and Spanish preparations for the failed Spanish attack on England. The printer emphasizes that his goal for reprinting these historical documents “is not that anyone would take pleasure in remembering the harms done to others (that would be inhumane),” but so that the dedicatee, the prominent Catholic governor and general Count Marc'Antonio Martinengo, would be able “to find the means that can be used one way or another in the event that such an attack should be retried.”⁷¹ Ventura left open the possibility that some of the news

⁶⁸ The section containing both the relation of the English forces and the “Ruotolo Dell'Armata di Spagna” is prefaced by the larger title “Apparechi delle Nimiche Armate d'Hispana, & d'Inghilterra, dell'Anno M D LXXXVII,” in *Asserte Ragioni d'Incerto Inglese, del Mal'Euento della Poderosa Armata Spagnuola Ne I Mari d'Inghilterra l'Anno 1588* (Bergamo: per Comin Ventura, 1593), r¹. Woodfield lists this edition as [1588], apparently misled by notes in James Lyell's commentary and catalogue. He also seems to believe it is a reprint of *Essempio*, but this is unlikely, as all of Ventura's other translations in the series are from French. See James Lyell, *A Commentary on Certain Aspects of the Spanish Armada: Drawn From Contemporary Sources* (unpublished typescript, [1932]), 260. Houghton MS Eng 714. Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 28.

⁶⁹ *Asserte Ragioni*, [*2], “la Raccolta da me fatta delle miserabili seditioni Francese.”

⁷⁰ Ibid. Gianmaria Savoldelli, *Comino Ventura: Annali Tipografici Dello Stampatore a Bergamo dal 1578 al 1616* (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 2011), lxi.

⁷¹ Ibid., [*2]. “Et ciò, non quasi debbia a niun diletare la rammemorazione de gl'altrui danni (che inhumana cosa sarebbe:) ma sì perche V. S. Illustriss. con l'acutezza dell'intelletto suo eleuatissimo, possa andar diuisando se vere esser possano, & mezzi ritrouare onde nè quelle nè altre lor giouassero, in euento che

he reprinted was false, noting that Martinengo's "sharpness" would allow him to "discern if they are true."⁷²

Ventura juxtaposed *CoL* with a summary of Spanish preparations drawn from one of the many distillations of *Verdadera* that circulated in France in the summer and fall of 1588 and paired it with a shortened French edition of *CoL*: his Italian translation lacks the "Printer to the Reader," the Protestant marginalia found in all French editions, and the *CA* material. In removing these paratexts, Ventura eliminated the Protestant framework that originally guided readings of this "news," resituating it as a more neutral report of the English military preparations and the English Catholic response to the attack. Ventura also removed some of the more horrific claims made in the postscript, such as the alleged Spanish plan to brand children under the age of seven "that they might be known hereafter, to haue bene the children of the conquered Nation."⁷³ Ventura's truncation of the postscript may have been to cater to a Catholic readership, or simply because the hyperbolic nature of the claims made them difficult to believe. While it is also possible that Ventura was working from a fragmentary source text, he concludes his postscript with the dateline "Di Londra il 20. di Settembre 1588," a date associated with the French "L'Imprimeur au Lecteur."⁷⁴ Ventura's edition, packaged with reprints of French military, legal, and governmental documents, serves as part of a historical casebook designed to influence readers' understanding of the conflict at a time when another Catholic invasion of England was considered a viable possibility.

Early modern news was partisan and purposeful. Its packaging – the other texts, images, and apparatus that contextualized the information as news – attempted to guide readers in understanding not only its credibility, but also its utility. Initially conceived as a reaction to polemics composed in the Low Countries by William Allen, the first printed editions of *CoL* framed Cecil's text as a rebuttal to the publication efforts of Bernardino de Mendoza. The marginalia of the English editions attempted to teach readers to question and reject continental news sources, targeting texts like Allen's

fosse tal' impresa ritentata; si come non hà dubbio, che saprà ella ottimamente fare." Translation of the preface provided by Craig Martin.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Cecil, *Copie*, 37.

⁷⁴ While Wolfe's Italian edition is also translated from Vautrollier's French editions, there are substantial differences between Wolfe's Italian and Ventura's Italian translations.

Admonition – “The Cardinals rash and viole[n]t writing misliked by the Catholiques” – and the many editions of *Verdadera*, particularly the French edition facilitated by Mendoza’s publishing connections.⁷⁵ Continental printers were selective about reproducing this English framework and the added printer’s epistle, with its vocal rejection of Mendoza’s credibility. The material added to *CoL*, detailing the Spanish wrecks off the Irish coast, although published contiguously in later editions, likewise had a diverse reproduction history, circulating independently in diverse circumstances. Sent to France as news by Walsingham “to satisfy such as shalbe disirous to know thereof,” in the German compilation produced by Engelprecht Moerewinder the reports of *CA* directly precede Theodore de Bèze’s infamous Latin thanksgiving poem and a series of triumphal occasional verse in German and Latin, recasting the staid reports as Protestant gloating.⁷⁶ Five years later, Comino Ventura juxtaposed *CoL* against the details of Spanish armament to provide historical context for an ongoing Anglo-Spanish conflict.⁷⁷ Reconstructing the dissemination – the social reproduction – of this remarkable news letter reveals the multiple purposes to which news could be put in early modern Europe and the way a pivotal event in English history could be reframed and reused by multiple authors, printers, and readers.

SOMMAIRE

L’ouvrage de William Cecil, *Copie of a Letter* (STC 15412 – 15414.6) – lequel comprend le texte de la lettre proprement dit, un post-scriptum, une lettre de l’imprimeur et un pamphlet additionnel, *Certaine Advertisements Ovt of Ireland* – a été publié graduellement au cours de l’automne 1588. Ces différents textes décrivent les préparatifs militaires de l’Angleterre, le climat politique qui prévalait alors ainsi que les

⁷⁵ Cecil, *Copie*, 5.

⁷⁶ Francis Walsingham to Edward Stafford, 30 September 1588, British Library MS Galba E VI, fol. 366^r. De Bèze’s poem was published in England in a remarkable eight-language broadside. See A.E.B. Coldiron, “The World on One Page: an Octolingual Armada Broadside,” in *Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁷⁷ Research for this article was funded by a Bibliographical Society of America short-term fellowship and a Mellon-CLIR Dissertation Research in Original Sources fellowship.

événements de l'été 1588, ces derniers étant rapportés sous la forme d'une lettre adressée à Don Bernardino de Mendoza, l'ambassadeur d'Espagne en France. L'objectif de ces imprimés était triple : diffuser les plus récentes nouvelles au sujet de la défaite de l'Espagne, rendre illégitimes les nouvelles sources catholiques et dissuader les catholiques d'appuyer et de financer un autre convoi militaire. Tous ces textes ont été rédigés tandis que se déroulaient les événements politiques au cours de l'été et du début de l'automne 1588. Dans le présent article, l'auteure se penche sur la production et la diffusion de l'ouvrage de propagande de Cecil dans le but d'analyser les cadres interprétatifs que les producteurs des textes, tant les auteurs que les éditeurs, utilisaient pour présenter les nouvelles au début de l'époque moderne.